

**T H E
COMMIT
ARENA**

Vista's release has been delayed on multiple occasions. Microsoft most recently said it plans to release the OS to manufacturers and businesses in November and to consumers in January. But confident the company will sort the bugs, I've included more of the Vista intro material below.

Explorers

The new Explorers are powerful yet easy-to-use tools for working with files consistently across Windows Vista. Explorers give more information and control while simplifying how one works with files. The experience is easy and consistent, whether one is browsing photos or documents or even using the new Control Panel, said the spokesman.

"The new Document Explorer makes working with your files a snap. Find your files more quickly with the new Live Icon feature, and see what they contain without having to open them," he says.

"Key elements of the Explorers in Windows Vista are designed to help you get to the information you need, when you need it. Instant Search is always available to help you find files instantly. The navigation pane contains the new Search Folders found in Windows Vista, as well as traditional folders that you have created on your computer. Command Bars display only the tasks that are most appropriate for the files being displayed. With new Live Icons (scalable thumbnails) used throughout Windows Vista, you can see the first page of documents, the actual image of a photo, or the album art for individual songs in your music collection, making it easier to find exactly what you are looking for.

Windows Aero

Windows Vista is the first Windows operating system that has a user experience that can gracefully scale to the hardware capabilities of the computer it is installed on. All computers that meet minimal hardware requirements will see the Windows Vista Basic user experience, which provides the benefits of the refined interface features already mentioned. Windows Aero is an environment with an additional level of visual sophistication, one that is even more

responsive and manageable, providing a further level of clarity and confidence to Windows users.

Live taskbar thumbnails: Resting the mouse pointer over a taskbar item displays a live thumbnail of the window, showing the content of that

window. The live thumbnail is displayed whether the window is minimised or not, and whether the content of the window is a document, photo, or even a running video or process, says the spokesman.

Windows Flip and Windows Flip 3D

Windows Vista provides two entirely new features to manage windows: Windows Flip and Windows Flip 3D. Flip allows you to flip through open windows (by using Alt+Tab), providing a live thumbnail of each window, rather than just a generic icon and file name. Live thumbnails make it easier to identify quickly the window you want, particularly when multiple windows of the same kind are open. With Flip 3D, you can use the scroll wheel on your mouse to flip through open windows in a stack, and quickly locate and select the one you want to work with, he says.

Microsoft began planning the successor to Windows XP in May 2001, four months before it even shipped XP to the public. Then codenamed Longhorn, Windows Vista was revealed to the public in July 2001. Previously, we had been told that a major Windows release, dubbed Blackcomb, was to have succeeded XP. Longhorn, at the time, was viewed as a minor, or interim, Windows version.

Over time, Longhorn grew into a major Windows release. In April 2002, then-Microsoft group vice president Jim Allchin admitted publicly that Longhorn would slip from its expected 2003 release to 2004 because of its storage engine requirements and advanced 3D user interface. This new user interface, Microsoft executives said, would utilize the GPU (graphical processing engine) found in 3D video cards and provide "smooth desktop animation and new rendering features and effects." And with great fanfare, in mid-2002, Microsoft started talking about "Palladium," the next-generation security architecture that would ship as part of Longhorn.

In the intervening years, Longhorn turned into Windows Vista, dropped numerous promised features, and was delayed several times.

So is Windows Vista broken? Is it beyond redemption, a product that is worthy only of your scorn? Absolutely not says reviewer Paul Thorrott on his website at www.winsupersite.com. Windows Vista is a major Windows release, and that means there's both good—such as great new features like Internet Explorer 7, Windows Media Player 11, and Photo Gallery - and bad - the inevitable learning curve that occurs when Microsoft just changes things, sometimes for no perceptibly good reason. Windows Vista is both a lot like Windows XP and completely different. It will beguile you with its translucent, glass-like user interface and will confuse you when you discover that commonly-accessed options are missing or moved.

