

## Upgrades for Your Windows Computer — Should You or Shouldn't You?

### Bottom line:

Windows Vista: purchase on new computer - Wait; upgrade existing computer - No  
Microsoft Office 2007: Wait  
Firefox 2: Yes  
WordPerfect Office X3: Yes

### Windows Vista

Microsoft officially released Vista on January 30, 2007. This is the first upgrade to the operating system in over 5 years. The Microsoft marketing campaign is touting the “WOW!” factor, but the industry has reacted with a ho-hum. The CNET review said “there’s a definite ‘Is that all?’ feeling about Windows Vista” and that “it is not worth rushing out to purchase.”

CIT Computing has been testing Windows Vista Enterprise (campus license version). While it seems stable on newer computers, our recommendation for new computer purchases is buy “Vista ready” but have the XP operating system installed. For computers already in the office, we recommend against upgrading any computers to Vista.

#### Reasons for not purchasing or upgrading (as of 2/15/07)

1. Security questions. Reviewers say that Windows XP SP2 is as secure as Vista and more secure with added third-party security software.
2. Best performance requires top-of-the-line machines manufactured within the last year or so. Minimum requirements include: 1GHz CPU, 1GB memory, 20GB storage space and a video card with 128MB dedicated memory, Pixel Shader v2.0 technology, and 32-bit per pixel.
3. Lack of new functionality versus Windows XP SP2.
4. Too many dependencies on Microsoft products, especially Internet Explorer 7 and security features.
5. Several driver issues with network cards and older computers.
6. Not all software works, please check the vendor website for details. Here is a brief list of applications that we know have problems.
  - a. Lotus Notes 6.5.x is not supported on Windows Vista;

- a. Lotus iNotes on the Web doesn't work with IE7.
  - b. SAP GUI will not function properly.
  - c. SAS 9.1.3 and earlier are not supported on Microsoft Vista.
  - d. SPSS for Windows 15.0 and earlier are not supported on Microsoft Vista.
  - e. Apple - none of its software for the Windows environment (iTunes, QuickTime, etc.) has been updated for Vista compatibility.
7. If you must change a computer's Windows version, do it with a clean installation, not an upgrade.

[CNET Review: Windows Vista Ultimate](#)  
[CNET Review: Windows Vista Business](#)  
[Computerworld Review: The Trouble with Vista](#)  
[InformationWeek: Windows Vista Flunks At MIT](#)

### Microsoft Office 2007

Microsoft Office 2007 has a drastically different interface. The core applications of Excel, PowerPoint, and Word save files in a new format, which is NOT automatically compatible with previous versions. Access 2007 has the new user interface, but not much else has changed.

As a Microsoft Office 2000, XP, or 2003 user should you upgrade to Office 2007? As the CNET review says: “This upgrade isn't for everyone: If you're patient, eager to try the latest tools, and willing to relearn most of what you already know about Office, then you may relish the challenge of Office 2007.”

A power user of Word in our office found it very frustrating when using Word 2007. The Microsoft representative who gave a demo of Office 2007 on campus January 30 admitted that

Microsoft had heard from many frustrated power users.

### Reasons to wait to upgrade

1. Wait for Service Pack 1. CIT's standard policy is to wait for the first Service Pack after a new version of software is released. There are always bugs to be corrected.
2. Not everyone can upgrade. The minimum requirements are Windows XP SP2 on a 500MHz processor with 256MB of RAM.
3. Steep learning curve to learn new interface. Drop-down menus and toolbars have been replaced by the Ribbon and tabs. The Computerworld review stated "We found that the new interface made some tasks in Office 2007 harder to complete than in previous versions."
4. New file formats. Wait for reports of ease-of-use by other "real-world" users and determine your needs based on file sharing. The new formats have an 'x' added to the file extension name, e.g., .docx replaces .doc as the default file format for Word 2007.
5. The most awaited new feature was the capability to save files to the PDF format. Microsoft Office does this with an add-in named "Microsoft Save as PDF." It is version 1.0, so wait for a possible fix on this also.

### Gently work your way into 2007

When you do install Microsoft Office 2007, you may want to install it as a separate, new application (not as an upgrade over a previous version). This will allow you to learn to use the new Ribbon interface, but when you are up against a deadline, you can still get something out quickly by using the more familiar interface of 2003 (or earlier version).

You can also force Office 2007 to always save your new files in the old .doc, .ppt, or .xls file formats. In each program, click the Office Button, choose Options, click Save, and in the "Save files in this format" pull-down list, choose the old file format.

### Add the Compatibility Pack to Microsoft Office 2000, XP, or 2003

CIT Computing does recommend that users of Microsoft Office 2000, XP, or 2003 download and install the Compatibility Pack so that you will be able to open documents from people who have upgraded. As stated in a Gartner research note, "Whether you adopt Office 2007 or not, your organization will be affected by the new document format it introduces, because you can't control the format in which users outside your organization will send documents to users within your organization." ([Gartner: Deploy Office 2007 File Converters Now](#), InformationWeek, Feb 5, 2007 02:10 PM)

NOTE: Please check with your departmental computer support

person before installing either the application or the Compatibility Pack.

[Microsoft Office Compatibility Pack for Word, Excel, and PowerPoint 2007 File Formats](#)

[CNET Review: Microsoft Office 2007 RTM](#)

[Computerworld Review: Final Review: The Lowdown on Office 2007](#)

[Microsoft Resources: Learn Office with self-paced training courses and more](#). If you have not seen the new interface, you may find the video demos titled "Up to speed with Excel 2007 (or PowerPoint 2007 or Word 2007)" especially helpful.

## Firefox 2

Firefox 2 has received CNET's Editor's Choice award for best Internet browser. Now that the first update has been released (December 19, 2006, version 2.0.0.1) CIT Computing recommends that Firefox users upgrade to this version. Unless you are a diehard Internet Explorer (IE) user, we also recommend that IE users switch to Firefox as their main browser.

Firefox is more secure than IE 6 or 7. Firefox is not integrated with Windows, has no support for VBScript and ActiveX (reasons for many IE security holes), it doesn't use Microsoft's Java VM, and any vulnerabilities found are quickly fixed. As the CNET review says: "Mozilla remains very responsive to fixing its vulnerabilities, pushing out updates within a few days of public notice. Microsoft, on the other hand, parses out its vulnerability fixes a little at a time. In the five years since its release, IE 6 has accrued a large deficit, and we see no sign that Microsoft is addressing new vulnerabilities found in IE 7 any faster."

The Lotus Notes iNotes Web version and ESS will work correctly in Firefox 2.

### Reasons to upgrade

1. Built-in spell checking. Works for text area entries in forms, blog posts, e-mail message fields, etc. The spell checker includes a personal dictionary that allows you to add your common words. NOTE for eARFA users: If spell check is not active, right-click in the text box and select "Spell check this field" from the shortcut menu.
2. Better security - protection from phishing and spyware. When a website is suspected of being a forgery (known as a "phishing" site) Firefox will warn you. Firefox will also warn you when a website tries to download, install, or run a program.
3. Session restore. If Windows crashes, you can reopen Firefox and return to the same page(s) you had open. It is said to even save text you were in the middle of typing into a form.
4. Improved tabbed browsing. You can now easily manage any number of tabs, track closed tabs and reopen a specific tab,

select a start-up option to restore the tabs you had open in the previous session, and more.

5. Firefox is available on a variety of operating systems: Windows, Mac, and Linux. Firefox 2 works on Windows versions from 98 to Vista. (The Mozilla organization recommends XP.)

NOTE: Please check with your departmental computer support person before installing Firefox 2.

CIT Computing continues to recommend against upgrading from IE6 to IE7, especially if you use Lotus Notes iNotes and the SAP GUI. The Lotus Notes UNL website states: "There are known issues using IE7 and Lotus Notes Domino Web Access."

[CNET Review: Firefox 2](#)  
[Firefox 2 Features page](#)  
[CNET Review: Internet Explorer 7](#)

WordPerfect 12, it now gives you single-click access to Save As Microsoft Word, Publish to PDF, and other features. You can easily edit the toolbar to include Save Without Metadata and the generic Save As feature.

6. Works in Windows XP, 2000, or 98 SE. During installation you can customize the installation, delete older installations (or not), and migrate settings from previous versions, including templates, address books, user word lists and more.

NOTE: Please check with your departmental computer support person before upgrading.

[CNET Review: Corel WordPerfect Office X3 Standard Edition](#)  
[InformationWeek Review: WordPerfect Office X3 Standard Edition](#)  
[Corel Resources: WordPerfect® Office X3 - Standard Edition UNL Computer Sales license information](#)

## Corel WordPerfect Office X3

WordPerfect Office X3 was released over a year ago and the first Service Pack was released in July 2006. Service Pack 2, which primarily addresses working in the Windows Vista environment, was released on January 11, 2007.

If you are a current WordPerfect user should you upgrade to WordPerfect X3? Yes. As the CNET review says, "Corel has a winner in WordPerfect Office X3... Overall, [it] is a solid upgrade for longtime users, particularly those who manage a lot of PDFs." The file format stays the same so files can be easily shared with other WordPerfect users and opened in Microsoft Word. The interface has stayed the same but has an updated look.

### Reasons to upgrade

1. Publish to PDF. This feature has been enhanced in WordPerfect so that table-of-contents headings are converted to PDF bookmarks. Publish to PDF has been added to Quattro Pro.
2. Edit PDF. This feature works for editing long, text-based PDFs generally used in legal and government offices, but still needs work for more complex documents.
3. New security feature - Save Without Metadata. This feature strips out comments, undo/redo history, and other sensitive data so that it is not shared with other people.
4. Paste Unformatted Text shortcut. This feature has been available for years. Corel has now added shortcut access on the right-click shortcut menu. Use this feature to strip out all formatting from HTML, Microsoft Word, Lotus Notes e-mail, or other source content and only paste the text into your document.
5. Compatibility Toolbar. Although first available in