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Windows Vista: More Than A Simple Upgrade by Greg Thomas

Windows Vista, Microsoft's newest operating system, is gradually replacing Windows XP. Just about any new computer that you purchase will now come with some variant of Vista installed. IT departments both in industry and academia are approaching this transition with a great deal of caution. Universities across the country have responded with policies ranging from guarded optimism to out-right rejection. I won't try to sort out all the details here, but I would like to mention some unexpected costs involved with adopting Windows Vista. There is still a choice for your personal computers since some computer manufacturers still offer Windows XP as an option.

Windows Vista is a new operating system in more ways than "new and improved" usually warrants. Ordinarily we would regard such an upgrade as a good thing. However, the significant changes in Vista could mean older programs no longer work properly with the new OS, if at all. In the case of Vista, there is more to consider than simply upgrading to a new operating system. Vista Business edition is available for \$139. Upfront, that seems manageable, but let's look at some of the "other" costs that are not so obvious. Software incompatibility is a concern as many earlier versions of software that ran on Windows XP will no longer work with Vista. Two worthy examples are Symantec AntiVirus and earlier versions of MS Office. These are both far from "minor" software titles yet both require current versions in order work properly with Vista. In the case of MS Office, this can mean an upgrade to MS Office 2007 which has some additional changes and quirks of its own. Many other software titles are affected in similar fashion which may require upgrading to current versions. Upgrading is often less expensive than buying brand new software. Purchasing all new software to accommodate a new operating system may raise Vista's over-all cost beyond our comfort level.

There is also a learning curve to consider. Windows Vista looks and operates differently than previous versions of Windows. While the new interface is user friendly, several features may seem awkward at first. Aimee Sandifeer makes the point that Windows Vista is "just different enough" that you would need to spend some time learning how to maneuver in the new operating system, although some features do remain the same as they were in Windows XP (e.g. some items on the Start Menu are the same).

So while there may be early frustrations as the transition to Vista is made, they are likely to be temporary. Having a better understanding of the "big picture" will make that transition go more smoothly. As always, if you have questions or need assistance with Windows Vista, contact your neighborhood Regional IT Specialist.

Centra Central

A new Friday Online Schedule will be coming out soon! Watch this space for updates.

Enroll or browse upcoming events or learn more about Centra by clicking the Centra Symposium link from the EIT webpage or going directly to <http://eit.tamu.edu/centra.html>. Playback any of the 250+ recorded sessions from the Public Recordings link at <http://centra.tamu.edu/main/tce>. For more information, go to <http://eit.tamu.edu/Centra/frionline0607.pdf>.

We've got a subscription to Centra online courses!

Contact EIT at CentraHelp@ag.tamu.edu or 979.845.9689 to get the subscription number you'll need to enroll in any of the online courses offered thru Centra. Browse the list of classes offered at <http://eit.tamu.edu/Centra/centraonlineclasses.pdf> or follow the "Online Classes" link to view them from Centra's site at <http://www.centra.com/education/>.

There are all kinds of topics, from Incorporating Multimedia Content to Interactivity and Learning Styles and from Using Application Sharing and Web Safari to Client Help Desk: Audio Issues. And they're taught by real live Centra experts! You can take any or all that sound interesting. So get with us, get the subscription number, get enrolled, and get to know Centra better.

And keep an eye on the Centra blog for current Centra news at <http://tceblogs.tamu.edu/mt/Centra/>

DVD and CD Duplication

By Mary Ann Mooring

Whether you need a few or a few hundred, Extension Information Technology can provide a total solution for your CD/DVD duplication and labeling needs. Yes, that right! We now have the capability to duplicate and label your DVD's as well as CD's.

DVD's can be full size or mini with a printed label included. This combination of duplicating and printing allows your product to have a fully customized look. The result is a CD/DVD you will be proud to distribute.

To contact Extension Information Technology for all of your duplication and labeling needs, please call 979.845.9689 or email eithelp@ag.tamu.edu for assistance.

Helpful Links

Possible URLs to link from your Websites this Month:

- **FCS – Birthday Party Ideas** – <http://birthdaypartyideas.com/>
- **AG and Natural Resource** – *The Mother-load of Ag Lessons (PowerPoint format – a wide variety of Ag-related topics hosted by Glen Rose FFA)* - http://63.102.41.8/lesson_plans.htm
- **4H – Experience Texas (Texas Parks & Wildlife)** - <http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/exptexas/>

Other useful links:

- **EIT Learning Resources:** <http://eit.tamu.edu/resources.html>
- **EIT Tech Ops Blog:** <http://tceblogs.tamu.edu/wtexas/>
- **Brazos Valley Adobe-Macromedia Users Group :** <http://bvamug.tamu.edu>
- **Brazos Valley Web Guild:** <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/bvweb/>

Tip of the Month: Bored with PowerPoint? Try a New Template! by Jeffrey SoRelle

Are you bored with the same old design templates in PowerPoint? If so, I have the simple fix for you. What if I told you there are hundreds of new and exciting PowerPoint Designs available for you to use with just a simple trip to the net. Need proof? Ok, here it is and all of these can be used for free.

1. Start PowerPoint
2. Start a New PowerPoint
3. You will need to turn on the Task Panel if it is not already on, so Click on View > Task Panel
4. From the Task Panel, use the pull down arrow to select Slide Design (Figure 1)
5. Scroll down the list of Slide Designs until you reach the bottom of the list
6. Then click on "Design Templates on Microsoft Office Online"
7. At this point a browser window will open to the Microsoft Office Online Design Slides webpage

NOTE: It is much simpler to download and use the online resource if you are using Internet Explorer. I recommend that you copy and paste the URL to Internet Explorer if it is not your default Browser.

8. On MS Office Online website, select a design category. (Example - Academic)
9. Then click on the desired Design (Example - U.S. flag design template)

NOTE: LOOK CAREFULLY at the Version information. You will only be able to download templates for your version of PowerPoint (Figure 2).

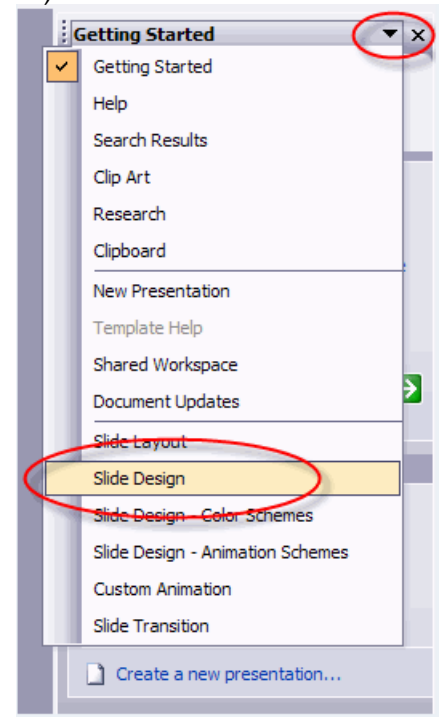


Figure 1



Figure 2

10. Next, IE may ask you to press Continue to confirm you are using a genuine Microsoft Office product - Click **Continue** to start the validation process
11. IE may want to install Active X, click Install
12. Finally, click Download Now and Accept the licenses agreement
13. The template will be downloaded, and PowerPoint will auto-load it for you

Congratulations! You have now successfully added a new template that you can use to build PowerPoint presentations.* I encourage you try out some new designs. Why not, they are free!!

* Download and use a new template to create a slide with your name, county, and the date and send to ajhughson@ag.tamu.edu. First 5 received (according to time stamp on the email) will receive a prize!