

Re: How workable is Vista?

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- *From:* David Brown <david@xx>
 - *Date:* Sun, 29 Jun 2008 12:53:39 +0200
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Vladimir Vassilevsky wrote:

Paul Keinanen wrote:

On Tue, 17 Jun 2008 01:29:47 -0400, "MC"
<for.address.look@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx> wrote:

One thing I really like is that Vista is ready to respond to mouse clicks almost the moment it boots up; I don't have to wait for all the startup applications to finish before I can get responses to anything I do. XP was notorious for sitting around 2 or 3 minutes with little things still starting up, not letting you do anything. With Vista, the startup apps may take the same 2 or 3 minutes but you can go ahead and get started doing your work.

The first question, why on earth does the computer have to be booted?

The computer should be on when you need it. Why on earth do you need the computer to be on when you are not using it?

Do you keep the water taps in your bathroom open at all time?

Why not just let the computer run through the night?

Fire hazard, noisy fans, energy waste, hardware wear?

A computer is not more of a fire hazard at night than during the day – less so if it is not doing much work.

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The fan noise is not a problem unless it is in your bedroom, and the hardware wear is not a big issue (hard disk wear is much more significant when they are in use), though it is not negligible. Good quality hardware is designed to work at 100% uptime.

The only serious issue is energy usage. Modern systems are quite good at running at lower power when there is not much demand for processing power. It's still a waste, unless you use electric heating anyway. How relevant that waste is depends on your circumstances.

I have been managing big VAX/VMS systems in the 1980/90s, in which the question was which `_year_` the next boot should be performed. I assume that the situation was similar for any Unix system.

The Microsoft 9x family was quite useless for any serious applications,

Like what?

but for instance NT 3.51 did not crash even if you looked at it with the angry eye :-).

Most of the problems attributed to Microsoft are actually caused by the lousy application programmers and unskilled operators.

Most of the problems people encounter are application problems, or driver problems. But MS is not blameless – both applications and drivers can cause far more problems than should be possible if the OS had proper separation of programs. The main reason NT 3.51 was more reliable and stable than any windows version before or since is that the gui and drivers were in user space, not kernel space.

The problem with any Microsoft version is that it needs daily (or at least weekly) security updates,

There is no practical need to do updates to the original versions. Well, with the exception for the few special cases when you really need never components. It is Microsoft who wants you to be addicted on the unnecessary clutter.

I agree entirely. The only people that really need regular updates and service packs are those with unsafe web habits. Use a proper browser (anything but i.e.), a decent email client (anything but o.e. or o.), proper virus scanning on email (on the email server, not the PC), and a real firewall (not software "firewall" on the windows machine). And apply a touch of common sense. These basic rules are far more relevant than windows upgrades or fixes.

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which strangely also require a reboot.

This is not strange. It is quite difficult to uninstall the loaded component correctly, with all associations and dependencies. They ask for reboot to make sure everything is done all right. In the most of cases you can continue safely without reboot even if they required it.

It's difficult, but far from impossible. On *nix, it is perfectly possible to replace and update the executables and libraries for programs that are in use. The new version will not be used until it is restarted, but that alone avoids a lot of reboots for equivalent updates.

For a more advanced solution, there is work under way to allow live patching of the Linux kernel without rebooting, as long as the change does not require changes to existing data structures. It's already perfectly possible to unload, update, and reload kernel modules without a reboot.

On windows, many of the "required reboots" are not required at all – it's just developers don't spend the time and effort required to figure out how to avoid it. A reboot is simple to request, and avoids many potential complications.

For this reason, I do not recommend to my customers to use any Windows based operating systems, unless a double/triple redundant system is used (in which case you can boot one PC at a time for security updates).

If someone is a lamer, he will have problems regardless of OS.

If you need close to 100% uptime, you need redundant systems. With windows, you need more to achieve high uptime figures than with *nix. I can't remember where I read it, but I saw a report for getting five nines uptime for a cluster running a web server. With Red Hat, you needed two machines (obviously with appropriately spec'ed hardware – redundant power supplies, fans, and RAID). With Windows (probably W2K or W2K3 server), you needed five machines.