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Database



Vista Upgrade Seems Better for PC Security

By Lonnie Brown

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Last month, Dick Suetterlin had an experience with Murphy's Law (generally cited as, "Whatever can go wrong will go wrong, and at the worst possible time.").

Suetterlin is a member of the Polk Computer User Group. He speaks of RAID arrangements, simultaneous disk writes, cache memory with the same ease and familiarity as people speak of their grandchildren. When it comes to computers, Suetterlin is an early adapter. So he was picked to give a presentation of Microsoft's new operating system, Vista, at the January PCUG meeting.

He had downloaded the 30-day trial version since Windows would not be available for purchase until a week after his scheduled presentation. Just to make sure the 30 days weren't up, he logged on to the computer to check shortly before he left for the 7 p.m. meeting.

Sometime between his trip from the house to the club meeting, the 30-day clock ran out. No one is sure exactly when or where.

The computer was turned on, the room lights were turned off, the big screen lit up. No Vista.

Unlike a cat, Vista trial version has but one life. It cannot be revived. Oh, how Suetterlin tried.

"I felt so sorry for him," said PCUG President Dallas Clay. "It was just embarrassing, and I know just how he felt. It's happened to me."

So Clay invited Suetterlin back to the February meeting. This time, he was armed with a new copy of Vista.

Anyone who has a passing interest in Windows-based computing is probably familiar with the new bells and whistles contained in the new release. They have received plenty of press. For those who want to know more, information can be found at the Microsoft Web site (www.microsoft.com); click on "Windows Vista" under "Destinations & Events."

For all its new features, there's one Suetterlin told the group that he favors above all others: Security.

"It's worth the upgrade for that alone," he said. At its strongest default setting, it will pop up a warning box every time a new program attempts to install on the computer. It will do that when a user is trying to install a program.

It will also do it when a rogue piece of software that secretly downloads itself from a Web site or emerges from another program tries to install itself on the computer.

"If you know it's a program you want, that's fine. Tell it to proceed," said Suetterlin. "If not, you can stop trouble before it begins."

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Apple computers aren't affected by viruses and hackers. So the company has made another commercial in its popular "I'm a Mac/I'm a PC" series that show the two human representatives trying to talk through a sunglassed secret-agent third person who constantly asks "cancel or allow?" before permitting the other to speak.

Suetterlin noted that the warnings might seem a little overdone to some users, "and while you can turn them off, if you do that, you've defeated the security purpose."

The Vista Home Premium, Business, Ultimate, and Enterprise editions offer scheduled and network backups along with "performance self-tuning and diagnostics" to help keep the computer running well.

DOMAIN GAME

InfoStreet Inc., a California-based company, will launch an independent service, InstantName.com this week. It's a one-stop domain-registration service provided in conjunction with Register.com. Besides registration, the service offers hosting and Web site maintenance for as low as \$10 a year.

"A domain without accompanying services is as good as a license plate without a car," said InfoStreet CEO Siamak Farah in a press release. "By bundling [InfoStreet's] StreetSmart's state-of-the-art and proven on-demand solutions, we ensure clients can put their domain to use immediately".

For more information, visit the company's Web site: www.InstantName.com.

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