

## With Windows 7's Arrival, Plan Migrations Now

**Stephen Kleynhans**

Although Microsoft will continue supporting Windows XP through 2014, enterprises should begin migrating to Windows 7 soon to avoid losing support for their environments from independent software vendors.

## NEWS ANALYSIS

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### Event

On 22 October 2009, Windows 7, the latest version of Microsoft's flagship operating system, entered general availability. New PCs will ship loaded with the new operating system (OS), and upgrades are publicly available.

### Analysis

While Microsoft's release of Windows 7 marks a milestone for consumers buying PCs, for corporate buyers it's simply another reminder to begin the planning and preparation process for the upcoming unavoidable migration.

Gartner believes Windows 7 will get a significantly better reception than Windows Vista, and we expect it to become the predominant OS in both the corporate and consumer space over the next four years. Windows 7 builds on Windows Vista, inheriting all of its improvements in security and manageability while adding a level of polishing, optimization and feature improvements. The poor level of ecosystem readiness which hobbled Vista, creating serious compatibility issues, has mostly been addressed in Windows 7.

For most corporate users, the critical factor is the end of life for Windows XP, which Microsoft will not support after April 2014. Equally important, we anticipate waning third-party support for XP beginning in late 2011 and accelerating through 2012. We expect that preparation work for migration will take at least 12 to 18 months for most organizations. Organizations should therefore begin migration planning immediately to maximize their options and enable a controlled and cost-effective migration to Windows 7.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

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### All enterprises using Microsoft Windows:

- Although Microsoft will support Windows XP until April 2014, plan to be off Windows XP by the end of 2012 to ensure ongoing support by independent software vendors for new applications.
- Start migration projects immediately, including planning and testing programs. Unlike previous OS migrations, there is no need to wait for the first service pack before testing or deployment.
- Develop an appropriate and realistic budget for the migration. Gartner's model shows that, depending on an organization's approach, migration typically could cost more than \$500 per user for IT testing and deployment labor, \$500 to \$1,000 per user to replace incompatible software in a move from Windows XP to Windows 7 — and \$175 to \$210 per user for testing and migration to move from Windows Vista to Windows 7 (see "Cost Model: Migration to Windows Vista and Windows 7" and "Prepare for Windows 7 in Three Phases").

## RECOMMENDED READING

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- "Reasons to Care About Windows 7, and Reasons Not to"— Windows 7 has been characterized as everything from a major step for Windows to a minor service pack for

Windows Vista — but either way, Windows 7 is unskippable. **By Michael Silver and others**

- "Prepare for Windows 7 in Three Phases"— Organizations should plan to spend between 12 and 18 months learning about Windows 7, developing new environments and testing their applications. **By Stephen Kleynhans**

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