

Computer Bits by Mark Eggert of Raad One Network Solutions, Inc.

Welcome to Computer Bits, a series of articles on computers and network information. This month I'll follow up on my April 2006 article on the versions of Microsoft's Windows Vista.

Since I wrote the April article the number of versions of Windows Vista has gone up and then down, but now the official count is back to five. They are the same five that I laid out in April. I'll go over them again but I'll give more information on the purpose or who the version is intended for.

Microsoft is going to release five version of Windows Vista, two for the home users, two for the business users, and one for either. The five versions are as follows:

1. Windows Vista Home Basic – for those home users who just want to do the basics with their computers. This version will allow the computer to connect to the internet but it has no other networking functions, so it is targeted for single computer homes.
2. Windows Vista Home Premium – for those home users that want to use their computers for home entertainment. Also this version allows for peer to peer networking used at home or in small offices.
3. Windows Vista Business – for those business users that want to use a reliable and security business network via client/server domain. I should point out that the mobility features are built into the business versions.
4. Windows Vista Enterprise – is only available to those businesses that have volume licensing agreements. There is going to be a new way in which computers will activate this version to help cut down on the piracy of Windows Vista. Microsoft has estimated that also half of the pirated copies of Windows XP are volume license version. This version also has a hard drive encryption feature called BitLocker that works at the BIOS level.
5. Windows Vista Ultimate – for those users that want all of the best features of the home and business versions. This version has all of the features of Vista Home Premium and Vista Business plus the BitLocker feature.

It should be noted that Vista Home Premium and Vista Ultimate have the features of Windows XP Media Center. Another thing to note is that some computer manufacturers are giving Express Upgrade to Vista with the purchase of Windows XP computers now. An Express Upgrade is a download upgrade that allows you to upgrade over the internet. I haven't been able to find if they're also making media available for purchase so that you can have a hardcopy of Vista incase there are any problems.

If you have a computer or network question you'd like answered and you think others would like to know the answer too, please forward them to me. My email address is meggert@wi.rr.com, my phone number is 262-679-7704 and my fax number is 262-679-7664.