

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's article will cover some of the enhancements in Windows Vista. Just a quick note for those of you waiting for the first Vista Service Pack before you upgrade to Vista, you may not have long to wait. Best guess is that Microsoft will release SP1 this fall.

Here are some of the enhancements included with Windows Vista. You may be surprised at some of these.

First enhancement stems from a philosophy change at Microsoft, they have found that people are more productive if they can easily and quickly find the information and applications they need to use. So Vista now has a more robust search engine and when you open the Start Menu the first item you see is a search box. Vista's search engine does a background index of all of the files on the computer. It even does a contextual index of the contents of documents, spreadsheets, etc. This means that when you start type something into the search box you start to see results and you can type as much as you need to find the item you're looking for. It should be noted that the results are categorized so that applications are grouped together and documents are grouped together, etc.

The second enhancement is the way in which the Start Menu displays. In previous versions of Windows the Start Menu would fly out to the right when you click on an item that had items in it. For those of us with many applications installed, clicking on the Programs item would cause the menu to fly out across the screen and you may have had to scroll some to see all of the installed applications. The new Start Menu now stays in a single column and each item opens when clicked on to show you what's inside it. This keeps you focused on one area of the screen.

A third enhancement is the new User Account Control, no user is allowed to run with complete administrative rights to the computer. Users can still be members of the Local Administrator's Group on the computer but even they will be prompted if what they are doing in Windows is going to compromise the security and stability of Vista. Some of you might be thinking that having these prompts pop-up that you have to answer is going to be annoying but in the four months I've been using Vista I've rarely seen the prompts. And when I do see them it is because I am doing something that could affect the security or stability of my computer. So far I haven't seen one of these prompts from a malicious bit of software that has gotten on to my computer.

There are more enhancements and I'll cover them in future articles.

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](mailto:meggert@wi.rr.com), my phone number is 262-679-7704 and my fax number is 262-679-7664.