

# Windows 7 - Worth The Jump?

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I have been using Windows 7 for a little over 3 months now and have been asked many times whether it is worth the upgrade. Here's my view:

## Compatibility

Vista had lots of compatibility issues. Microsoft say that if something worked with Vista it is almost certainly going to work with Windows 7, so all the compatibility issues are solved! Mmmm, maybe a good marketing spin but if you have an existing XP system with lots of peripherals then you still have the problems you had with Vista.

The main issue for me was the video demands. I don't have a lot of artistic ability and don't tend to have 'state of the art' graphics cards. I simply don't notice if the background is spiky or smooth (or the myriad other advantages of spending £400 on a graphics card). Hence when I upgraded to Windows 7 my graphics cards weren't up to it. I saw this coming in as much as the upgrade advisor had warned me that my existing card wasn't going to give me the best graphics. What I had not appreciated was that it would slow the whole system down to a crawl. If you are upgrading an existing system expect to have to get a new graphics card. There are cheap (approx £40) ones about so it can be regarded as part of the upgrade.

## Speed

There are all sorts of benchmarks about, many saying that it is not as fast as XP. I can't really feel any difference. The system seems to start up in about the same time and things run just as fast. I think for general use it can be regarded as the same.

## User Experience

Everything does seem to be easier. I miss the recent files option off of the start menu but the applications now have the most recent files they opened in some cases (you really notice when they don't).

I have yet to meet anyone who isn't caught out by the "Where's the print button?" game. Once you know it is under the MS Globe then you can find it easily but the first time is always frustrating.

The sidebar can be irritating. By default it has a picture frame in which the picture changes every 30 seconds or so. I hate things moving on the screen unexpectedly so that was the first thing that got switched off. The clock looks nice, it duplicates the digital one down the bottom but I've left it there, adding the date and weather gadgets gives me a good overview of the day.

Networking does seem to be slightly easier and the system seems now to be expecting to be on a network behind a router.

## **Is It Worth It?**

If you are getting a new PC where everything will be compatible then yes, this is the Operating System to choose.

If you are upgrading then it depends on what you are using. If you currently have XP then I would sit tight. The cost is not justified by the benefits. If you're using an older operating system then it is unlikely that you will be able to get all of your components working, so again, I would sit tight. If you are using Vista then it's a difficult call. If you have a free or cheap upgrade plan then go ahead and use it. If not then it depends on how annoying you find Vista. If it drives you mental then upgrading to W7 will cause you a lot less stress, if not then stick with it.