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Windows Vista  
Microsoft

## [3 Reasons Why Mac OS X and Linux Won't Succeed against Windows Vista](#)

### *Dislodging Windows is harder than it might seem*

Let me state from the get go that this is not a Mac OS X vs. Linux vs. Windows Vista article. It will not provide a conclusion over the superiority of one operating system alone and will only be limited to a total of three reasons why Mac OS X and Linux won't succeed against Windows Vista. Success in this context is equivalent to a scenario where either Mac OS X or Linux, or both, would negatively influence the adoption of Vista to such an extent that Microsoft's share on the operating system with Windows would suffer and become eroded. But in the end it is not about Vista, or a specific version of the three operating systems. The bottom line is that between the end of 2001 and early 2007, or from XP to Vista, neither Mac OS X nor Linux managed to dislodge Windows. **1. Windows Saturation** Since both Linux and Mac OS X are valid alternative platforms to Windows, each with its own footprint on the operating system market, the concept of a Microsoft monopoly is not valid by any means. Near-monopoly would more accurately describe the Redmond company's dominant position with its operating system, or even a Windows saturation of the market. According to the latest estimates for the install base of each platform as of mid 2007, Windows is on top of the world. The initial vision of Microsoft Co-founder Bill Gates was to put a computer on every desktop in every home. Gates is currently transitioning out of his day-to-day role with the Redmond company and will complete the quasi-divorce from Microsoft as of mid 2008, in favor of Ray Ozzie - Chief Software Architect and Craig Mundie - Chief Research and Strategy Officer. And by 2008, Microsoft will have achieved a key milestone, a landmark fragment of Gates' vision. Earlier this year, at the Financial Analyst Meeting 2007 on July 26, Steve Ballmer, Microsoft Chief Executive Officer, delivered a perspective over the evolution of Windows in the company's 2008 fiscal year, or from July 1, 2007 until June 30, 2008. "The install base of Windows computers this coming 12 months will reach 1 billion. If you stop and just think about that, parse that for a second, by the end of our fiscal year '08, there will be more PCs running Windows in the world than there are automobiles, which is at least to me kind of a mind-numbing concept. I think it talks about the way the value has been driven from the Windows PC, and all of the applications from Microsoft to third parties that go with it," Ballmer stated. And this is only on the client side. But Microsoft has also a strong presence on the server side with its Windows operating system. Clearly client- and server-side are two completely different dimensions. And the fact of the matter is that Linux is regarded as a prominent server platform, while the client version has failed to surpass the single-digit desktop market share since the introduction. Analyst firms Gartner and IDC, in their latest quarterly server numbers, gave Microsoft 67.1% of the market with Windows, and Linux 22.8%. Apple also produces a server operating system, along with the client version, but Mac OS X Server is an insignificant presence, although the Cupertino-based company is pushing ahead and will deal its next move concomitantly with Leopard in October. And what is even more relevant for Microsoft's dominance on the server-side is the fact that the Redmond company is accepting the reality of Linux. The interoperability and intellectual property assurance agreement inked with open source distributor Novell in November 2006, is nothing more than Microsoft's way of evolving inside heterogeneous environments, running mixed solutions, as Linux is an established presence and not going anywhere for now. "I would look at the server market. Windows Server has done well, but has not grown as quickly in recent years as Linux has," stated Brad Smith, Senior Vice President, General Counsel, Corporate Secretary, Legal & Corporate Affairs, Microsoft, explaining the company's position in relation to the lost antitrust battle in Europe. Statistics

look a tad different on the client-side. OneStat gives Windows a global usage share of 96.72% in mid 2007, while Mac OS X is credited with 2.70% and Linux with just 0.36%. W3Counter has Windows at approximately 93% of the market with 3.75% for Mac OS X and 1.37% for Linux, barely more than the percentage of Windows 98. Market Share by Net Applications also gives Windows the lion's share with over 93%, followed by Mac OS X with 6% and Linux still under 1%. The numbers are important because they reflect the fact that there is no empty space to grow for either Linux or Mac OS X. Windows is hugging the market, leaving little elbow room for its rivals. Both Linux and Mac OS X need a consistent amount of momentum to go against Microsoft, but in the Windows saturated market there is no way for that momentum to be gained. Things are simpler for Windows Vista. Microsoft's latest operating system has a natural growth trajectory by replacing older version Windows, and especially Windows XP. By definition, Windows users will look to Microsoft to provide their next operating system.

**2. Security** There is a generalized perception of Linux and Mac OS X superiority over Windows when it comes down to the level of security each operating system provides as a de facto standard. The status quo is a direct result of a cocktail mixed with various ingredients, starting from the "inherent" and arrogant superiority attributed to Mac OS X and Linux supporters, continuing with obscure market shares and inexistent threat environments for the UNIX based and the open source operating systems. For Windows users on the other hand, the success of the operating system has as a logical consequence, the downside of running on the most attacked platform on the market. The simple fact that Windows is a large and facile target, in terms of the volume of potential victims, focusing on the threat environment is synonymous with insecurity. Just look at the ["Top ten web threats"](#) from Sophos in September or from ["Virus Top Twenty for August 2007"](#) from Kaspersky. Not a single piece of Linux or Mac OS X malware. This is why Microsoft has invested heavily in security and in delivering the perception of security to the public since the release of Windows XP SP2 in 2004. Vista is constantly applauded as the most secure operating system to date, as a direct result of the implementation of the Secure Development Lifecycle methodologies in the building process of the operating system. The SDL is meant to deliver a result as close to the perfection of secure as default perfection is possible, and to reduce the maximum severity rating of the flaws that do get into the final product. Users have to understand that there is no panacea solution to security and that the number of vulnerabilities in Windows, Linux and Mac OS X will never be zero. Still, the first characteristic of both Linux and Mac OS X is the fact that both operating systems deliver the perception of security by default. And not only the perception. There are long time Linux and Mac OS X users that have never run an antivirus and never got infected with a piece of malware. This is security that Windows Vista is unable to deliver. But at the same time, Microsoft has poured a consistent amount of work into catching up to the rival platforms, because security was the one aspect where Windows was suffering a stigmata of inferiority compared to Mac OS X and Linux. Now the Redmond company is able to market not only a product designed to be secure via SDL, but also a mature security environment and industry built around the operating system, the latter giving it the edge on Linux and Mac OS X. This is how, with Vista, Microsoft is reducing the relevance of security as a decisive factor in choosing an operating system. You can access both ["Windows Vista 6-Month Vulnerability Report"](#) put together by Jeff Jones, Security Strategy Director in Microsoft's Trustworthy Computing group, or the independent ["Symantec Internet Security Threat Report - Trends for January-June 07"](#), for a perspective on the vulnerabilities impacting Windows, the major distributions of Linux including Red Hat, Novell SUSE, and Ubuntu, and Mac OS X 10.4 Tiger.

**3. Evangelism** Evangelism is the zealous marketing of the operating system not to end users, but to software developers. Windows, as well as Linux and Mac OS X are platforms first of all. But the success of an operating system is relatively independent of its quality. However, it is directly dependent on the ecosystem of third-party solutions that are orbiting around it. An operating system will provide a center of gravity for additional software products from developers, partners, information technology

professionals and end users. Microsoft, Apple and Linux distributors such as Red Hat, Novell or Canonical, the makers of Ubuntu, all offer support, tools, services and resources to developers building on top of their platforms. Evangelism is what keeps current partners happy and converts developers to one platform as opposite to another. And make no mistake about it. Microsoft is dead-on focused on software developers. Back in 2001, the Redmond company gave birth to the Developer and Platform Evangelism Division. And Microsoft has been militating Windows with zeal. At this point in time the Redmond company can throw behind Windows not only household names such as Bill Gates, Steve Ballmer, Ray Ozzie or Craig Mundie, but also the immense mass of Microsoft employees. The company's workforce, approximately 80,000 strong are all Windows missionaries to a higher or a lesser degree. Do you want an example of Microsoft evangelism at work? Just look at Windows Vista. The number of applications supported by the operating system has grown from 650 at launch to over 2,000 by mid 2007. Additionally, the number of compatible devices grew from 1.5 million to over 2.2 million with in excess of 11,000 items labeled with the Works or with Certified for Windows Vista logos. And this in just the first six months of availability of the operating system. Microsoft Evangelism, on top of the ubiquity of the company's operating system, is the reason why the best and latest games come first to Windows and the reason why top worldwide applications and programs along with software entertainment products, are centered on the platform and not ignoring it. The same scenario is valid for Linux and Apple but to a smaller degree. And with the Cupertino-based company the evangelism strategy is quite different, and it involves mainly the persona of Chief Executive Officer Steve Jobs. Apple however is doing not so much evangelism as pure marketing, because this is the trademark of Jobs. Gates is a monopolist turned philanthropist, the world's wealthiest man, and the one that will take Windows to an install base of 1 billion in 2008. Gates has "killed" competitors on the market and has gone head to head with the authorities in the United States and Europe, and Microsoft came out all right, more than ever regarded as an untouchable software monolith. Jobs instead can sell. He has the Mac Guy aura all over him, and he is able to sell every piece of hardware that Apple packages in a bubblegum white design, and every item of software produced in Cupertino. And first and foremost, Jobs is the living and breathing example that there can be a successful operating system outside of Microsoft's Windows. In contrast, Linux has close to nothing. The Linux world, in fact the entire open source universe is an example of fragmentation. There is no center of gravity, no common criteria or ground and no balance. There is only a puzzle of disparate entities and interests, continually unsynchronized and in a perpetual motion. Linus Torvalds, the original developer of the Linux kernel is nothing more than a background figure. He is the all time good guy of operating system development and the embodiment of utopic open source principles and policy. But Torvalds and Linux evangelism are concepts that do not mix. Instead of being the driving force behind Linux adoption, Torvalds is just its passive father and nothing more. Fortunately for the Linux world, new figures emerge such as Canonical founder Mark Shuttleworth. Now with Ubuntu, an operating system regarded as inferior to the products of Red Hat or Novell, Linux has got some comprehensive examples of evangelism, but it is too early to tell what the results will be. Still, for the first time since the availability of Linux, Ubuntu makes end users feel less alienated by the open source operating system. A subject that can be easily correlated with evangelism is the support original equipment manufacturers and system builders are pouring in each of the three operating systems. Now obviously, this is not the case for Apple. The Cupertino company is a closed environment producing both the hardware and the operating system. This strategy has obviously hurt adoption, but with emulators, hypervisors and virtualization technology the Mac actually has a winning chance. For this Windows XP and Windows Vista had to be welcomed with open arms on Mac computers. With the introduction of Boot Camp, Apple is simply keeping up with the virtualization industry, offering an alternative. But either way Microsoft operating systems can run on a proprietary Apple platform, which gives users, and especially Windows users,

the choice of either a PC or a Mac for their next new computer. At the same time Microsoft has the support of all major original equipment manufacturers and system builders. Companies such as HP, Dell, Lenovo and Acer are all traditional Microsoft partners. According to estimates from Gartner, by the end of 2007, no less than 257.1 million personal computers will be sold worldwide, up from 231.5 units in 2006. The vast majority of these computers will come preinstalled with the Windows operating system. In order to get an idea of what this means you have to understand that in 2007, Apple will sell approximately 8 million Mac computers, but no more than 10 million. Now the fact of the matter is that PCs can easily run either Windows or Linux, and companies such as Dell with Ubuntu and HP with Red Hat Enterprise Linux Desktop 5 are also offering the open source operating system but on the note of a pet project aimed at a niche of the market, an accessory to the Windows offerings rather than an actual business. As of February 2008, Windows XP will no longer be available to the retail and original equipment manufacturer channels. From 2008 until Windows 7 (Seven) is scheduled in 2010, Microsoft and its OEM partners will be selling only Windows Vista. And the estimated 257.1 million PCs to be sold by the end of this year will only grow in 2008.