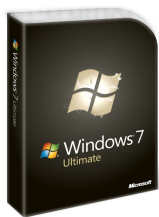


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By: Marius Oiaga, Technology News Editor

[How the Windows 7 Free Upgrade Option Program Works](#)

Courtesy of Microsoft, sort of



Windows 7 Ultimate
Microsoft

"Here's how it works:" is a line from official Microsoft resources designed to provide information on the [Windows 7 Upgrade Option Program](#). The Redmond-based company is, of course, continuing to keep mum on the matter of free Windows Vista to Windows 7 upgrades as far as the general public is concerned, but the same is not valid for its OEM partners. Moreover, the software giant is already detailing the Windows 7 Upgrade Option Program to original equipment manufacturers, as an integral part of the efforts designed to help company partners fuel computer sales pre-installed with Windows Vista ahead of the Windows 7 launch. Although not confirmed by the maker, the Windows 7 Upgrade Option Program offering free upgrades to the next iteration of the Windows client for new OEM Vista PCs is scheduled to debut in just three days.

"Anticipation for the Windows 7 operating system is high - but you need to sell PCs today. To help you sustain PC sales until Windows 7 is available in the market, we have created the Windows 7 Upgrade Option Program. This optional, low-cost program allows partners who purchase a qualifying Windows Vista SKU from an Authorized Microsoft Distributor to provide a Windows 7 Upgrade Option offer form to customers. This offer form can be redeemed for a free Windows 7 upgrade when Windows 7 is available," Microsoft revealed, via [Mary Jo Foley](#).

The validity of the information is indisputable. On June 17, 2009, Microsoft Canada ran a webcast [event](#) for Windows 7 Upgrade Option Program, the synopsis of which contains a fragment of text from the above quote. In addition, the information is available for OEMs that have registered accounts with the Microsoft Partner Program via this [link](#). Microsoft reveals that there are no less than four steps to how the [Windows 7 Upgrade Option Program](#) works.

1. You purchase a qualifying Windows Vista Upgrade Option SKU from your Authorized Microsoft Distributor (Windows Vista Home Premium, Business, or Ultimate with an accompanying Upgrade Option offer form).
2. Preinstall this qualifying Windows Vista operating system on a PC.
3. Sell the PC during the eligibility period and give the Upgrade Option offer form to the customer. The customer visits a fulfillment Web site to order a Windows 7 upgrade at no additional cost. Microsoft will manage the Web site upgrade requests and media fulfillment process for the program.
4. After Windows 7 is released and available, the customer will receive from Microsoft a comparable version of Windows 7 for installation on his or her PC."

Microsoft has yet to announce the Program Eligibility Period; however, the software giant did indicate that the Program SKU Order Period started on June 1, 2009 and would end on December 31, 2009. The Authorized Replicator Ship Date has been set on June 19, 2009, but Microsoft has yet to reveal the Program Fulfillment Website Go-Live Date. The Initial Upgrade Media Fulfillment Date is the same as the Windows 7 General Availability Date, namely the moment when users are able to start taking advantage of the Windows 7 Upgrade Option Program. They will have to do so by the Upgrade Offer Form Expiration Date, or February 28, 2010, and the Final Software Fulfillment Date/Program End Date is set for April 30, 2010. Of course, Microsoft has yet to announce officially the start date of

the Windows 7 Upgrade Option Program, which, according to various leaks, is June 26, 2009.

There will be no restrictions associated with localized versions of Windows, as the program will come with support for all Windows 7 language versions. The Redmond-based company is also planning to unveil marketing assets for OEMs, set up to help them generate demand. The software giant only indicated that the resources would be made available for download soon, close to the release date of the Windows 7 Upgrade Option Program.

"Eligible Upgrade Paths Upgrade media will be product version specific and must correspond to the Qualifying Product Version. Upgrade Option Offer Paths to Windows 7. If a customer buys a PC preinstalled with (this), they are upgraded to (that): Windows Vista Home Premium: Windows 7 Home Premium. Windows Vista Business: Windows 7 Professional. Windows Vista Ultimate: Windows 7 Ultimate. Non-qualifying Windows OS versions: Windows XP (all versions), Windows Vista Home Basic, and Windows Vista Starter," Microsoft informed.