

By: [Aparna Ganga](#), Technology News Editor

[Introducing Code-Named Albany Beta](#)

From Microsoft

Code-Named Albany is Microsoft's latest venture into the territory of software plus services and is designed as an all-in-one subscription service. Albany has now debuted into a private Beta setup to analyze the initiative's capacity of increasing productivity, security and connectivity for customers. Albany Group Product Manager Bryson Gordon described the new service as a bundle of software and services put together in order to cover a wide range of user needs. Albany will deliver the latest versions of Windows Live OneCare, the Office System, Windows Live Mail, Messenger and Photo Gallery. "The beta program (...) spans a broad cross-section of users and is an integral part of bringing a new service to market," Gordon said, revealing that Microsoft has focused Albany on consumer indications that productivity and security software is a top priority. "We expect "Albany" to resonate broadly with consumers - whether they're buying a new primary PC, a second one for their household or trying to get more from an existing PC. Because each "Albany" subscription is good for three PCs, "Albany" is ideal for individuals with one or several computers, as well as families," Gordon added. On top of the new bundle of software-plus-services, Albany is a crucial step for Microsoft in terms of introduction of a subscription-based pricing model. Gordon explained that the subscriptions can be tailored specifically to the constantly evolving all-in-one service. Still, Microsoft offered assurances that it will not diverge from the traditional software licensing model. In this context, consumers will continue to have the possibility of acquiring perpetual licenses for the Office System. But a clear advantage of Albany is that, while Microsoft is offering Office Home and Student 2007 at this point in time, users will be automatically upgraded to Office 14 once it comes out as part of their subscription. "Albany" is not the next version of Microsoft Office; it's just another way to get the current version plus other software and services that consumers consider indispensable for getting the most out of their PC. With the subscription model, when the next release of Microsoft Office comes out, "Albany" customers with an active subscription will automatically get an upgrade to this version - at no extra cost, as part of their subscription," Gordon promised.