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Microsoft Promises Vista SP1 and Windows 7 Will Be as Transparent as Aero

And open source will be right at home at Microsoft

Windows Vista is among a collection of high-volume Microsoft products, also including .NET Framework), Windows Server 2008, SQL Server 2008, Office 2007, Exchange Server 2007, and Office SharePoint Server 2007, all impacted by the company's latest strategic move designed to expand interoperability across its technology and business practices. Microsoft is effectively envisioning a new tactic related to the information about its products and technologies that it will let slip through its fingers, one focused on delivering a new level of transparency. And in this regard, the company promised that the expansion in interoperability and the shared technology will not only affect the products enumerated in the first paragraph, but also their successors such as Vista SP1, Windows 7, Office 14, etc. There are a total of four steps outlined by Microsoft as crucial to increasing the openness of key products: (1) ensuring open connections; (2) promoting data portability; (3) enhancing support for industry standards; and (4) fostering more open engagement with customers and the industry. The principles will be the four pillars of the Redmond company's quest for interoperability. "These steps represent an important step and significant change in how we share information about our products and technologies," said Microsoft chief executive officer Steve Ballmer. "For the past 33 years, we have shared a lot of information with hundreds of thousands of partners around the world and helped build the industry, but today's announcement represents a significant expansion toward even greater transparency. Our goal is to promote greater interoperability, opportunity and choice for customers and developers throughout the industry by making our products more open and by sharing even more information about our technologies." "Customers need all their vendors, including and especially Microsoft, to deliver software and services that are flexible enough such that any developer can use their open interfaces and data to effectively integrate applications or to compose entirely new solutions," said Ozzie. "By increasing the openness of our products, we will provide developers additional opportunity to innovate and deliver value for customers." "In order to ensure open connections to Microsoft's high-volume products, the company will make publicly available in excess of 30,000 pages of documentation related to the Windows client and server protocols, as well as for its application programming interfaces (APIs) and communications protocols. Furthermore, the company will from now on document every minute detail of how it will support industry standards and extensions with its high-volume products. Office 2007 will be enhanced with APIs for the Word, Excel and PowerPoint, in order to permit the integration of additional formats into the applications. And last but definitely not least, Microsoft also pledged its commitment to building interoperability between its proprietary products and open source solutions.