

30 November 2007

By: Marius Oiaga, Technology News Editor



Vista vs. Leopard - a Microsoft Perspective

Two operating systems barely in the same league together

Windows Vista vs. Mac OS X Leopard was the inevitable clash of catalyzed by the operating system measuring contest between Microsoft and Apple. From the position of the undisputed underdog of the operating system market, owning a share of just over 6%, according to statistics from Net Applications, Apple has constantly been comparing OS X with Windows and coming up on top. Released over half a year ahead of Leopard, Vista is now at almost 8% of the OS market, with Leopard just starting along, even though it indicated strong momentum from the get go, the Cupertino-based hardware company selling some 2 million copies in just the first weekend after the release. It is not in Microsoft's nature to publicly comment on its rival. In the summer of 2007, Chairman Bill Gates applauded Vista for an install base larger than all competitive products, taking a subtle shot at Apple. But the Redmond company failed to make available a Give Up on Leopard advertisement. Still, Microsoft employees did approach the subject, although not necessarily in their official roles with the company. "There is one reason however why one should never compare Windows to MacOS like this: MacOS runs on closed hardware. Any technical person and any person with some common sense would agree that it's infinitely more difficult to run your software without glitches on an infinite number of hardware configurations compared to running it on just a small set of configs," revealed [Hans Verbeeck](#), Developer Evangelist for Microsoft EMEA. [James Senior](#), Microsoft UK Partner Technical Specialist took a shot at Leopard's security: "A firewall that is off by default? No granularity to the user settings? Sounds like Leopard might not be as secure as people like to band around. We've been making security part of the development methodology for years now and the fruits of our labour are starting to pay off - we had the fewest vulnerabilities of all OS in the first 6 months after launch. My question is, does turning the firewall off by default count as a vulnerability or is it something worse?" And [Robert Hensing](#), from the Microsoft PSS Security Team wrote a blog post about "the trials and tribulations of a Leopard upgrade. (...) Now imagine having to release and test your OS and updates to support tons more hardware, on 3 different architectures (x86 / AMD64 / Itanium), in ~36 languages." The conclusion seems to be but one. Windows Vista and Mac OS X 10.5 Leopard are barely in the same league together. And as long as Apple has the advantage of building both the hardware and the software, Windows will always come in second place. "Leopard will never be the new Windows. It will always be the OS that runs well (at least in most cases) on a handful of configurations with a limited set of applications to run. Still, it proves to be a good model for Apple and they get and deserve also praise for that from some who are happy to live with these constraints. And that's fine by me," Verbeeck added.