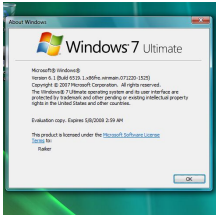


18 February 2008

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Windows 7
What's Next?

[Windows 7 - Could Microsoft Go Back Before Vista and Resurrect Longhorn?](#)

At least some bits and pieces of the original Longhorn vision?

Is Microsoft going back in time with Windows 7, before Windows Vista, and resurrecting bits and pieces of Longhorn? Could the crumbs of the original Longhorn project that were discarded on the way to Vista make the mother of all comebacks in Windows 7? Well, there are no official details from Microsoft pointing to the validity of this scenario, but the company did manage to leak just enough for such a perspective to be valid. In January 2008, while working to wrap up the RTM builds of Vista SP1, Windows Server 2008 SP1 and XP SP3, Microsoft dropped Milestone 1 of Windows 7 in the laps of a selected group of partners. The leaked Windows 7 M1 Ultimate Edition Build 6.1.6519.1 offers only a superficial evolution in comparison to Windows Vista. And is in fact not even a standalone platform, having to be installed on top of Vista. But at the same time, it does offer a sneak peek into the elements Microsoft plans to integrate in the successor of Windows Vista. One such clue is the HomeGroup. Designed to offer centralization of photos, music, videos and printers across the computers in the same household network, the HomeGroup is strangely reminiscent of the Longhorn Castle. "The 'castle' feature allows users to have the networking functionality of the domain, including roaming the user's profile, machine trust and having a consistent user identity throughout the network. The main difference with Castle is that users do not have to setup a dedicated machine, such as a domain controller, to maintain the trust and identity relationship. It also makes it easy to share and access files on those computers. Each computer on the same subnet can discover and join an existing castle. Or, the user can create a Castle," Microsoft revealed. "To join an existing castle, you must know the login credentials of an administrator account already part of the castle. Only non-blank passwords can grant access. This helps ensure only authorized computers join the castle (use of strong passwords for administrator accounts is highly recommended). When a computer joins a castle, the accounts on that computer will be added to the list of accounts accessible from any computer in the castle. User specific data (e.g. their password, access rights, and preferences) will be replicated on each computer in the castle and kept in sync. In addition, the newly joined computer will inherit and respect all policies from the Castle," Microsoft added. But there are additional features that have been scrapped from Longhorn prior to the project taking on the Vista label and ending up what it is today. Perhaps one of the most prominent features that were axed from Longhorn is the Windows File System (WinFS). Designed to be the storage subsystem in Longhorn delivering capabilities, such as searching, organizing and sharing data, WinFS was cut with the explanation that the best of what it had to offer was already implemented into Vista's Windows Explorer. "Files stored in WinFS contain metadata properties. When you take an existing Windows file and move it to WinFS, a new WinFS 'Item' (basic unit of storage for any type of document) will be created. WinFS will populate this Item with metadata extracted from the file. The properties stored in these Items can be targeted when you perform detailed queries. Access control will be provided for WinFS Items, so that only users with the proper permissions will be able to query on the WinFS Items. (Please note the Important Information below.) WinFS also allows you to establish 'Relationships' that are used to correlate Items with each other (such as an employee relationship between a person and a company). Use of Relationships during queries will also be subject to access control for different users," Microsoft described the WinFS feature. And together with WinFS there could be yet another feature of Longhorn that could make it into Windows 7. Namely Location Awareness. Now, you have to keep in mind that Microsoft has not confirmed any of the features that will be delivered in Windows

7. But at the same time, the introduction of the HomeGroup and its close resemblance to Castle do open up the possibility that Windows 7 could very well bring WinFS to the table, as well as Location Awareness. "The Location Awareness feature collects computer location data such as address, position, building/floor/room, and stores it locally in the WinFS store. It also collects data that helps to determine the location information of your computer, but is not directly useful as location information itself, such as: MAC addresses of access points near your computer and the IP address of the subnet and default gateway to which you are connected. It collects data from you, from the active directory, from wireless zeroconfig, and from IPHelper. The feature is turned off by default," Microsoft stated.