

6 June 2008

By: Marius Oiaga, Technology News Editor

Windows 7  
Microsoft

## [Windows 7 Is Just the Beginning for Microsoft](#)

### *The beginning of an interaction revolution*

As far as Microsoft is concerned, Windows 7 is just the beginning. Not a new beginning for Windows, mind you, but the debut of a revolution in human - computer interaction. At Tech Ed 2008, Microsoft Chairman Bill Gates indicated that he is betting big on natural user interfaces. "Now one of the big changes coming that I think is most underestimated is the change in interaction," he stated. Not by coincidence, the Redmond company's first [public demonstration of Windows 7](#) involved almost exclusively the new touch computing technology built into the operating system. "The way we interact with the computer has hardly changed," Gates stated looking at the current model of interaction. "We had the graphics revolution that took us from the keyboard to the keyboard and the mouse, and it took the screen from character mode to graphics mode. But still it's that one person sitting there, primarily using the keyboard, and the pointing device to interact with the application." With Microsoft Surface, its first surface computing product, the Redmond giant made a single Windows Vista machine a potential nucleus of social interaction. The secret lies in the multi-touch, gesture and object recognition capabilities - exactly the features that Windows 7 will sport, as Microsoft so amply demonstrated. And just as security and reliability were the focus of Windows Vista, so will the natural user interface in Windows 7 be the focus of the next iteration of Windows. Microsoft is not exactly reinventing the wheel of touch computing, as the technology is hardly an innovative item any more. But what Microsoft is without a doubt is the agent which will make the natural user interface as ubiquitous as the Windows operating system. "There's a number of technologies that our research group and others have been working on for these decades that are now moving into the mainstream. It's a combination of software advances, and hardware power that allow us to bring new interaction techniques to a mainstream world. We collectively refer to these as natural user interface, but it's several different things. It's the idea of touch panel, and we gave a glimpse just last week of some of Windows 7, and the thing we chose to highlight there was this touch support, and how we built that in and made that easy for developers, and how end users will like that," Gates added. But in the end natural, user interface is much more than just touch computing. It's also about pen capabilities for tablet devices, and about voice recognition. It's about opening up the computer, and technology in general, and making it available to as much people as possible, independent of the literacy level, of education, of language. [Windows 7](#) is just the first step to taking interaction down to the level of a reflex. "The final natural interface piece, one that I think is perhaps the most important of all, is vision. A camera is very inexpensive, and putting software behind it that can tell what it's seeing allows you to have gestures, and movements, things that will be used in a variety of settings," Gates explained. "Your desk won't just have a computer on it, it will have a computer in it. And your whiteboard will be intelligent. You can walk up, take information, expand it, point to somebody's name, start a teleconference with them, sit there and exchange information. And so natural interface really has a pretty dramatic impact on making these tools of empowerment, the personal computer, making them pervasive, and looking at them in new ways."