

CourseCast of the Week

Episode 124, 10/24/2009

Title/Description: Windows 7 is here!, Net Neutrality Showdown, and Other Tech News Headlines

Welcome to Course Technology's CourseCast of the week, Episode 124, recorded October 24th, 2009.

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And now the news.

Story 1: Windows 7 is here!

Windows 7 was released this past week, to favorable reviews and an enthusiastic fan base. The opening of the first Microsoft retail store coincided with the release. The Scottsdale Arizona store opened to find around 500 customers waiting at the door, many of whom had camped out over night.

The new version of Windows has been dubbed "Vista done right" by many analysts. It incorporates the best features of Windows Vista, like its glossy user interface, stability, and security features, and addresses its weaknesses such as sluggishness, steep hardware requirements, and nagging security alerts. Windows 7 also offers some attractive new features including improved window management, an improved taskbar with mouse-over previews, libraries that allow folders from different locations to be grouped together, improved home networking and wireless networking features, and better compatibility with a wide variety of devices.

Microsoft is more than happy to consign Vista to the history books after rather disappointing sales. While Vista adoptions on home PCs were respectable due primarily to pre-installs on new PCs, business sales were abysmal. Roughly two thirds of corporate PCs are still running Windows XP. Microsoft hopes that Windows 7 will change all that. So far, early corporate adopters are please with the upgrade claiming significant savings in power costs and user time due to Windows 7 improved boot up time, and power management.

There is at least one down side to Windows 7. Users upgrading from Windows XP should be prepared for somewhat of an ordeal. There is no upgrade option from Windows XP. Microsoft is hoping that XP users will opt to buy a new PC with 7 preinstalled. XP users who decide to upgrade will have to first transfer all of their data to a backup medium, perform a clean install of Windows 7, reinstall all software, then copy data files back to the computer. The process could take the better part of a day.

Windows Ultimate runs \$220 for the upgrade edition and \$320 for the full edition. Windows Home Premium runs \$120 for the upgrade edition and \$200 for the full edition. College students and faculty can take advantage of a special deal and download the Home Premium Upgrade for just \$30 from windows7.digitalriver.com.

- [Windows 7 is here](#) [Ars Technica]
- [Long lines as Microsoft opens retail store](#) [Reuters]
- [Week in Microsoft: Windows 7 has arrived](#) [Ars Technica]
- [Windows 7 Keeps the Good, Tries to Fix Flaws](#) [NYTimes]
- [Windows 7: The Difference Is Black and White](#) [NewsFactor]
- [Like Windows 7, Vista got good reviews too](#) [Reuters]
- [FAQ: How to prep for an XP-to-Windows 7 upgrade](#) [Computerworld]
- [Early adopters finding Windows 7 saves time and energy](#) [Computerworld]
- [For XP users who wish to upgrade, a few tips](#) [Houston Chronicle]

Story 2: Net Neutrality Showdown

This week the Federal Communications Commission voted to begin the process of crafting policies around net neutrality. As the FCC draws closer to defining policies, both opponents and proponents of net neutrality are increasing their lobbying efforts hoping to influence the process.

Proponents of net neutrality include Internet content providers like Google, Facebook, Twitter, and Amazon, along with public interest groups and Internet pioneers like Vint Cerf. They believe that network neutrality regulations are needed to insure that all Internet traffic is treated equally, and to uphold Internet privacy by keeping the telecom companies from analyzing the data that flows over their networks. They also believe that regulations are necessary in order to keep the big telecom companies from abusing their monopoly power allowing smaller companies to enter the market, increasing competition, and providing more options for consumers.

Opponents of net neutrality include Internet service providers like AT&T, Verizon, and Comcast, and some republican law makers like Senator John McCain who is working to derail the FCC with a new bill. The bill is titled the Internet Freedom Act of 2009 and would save Internet service providers from being regulated. Opponents to network neutrality believe that the telecom companies should have the ability to give priority to some types of Internet traffic over others in order to more evenly distribute network resources to all users. For example, telecom companies have claimed that 10 percent of users hog 90 percent of network bandwidth. You may recall that last year Comcast decided to throttle and disconnect users that were downloading movies in its efforts to manage network traffic. Currently AT&T is considering charging higher fees for data hogs. New network neutrality policies will determine whether AT&T is allowed to do so.

Those on both sides of this issue are passionate about their convictions and this showdown is likely to get ugly in coming months. Online news sources are overflowing with net neutrality stories. Check the show notes for links to a dozen of the best stories representing all viewpoints.

- [FCC takes first step toward net neutrality rules](#) [Computerworld]
- [FCC Votes to Begin Net Neutrality Rule-Making Process](#) [Ecommerce Times]
- [Web company CEOs call for net neutrality rules](#) [Computerworld]
- [Key U.S. lawmaker backs FCC on eve of Web rule](#) [Reuters]
- [A Flurry of Lobbying on Net-Neutrality Proposals](#) [NewsFactor]
- [McCain Locks Horns With FCC on Net Neutrality](#) [Ecommerce Times]
- [McCain introduces bill to block FCC's net neutrality rules](#) [Computerworld]
- [Tech Heavies to FCC: Stay On Target](#) [Ecommerce Times]
- [AT&T accused of 'astroturfing' on net neutrality](#) [Computerworld]

- [Verizon chief rips net neutrality](#) [Computerworld]
- [AT&T weighs higher fees for data hogs](#) [Computerworld]
- [Net neutrality could lead to inexpensive, high-quality broadband services for businesses](#) [Computerworld]

News Briefs

- Search engines are extending their reach into social networks. Both Microsoft Bing and Google cut deals with Twitter this week to include Twitter Tweets in their search results. Microsoft announced that it will soon include Facebook updates in its search, while Google announced a new tool called Social Search that allows users to search posts from friends on numerous social networks.
[Hands on with Bing's real-time Twitter search](#) [Ars Technica]
[Google Tops Bing with Tweets and Social Search](#) [NewsFactor]
- Looks like Craigslist is off the hook, as a judge dismissed a law suite that held the online classifieds company responsible for ads placed by prostitutes. The judge said that Craigslist does not induce users to post ads for illegal services, nor does its adult services section imply illegal services.
[Judge Throws Out Craigslist Prostitution Suit](#) [NewsFactor]
- Barnes & Noble has launched its new eBook reader named Nook. The Nook eBook reader features one ePaper display for reading books, and a second touch sensitive color LCD display for navigation. Beside having more advanced features than the Kindle, the Nook also allows users to share books between devices. Meanwhile Amazon offset the news with an announcement of its own about new Kindle software that will allow customers to access eBooks from any PC without having to purchase a Kindle.
[Barnes & Noble puts Android on an e-reader with the Nook](#) [Ars Technica]
[Nook e-reader pushes Barnes & Noble into crowded market](#) [Computerworld]
[Amazon Amps E-Reader Rivalry With Free Kindle for PC](#) [Ecommerce Times]
- Nokia has filed a massive patent law suite against Apple over patents it holds on wireless standards. If successful, the law suite could cost Apple as much as \$1 billion.
[Nokia Throws the Book at Apple](#) [Ecommerce Times]

- Verizon has launched an ad campaign attacking inadequacies in Apples iPhone and claiming that its soon-to-be released Droid phone is much better. Analysts are expecting the Droid to be the first major competitor to the iPhone and the first step towards Google Androids dominance of the smart phone market. Verizon's ad campaign has also quieted rumors that Verizon will soon sell the iPhone.
[Verizon fires shots across iPhone's bow with Droid smartphone](#) [Computerworld]
[Droid TV ad pulls no punches in attacking the iPhone](#) [Computerworld]
- Apple unveiled new hardware upgrades this week that include a slimmer sleeker Mac book for \$999, a bigger more powerful iMac, a Mac mini server, and a cool new "Magic Mouse" that incorporates multitouch into its surface.
[Magic Mouse, iMacs, Mac minis lead Tuesday Apple update bomb](#) [Ars Technica]
[Apple introduces its first home server](#) [Computerworld]
- Last week we heard about the first notebook that offers wireless battery charging, this week Acer releases the first notebook that incorporates a 3D display that can be used with glasses to watch 3D movies and play 3D games. The display switches to 2D for regular computing needs.
[Acer goes 3D with new Win 7 laptop](#) [Computerworld]
- Both Google and Facebook have announced plans to begin selling music. The companies see music sales as a way to boost profits and gain a competitive advantage.
[Google, Facebook to offer music sales](#) [Computerworld]

That's it for this week's CourseCasts. This week's shout out goes to Leslie Raffelson and her hard working students at Peetz High School in Colorado. Thanks for listening! Email me with your comments and suggestions for the show at CourseCasts@gmail.com. Let me know how you use CourseCasts in your classes and I'll give you and your school a shout out on my next CourseCast. Until next time have a great week and be sure to take advantage of the Power -- of Technology!