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Vista in all Flavors Comes to DMAC; DMAC Learns About "Security"

For those of you who have yet to install Microsoft's Vista operating system, this article might be of some help. DMAC has now had every DMAC person install Vista (Home, Premium, Business, and Longhorn) on at least one machine and begin to learn what it means to have Vista.

The first change was that many programs would not start automatically because they were not digitally signed or accessed – an interesting Microsoft decision. DMAC's VPN client, virus checker on laptops, mail client, etc. initially had to be upgraded. The most frustrating item was that Vista complained Microsoft's own program to remove a program was called "insecure". And to Vista if a program is not secure, you must tell Vista it is ok to run EVERY time you wish to run it.

The next big issue was that programs which stored data in the folder "program files" were trashed. Most software vendors have workarounds – but some workarounds were not pretty. By the way, Unibase by DMAC, Release 8.4, stores its data in "Program Data" by default (not "Program Files") and anywhere the user wishes by choice.

Another issue was that Vista does not gratuitously show the user very much about the network and security environment. If you do not know what the correct reply is, you are up the

proverbial creek.

And finally, Microsoft is tightening the network environment so that what used to work does not. See this season's article on the Upgrade of DMAC's Network. #

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Mark Rix Spends Four Months In India; Works Directly With Developers;

For months Mark has been talking about visiting his developers in India. He carefully chose the dates for his trip and two weeks before the trip the sky here in Marble Falls opened up and flooded everything. So quite unfairly we at DMAC say he went to avoid the mess of cleaning up after the flood. Mark returned when DMAC had settled into its new offices.

But we thought you might wish to hear about Mark's preparations for his trip. Two brand new identical laptops were chosen. On one Vista was factory installed. On the other one, XP was installed here at DMAC. Vista was installed for testing the alpha versions of DMAC software which Mark went to check out. XP was installed for running the Visual Studio 2007 development environment and the Installshield 12 installation environment. Such things as code signers and Fogbugz interfaces and VPN and remote desktop had to be installed on both systems.

The XP laptop could not drive all its peripherals. No sound driver was available for the laptop for XP – only for Vista. But if a hardware failure occurred Mark was ready. He had two of everything.

The VPN client on the laptops and here at DMAC had to be upgraded to be compliant with Vista. Microsoft updates had to be installed so that both computers were up to date.

Mark carried his VoIP phone with him. Mark made sure he had Internet access at his apartment and at the office. The office had a fixed IP address. Mark took the Symantec 320 router with him.

And what went wrong? Here is a quick report. We do hope to say that Ace Contact Manager has passed Microsoft's certification process by the time you read this article. Everything is more or less working right now; Mark's clients accepted that he was sleeping when they were awake unless they have a problem he needed to work on with "Go to Meeting."

While Mark was in India he came to work one day and the Vista machine did not work. He took the machine to the hardware manufacture's shop in India and they fixed it. The interesting thing was that they would not tell him what they did to fix the machine. We at DMAC figure there was an upgrade from Microsoft which broke the code and they installed a patch.

Mark used secure VPN to access his computers here in Texas from India. This worked well. The connection of networks did not work well. The VOIP phones did not work.

On the weekends Mark is touring India. Maybe we can get him to put some pictures up on the web. #

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Marble Falls Receives 20 Inches of Water In Five Hours; DMAC Has Water on Floor and More

June 22, 2007 will be remembered here at DMAC as the "Day of the 500 Year Flood". Fred and Tina missed flying to a wedding because they could not leave Highland Haven due to five feet of water over the road. In all 20 inches of rain fell in about five hours.

Mark Rix made it to work and found about an inch and a half of water on the floor. Quickly Mark made sure everything was off the floor. Then he began vacuuming the carpet over and over to try to remove the water. Next day came the smell. By late August the smell still remained. Fred ran around in a paint respirator. Mark went to India to work and stayed until DMAC had moved to new facilities.

Right after the flood DMAC had three new HEPA filters running constantly. From two of these filters negative ions are everywhere. Regular filters show the particulate matter within days. The carbon filters worked hard.

But finally, in October, DMAC acknowledged that the 500 year flood was a real pain. DMAC moved to a new building in a new city – Granite Shoals. Marble Falls is six miles from Granite Shoals. We tried and tried but could not get rid of the smell, dizziness, and constant agitation. So we moved.

This time DMAC's stockholders own the building. And the building is 36 inches above the ground. And it is twice as big. And it sits on five acres. Soon we will get some pictures on the web of our new building.

And all that DMAC lost technically to the storm was one 21 inch LCD monitor and one disk drive which was not backed up well. And of course DMAC lost a lot of time, and some hard work moving stuff around to allow failed attempts to remove the smell from the carpet. And DMAC lost more time in the complete move to the new facility. But technical change did occur. See the article on DMAC's plans for moving the server farm. Read about Mark's preparation for his trip to India. #

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DMAC Upgrades Its Internal Network Because The Network Quit Working

Anyone who has tried to use the demonstration of WebBase from the web knows what we at DMAC know. It does not work anymore. Of course you could say it is DMAC's own fault. Back in 1989 when DMAC installed its first network, the local internal network was named dmac-unibase.com. Yes, this was the same as the web wide name of www.dmac-unibase.com. But there were many articles telling DMAC that this was the way to accomplish what DMAC wanted to accomplish. Back then DMAC had demilitarized zones and all sorts of "current things."

Well, when DMAC was to move to Texas, Mark and Fred split the network into two sides – dmac-unibase.com and dmacsoftware.local. But when Mark arrived in Texas over a year ago, he merged dmacsoftware.local back into dmac-unibase.com. All good so far. But one day in June, 2007 WebBase quit working. Fred figures that it is tied into the security changes for Vista and Longhorn. Of course there is nothing written that Fred can find on how to make the internal dmac-unibase.com work with the external www.dmac-unibase.com after Microsoft made its changes in June.

So coupled with the move to the new building, DMAC brought back its internal network of

dmacsoftware.local – the current way to do things. Sounds simple – but it is not. You see, you cannot change a Microsoft server to suddenly become a domain server of a new domain. In fact most people, Fred included, never can finish this transition; things break. Your only choice is to build a new domain and move everything to it. So that is what DMAC did. This requires new domain servers, new fixed ip addresses, new routers, new firewalls, etc. And of course DMAC daily uses vpn access and web access to its internal network. So any change is going to be disruptive. Mark will finish the work when Ace Contact Manager is "Certified For Vista." Is it not fun to play with technology?

So WebBase started working again after the flood. Then DMAC decided to move six miles down the road. The cable for the internet stops six hundred feet short of allowing DMAC to use a cable modem. Thus the ip address is tied up until the cable is extended. No WebBase until the cable arrives. Here it is 2008 and the cable has not arrived.

In case you wonder, DMAC is now using a radio frequency – line-of-sight internet access for its new building. When the cable arrives DMAC will have redundant access to the internet. It is never dull in technology. #

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Microsoft Server 2008, Longhorn, Joins DMAC's Sever Farm

Read the article in this newsletter about Vista. Now imagine all the cute security of Vista going to the server. Yep, that is Microsoft Server 2008, code name Longhorn.

DMAC has installed a Beta version of Longhorn and has been testing. Unibase by DMAC and Ace Contact Manger will be ready to run on Longhorn when Longhorn is released. WOW - the things DMAC does to try to remain current. But the local developers want everyone to know how busy they have been in addition to handling the flood and the move to a larger space. Other DMAC products are being tested on Vista and Longhorn as fast as possible. #

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AID Programs Acquire A Parse Date In Wmenu Displays

As usual, a DMAC client or prospective client comes up with such a good idea that DMAC developers implement it almost immediately.

This time, the client suggested that instead of saying "yes" for whether an AID program (File Edit, Field Edit, Output, and Sort) has been parsed, why not put the time date stamp where the "yes" shows up on the display. QED #

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Unibase by DMAC, Release 8.4, Entering Test Phase; "Works with Windows Vista" Is The Goal

Unibase by DMAC, Release 8.4, has been upgraded and changed to include everything DMAC can find to make it work with Windows Vista.

This includes a new version of Installshield which allows the installer to make separate choices as to where the programs and where the data goes.

And of course Unibase by DMAC, Release 8.4, must still convert from old fashioned drive letters to UNC names as needed (and is constantly changing in Microsoft's operating systems).

This new release is in beta test at DMAC. DMAC sends it to clients who want to install on a Vista or Longhorn machines. Very little changes internally when compared to the latest release of 8.3; just changes dictated by the new series of Microsoft operating systems. #

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Sneak Preview of DMAC Vaporware; With a Few Small Miracles; End of Year's Releases

Forever the optimists, DMAC people thought you might like to hear what the developers have in store for the coming year.

Wde (witty) is moving through the development process. Tina worries about costs, Rick worries about the right features and feel, Sabya and the developers worry that it works, Fred and Mark worry that Wde finishes in 2008. This Wde is the full Graphical User Interface for the Data Entry segment of Unibase by DMAC. It will complement the Menu User Interface now utilized for the Data Entry segment.

Ace Contact Manager 7 is in test. Ace 7 has earned the "Works with Vista" logo and has been submitted to Microsoft for the "Vista Certified" logo. Mark and Sabya are working hard to get Ace 7 out the door during first quarter 2008.

For 2008 or 2009 a new eDocs Work Tracking System for document scanning service organizations is finishing internal DMAC testing. Next step will be to figure out how DMAC will market the product. So you all can see, the plate is full. #

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