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**Mobile Update: New Thoughts on the BlackBerry Storm and Palm Pre**

A few months ago, we reviewed the BlackBerry Storm and gave it, for all intents and purposes, two

Dear [member\_name\_first],

Fall is finally here, and with it have come two new operating systems. Since operating systems are kind of a big deal in the tech world (after all, they determine the way we use our computers), we figured we would give you our take on both Apple's Snow Leopard and Microsoft's Windows 7. Feel free to contact us if what have to say below raises any questions for you.

Thanks,

Sean Wright

## Snow Leopard

In the past, new versions of Mac OS X have been greeted with large helpings of hype from the tech community. And in most cases, the enthusiasm has been justifiable. Past updates (Tiger, Leopard, etc.) have made significant improvements to an already excellent, intuitive operating system.

All that to say that Apple has set a lofty bar for subsequent versions of OS X. And after having tried out Snow Leopard, the most recent upgrade, we have to say that it does not meet the high benchmark set by previous versions. Of course, we should make an important distinction between Snow Leopard and previous versions of OS X: it only costs \$30 as opposed to \$130. So really, it's more of a service pack upgrade than a full-blown new version of the operating system. Apart from a few minor changes to the Dock and Exposé, there aren't really any apparent changes to the look and feel of the system, and most of the significant developments have happened under the hood, so to speak, where most normal users won't notice much of a difference.

Of course, that's not to say that Snow Leopard is a bad product, because it does offer several worthwhile features. One of its major selling points is that it takes up less hard disk space. Of course, if you're working with a newer system, the amount of space freed up might be negligible (sometimes as low as 1 GB), but every little helps, right? And perhaps the most important feature of Snow Leopard is that it supports 64-bit processing. This feature not only allows 64-bit systems to take advantage of their processing ability and memory but also provides a good foundation for future versions of OS X which will certainly use 64-bit operation.

And then there is the highly-touted support for Microsoft Exchange, which was an important step for Apple to take. The only problem is that Snow Leopard only supports Exchange 2007, so if you are using an earlier version (which we suspect a lot of users are) you're still out of luck.

So, yes, Snow Leopard does have its advantages. But it is also not worth the usual hype that surrounds OS X updates. If you feel like its features will be specifically helpful to you (i.e., if you have Exchange 2007, are strapped for space or really want 64-bit support), then upgrading to Snow Leopard would probably be worth the \$30 for you. Otherwise, it's not imperative that you upgrade, and that \$30 just might buy you a pair of movie tickets.

Interested in learning more about Snow Leopard? [Click here.](#)

thumbs down. [Click here to read about our slight change of heart.](#)

We also have new information on why the Palm Pre is giving the iPhone a run for its money--literally. [Click here for more information.](#)



#### Recommended Home Antivirus Software

Protecting your computer from viruses and spyware is absolutely essential. For home users, we recommend downloading AVG Antivirus Free Edition. We have found that this software works very well, and it's completely free. [Click here](#) to visit AVG's free download page.

## Windows 7

We should all stand up and give our friends at Microsoft a round of applause. After the infamous Vista flop, they returned to the proverbial drawing board and have given us Windows 7—a robustly functional operating system that is, for all intents and purposes, what Vista should have been.

At first glance, actually, you might think that Windows 7 is not all that different from Vista. And as far as look and feel go, you wouldn't be that far from the truth. While there are some relatively significant changes to the visual interface (such as the expansion of the taskbar's functionality), Windows 7 mainly keeps Vista's visual makeover and actually delivers on Vista's original aim of creating a more streamlined and intuitive operating system.

While Windows 7 does boast some new external features that users may enjoy (more options for viewing multiple windows, a new Windows Media Center, etc.), we feel like the most important step Microsoft has taken has been to sort out the underpinnings of the software to make it run faster and more efficiently. Windows is not the memory hog that Vista was, so it has the internal functionality to back up its visual sleekness. Furthermore, you don't have to own a brand new computer to enjoy Windows 7 (provided that you have enough memory to meet the minimum operating requirements); we have installed it on some of our office hardware which are around 8 years old, and it works great.

If you have a Windows machine at home, then, we would feel comfortable recommending that you switch to Windows 7 if you think it is right for your particular needs and worth the money to you (the Home Premium Upgrade costs \$120). Although we are still testing Windows 7 for business use and aren't quite ready to give a firm verdict, our findings have generally been positive in that regard as well. Overall, we're just glad we can put Vista behind us and move on.

Interested in learning more about Windows 7? [Click here.](#)

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