



NANAIMO COMPUTER CLUB NEWS

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Seagate Ships Encrypted Laptop Platform, New Hard Drives

Patrick Hoffman - March 12, 2007

businesses to retire laptops without losing important information while also staying in line with data privacy laws .

Seagate Technology LLC announced March

Submitted by: Y. Bulger

12 that it will ship its encrypting PC hard drive, the Momentus 5400 FDE.2 (full disc encryption), to ASI Computer Technology's newest laptop PC, the C8105, offering a diverse set of hardware-based security features.

The Momentus 5400 FDE.2 is a hard drive that provides business professionals with 160GB of storage space, a Serial ATA interface and a hardware-based AES (advanced encryption standard). The AES is a government-grade security protocol that automatically encrypts hard-drive information, enabling users to block unauthorized access to information on lost or stolen laptops.

The encrypting hard drive from Seagate, based in Scotts Valley, Calif., also enables





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The Vista Promise

Microsoft calls Vista "a breakthrough computing experience." That's marketing hyperbole, for sure, but it's not entirely unfounded. The new OS is far more than Windows XP with a pretty new face. Many aspects of Vista are substantive improvements: stronger security, better built-in apps, networking enhancements, parental controls, and DirectX 10 graphics support, to name just a few.

As a whole, Vista feels more evolutionary than revolutionary. That's not all bad; one of Microsoft's strengths has been its commitment to backward compatibility, which continues with Vista.

Vista's real competitor, though, is Windows XP. For many users, XP is good enough. And for all the advances in Vista, it's hard to avoid seeing the things that aren't as good as they could have been.

Nor is Vista bug-free. As I assessed final code, I ran into a variety of small but annoying glitches and found plenty of features that didn't work as seamlessly as I would have liked. I

can't shake the feeling that Vista's release was rushed.

So what's our verdict? Vista is good—in some respects very good—but not spectacular. Call it a nice-to-have product rather than a must-have.

If you're buying a new consumer PC this spring, it probably makes sense to get Vista. Soon, there won't be much of a choice; according to Microsoft's support life cycle, retail PC buyers will have only a year after Vista's release to buy Windows XP.

If you've already got a PC running Windows XP smoothly, it's harder to see a reason to upgrade right away. You can wait until you replace your machine, or at least a few months, until Vista's kinks are worked out. (If you're curious to see how well your existing machine will support Vista, try Microsoft's Vista Upgrade Advisor, available at www.windowsvista.com/upgradeadvisor). In the meantime, you can download some of the new software included in Vista, such as Internet Explorer 7, Windows Media Player 11, and a desktop search utility, to enjoy some of the same capabilities you'd get in Vista itself.

For business customers, it makes sense to start evaluating Vista now, particularly since improved deployment, management, and security could lead to significant cost reductions in the long term. But you'll want to be confident about compatibility and support before you make the transition en masse.

Submitted by: G. Bulger



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Looking at the GeForce 8800 GTX

ExtremeTech—March 2007

Gamers and graphics aficionados have been waiting for the first generation of DirectX 10 GPUs to arrive on the scene.

In fact, it seems like eons since a truly new graphics architecture has arrived on the scene. All the current graphics cards on the market, before today, can trace themselves back to either the GeForce 6 series or, in ATI's case, back to the Radeon 9700. Sure, there have been some pretty substantial enhancements, but fundamental changes in the architectures have been limited by the restrictions built into the DirectX 9.0 API.

The wait is over. Nvidia is announcing the GeForce 8 series architecture, previously codenamed G80. Check out our companion article for an in-depth analysis of the new GPU architecture. With that announcement comes two board-level products, the GeForce 8800

GTX and GeForce 8800 GTS. Today, we're looking at PNY's GeForce 8800 GTX in-depth, but we'll also discuss speeds and feeds of the GTS product as well. Boards will be available on Internet shopping outlets this week, with stores getting them shortly.

Submitted by: Y. Bulger



Vista Apps. and Utilities

On top of the revamped shell, Vista includes new and enhanced applications. Some, such as Windows

Media Player 11, are quite good. Others are less so: Windows Calendar, Windows Defender, and Windows Mail. Power users will want more-sophisticated equivalents.

Vista ships with Internet Explorer 7, which is a major improvement over IE6. To my mind, though, IE7 still falls short of Firefox 2. IE7 finally supports tabbed browsing, and has a

convenient Quick Tabs view that shows thumbnails of open Web pages. But it lacks incremental in-page search. IE7 scales printed output better, can zoom entire pages, and includes a number of security improvements, among them antiphishing warnings.

In my testing, IE sometimes forgot my preferences for hiding add-on toolbars, and it consistently ate my first few keystrokes after I pressed Ctrl-T to open a new tab. Still, if IE7 sounds appealing, you don't need Vista to get it: There's an XP version at Microsoft.com.

Two of the more compelling applications in

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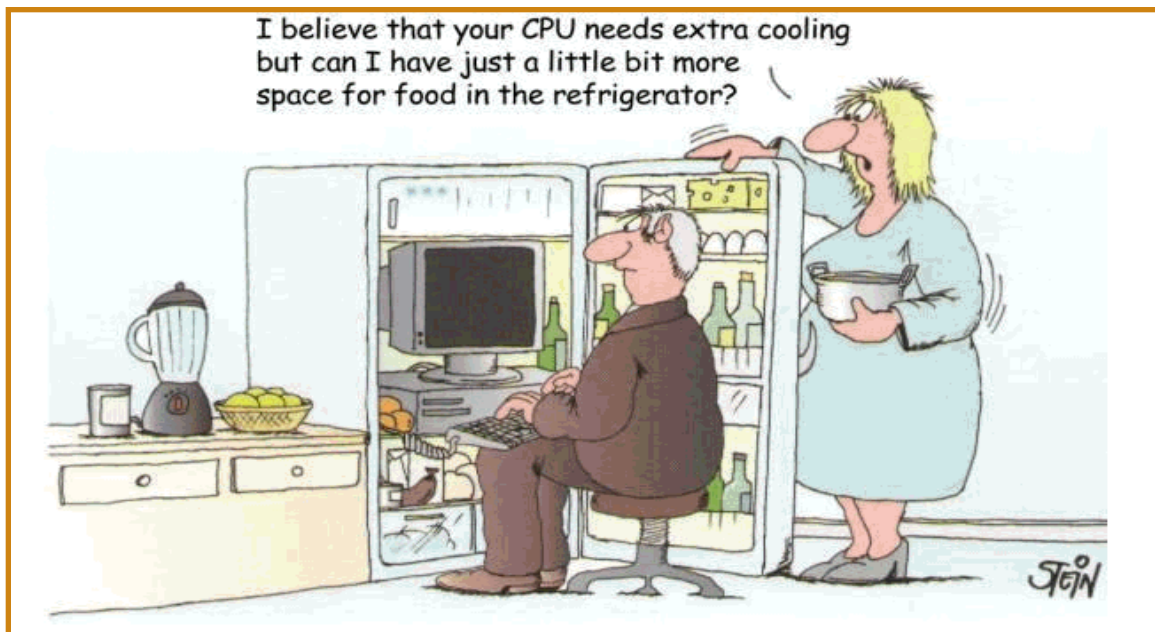


Humour

Microsoft Boot Camp

One of Microsoft's finest tech's was drafted and sent to boot camp. At the rifle range, he was given some instruction, a rifle, and bullets. He fired several shots at the target. The report came from the target area that all attempts had completely missed the target.

The Microsoft tech looked at his rifle and then at the target again. He looked at the rifle again, and then at the target again. He put his finger over the end of the rifle barrel and squeezed the trigger with his other hand. The end of his finger was blown off, whereupon he yelled toward the target area: "It's leaving here just fine. The trouble must be at your end!"





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Vista are Windows Photo Gallery and Windows Media Player 11. Photo Gallery manages large numbers of digital photos with tags, incremental search, and basic editing such as cropping and red-eye reduction. We reviewed WMP 11 (go.pcmag.com/wmp11), awarding it an Editors'

Choice for its improved browsing, search, and interface. A Windows XP version is available as well.

Vista makes incremental improvements to the little-known Windows Movie Maker app for authoring videos, and also includes a convenient Windows DVD Maker that lets you package up videos and title screens to create and burn movie DV Ds.

Of course, you'll also find a variety of diversions, from the usual collection of classic games such as Solitaire and others to new titles such as Chess Titans that showcase Vista's 3D capabilities.

In addition to full applications, you'll find a variety of enhanced tools and utilities. Parental controls let parents restrict access to applications and Web sites, or limit the hours kids can log in. New Activity Centers organize related tasks. Vista's Network Center, for example, makes it easy to monitor network status and open file shares, and its Mobility Center lets you perform portable PC tasks such as altering



power settings or entering presentation mode. (Presentation-aware apps can then, say, prevent IM windows from popping up during your sales pitch.) And the Performance and Reliability Monitor is a central location for monitoring system health.

Vista's Backup and Restore Center includes Complete PC Backup, which uses full-disk imaging similar to Norton Ghost or Acronis's TrueImage. Some editions of Vista include version control that lets you roll back to previous versions of documents.

For corporate IT and power users, Vista also includes an improved event log with filtering and notification options, more sophisticated task scheduling, and diagnostic tools such as a memory tester.

Submitted By: Y. Bulger





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TOUGHBOOK



The TOUGHBOOK falls under Panasonic's fully rugged moniker, meaning that it will stand up to almost anything. That includes being dropped from almost a metre, being showered with water,

being thrown in the mud and being dragged through dust and sand. It's therefore no surprise that ToughBooks are used by the US military, where the conditions are often inhospitable to say the least. In fact Panasonic was keen to mention that a ToughBook saved a soldier's life during Desert Storm.

The unusual thing about the TOUGHBOOK, is that despite being as tough as an armadillo, it's also pretty small and light. Weighing in at 2.25kg and measuring 271 x 216 x 49mm (WxDxH), the TOUGHBOOK's proportions don't indicate that it could withstand serious abuse, but believe me, it can.

The video embedded on this page shows the TOUGHBOOK being dropped from a metre high, being doused in water, having someone jump on it and having it doused in more water with the lid open. You can also see from the video that the TOUGHBOOK still worked after all that

punishment and was happy to be doused in yet more water when powered on.



Because fully rugged ToughBooks are built to be used in extreme environments, pointer movement can be something of an issue. It's hard to use a touchpad when it's covered in mud or dust, so Panasonic has equipped the TOUGHBOOK with a touch screen instead. I found it incredibly simple to navigate Windows with my index finger, but I realised that the previous version had a 10.4in screen that made this a little tricky. The same is true for the TOUGHBOOK, which utilises the same 10.4in screen, but Panasonic gets around this problem by hiding a stylus just below the screen. Continuing with the rough and ready theme, there's also a supplied cord that attaches the stylus to the TOUGHBOOK, to make sure that you don't lose it while you're kyaking down the Yukon.

Submitted by: Y. Bulger



**Panasonic recommends
Windows Vista™ Business**