

CADZOW NEWS

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HELLO, GOOD EVENING AND WELCOME

COMPUTING: Windows 7 Lands

Windows 7 has been available for several months, and all vendors are now shipping it with their machines.

Some vendors are still shipping Windows XP "downgrade" media, and some still offer Windows Vista as an option, but these will probably disappear soon. Previously many people solved their Windows Vista problems by sticking with Windows XP, but we are rapidly approaching a point where, if you have a problem with Windows 7, you'll have to fix it, because it won't be solved by using Windows Vista (since they're essentially the same) and it is simply not practical to buy a new computer with Windows XP unless it's a tiny Netbook.

If you purchased a machine with Windows Vista in the second half of 2009, you probably qualify for a cheap upgrade to Windows 7, but this offer expires soon. See <http://www.cadzow.com.au/?Article=2163> or consult your vendor for information about how to claim.

Whether or not you would install the Windows 7 upgrade is another matter. Even a brand-new system with Windows Vista-compatible software and drivers may experience problems installing Windows 7, so the process could be simple and quick, or fraught with difficulties. And you may have trouble with some older programs. So if you have a Windows Vista system that is running well, you may wish to keep it that way for the time being. But having the Windows 7 upgrade may be useful for the future.

Before upgrading, copy your data to a safe place, such as a removable drive. (These are very cheap now.)

Or if you prefer, Cadzow provides a Vista-to-7 upgrade service for a fixed fee of \$66 (not including the upgrade licence itself). This is a pickup/return service and may take up to 48 hours.

COMPUTING: Spam, Phishing, Fraud and Whatnot

As if you didn't know, spam, phishing and hacks continue to plague internet users.

Our small-scale spam study (<http://www.cadzow.com.au/?Article=1245>) shows spam has been declining over the last few years, and anecdotally it seems to be less of a problem for users. But the major spam-filtering vendors report spam is *increasing*, despite the arrest of various spam-barons and the closure of the rogue networks that generate the stuff. One explanation for this is that the spam filtering vendors, by definition, are studying the spam-infested emails their customers have asked them to filter. You wouldn't pay for a spam-filtering service unless you had a major problem with it. Spam for ordinary users seems to have been reduced to a light buzzing.

Correspondingly the number of phishing emails we logged dropped also, from almost 2 per day in 2007, 0.75 per day in 2008 to 0.5 per day in 2009. Phishing is an attempt, usually via email, to trick you into revealing some personal information, like banking passwords. The dichotomy in the current situation is that, if users receive fewer phish emails, they might become less wary over time and fall victim more readily, so it is worth renewing your acquaintance with this phenomenon: <http://www.cadzow.com.au/?Article=1228>.

Strangely enough, some very old viruses, like Netsky (which is almost 6 years old), have reappeared via email. These have been dressed up as password-reset tools for things Facebook and MySpace, with convincing-looking emails, complete with logos and matching fonts. Why anybody thinks Netsky will get past modern antivirus systems is a mystery, but email-borne viruses have been rare for a few years, and users may be similarly blasé about them.

Another scam that is suddenly popular is emails asking you to upgrade your Acrobat software. These usually lead to a site where you can pay for the free Adobe Acrobat Reader, or buy some third-party

Acrobat clone. These scams seem not to contain malicious payloads, but are simply seeking to trick you out of some of your dosh. And of course there's no telling what might happen to your credit card number later.

There has also been a surge in the "fake-antivirus" scam. This is where you are merrily surfing the web and get a message that shows all the errors on your system and offering a download to help fix it. But this is a scam also. The "scan" that it displays is just a generic animated graphic, and it has no ability to check inside your system. And the software they offer is a scam also, which will find all sorts of errors and ask for your credit card in order to fix them. There are also many programs which claim to fix driver errors, or registry problems, or make your system run faster.

The usual response to these waves of people trying to rob you is to ignore unsolicited emails, ignore warnings you receive on the internet and never give out your credit card number unless you are certain it is a trusted vendor, say, like Amazon. Ask us if you're not sure.

The threat landscape has changed in recent years. Rather than bored hackers in the proverbial "parents' basement", the Internet is now awash with real criminals, who want your money. Mostly these crooks operate in countries with poor, nonexistent or unenforced cybercrime-type laws. One thing you can do if you feel you've fallen victim to some sort of Internet scam is to have your credit card cancelled. It's a hassle, obviously, but it's much better than finding fraudulent charges on your statement for years to come.

COMPUTING: Acrobat Security Issues

Adobe Acrobat is becoming increasingly exploited as an "attack vector" for hackers on the web. This is because Acrobat is ubiquitous, can be triggered via a web page, and is complex enough to contain many software faults which give rise to security vulnerabilities. Some of them have been so-called "zero-day" faults, meaning they were being exploited by hackers before software updates were available to fix them.

Adobe started 2010 with a suite of updates to Acrobat 7.0, 8.0 and 9.0. Although Acrobat will eventually update itself, it is important to be up-to-date and the updates can be obtained easily by using **Help / Check For Updates**. Acrobat updates are not cumulative, so you may need to load several incremental updates to bring you fully up to date.

COMPUTING: Cheap Stuff

If you're in the habit of buying things from iTunes – whether it be music, movies, television shows or apps – you should know that by far the best way is using iTunes gift cards, rather than just using your credit card.

This is because there is a vibrant market for discounted iTunes gift cards, so you can buy them, safely and legitimately, for less than their face value. Various stores have various offers at various times. For example, a common discount is two \$20 cards for \$30; a 25% discount. Sometimes you can get two \$30 cards for \$40, a 33% discount. And lately, both Big W and Coles have sold them at a whopping 50% discount.

So you can see that, instead of paying \$16.99 for an album, you could pay as little as \$8.50, or at most \$12.75. That might not seem like much, but of course it depends how addicted you are to iTunes. It also means that if you fund an "allowance" for your kids on iTunes, you should be giving them discounted gift cards instead.

However, buying gift cards on special is different to buying them on Ebay, or second-hand. Never buy gift cards unless you absolutely trust the seller.

Keep an eye on <http://www.cadzow.com.au/?Article=2197> where we will post the latest offers.

LITERATURE, Great Moments In

I think all right-thinking people in this country are sick and tired of being told that ordinary decent people are fed up in this country with being sick and tired. I'm certainly not. But I'm sick and tired of being told that I am.

Monty Python's Matching Tie and Handkerchief (1973)

The Cadzow team has been developing business and accounting software solutions for over 25 years. Cadzow is an Australian organisation addressing the software requirements of business and government. Software solutions in the Cadzow 2000 family include: Cadzow Contact Manager, Cadzow People Manager, Cadzow Time Manager, Cadzow Training Manager, Cadzow Call Stats Manager, Cadzow Booking Manager, Cadzow Job Manager, Cadzow Accounts Receivable, Cadzow Accounts Payable, Cadzow Stock Control, Cadzow Weblink, Cadzow Room Manager plus other web-based and customised solutions. To learn how they can be used individually or together, visit <http://www.cadzow.com.au/?Article=1288>.

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