



Seltek Tech Tips November 2011



### Thai Floods, Hard Drive Shortage Threaten PC Sales from Reuters

A shortage of hard drives caused by floods in Thailand may affect companies like Intel, Apple and Dell this December. Major hard drive manufacturers Western Digital and Seagate have factories in Thailand that have been affected by the recent flooding. These factories may remain closed for months.

Thailand is the second largest manufacturer of hard drives in the world. According to experts, world output of hard drives could fall as much as 30 percent in the final three months of 2011 and manufacturers that need them are now scrambling to snap up existing inventories.

It is important to note that this news will affect the purchase of new computers (either for business or personal use). If you are purchasing a new PC (or other device with a hard drive) soon, remember that delivery will likely be delayed.

Similarly, purchasing a new hard drive for your system may be more expensive or more difficult to find due to the shortage. If you plan to upgrade your system or purchase a new PC, I highly recommend considering this now before the shortage becomes too severe.

Here at Seltek, we've already seen a 30-50% price increase at local stores for certain hard drives in the last two weeks. Be sure to call us before buying!

### Sticky Notes!

If your office desk looks anything like mine, there are post-it notes attached to the monitor, keyboard and phone with scribbles of phone numbers, appointment reminders and to-do lists. De-clutter your desk and digitize those important yellow pieces of paper with Sticky Notes.

In Windows 7, click Start and type Sticky Notes to bring up your first note. The program is very simple. Simply type your information onto the note. It will stay there until you click the "x" in the top right corner to delete it. You can right-click on the sticky note to change the color, or click the plus icon in the left hand corner to create a new, blank note. Click and drag the top bar to move the note around the screen. Position your cursor over the dots in the lower right corner and click and drag to resize the note.

Windows Vista also features an earlier version of Sticky Notes as a gadget for the Windows Sidebar. The

## New to Windows 7?

By Kara Mueller, Primary Help Desk Analyst

Microsoft's Windows 7 was released in late 2009, making it Microsoft's latest operating system (OS). Although it has been available for purchase for quite some time now, many companies still use Windows XP or Vista. However, most computer manufacturers are now only selling new PCs with Windows 7 installed. You may have noticed this if you recently purchased a home computer - it most likely came installed with Windows 7.



If you are only used to using Windows XP or Vista, there may come a day where you will need to adjust to using Windows 7. Perhaps your company has already purchased new computers and you've been forced to make the jump. Windows 7 may be intimidating to those who are used to working with something else. In this article, we'll discuss some of the differences between the older operating systems and Windows 7, and I'll highlight some tips and tricks for new users.

### What is an OS, anyway?

The Operating System, or OS, of your computer is a piece of software that manages hardware resources and provides services for your applications. Without an OS, your computer wouldn't be very useful. You would be unable to run the programs you are used to, such as Microsoft Outlook and Word. In addition to your computer, most of your electronic devices also have an OS installed. An iPhone, for example, runs an operating system called iOS. Most phones, video game consoles, personal computers and servers all have an OS.

### Why is it necessary to upgrade from XP or Vista?

You could technically keep Windows XP on your computer for as long as you'd like. However, there are a number of reasons why you need to upgrade. Here are a few:

1. **Security** - The most important reason to upgrade! Microsoft will end all support for Windows XP in April 2014. Currently, Microsoft only offers "Extended Support" for Windows XP. This means only updates and fixes for major security problems are released ("Mainstream Support" for XP ended in April 2009). If any security vulnerabilities are discovered in the software after April 2014 (when the "Extended Support" ends), you won't be getting a fix from Microsoft. This could put your computer security at risk.
2. **Increased hardware support** - The hardware compatibility of Windows 7 is much better than XP and Vista. New hardware devices (such as a thumb drive, printer or game controller) will install much more quickly and easily.
3. **Performance improvements** - Your time is valuable, and the faster and smoother your PC runs, the more time you have to get the important stuff done. Windows 7 has key performance improvements to take up less memory and run background services only when you need them. It's designed to run your programs faster and to sleep, resume, and reconnect to wireless networks quicker.

I just received a new computer with Windows 7.

Windows Sidebar in Vista is a long, vertical bar that is displayed on the side of your desktop. If the Windows Sidebar is not visible, click Start, All Programs, Accessories, and then choose Windows Sidebar. Once opened right-click on the Sidebar and choose "Add gadgets" then highlight Notes and click and drag the icon to the Sidebar.

Windows XP does not have a built-in application such as Sticky Notes. However, there are a number of free programs on the web that will act similarly, but use caution when downloading unknown programs. 3M Post-It Notes brand offers a program such as this on their website. The full version is \$9.99.

#### What should I know?

When you sit down at your new Windows 7 computer for the first time, you'll notice a few things that look very different. Windows 7 can do just about anything Windows XP and Vista can, but some things may need to be done in a different way, or will require a different (and hopefully easier) route to accomplish. Here are a few things to check out while you get acquainted with this new software:

1. **Start menu** - The blue Start button in the lower left corner of the screen is now round and only shows the Windows logo. Clicking on this brings up the Start menu, which is similar to the default Start menu in XP (not the classic Start menu, which has fewer options).
2. **Searching** - Click on that Start button again in the lower left hand corner to bring up the Start menu. At the bottom of the Start menu is a bar with a blinking cursor. This is where you can search for files on your computer. Simply type in your search terms and press enter. A window will appear with the results. You can also run common programs from here. Type calculator to bring up the Windows calculator (also improved from previous versions of Windows). Other keywords, such as paint, excel, word, adobe, notepad or even help will bring up the associated program. Try it out!
3. **Taskbar** - To the right of the Start button is your taskbar. Just like previous versions of windows, any programs you have open will appear here. However, the Windows 7 taskbar behaves a bit differently. You can "pin" items to the taskbar (where you would save them to the "quick launch" in XP) so even if the program is closed, the icon will still appear and be quickly accessible. Icons for programs that are open have a different appearance than those that are closed. If you hover your mouse cursor over an icon for a program that is open, a preview of the window will appear. This can be useful to help locate the correct item if there are multiple windows open for a single program.
4. **Windows Explorer** - Windows Explorer in Windows 7 is more similar to Windows Vista than XP. You can still browse, sort and search for files like you would in XP, but the file list has some new features. In the left hand pane, you'll see a list of locations under Favorites. Here, you can add folders you access frequently by clicking and dragging them to the list. In addition to Favorites there is now a category of Libraries, where you can access your documents, pictures, music and videos quickly. Tip: Right-click in blank space in the left hand pane and choose "Show All Folders" to get a view slightly more similar to that of Windows XP.

#### What's next?

Technology is always evolving and of course Microsoft already has Windows 8 in the works. It boasts even greater performance boosts and is tablet PC ready. However, even at the rapid pace that some software and gadgets seem to become outdated, Windows 7 still has quite a bit of life left. The software is still relatively new and Microsoft will be offering extended support until 2020.

For assistance with Windows 7 or for questions about other issues, please contact the Seltex helpdesk at (804) 360-4490.