

July 24, 2007

Microsoft Windows Vista Business and Office 2007 Implementation Guidelines
CUSD Information Technology Services Department

Microsoft is now shipping Windows Vista Business edition. It is the only version the IT team is testing for compatibility with our networks and applications. Microsoft Office 2007 is now the only version available from our suppliers.

Testing of Windows Vista Business Edition is presenting compatibility problems with certain software that is critical to Chico Unified daily operations. Affected is the Citrix Metaframe client we have deployed to deliver SASI to many of our schools. We have also discovered some problems with some of Microsoft's network support tools not functioning on the Vista platform. New versions of existing programs such as CD/DVD burning software and other utilities are needed which will cost each department beyond the purchase of the computer. With these problems, I am recommending that we do not deploy Vista Business until we can test again when the service packs are released by Microsoft in the future.

Our IT strategy for new computer purchases is to buy the Vista Business license with the computer but install Windows XP Professional for the immediate need. The ownership of the Vista license will give us the flexibility to upgrade to Vista at a later date when Microsoft has shipped a service pack update that addresses the compatibility issues we have with existing software. The cost to upgrade all existing software to be Vista capable is not cost effective at this time.

Office 2007 also presents compatibility problems for us. For Office 2007 users to share documents with others, all existing copies of Office 2003 will need to be patched to handle the differences in the document format. At this time there are no resources available to update our Office 2003 installations to accommodate Office 2007 users. We recommend that users continue to use Office 2003 and when purchasing new licenses (like the Vista strategy), purchase the Office 2007 license now. You will take possession of the newer license so when there is a compelling reason to move away from Office 2003, you are appropriately licensed to upgrade. The IT team will continue to deploy Office 2003 until there is reason to patch all copies of Office 2003 or upgrade all users to Office 2007. There are cost implications for upgrading all users to Office 2007.

The practice of owning the current license and running a previous version of software is a standard practice since many organizations do not have the resources to test and upgrade all existing users and computers to the latest software platforms. This is a necessity when Microsoft obsoletes the previous version of software and we cannot purchase the older product anymore. Until compelling reasons are presented to the IT team to change, the standard for Chico Unified is Windows XP Professional and Office 2003.

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