



SMB Newsletter

Issue 25

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Microsoft is expected to release the Vista Operating System and Microsoft Office 2007 * (2007 Office or Office 12) to large corporate customers before the end of 2006 and to the general public early in 2007. As the release date for Office 2007 approaches, businesses which use these productivity tools need to know what to expect. We thought it might be helpful to provide you with some items to consider as you go forward and plan for next year.



I would like to thank Dave for contributing the articles in this Issue's Newsletter.

Laura Dallas Burford

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ARE YOU READY FOR OFFICE 2007?

So what do you need to know?

First, you don't need to replace all of your Office XP or Office 2003 programs immediately. More about this later.

Second, this is a fairly large portfolio of products and services that will take time to be fully deployed by Microsoft and more time to be fully understood. These products and services are organized by Microsoft into 3 categories: Programs, Servers, and Services.

Programs are the core desktop productivity tools of the Office system and this is where we will focus our comments. The Programs are designed to run on both Microsoft Windows XP Service Pack 2 or later and Windows Vista operating systems. If you are still using a Windows 2000 or earlier Operating System in your production environment expect to upgrade soon.

Ultimately, 14 Programs are planned to be offered in as many as 8 suites. Some of the Programs require server elements to function and some will only be sold as part of a suite. The chart on the next page was taken from the Microsoft office website and shows likely Office Suite contents. More information about Office 2007 is available at <http://www.microsoft.com/office/preview/default.mspx>

What has changed?

The User Interface (UI) and File Formats have changed significantly. We expect the most immediate impact will result from the File Format change because the UI change only affects those who use the programs. We think most Microsoft Office products are bought because purchasers want or need to exchange documents with others who also use this suite of personal productivity tools. Whether you buy Office 2007 or not, if you share files with those

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* At this writing Office 2007 is only available in Beta release; comments are based on the Beta version as well as published Microsoft documentation.

who do use Office 2007, you will need to worry about File Formats.

	Microsoft Office Basic 2007	Microsoft Office Home & Student 2007	Microsoft Office Standard 2007	Microsoft Office Small Business 2007	Microsoft Office Professional 2007	Microsoft Office Ultimate 2007 (RTM)	Microsoft Office Professional Plus 2007	Microsoft Office Enterprise 2007 (RTM)
Microsoft Office Word 2007	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Microsoft Office Excel 2007	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Microsoft Office PowerPoint 2007		●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Microsoft Office Publisher 2007				●	●	●	●	●
Microsoft Office Outlook 2007	●		●				●	●
Microsoft Office Access 2007					●	●	●	●
Microsoft Office OneNote 2007		●				●		●
Microsoft Office Outlook 2007 with Business Contact Manager				●	●	●		
Microsoft Office InfoPath 2007						●	●	●
Integrated Enterprise Content Management						●	●	●
Electronic Forms						●	●	●
Advanced Information Rights Management and Policy Capabilities						●	●	●
Microsoft Office Communicator 2007							●	●
Microsoft Office Groove 2007						●		●

The Facts, Mam... just the Facts

Office 2007 uses new file formats based on a Microsoft technology – Open XML. See our articles for more detail. These file formats will be Office 2007’s standard (i.e. default) format for Word, Excel, and PowerPoint. Unfortunately, the new formats are not compatible with the Office file formats in current use and we expect this incompatibility to present challenges for users and businesses. However, you can take steps to be prepared for this situation.

Why? Why? Why!?!

No doubt many who use Office will wonder why Microsoft is “*fixing what ain’t broke*”.

The proprietary binary file formats in use currently (.doc, .xls, and .ppt) were designed in 1994 (12 years ago!) and introduced with the release of Microsoft Office 97 — before the common use of the Internet for work collaboration and before the widespread exchange of documents and data routinely experienced today. The increasing use of the Internet and Web-based technologies to support collaborative work and

broad sharing of information (particularly in large organizations) make use of the old file formats increasingly impractical. We think the new file formats represent Microsoft’s response to customer requests and competitive pressure from the Open Source community.

Microsoft explains that the new formats are to permit people to work across boundaries: organizations will have a common public “language” for exchanging information, documents can be programmatically scanned for revisions, elements of files can be isolated making management, revision and recovery from file corruption possible.

People who do not share documents or collaborate with others to create documents will not see the need for this change.

Regardless of your view on the need for a new file format – If you share documents with those who use Office 2007, dealing with the new file formats will be a fact of life once Office 2007 is released.

What to do?

First, If you use Office 2000 SP3, Office XP SP3 or Office 2003 SP1, Microsoft plans to offer software (Microsoft Office Compatibility Pack; currently in Beta release) that will let these versions of Office open and save Open XML files. There will also be Operating System requirements to install/use this compatibility pack.

Second, Office 2007 programs can open as well as save files in the “old” binary formats – but you probably need to ask whoever is providing the file to you to save it in your format.

Third, the default file format for Office 2007 programs can be configured individually to save to the old binary

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formats. However, organizations outside of your company may not want to do this.

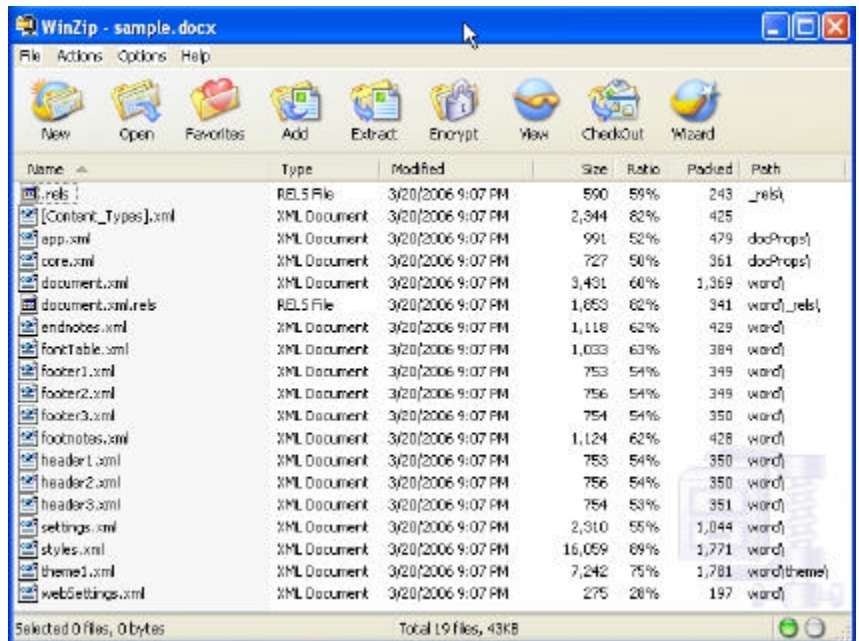
Last, if your business depends on a third party (non-Microsoft) program that uses an Office component (i.e. generate a form letter), we suggest first discussing using Office 2007 with your vendor before migrating.

We believe the Office 2007 File Format change will prove to be the most immediate concern for Small Businesses who need to exchange files with people/companies who use Office 2007. The good news is that users have some flexibility in handling the change and will not need to immediately upgrade.

MORE ABOUT OPEN XML

Open XML is a Microsoft technology which defines file formats. It is based on combining industry standard XML and ZIP technologies and will be Office 2007's standard (i.e. default) format for Word, Excel, and PowerPoint.

The ZIP technology provides a container which compresses its contents – saving hard disk space and making files smaller for sending across a network. This forms a wrapper for a set of XML files that together are the basis of the Office document. The ZIP wrapper also may contain binary files including PNG, JPEG or GIF images. This is one of the most flexible aspects of Open XML: the support for arbitrary embedded objects, which may be any type of binary content. Additionally, it is possible to individually open, read and edit the files in the ZIP container – allowing for recovery of data if part of the Office document becomes corrupt.



Screen shot of the contents of a simple Word 2007.docx file using WinZip.

THIS ISSUE'S QUESTION — SO WHAT IS XML? AND WHAT IS ZIP?

So What is XML?

XML is Short for **Extensible Markup Language**, a specification developed by the *World Wide Web Consortium (W3C)* a body that develops open standards for use on the Internet. XML is designed especially for Web documents and provides formal structure (rules and definitions) for Web documents written using **HyperText Markup Language (HTML)**.

HTML defines the structure and layout of a Web document by using a variety of tags and attributes. There

are hundreds of tags used to format and layout the information in a Web page or Web document.

The structure for a HTML documents looks like this:

```
<HTML><HEAD>(enter here what document is about)
<BODY>
    All the information to include goes here
</BODY></HTML>
```

XML and HTML work together to allow designers such as Microsoft to create their own customized tags, enabling the definition, transmission, validation, and interpretation of data between applications and between organizations.

What is ZIP technology?

More properly called the ZIP file format, this is a popular data compression and archival format. Files that have been compressed with the ZIP format are called ZIP files. Compressed data files save time and space and make

downloading software and transferring e-mail attachments faster relative to un-compressed files. Frequently ZIP files contain more than one uncompressed file. Originally, ZIP files required a utility such as PKZIP or WinZip for users to create, modify or uncompress these files. More recently, Microsoft includes built-in ZIP support in later versions of Windows operating system and Apple includes built-in ZIP support in Mac OS X v10.3 and later. Some software uses the ZIP file format as a wrapper for a large number of small items in a specific structure. Generally when this is done a different file extension is used.

For more information about XML and Open XML

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Microsoft_Office_Open_XML

<http://openxmldeveloper.org>

OFFICE 2007 REVIEWS AND SCREEN GALLERIES

Office 2007 has been reviewed in industry press and many screen shots are available on-line. Some of our favorites:

Reviews:

Computer World: <http://www.computerworld.com/action/article.do?command=viewArticleBasic&articleId=9000690>

WindowsITPro (Paul Thurrott) http://www.winsupersite.com/reviews/office2007_beta2.asp

Screen Shot Gallery:

TechRepublic http://content.techrepublic.com.com/2346-10877_11-2207.html?tag=nl.e101

FILE EXTENSIONS FOR OFFICE 2007 DOCUMENT TYPES

Microsoft Office "Word 12" File Types	Extension
"Word 12" Document	.docx
"Word 12" Macro-Enabled Document	.docm
"Word 12" Template	.dotx
"Word 12" Macro-Enabled Template	.dotm

Microsoft Office "Excel 12" File Types	Extension
"Excel 12" Workbook	.xlsx
"Excel 12" Macro-Enabled Workbook	.xlsm
"Excel 12" Template	.xltx
"Excel 12" Macro-Enabled Template	.xltn
"Excel 12" Binary Workbook	.xlsb
"Excel 12" Macro-Enabled Add-In	.xlam

Microsoft Office "PowerPoint 12" File Types	Extension
"PowerPoint 12" Presentation	.pptx
"PowerPoint 12" Macro-Enabled Presentation	.pptm
"PowerPoint 12" Template	.potx
"PowerPoint 12" Macro-Enabled Template	.potm
"PowerPoint 12" Macro-Enabled Add-In	.ppam
"PowerPoint 12" Show	.ppsx
"PowerPoint 12" Macro-Enables Show	.ppsm

OUR SERVICES

From advice and planning to the nitty-gritty technical work, we work with you. We place a priority on understanding your **business needs and goals** first, explain your **technology options** to you, and work with you to **implement processes and systems** that meet your needs and help your business grow.

Network Infrastructure and Technology Planning and Support
System Selection and Implementation
Business Continuity/Disaster Recovery Planning
Business Workflow
Part-Time or Interim CIO

Developers of **Computer Census™**

A portable software tool that enables technicians inventory a single computer, selected computers, or an entire Domain - automatically.

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