Privacy and Data Protection in Windows Vista



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Trustworthy Computing



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Privacy and Data Protection in Windows Vista

Rapid and sweeping advances in software and computing hardware have created vast opportunities and previously unimaginable benefits for hundreds of millions of people worldwide, transforming how they work, play, shop and communicate. Supported by increasingly powerful and affordable wireless and broadband technologies, the Internet is also transmitting growing volumes of personal information faster and more easily every year. Along with delivering such valuable benefits, however, computers and the Internet have become the targets of an expanding array of threats to personal and data privacy. Online fraud, identity theft, phishing scams and organizational data breaches, as well as citizens’ growing unease about how their personal data is collected and used, are threatening to erode public confidence in the computing ecosystem.

In light of these issues, helping protect individuals’ privacy and prevent data breaches that could compromise their personal information are fundamental priorities for Microsoft Corp. This commitment is underscored by advances in the new Windows Vista™ operating system, the first to be developed from the ground up using the Microsoft® Security Development Lifecycle and associated Microsoft Privacy Standard for Development. These processes have helped make Windows Vista the most secure and privacy-oriented version of the Windows® operating system ever offered.

Deterring Online Scams and ID Theft

A host of anti-malware and anti-phishing tools within WindowsVistahelp repel attempts by cybercriminals to commit fraud or steal consumers’ personally identifiable information**.** Operating in Protected Mode, which is turned on by default in Windows Vista, the Internet Explorer® 7Web browser improves security and reduces the risk of malicious attacks by restricting Web sites from modifying a user’s files or settings, helping keep PCs safer from Web-based attacks. The Microsoft Phishing Filter, an opt-in service available as part of Internet Explorer 7 and Windows Vista, helps users browse more safely by alerting them to suspicious or known phishing Web sites. Within three months of its October 2006 launch, the Phishing Filter was blocking more than 1 million attempts to entice users to visit known phishing sites per week. Windows CardSpace™, a component of Microsoft .NET Framework 3.0 within Windows Vista, simplifies and safeguards the ways consumers gain access to password-protected Web content and share their personal information on the Internet by putting users in control of how they store and use their digital identities. In addition, it helps assure users that parties asking for digital identities are who they say they are.

Blocking Spyware and Other Intrusions

As part of Microsoft’s commitment to protecting peoples’ fundamental right to be left alone, several key advances in Windows Vista help repel unwanted communications from overly aggressive marketers and cybercriminals. Windows Defender is a free program thathelps protect PCs running genuine Windows Vista or Windows XP against security and privacy threats from spyware and other unwanted software. Its real-time protection tools help monitor key system locations for changes that signal the presence of spyware and check any opened software against a constantly updated database of known spyware. User Account Control works with Windows Defender and Internet Explorer 7 to help reduce security risks from viruses, spyware and other threats by limiting standard user privileges and granting administrative access only when they are needed. Windows Updateoffers the option of automatically downloading new Microsoft security updates, making it easier to keep a computer more secure and resistant to privacy intrusions.

Securing Sensitive Data

A number of innovations in Windows Vista address the sophisticated data protection and privacy needs of enterprises. For example, Windows Rights Management Services (RMS)technology works with Windows Vista and various RMS-enabled applications to help safeguard digital information from unauthorized use. BitLocker™ Drive Encryption, available in Windows Vista Enterprise and Ultimate versions, encrypts all user and system files to help keep private and sensitive data from being accessed if the computer is lost, stolen or insecurely decommissioned. Encrypting File System (EFS)enables PC users to automatically protect their data from unauthorized access as well as enhance PC performance and manageability. EFS also provides broader support for smart card integration, which lets people use their smart card for encryption and authentication. Windows Service Hardening restricts the capabilities and privileges of background system services to those needed for them to function, reducing the chances that a malicious attack could compromise services and damage or disclose sensitive data.

Protecting Families

As a critical element of Internet safety, Microsoft offers a range of tools designed to give parents stronger control over Web-based content and interactions accessed by their family members. Windows Vista Parental Controlsare grouped in a single, integrated user interface that simplifies the task of setting safe parameters for the family’s computer use. Parents can create separate accounts with appropriate settings for each family member. Control options include time limits, restrictions on access to specified games, programs and Web sites, and the ability to block file downloads. Parents can view activity reports to help guide meaningful conversations with children about their computer use. Parents can further extend these Windows Vista online safeguards with Windows Live™ OneCare™ Family Safety, a free Web-based service that enables customized settings for each family member to help block inappropriate content and facilitate safer online interactions.

Conclusion

These and other comprehensive security and privacy enhancements in Windows Vista are designed to help individuals and organizations meet the increasingly sophisticated challenges of protecting sensitive personal information. Additional details about the in-depth privacy and data protection features in Windows Vista are available at http://www.microsoft.com by searching for “Windows Vista security.”