

**Tech Talk: Windows 7 is a Grand Slam!**By **MJ Shoer**

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It's baseball season, so it seems like a perfect metaphor to introduce you to Microsoft's latest operating system, Windows 7. You've no doubt heard and seen plenty of complaints about the Windows Vista operating system. Apple's marketing genius has put some very humorous commercials on the air that really drive this point home. Microsoft's answer to the chorus of negativity is Windows 7, a grand slam by any measure.

Windows 7 is now in its final testing phase. It has been through the infamous "beta" period, which is a common term used throughout the software industry for when a company releases the first version of its latest software for general testing. There are typically "closed" beta periods, in which hand-selected people test the software, and then "public" beta periods, when the general public can download and test the software. Once this is complete, the product moves into "release candidate" stage. Windows 7 is now RC1, which is Release Candidate 1. There may be an RC2, but that will probably be the final stage before the software is RTM, or "released to manufacturing," when no further changes are made and the final software is burned to DVDs or released for electronic delivery.

Microsoft's official timetable for the final release of Windows 7 to the marketplace is thought to be the first quarter of 2010, but don't be surprised to see it released in the late third or early fourth quarter of 2009.

Microsoft has gotten nearly everything right in Windows 7. Whatever gripes you may have about Windows Vista or even Windows XP, chances are it has been dramatically improved in Windows 7. I have been testing Windows 7 and I am extremely impressed with the operating system. What I am noticing most about Windows 7 is its speed. Speed is perhaps the number one complaint you hear about Windows Vista; that issue is gone with Windows 7. The installation is very fast, less than an hour in many cases. Boot times, shutdown times and even more advanced things like hibernation and time to resume are cut in half, if not faster.

The operating system is also very stable and handles conflicts that may arise intuitively, which makes things easier for the end user. I've encountered no issues with drivers or software compatibility.

Like any new operating system, there will be issues, but overall, this is a giant leap forward and I expect businesses to embrace Windows 7 with enthusiasm. I will write about this again as the final release draws closer. In the meantime, be prepared for Windows 7 to move rapidly into the business computing space. Businesses of all sizes will appreciate the productivity boost that the enhanced speed and overall reliability will bring to the computer experience.

Thanks for reading.

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