

## A Look at the Windows Vista™ System Requirements

*Expect an upgrade when upgrading to Microsoft's new OS.*

The following specifications are pulled from the Microsoft Windows Vista™ Pre-release hardware requirements information page. Basically, unless you bought your computer in the last 2-3 years and spent more than \$2,000 on it, you'll most likely need to upgrade your hardware in addition to buying the Vista upgrade. Below is a table of the absolute minimum system hardware requirements to run Windows Vista:

Vista™ Minimum Supported Requirements	
Processor	800 MHz 32-bit (x86) or 64-bit (x64) processor
System Memory	512 MB
GPU	SVGA (800x600)
Graphics Memory	- -
HDD	20 GB
HDD Free Space	15 GB
Optical Drive	CD-ROM Drive

Those requirements are just a little higher than today's standards, you may be thinking... so what's the big deal? Well, the problem is that Windows XP would perform poorly on those requirements, and this operating system is even hungrier for specs.

The new OS has a 3D graphical desktop engine called Aero; think of it as the arcade version of Windows. Things fly around, spin open, and have transparent attributes... but only if your system meets the requirements for a Vista "Premium Ready" PC. Almost double most of the basic Vista specs, the Aero-capable requirements are JUST for the OS... prepare to add more memory to cater to videogames, graphics applications, and maybe even the new Office suite. The chart below shows a side-by-side comparison between "Capable" and "Premium Ready" Vista machines.

	Windows Vista™ Capable PC	Windows Vista™ "Premium Ready" PC
Processor	<a href="#">Modern processor</a> (at least 800 MHz)	1 GHz 32-bit (x86) or 64-bit (x64) processor
System Memory	512 MB	1 GB
GPU	DirectX 9 Capable	Windows Aero Capable- DirectX 9-class GPU that supports <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● A WDDM Driver</li> <li>● Pixel Shader 2.0 in hardware</li> <li>● 32 bits per pixel</li> <li>● Adequate graphics memory</li> </ul>
Graphics Memory	- -	128 MB
HDD	20GB	40 GB
HDD Free Space	15 GB	15 GB
Optical Drive	CD-ROM Drive	DVD-ROM Drive

So while Vista PC's may look pretty, have better firewall, user account management, and desktop search capabilities; expect unadvertised costs if you plan on running Photoshop or Quake on your new (or upgraded) Vista machine.

Windows Vista IS pretty- screenshot of the Windows Aero Alt+Tab program switching in action.

**..:About the Author**

William Kinirons is the president of BMK Media, a web and graphic design company based in Coconut Creek that also offers in-home computer hardware & software support. For more information on web design, onsite computer software support, or managed web hosting call BMK Media at (954) 818-2010.