



## Microsoft Windows and Office 2007

### You have all heard the

news—the new versions of Microsoft Windows and Office have been released. And since my secondary computer had just given up the ghost, it was a good opportunity to take the plunge and get a Vista and Office 2007 computer.

Clearly I am not going to write a review of these programs—there are plenty of those out there. However, I would like to focus on a couple of things that are important for translators, such as multilingual and statistical abilities. For the (poor) record on compatibility with translation environment programs, you can read the posting on ATA's Language Technology Division's website at [www.ata-divisions.org/LTD](http://www.ata-divisions.org/LTD).

When you start working with Office 2007 programs, you will need to get used to a whole new work environment. The traditional menus have been replaced with the so-called “ribbons,” which give everything a different look and place the commands in new locations. This can be annoying at first, but it is something you will get used to quickly. Here is what I figured out as I tried to orient myself quickly in Word 2007: the most important ribbon for us translators is probably Review. Here you can find the spelling, language, and review options. All of the commands that used to be in the File menu (Open, Save, Save as, Print, etc.) are now available when you click on the Office Button in the upper left-hand corner. And the all-important Options dialog can be accessed from wherever you see an Advanced or More button, but most easily under the Office Button and “Word Options.”

The good news is that there are some improvements that make Word just a little bit easier for us to work with. For instance, the real-time word

count that the Mac version of Word has had forever has now been integrated. A little field down on the status bar shows you how many words your current document has, and the number is updated as you type. And—ta-da! —words in text boxes are finally counted (if you check that option in the Word Count dialog). This is a long overdue feature and certainly a welcome addition. Words in WordArt, hidden text, headers, and footers are still not counted, but typically there is a lot less to worry about.

Now on to Windows Vista. It is very pretty when you have the new “Aero” view enabled, but I would not advise you to upgrade until you buy a new computer, or you have assurances from the manufacturer of your present computer that your (recently purchased) computer is compatible. Remember last month's column: “If it ain't broke, don't fix it.”

Of course, there is the Microsoft Upgrade Advisor under [www.microsoft.com/windowsvista/upgradeadvisor](http://www.microsoft.com/windowsvista/upgradeadvisor) that supposedly tells you what parts of your computer have to be replaced to work with Vista, but it is simply not worth it to spend several days hunting for new drivers and replacing video cards just because the new Windows is pretty.

Well, naturally there is a little more to it. The big thing about the new version is accessibility. When you click on the Start icon or press the Windows key, your cursor is automatically located in a little text box that allows you to search for all kinds of things, even text within documents. This is a bit like what the desktop index tools from Google and others have been doing for a while, only it is more integrated into the system. (And this to Mac users: There is no reason to write that your Mac computer has been doing this for years. I know, but Mac did not exactly invent indexing, either.)

But on to language-related things. Setting up foreign language keyboards has not changed since Windows XP (see my article in the April 2006 issue of this magazine, “Switching Keyboards on a Windows System”), but you do not have to enable support for “complex” languages anymore. This was always an unnecessary stumbling block and I am glad it is gone. What is very helpful is that you can now have Windows with a Multilingual User Interface (MUI), meaning you can switch the languages and the locale that Windows runs under. This was previously only possible for members of the Microsoft Developer Network. Unfortunately, you do have to buy the more expensive Vista Ultimate version, but this is a real treat for folks who deal with more than two languages.

Back to Office 2007. The last few versions of Office all came with a number of proofing tools for different languages. For instance, if you bought a U.S.-English version of Office, you received English, Spanish, and French spell checkers and grammar checkers. This has not changed with Office 2007. What has changed is the availability of additional languages beyond the ones that come with the normal installation. In short, there are none at this point (February 2007).

Here is how and when they will be available. Unlike past versions of MS Office, the earlier versions of the proofing tools are not compatible, so you will have to purchase a completely new product if you need additional proofing tools. And unlike the earlier versions, the product not only includes the proofing tools, but also a complete multilingual user interface (MUI) for the respective language. This means that you can run your

English version of Office in Dutch, Swedish, or Latvian if you buy the “language pack(s)” for these languages. Of course, this is very helpful and goes along the lines of what Microsoft is offering for the Windows version of Vista Ultimate (see above).

Microsoft says that the first “Single Language Pack” will be available sometime in March, and that all 37 covered languages will be available in June of this year. By that point you can also buy the “Multi-Language Pack” that includes all languages. You can also find all this information at <http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/suites/HA102113691033.aspx>.

To be honest, it baffles me why Microsoft would release a product with such fanfare, but delay the release of a very relevant component until months later. Here is what I would strongly encourage Microsoft to do. Though I understand that there may be actual technical limitations to using some of the old proofing tools in the new version of Office, there is no reason not to honor former users of earlier proofing tools with a substantially reduced upgrade price (and maybe then we would not be quite so frustrated about the fact that a half-finished product was released in the first place...).

And last but not least, for those who

translate products related to the new versions of Windows and Office, the latest version of the Microsoft glossary now contains Vista and Office 2007 terms at [www.microsoft.com/globaldev/tools/MILSGlossary.msp](http://www.microsoft.com/globaldev/tools/MILSGlossary.msp).

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*The GeekSpeak column has two goals: to inform the community about technological advances and at the same time encourage the use and appreciation of technology among translation professionals. Jost also publishes a free technical newsletter for translators ([www.internationalwriters.com/toolkit](http://www.internationalwriters.com/toolkit)).*