

Windows Vista: Killer Product or Dud?

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There is no doubting the importance of Windows Vista, (formerly known as "Longhorn" and the successor to Windows 95-XP), as it forms the foundation for Microsoft's future fortunes just as its predecessor did for the company in years past. Vista will be Microsoft's strongest response to competitive pressure from platforms like Linux and the MacOS.

For buyers, the Vista platform has been a long time coming. Originally anticipated for 2004 release, it is now running two years late. You have to admit, there are few companies that could survive a two-year slip for a critical product like this.

We won't know whether this product is a success or a failure for sure until after it actually launches, and I'm not willing to make the call right now because there are clearly a lot of issues that need to be decided. So I'll spell out two scenarios, one where it sets records and one where it fails miserably. Realize, it probably will fall someplace in between, but this will offer some indicators to watch for so you can determine, early, hopefully, which way the dice are going to roll.

Let's start with failure, then success:

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