

ITEON●CONSULTING, LLC

Newsletter Q3 - 2007

In this issue...

Jawbone

Postcards

Dell/HP, Vista, Vostro

Vista SP1—Not Yet!

Backup Exec 11d

Google

Cell Phones

Price Watch and Iteon News

Jawbone

This has been touted as the best bluetooth earpiece made to date. It is.

The Jawbone eliminates noise and gives the person on the other side really good sound quality (especially important for Treo users). The sound coming into your ear is not particularly loud, but it is clear, and will likely save a bunch of spouse-cell-phone fights. It uses military technology to feel the vibrations from your jaw (rests on your cheek), figures out everything that isn't your voice, and blocks it.



It isn't very good with wind (actually, it doesn't work at all when wind hits the microphone). Although it has about a 3-day battery life, after charging it, you have to re-pair it (the part where you type in 0000). There are only two buttons, and once you get the hang of it (a few days), it is really nice.

Cost is \$100-\$120, and they come in a variety of colors. Almost everyone at Iteon is using one now.

Tip: When you're talking, press the top bottom 5 times. It increases the volume incrementally, and it makes a huge difference in loud rooms.

Dell/HP, Vista, Vostro

If you want to buy a computer right now, you are going to be in for a rude surprise. After almost a year with some very good computer deals, the major manufacturers have raised prices--they've been up since early July. The price for an average business computer has risen by more than 70% (from about \$750 to almost \$1200). Deals are very hard to come by, and to add insult to injury, it is very difficult to get Windows XP pre-installed without paying through the nose.

This has been spurred by Microsoft. Love them or hate them, their agenda is to move us all from XP to Vista. Vista has been plagued by problems, and very few business users have adopted it. (Iteon has responded to almost 100 requests

to remove it.) Microsoft has been leaning hard on computer makers to include Vista (and to not sell XP at all). To make up for low sales volumes, Dell and HP have raised prices, which is further hurting their sales. Right now "custom" computer makers (both low-end and high-end) are doing very well.

Dell has introduced a new line that comes with XP as an option (Vostro), but it is overly expensive for the hardware included, and really just a misguided attempt at rebranding. Hopefully few buyers will be fooled.

A word of caution: If you find a deal on a Dell or HP right now, be wary. The sale price computers are so under-powered that they won't run most business software and will require expensive hardware and software upgrades. If you have to get a computer, expect to pay at least a \$500 premium over last year's prices. Try to either wait until the holidays (either just before or just after, prices should fall), or buy a custom built computer. RAM upgrades and/or repairs to your old computer may get you that few extra months you need to hold out for lower prices.

Postcards

Other the past few months, there has been a marked increase in the number of emails containing virii on the Internet. Many of these just look like spam (re: Picture Postcard from NY City), but clicking on the link can have very dire effects. The virus link site often uploads a "rootkit" (a program that allows remote control of your computer by a hacker) to your computer.

If you don't know what I'm talking about, it is probably because you have Postini (most of our clients use Postini for spam, but it also does email virus scanning). For people that don't use Postini and for your home computers, be extremely careful of emails that seem like Postcards (they are meant to look like they were sent from Tourist Kiosks).

Vista SP1—Not Yet!

Microsoft is even later than usual. In the last newsletter, I suggested waiting for SP1 before installing Vista. To be sure, do not move to Vista until SP1. In the last newsletter, I was wrong--the Maze opened a long time ago, and Microsoft has just reset expectations: January for SP1. Right now there are over 30 critical fixes they are testing, and approximately twice that many critical problems that have yet to be fixed. The fact that Post-Release Beta I (Microsoft calls this Vista) didn't sell well has hampered their ability to learn just how bad it really is without testing it internally.

The worst part of the whole Vista fiasco is that Vista doesn't really add much for business users. It is just another effort

Steve Walker
swalker@iteontech.com
510.289.3226

Sejo Jahic
sejo@iteontech.com
415.203.9213

by Microsoft to extract more money from computer users. (BTW--After using Office 2007 for 6 months, I uninstalled it and went back to Office 2003.)

Backup Exec 11d

Symantec has done a great job with their newest release of backup software, Backup Exec 11d (there is also a version for Small Business Server). While Iteon wasn't enthusiastic about previous versions of the software, 11d has fixed all of the problems with previous versions. It works well with disk-to-disk backup, now backs up Exchange in an efficient and fast manner, and has improved recovery options, which greatly aids recovery time, especially for mail.

Iteon recommends that all clients move to this software. It is well worth the cost for the piece of mind it brings.

Google

Google is doing a lot lately. This is just a review in case you've missed any of their cool toys. We know that there are more, but these are the things we at Iteon use every day:

- Google Maps (on the Treo)
- 46645 (Google SMS--enter the name of a business, and it will give you 411 type info for free)
- Google Earth (is this the coolest piece of software ever written? ...even if Microsoft had TerraServer first)
- Dial 1-800-466-4411 (GOOG-411) for information
- Google Translate (web sites, whole paragraphs)

Of course, everyone knows about gmail and Google Calendar.

definition: MASHUP. Combining information from two services in a creative way. Many interesting Mashups use Google Maps.

Iteon can create Mashups for your internal use. Ask us if you have something that you'd love to be doing.

Cell Phones

iPhone? -- Cool gadget, but not very useful for businesses. Mac people love them, but business people have not been flocking to them (btw--they are still \$400 even after the new price drop and don't work at AT&T's fastest speed. Email is not easy. Gyro features are cool and WiFi is a nice plus.

Treo 755 (Sprint Verizon) -- Just a hardware point release on the 750 (and 700). It isn't really much better, and the Treo is still heavy. On the AT&T side the Treo 680 is fine. Both phones are better than the 650, but neither is anything to write home about in terms of new features. Treo is probably still the best device out there in terms of ease of use and features, although the sound quality, weight, and battery life leave us hoping the next major revision will be better.

BlackJack -- Device sounds great and the battery lasts 4-6 days. If you sign up for a plan with AT&T, the phone is

only \$100. The screen is sufficient, and the device is much smaller and lighter than a Treo. It has a scroll wheel like the Blackberry--the only real negatives are that it runs Windows Mobile and is only available with GSM networks (AT&T).



Blackberry 8800 -- The current standard for Blackberry users. It is a good device, but with the usual limitations of Blackberries (Iteon usually recommends Good, rather than the Blackberry Server, but understands some clients really like their Blackberries).

Price Watch

Flat Panels

Flat panels are cheap. You may have to look for bargains (and be careful not to get low-end models), but 19" LCDs and 22" Wide Screen LCDs are a great deal--in the \$200-\$400 price range. Stop the eye torture! Now is the time to replace 15" and 17" LCDs very inexpensively. Samsung and Viewsonic are two of the best brands, although other brands have good models, too; some Samsung/Viewsonic models are not great. Feel free to ask us for recommendations!

Hard Drives

Hard drives are cheap right now. Hitachi has a 1000GB (1 Terabyte) drive. It is expensive, but it has driven the prices down for the smaller *big* drives (300GB, 400GB, 500GB, and 750GB). Also the PC sized drives (120GB and 160GB) are becoming the standard, but they aren't much cheaper than the 300GB drives. 80GB drives are pretty much a thing of the past. Please, do not buy Maxtor drives. Western Digital, Seagate, and Hitachi are all quality brands.

Desktops, Laptops, Servers

As mentioned above, now is not a good time to be buying computers of any sort from Dell or HP. It is likely that Laptop prices will also continue to be high and unstable for the next few months. Desktop prices will likely fall either just before the holidays or just after. Dell and HP prices on servers are stable, but not terribly low. They will likely rise before they fall, and expect volatility in server pricing.

Iteon News

Things are good at Iteon, and business continues to grow. We have two new engineers. Matthew Kell has been with us since May, and Chris Strobel joined us in July.

Matthew has a wide variety of technical skills, and his speed in solving problems is hard to beat. In his spare time he works with kids doing EMT work.

We hired Chris straight from Switzerland, where he and his family have been living for the last 5 years. He has two beautiful little girls.

As always, thank you for your business and referrals!