

Travel Advice for the Voyage to Microsoft's Vista and being Office 2007 Fluent

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ABSTRACT

This will be a panel discussion led by four faculty and will include those in the audience as each shares respective experiences of using and teaching students about the new Microsoft offerings. These include the Vista operating system along with Word, Excel, PowerPoint and Access in Office 2007. The intent is to provide useful information for those who are currently using these products and those deciding whether to make the transition or not.

SESSION DESCRIPTION

Many who have adopted the new Microsoft packages have initially found the transition to be a real trip and not just a walk in the park. The session will be an open forum led by individuals with trip experience. The purpose is to provide helpful information for those who are currently on this voyage and for those who are considering undertaking it. The panelists will present their experiences and members of the audience will also be encouraged to contribute.

OFFICE 2007

Office 2007 has been redesigned. No more menus, submenus toolbars and hidden dialog boxes. The tasks that existed in 2003 are still there, however learning the new navigation may take awhile. But for many the learning curve is not so great that is isn't worth the trip. One must be aware that there are different versions of Office 2007 and when purchasing a computer an upgrade to get the desired applications.

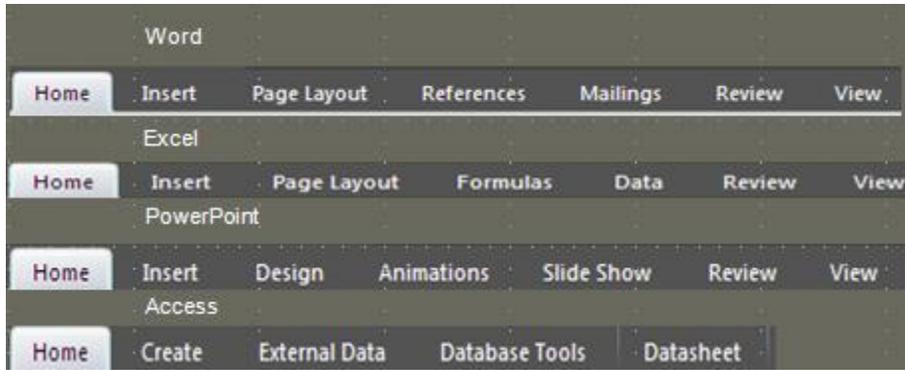
	Microsoft Office Basic 2007	Microsoft Office Home & Student 2007	Microsoft Office Standard 2007	Microsoft Office Small Business 2007	Microsoft Office Professional 2007	Microsoft Office Ultimate 2007 <i>NEW!</i>	Microsoft Office Professional Plus 2007	Microsoft Office Enterprise 2007 <i>NEW!</i>
Microsoft Office Word 2007	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Microsoft Office Excel 2007	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Microsoft Office PowerPoint 2007		●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Microsoft Office Outlook 2007	●		●				●	●
Microsoft Office Outlook 2007 with Business Contact Manager ¹				●	●	●		
Microsoft Office Accounting Express 2007 ²				●	●	●		
Microsoft Office Publisher 2007				●	●	●	●	●
Microsoft Office Access 2007					●	●	●	●
Microsoft Office InfoPath 2007						●	●	●
Microsoft Office Groove 2007						●		●
Microsoft Office OneNote 2007		●				●		●
Microsoft Office Communicator 2007 ¹							●	●
Integrated Enterprise Content Management						●	●	●
Integrated Electronic Forms						●	●	●
Advanced Information Rights Management and Policy Capabilities						●	●	●

To collaborate with other users still using 2003 there is a free compatibility download from Microsoft that allow opening of 2007 files in the 2003 application. The easiest way to find the download is to Google “**Microsoft Office Compatibility Pack for 2007 Office**”.

NEW COMMON 2007 FEATURES

The Ribbon

The Ribbon is the navigation feature of the new User Interface used in Word, Excel, PowerPoint and Access. Users now can see at a glance grouped options that change based upon the task being performed rather than clicking around on Menu items. Each general task is indicated on a separate tab. On tab there are sub-tasks that appear in Groups. In a group there are command buttons that can carry out a command or display more options and some of these may appear in a dialogue box. The Home, Inset, Review and View tabs appear on all three applications as shown below, but the groups and their contents are not the same for all four applications.



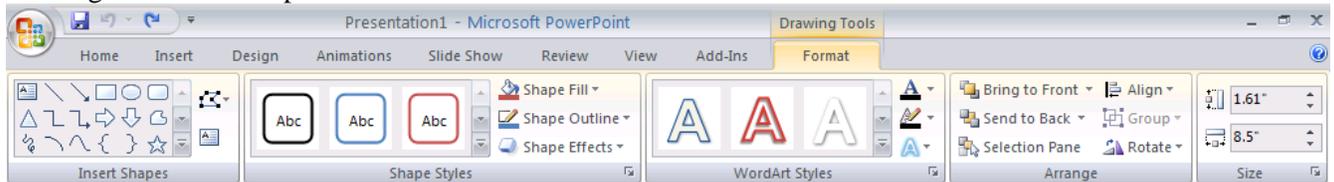
The Home tab is the first tab in all of the newly designed packages and displays the most commonly used tools for that application. For example at the Home tab in Word, the Clipboard, Font, Paragraph, Style and Find are the groups visible.



Double clicking on any tab reduces the Ribbon, clicking again to see the options or double clicking to restore the Ribbon. The Home tab shows when the application is launched and clicking on other tabs will show other options based upon the tab in use.

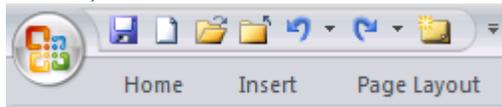
Contextual Tabs

Contextual tabs appear depending on tasks at hand. Here the Drawing Tools tab appears when working on an AutoShape.



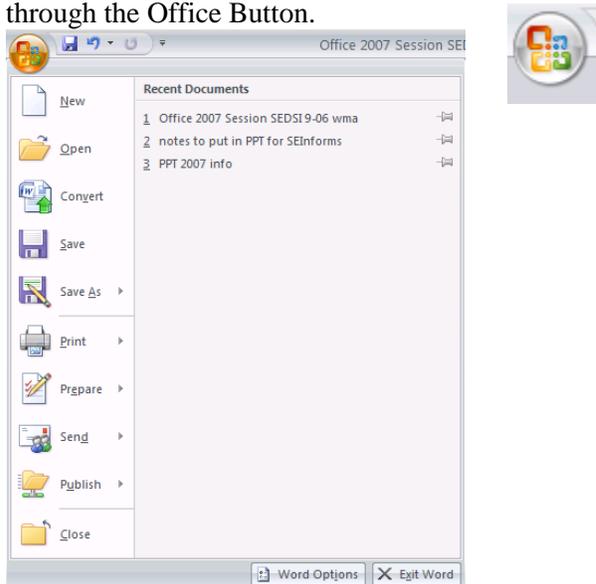
Quick Access Toolbar (QAT)

The QAT can be customized to include frequently used features. Icons are added by right mouse clicking items from the Ribbon or by clicking on the down arrow at the right of the QAT. Default is Save, Undo/Redo. It also can be moved below the Ribbon for quicker access.



Office Button

The Office Button replaces the File Menu. Save, Save As, Print, Send, Close, etc. are accessed through the Office Button.

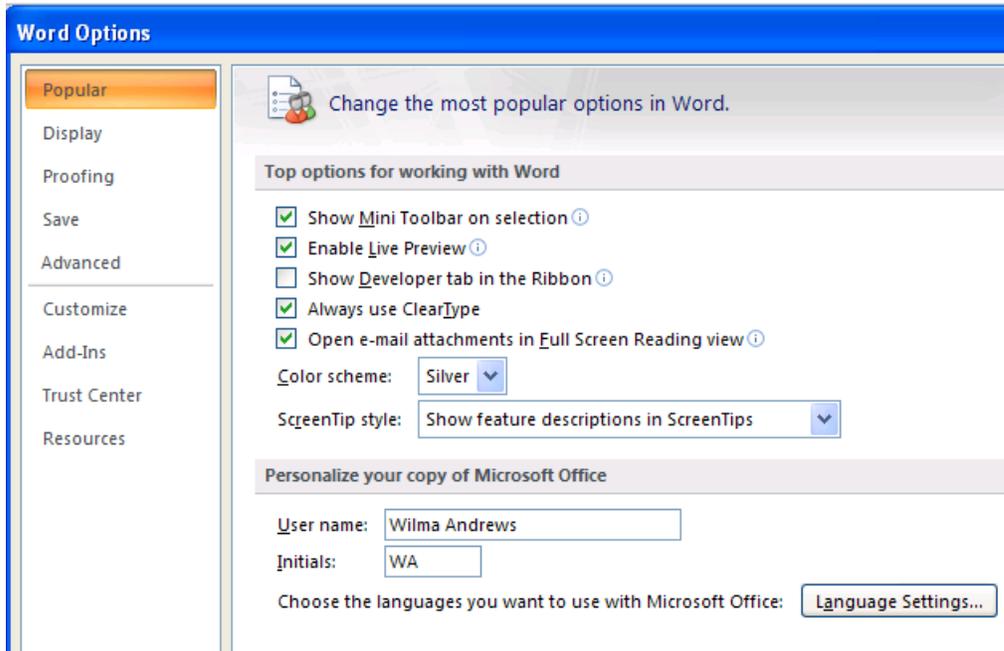


PDF and XPS support requires a free download but is at the Save As option for Word, Excel, Access and PowerPoint.

New File Extensions

New Office XML format for files gives new file extensions – docx, xlsx, pptx. (If there are macros in the document, an m will be at the end instead of the x.) These files in XML file format and are compressed up to 75% smaller. This format also improves damaged file recovery. Options to “save as” in a previous format are also at this screen. Currently Microsoft’s Internet Explorer changes the file extension to “zip” when downloading documents with the new four-character file extensions. Hence after it is downloaded one has to rename the file to change the “zip” extension to the appropriate new extension. Mozilla’s FireFox does not require renaming of files.

The screen obtained by pressing the Office Button is also where you access the Application Options via the button at the bottom of the page. These were located at the Tools/Options menu in earlier versions.



Color Scheme option here gives 3 Default Color Schemes – blue, silver, and black.

Status Bar Customization varies by application allows for the selection of visible functions. Some of these are common to all three and others are unique to the application. For example **Viewing options** that appear at the bottom right of the screen is a new feature that allows easy transition to a different view and can be turned on or off by selecting View Shortcuts. The **Zoom Slider** provides quick and easy zooming.



Full Screen Reading allows many formatting options and makes reading online easier.

MiniToolbar

The new Mini Toolbar appears when text is selected. It allows quick access to formatting options rather than having to access those options on the Ribbon.



Super Tooltips are descriptions with graphics that are linked directly to Help pages. Help screens are greatly improved and there are more of them.

SmartArt is new a graphic feature on the Insert tab. It includes improved diagrams and custom graphic layouts.

The **“Alt” key** provides readily indicated Key Board Shortcuts. Pressing the “Alt” key displays letters and numbers on the Ribbon that indicate the key board options available. Selecting a letter presents the subsequent set of choices available at the tab.

Galleries

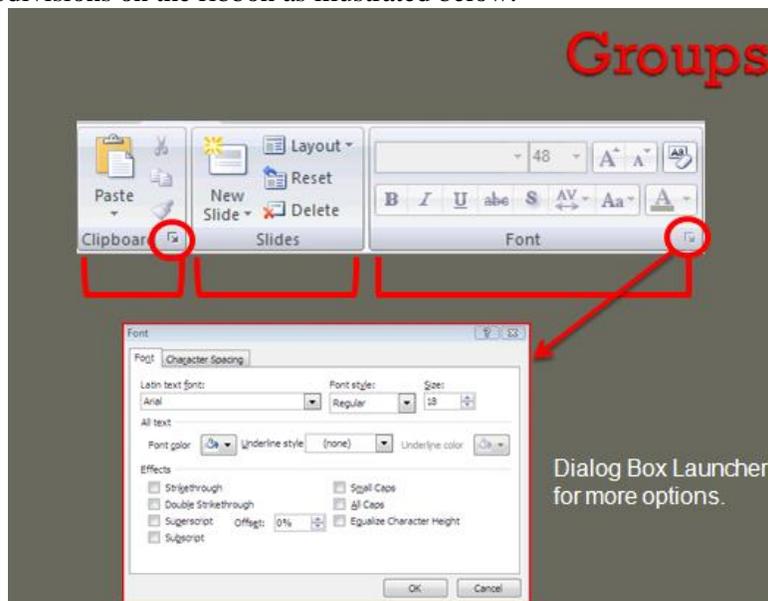
The new Gallery feature will allow the production of more professional looking documents without in-depth knowledge of all the options. Plus the view is shown while selecting so users will see the end results without finalizing a dialog box. In addition, personalized changes to color, font, etc. are possible.



Live Preview

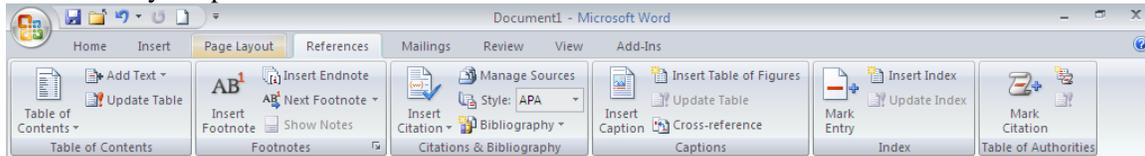
Live Preview, a great new feature, allows users to see what changes will look like before making a selection. As the user hovers over an option, immediate, but temporary, results are shown until one option is selected. Examples include views of font changes, formatting styles, Gallery options, etc.

Groups are subdivisions on the ribbon as illustrated below.



WORD 2007

Creating a professional looking document and including visual formatting can be done quicker and has been made easier. Quick Parts consisting of a specified set of text or equations are building blocks that can be used on demand in creating documents. Word has new Equation Tools accessible from the Insert tab that is very different from the old equation editor. This is not available in Compatibility Mode. However one can create an equation using the Microsoft Equation Editor 3.0 in Excel 2007 as an option under Object and then copy this equation into a Word document. Blog Support with Word allows writers to create a Word document and output to blog-compatible HTML. On the Inset tab in the Tables group one option is an Excel spreadsheet. Excel functionality is provided when the table is created and when the table is highlighted. With an add-in you can save your documents in pdf or xps formats. The References tab unique to Word has several improved features that should save time when preparing academic articles ready for publication.



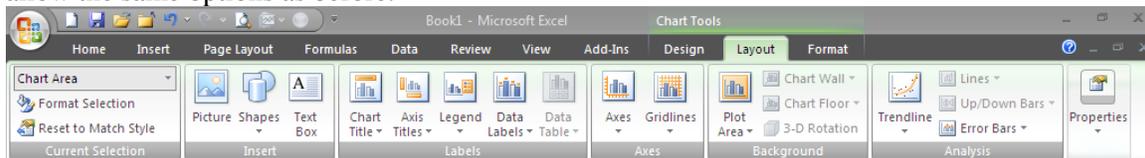
The Mailings tab brings more focus on the mail merge capabilities and facilitates the process for mail merges.

EXCEL 2007

Excel has larger worksheets (1 million rows and 16,000 columns), a formula bar that expands without covering up sections of the worksheet, additional features at the Status Bar, a Quick format gallery showing many new chart layouts, conditional formatting with many new features, new charting options, and pivot table changes. Viewable headers and footers are visible in the Page Layout View.

The main changes have been visual in nature, which includes a change in where things can be found. There are no more wizards for charts and PivotTables. The charting features have been changed. In previous versions of Excel a general rule that worked well was that if the user wanted to change something the mouse should be moved to point to whatever was to be changed then double-clicking on it would provide a menu or other opportunity to make the change. In Excel 2007 the workable rule is to right-mouse click instead of double-clicking.

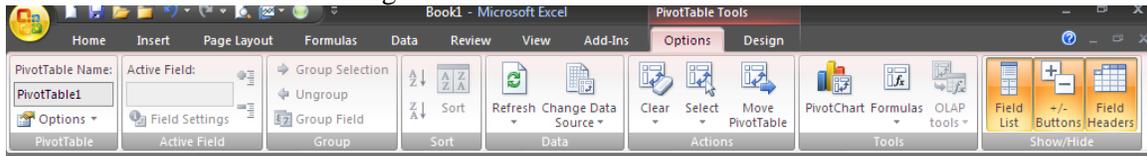
With the disappearance of the Chart Wizard, the different chart types are in a Charts group on the Insert tab and can be selected and inserted onto a worksheet, but there is no possibility to specify titles, labels or other previously available options as the chart is created. Hence one has to make these types of selections after the chart has been created. Once a chart is selected then Excel adds three additional contextual tabs: Design, Layout and Format as shown below. These essentially allow the same options as before.



Three dimensional column charts can no longer be rotated by selecting the image and rotating by clicking on a corner and moving the image with the mouse. Instead there is a 3-D Rotation item on a menu that allows rotation of one axis at a time.

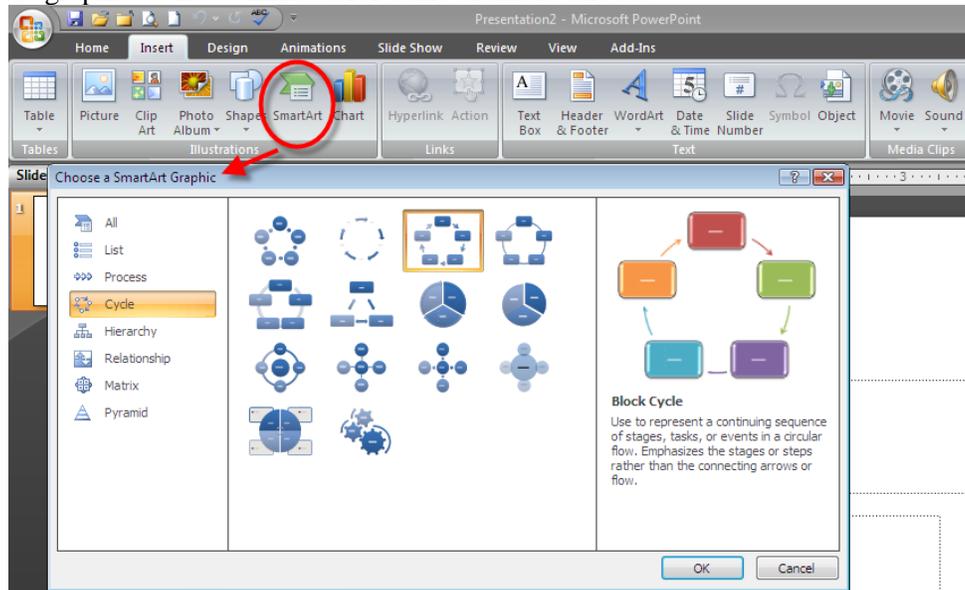
Currently there is a bug in the charting capabilities associated with Regression in Data Analysis. When performing multiple regression Excel2003 would produce multiple charts providing Line Fit Plots and Residual Plots for each independent variable (They were stacked on top of each other only showing a small segment of each chart) and a Normal Probability Plot. Excel 2007 will only produce one of the Line Fit Plots or Residual Plots and the Normal Probability Plot is incorrectly displayed as a histogram. To get the residual plots the user has to use the Excel generated residuals and then create each plot individually.

PivotTables are created from the Insert tab and no longer use the wizard. The mechanism for dragging fields in to the respective positions in the table looks different but functions much the same as in 2003. Once the table is created, clicking on a cell in the table or highlighting the table causes Excel to add two contextual tabs (Options and Design) under the title PivotTable Tools. These can be used to make changes to the table.

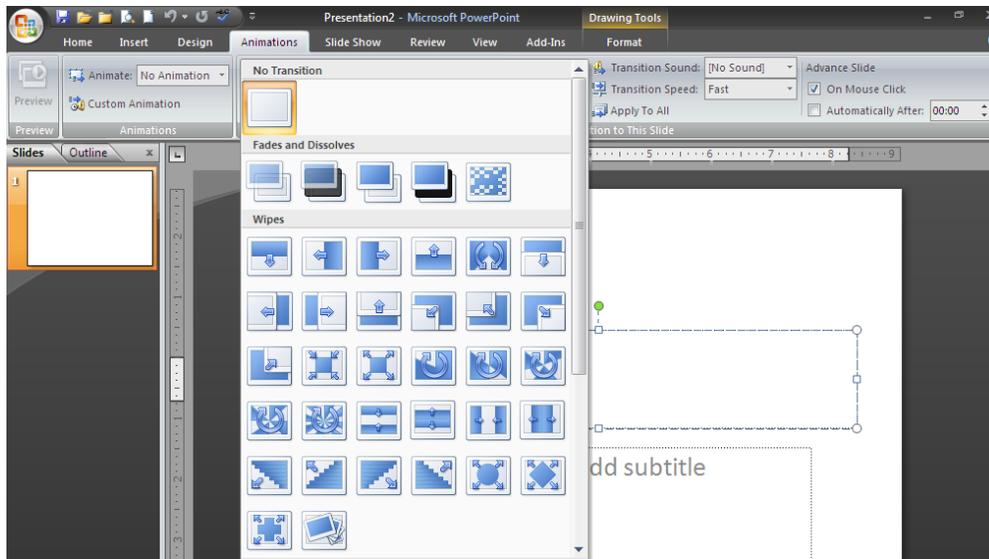


POWERPOINT 2007

SmartArt in PowerPoint provides many more graphics for presentations than in previous versions. Plus these graphics can be animated for some dramatic effects.



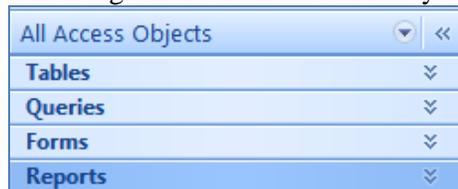
Animation options are more plentiful including new slide transitions.



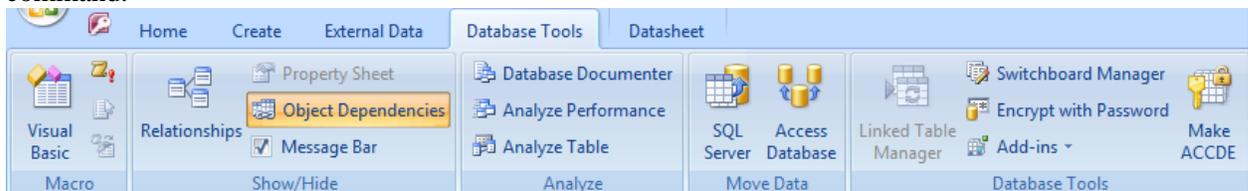
There are table and chart enhancements, proofing tools, and Presenter View using 2 monitors. Themes used in PPT can be repeated in Word and Excel documents for a unified look. The reduced document file size in Office 2007 is especially noticed with PowerPoint presentations.

ACCESS 2007

Microsoft Access is perhaps one of the most impacted components of Office in the change to 2007 both from an aesthetic and a functional point of view. Not much in Access 2007 has remained the same. Just like the other Office applications, Toolbars have been replaced by a Ribbon which usually displays a cluster of toolbars that have logical connections. The actual icons within toolbars have not changed. So, the major change for the 2003 user is to get to the right tab on the Ribbon. Another area that has remained the same in this application is the use of Wizards. This is especially important to those using Report and Label Wizards. You can still follow the same procedures even though there are now easier ways to create these objects.

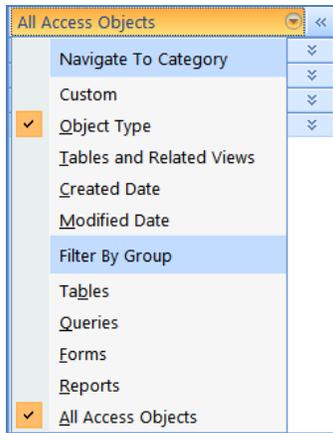


Most of the objects in the Object Navigation area such as Tables, Forms, Queries and Reports have stayed the same and now they all can be displayed simultaneously. Objects such as Pages, Macros and Modules have disappeared from the Object Navigation area. Pages are now clustered with Tables and handled with Access' sister software SharePoint. Macros are clustered with Queries and Modules are now under Database Tools tab and are designed using Visual Basic command.

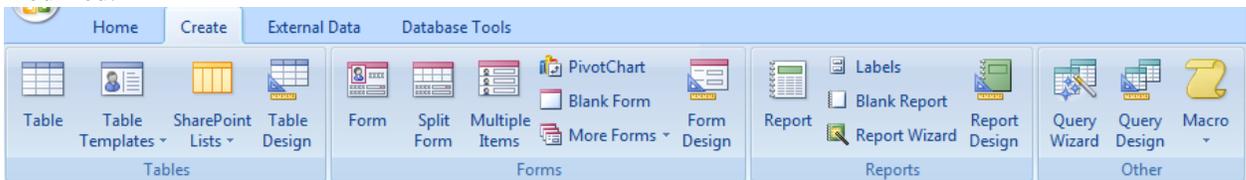


Few other things such as creating Queries in design view, establishing Relationships, creating New Tables, rearranging fields in forms and reports are still done the same as in the previous versions of Access.

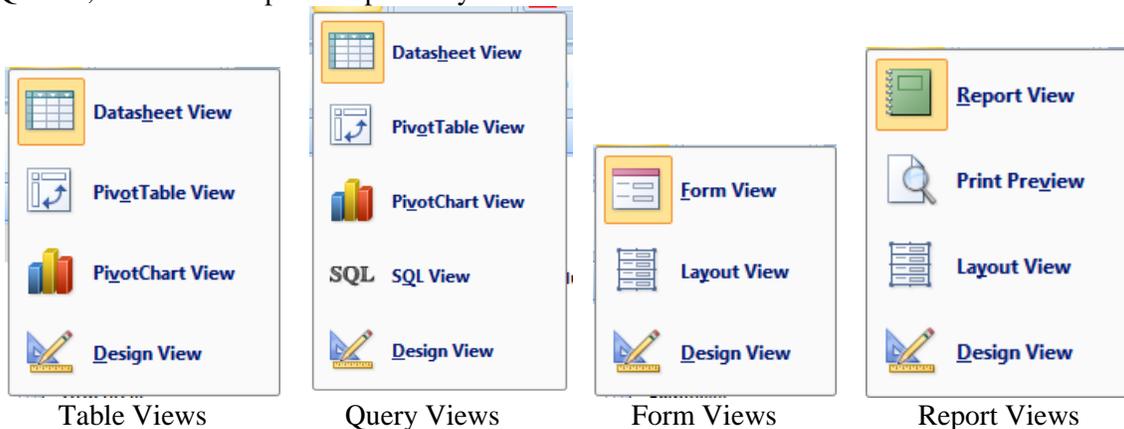
Numerous items have a new look in Access 2007. The old text menu that used to appear on top of the screen is no longer there. Most noticeably is the absence of File which is now under the Office Button like it is for the other applications. Edit, View, Insert, Format, Tools, Records, and Windows commands have been replaced by Home, Create, External Data, Database Tools, and Datasheet tabs on the Ribbon.



All Access Objects area (Objects area in the old version) has a new look and there is an option of displaying all Access objects in a database and arranging them by type, date created or date modified.



New objects can no longer be created or existing objects edited in this area. Those operations are relegated to the Create tab shown above, and one single key on Home tab allows displaying an object in different views. The images below show the various available views for Tables, Queries, Forms and Reports respectively.



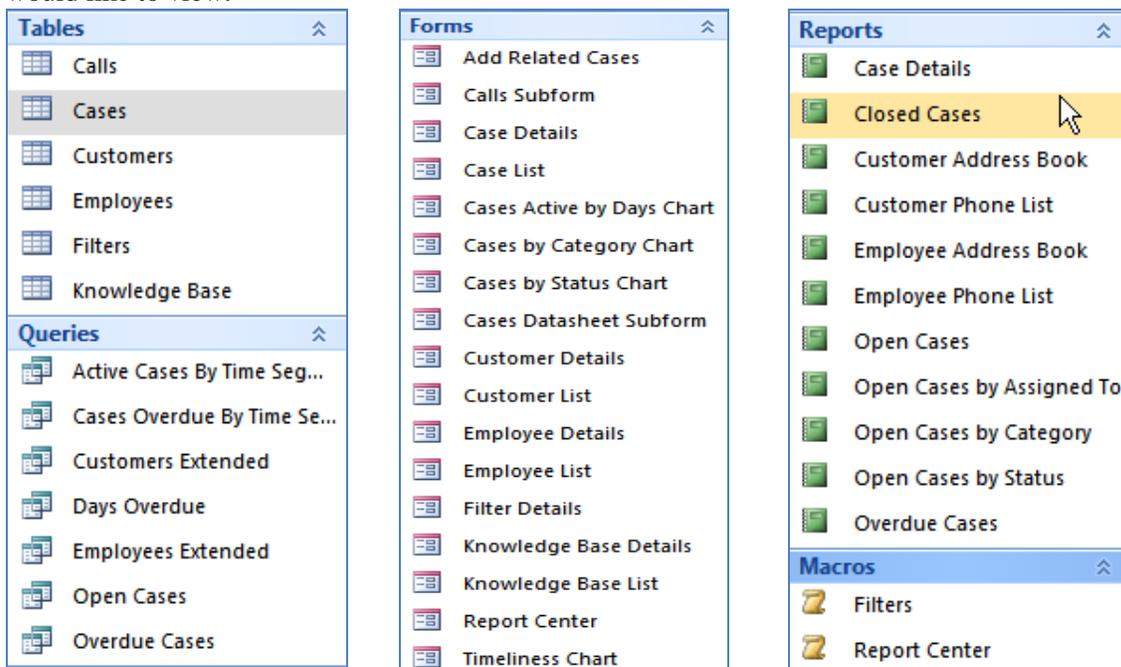
As in the other applications the formatting and cut & paste operations can be performed on the Home tab. Users still have the option of creating objects from scratch or automating the process using auto design or wizards.

There are a few new features in Access 2007 that make life easier for both the expert and novice user. To start, the splash screen is no longer a generic file browser but rather an area where novice users can download predefined templates in several categories.



This is helpful since it eliminates defining data structures that could be a daunting task for beginners. These templates provide a complete blank database that is ready to be populated. It is just like cooking a meal that only requires adding water. For example, under Business category, the Customer Service database can be downloaded within seconds and opened in Access. This database comes complete with 6 Tables, 7 Queries, 17 Forms, 11 Reports, and 2 Macros. The user only needs to add data. This can be done without a course in Data Structures or Database Management Systems!

The Object Navigation bar is on the right side of the screen and what is new in this area is that all objects can be displayed simultaneously and can be arranged by various categories. For example, Tables & Related Views can be used to arrange all objects relating to a table. This means that one can now tell what objects are impacted when the content of a table is changed. Objects can also be arranged by date created and date modified allowing one to filter out only the objects one would like to view.



A form or a report can be created on the fly by pointing to any table or even any object. There is no need for designing new auto forms or auto reports and a report can be created while designing

or previewing a form. How cool is that! Wizards have to be used if the desire is to not dump all fields into a form or a report.

VISTA OPERATING SYSTEM

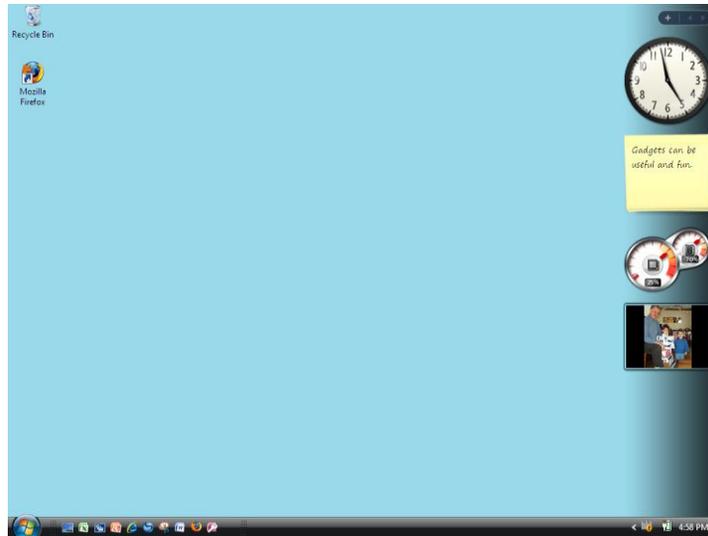
There are several versions of the new Windows Vista with different features. The basic version on many new computers may not be sufficient for a user’s needs and the purchaser of new computer should be prepared to pay for upgrades.



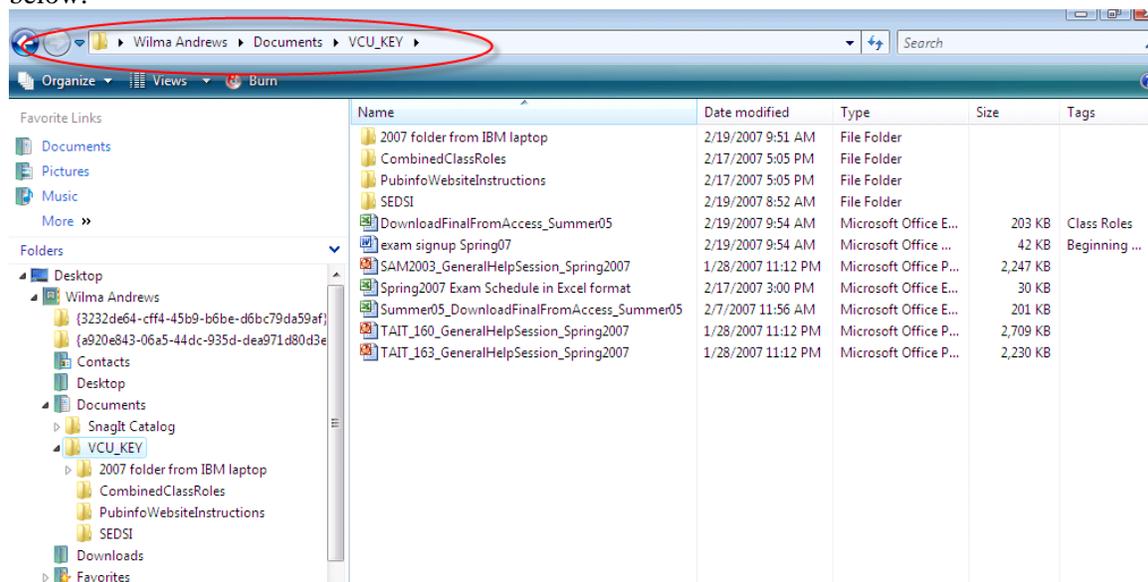
Features	Home Basic	Home Premium	Business	Ultimate
Most secure Windows ever with Windows Defender and Windows Firewall	✓	✓	✓	✓
Quickly find what you need with Instant Search and Windows Internet Explorer 7	✓	✓	✓	✓
Elegant Windows Aero desktop experience with glass-like menu bars, Windows Flip 3D, and Live Thumbnails		✓	✓	✓
Best choice for laptops with Windows Mobility Center and Tablet PC support		✓	✓	✓

Also system requirements are much larger than XP. There is a download at the Microsoft site that will test the computer to see if Vista will work. (At Google type “**Vista Upgrade Advisor**”). It does a free scan of our computer that takes about 10 minutes and will give recommendations and indicate which of your installed programs will be compatible. This compatibility issue may be a big deciding factor as to whether you want to upgrade or not. For example, SAS is not currently Vista compatible.

Beyond the basic version there is a graphic user interface and style called Aero Glass which gives glass-like menu bars, live thumbnails, and a 3-D flip to view open files. Other desktop features in several Vista versions is a Gadget Bar with options for clock, notes, CPU usage, pictures, stock quotes, time, etc. that are on the desktop and additional features can be downloaded from the Internet.



Navigation at Windows Explorer has changed to a bread crumb system as shown in the diagram below.



Greatly improved Search features can be accessed from the Start button and search will even include Outlook if it is used for emails.



Security:

Outside of the new bells and whistles, the main theme of Vista is something that most users do not see, and therefore are less likely to appreciate: **security**.

Background

Rumors of the new Windows version began slipping out in 2004, with hints of actual release dates beginning in mid-2005. The wave of expectation crested long before the product hit the shelves early **in 2007**. So without a big launching event, the question remains, then: **who needs it?** Having sat on the desktop for so long now, Windows XP has earned a solid place of affection for both the casual user and the seasoned champion. Previous major releases of Windows have included demonstrable feature upgrades to tempt the purchase price from users' wallets. For the typical user, an operating system is a necessary evil required to access the true purpose of owning a computer. This is not dissimilar to the requirement to buy insurance before driving your new car off of the dealer's lot. With Vista, the insurance against malware may actually justify the expense.

Another drag on new release adoption, especially from Microsoft, centers on the hardware required. The tradeoffs between making use of cutting edge hardware architecture and mass market appeal challenge any software developer. The behemoth size of Microsoft Vista magnifies this dilemma. For Vista to operate, the minimum configuration requires 512MB of internal memory. As with many products, the minimum configuration results in minimum performance, which introduces a new suite of problems for the adopting public. To run well, Vista requires at least 1GB of memory—this limits the target audience to those who have purchased machines within the prior 12 months of its release. Historically, it seems that new releases of Windows achieve market penetration through new machine purchases, anyway. This begins a new discussion of the impact of companies such as Dell or Gateway making operating system options part of the pricing equation.

Some blog commenter's support the claim that Vista is designed to protect the computer from outside intruders. However they also suggest that the purchaser may want to consider the potential danger from what is inside Vista. It may seem innocuous but it has the potential for Microsoft to monitor and control things that you may not want them to monitor and control. One individual indicated that he would buy a Mac before he would put Vista on his personal computer.