

History of the microsoft operating system research paper

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History of the Microsoft Operating System

Before purchasing a computer, one would often take into account a variety of factors that would ensure that he gets the satisfaction of his purchase. He would consider the price, the memory capacity, the features and most especially, the operating system. There are many operating systems available in the market, but only one has retained its popularity since the development period of the computer in the early 1970s. This OS is known as the Microsoft Windows Operating System, developed by Microsoft Corporation. This paper will discuss the history of this popular and dynamic operating system and discover how it has changed since its inception. According to Jaeger (2008), the development of Microsoft Windows began with the introduction of MS-DOS, the original operating system for IBM computers in 1981. MS-DOS was developed by Tim Paterson through the use of Quick and Dirty Operating System or the QDOS system. Microsoft purchased the MS-DOS system Paterson developed from his company, the Seattle Computer Products. Unlike the operating systems such as Multics and UNIX, MS-DOS was limited in terms of its features. It was incapable of performing various tasks, and it was not able to utilize the x86 processor it runs. Through MS-DOS's GUI, Windows was developed. Most of the Windows systems were variations of MS-DOS model, and up to present, it is still utilized by its current versions .

After the MS-DOS, the Windows Platform has evolved to a more user-friendly interface. Ritchie (2003) stated that Apple was slowly becoming a contender in terms of a more user-friendly interface since Microsoft still has a bland interface. Microsoft created the first version of Windows by 1985. Since the

entire Windows system is based from the MS-DOS system, both were combined in such a way that Windows became the user friendly interface of the operating system. Upon a few years, Windows 95 was released in 1995 which supported some of the innovations from the 3.1 version of the Windows series. Windows 95 boasted a 32-bit memory and a protective memory system, it also had a pre-emptive process scheduling for easy booting, and had a more user friendly interface, introducing color and easier options as compared to the MS-DOS series. This Windows series was concentrated to home and small office users upon its release since these groups did not require complex security and durability features. For large businesses and companies, Windows NT was introduced three years earlier for more critical applications and multi-tasking capacity.

Windows NT provides users a more secured system as it hosts 32-bit memory addressing and memory protection, and it does not need MS-DOS to load. For MS-DOS related programs, the NT uses a virtual DOS machine to simulate MS-DOS. The VDM, however, has limits as it cannot fully utilize MS-DOS especially when the program directly accesses the hardware of the PC. The NT also has two main parts: the user mode and the kernel-mode. The Kernel-mode provides all the administrative functions of the operating system and undermines all of the system's functions. After NT and Windows 95, Windows 98 was introduced and it updated the Windows 95 operating system since it now includes plug and play functions and disk reading function. The Millennium Edition or Windows 2000 came later in 2000 and just enhanced Windows 98's abilities. The Windows 2000 edition also included the NT interface as it now enables data encryption and distributed

processing. Administration capacity of users is also taken from the NT interface and is now on a user-friendly interface.

After a year, Windows XP introduced a more upgraded version of Windows 2000/ME. It also introduced a more elaborate user interface depending on the edition purchased. Windows XP had the Professional edition, concentrated in a more sophisticated market while the Home Edition catered to the families who purchase a single PC for their homes and for those who would need a PC for standard applications such as Word, Excel and PowerPoint . In addition to Windows XP's updated features, according to Coward and Knittel (2008), the operating system can emulate other operating systems. It also enables the user to determine which version of Windows it should use when a program requires an earlier version or not. A couple of years later, Windows Vista is launched in 2006, and it has thoroughly revised the user-interface known in Windows XP. The processing power of the Vista is more powerful than its predecessor. It has preserved Windows XP's corporate networking features and added more multimedia capacities such as the use of projectors, slideshows and even DVD/CD burning. The Vista also has a variety of packages, ranging from Home, Ultimate and Professional. The Vista's Home and Ultimate versions possess a wider range of Media Centre capabilities not found in its predecessor models. Vista's interface is the best version yet like its successor, Windows 7. It competes with Apple's OS X and Vista utilizes a specific programme known as the Aero, which gives out a more contemporary feel of the desktop, and the whole interface. Aero also acts like a glass, which enables users to view their wallpapers like a glass. Windows Vista also has a more effective

security feature as it has its own unique spyware, anti-virus and malicious software removal tools . Eventually, the Windows Vista system is adapted to its successor, the Windows 7 operating system. Windows 7 is said to be Vista's more stable release and at present, Microsoft is updating the 7 operating system to its Windows 8 series.

References

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