

Near disaster

Last night I was a bit exhausted from work, short nights of sleep, choir on the weekend, small group... Well, you get the picture. So it is understandable that when I read a news item about some new Vista Ultimate extras and I went to Windows update to get them and saw SP1 asking to be installed instead, I decided why not?

Well, as it turns out, the answer to that question is the reason it showed up for me so many months after its release. I forgot that I rejected it a while back due to problems I read about. What problems you ask? Failed installations for starters. No problem, right? I can always restore if there's a problem. Why not just forget for the moment this is the infamous Microsoft we're discussing? Yeah, sure, I did. ☐

I didn't remember I rejected it, and I didn't remember the installation issues. So as I said I started the installation, which by the way said could take over an hour and did even on this fast machine of mine. I should say unsuccessful installation. It *seemed* like it worked, but then it rebooted, disk activity for a while, then... blue screen of death. Great... Okay, rebooted to try again, same results. Starting to feel the dread coming on I chose to repair next time and it asked me if I wanted to restore. Sigh. All that time wasted. I clicked yes and waited. And waited. And waited. Eventually, I looked at the hard drive activity light and no activity. What? I unsuccessfully tried a few other things and eventually wound up at the restore application itself (the other was the repair app) and noticed all the points I could choose from. All one of them that is. The SP1 installation created a point and decided, hey why not delete the old restore points? Gee, thanks Microsoft. Well, I tried the one restore point and started the process. Things were looking good until it got to the end where it was "finalizing the restore." At this point (no pun intended) all hard drive

activity stopped and the finalizing animation kept going, and going... Clearly, this was the point where the repair program failed.

I looked online on the other computer and found out that this was a common problem, and there were few solutions. I wound up downloading a Vista recovery CD and a Ubuntu (Linux) CD in case I had to restore the entire system. With that, I could hopefully move critical files to the D: drive before reformatting. You may have noticed in the headline I wrote **near** disaster. As it turned out, I didn't need the Linux CD because the Vista recovery CD worked. Not that I expected it to after I saw it just had the same tools as on my HD that I already tried. I tried the repair, and it actually found a problem. Maybe. It said the boot record was corrupt and repaired it. Reboot. Nope. Now it seemed worse. Wonderful. I booted the CD again and tried the restore program just for kicks. Well, surprise surprise- no, really- **it actually finished the restore!** By now the computer had my full attention as I watched it reboot, start loading, get past the problem point, get to the GUI, and... LOGIN SCREEN! YES!!

Lesson learned- no service packs on **this** computer, a big thanks but no thanks. Security updates, but no big service packs. And I think my next software purchase will be a good backup program that is hopefully mostly painless unlike the basic one included with the OS. Ghost maybe? During yesteryear it was supposed to be a good program. Now...?

Well, back to the regular posts next time.