

## **Windows XP**

### **This is a Letter From the Editor for the “Windows XP” issue of Hardware Platforms.**

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A change to the operating system environment is among the toughest challenges IT organizations will face, given the scale, complexity and risk involved for most large enterprises. Making the right changes, at the right time, is vital to success.

Microsoft's Windows XP is the next operating system challenge. It certainly does include interesting new features that will be compelling for some users, but is that a good-enough reason to start planning mass migration? No. Enterprises are going to have to assess both the benefits and the costs to make a sound business decision. Many factors are involved, not least of which are changes to licensing and upgrade policies.

For many users, the benefits of upgrading from Windows 2000 won't outweigh the costs. For users running Windows 95, the benefits are irrelevant, given that support for Windows 95 — the senior citizen of the OS world — is coming to an end. For the rest, the reality lies between the two poles. The decision will have to be based on an individual enterprise's assessment of the risks and benefits.

Diversity is the key to success. It may no longer be viable for large organizations to standardize on one version of an operating system. A gradual introduction of the latest version of Windows is likely to prove the most cost-effective option over time, even if that does mean that end-users will not all be running the same version.

Mike Silver's "Windows and Office XP: Microsoft's New 'Experiences,'" AV-14-6982, outlines the issues and highlights the elements of this Spotlight that will help readers assess the risks and benefits. Enterprises need to adopt the right strategies at the right time, not only for the Windows operating system, but also for Microsoft's Office XP suite of applications.

As always, Gartner wants to know what you think of our research: What benefits you, and what you would like to see us cover in the future. Please contact me directly at any time at [anne.powell@gartner.com](mailto:anne.powell@gartner.com)

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