

Microsoft Office XP Released to Manufacturing With Widespread Industry Support

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Timex and Vanguard, and Other Key Customers and Industry Partners Praise Office XP

Microsoft(r) today announced that Microsoft Office XP, the new version of the world's leading office software, has been released to manufacturing and will be available for retail purchase later this spring. The company has completed extensive development and test efforts for Office XP, which is the most significant version of Office ever released. Major customers, industry partners and developers, including Timex Corp. and The Vanguard Group, are lining up in support of Office XP, which will deliver exciting new experiences for all types of customers, whether they are at home or in the enterprise. These experiences simplify productivity, enable collaboration for everyone, and provide flexible ways to solve business needs.

"Office XP's greatest strength is that it delivers extensive new innovations that will truly improve the way people work by enabling them to be more efficient and productive with their PC," said David Bennie, product marketing manager for Office XP at Microsoft Ltd. "We worked with a wide range of customers to shape this product, and we are excited to see that customer response has been very positive about Office XP."

Customer Evaluation Picks Up Speed

More than 500,000 corporate customers have the opportunity to evaluate the Office XP corporate preview release over the next several months, and many customers already have expressed enthusiasm about Office XP. Customers are interested in the new productivity and collaboration capabilities delivered in Office XP, which will enable them to work more effectively and communicate better with others.

"Office XP is an exciting new product that delivers vast productivity improvements to our organisation," said Michel Fouchard, CIO of Timex. "From smart tags to SharePoint Team Services to reliability innovations, Office XP delivers a wealth of new features that will benefit everyone in our organisation."

Customers are also pleased with features in Office XP that enable them to tightly integrate Office XP with information from the Web and other applications, including SharePoint Portal Server, the flexible portal solution from Microsoft that allows companies to easily find, share and publish information.

"Vanguard is very excited about the new features and functions of Microsoft Office XP, which we anticipate will have a significant impact on the daily work of our crew members using this software," said Jay Llewellyn, master architect, Corporate and International Systems, The Vanguard Group. "In addition, Office XP's Web capabilities coupled with its tight integration with Microsoft SharePoint Portal Server make it a powerful weapon in Vanguard's intranet arsenal."

Industry analysts also are supportive of the new technologies in Office XP and believe it is a substantial upgrade over Office 2000.

"A first look at Office XP clearly shows many compelling new innovations that make this a product people will want to get their hands on," said Amy Wohl, president of Wohl Associates Inc. "Advancements like smart tags, SharePoint Team Services and integrated Web Services have the potential to significantly improve productivity and offer a new way to collaborate with others. I expect an entire new industry to develop around smart tags as a new way of providing in-place information and choices."

Broad Industry Support for Office XP

With Office XP retail availability now just a few months away, industry partners, solution providers and developers also are rallying around the new desktop productivity solution.

Hundreds of Microsoft Certified Solution Providers (MCSPs) and independent software vendors (ISVs) already are building Office XP solutions. Office XP's support of new standards-based technology enables developers and solution providers to build a broad set of business solutions on the Office platform.

"Office XP provides great opportunities for solution providers to take advantage of technologies like XML, extensible smart tags and Office Web Components to quickly deliver the custom solutions customers need," said Rand Morimoto, president of Convergent Computing. "We can create custom solutions in the familiar Office development environment that take advantage of the advanced capabilities in Office XP to provide entirely new opportunities for our customers."

By leveraging the new technologies in Office XP, industry partners can help their customers reduce development and deployment costs, training and expense costs, and quickly create and deploy custom solutions.

"Our company is experienced in building Web-based solutions with Office XP, using the Office Web Components to expose Excel's rich analytical capabilities," said Rob O'Dell, solution director, Knowledge Management Solutions, Alpha Technologies Inc., an Immediant Company. "Using Office XP as a development platform, we can take advantage of the familiar Excel user interface to rapidly develop custom, value-added Business Intelligence solutions to enable our customers to better manage their business."

Pricing, technology guarantee, system requirements and availability details will be announced at a later date.

About Office XP and Microsoft

Office XP presents people with the tools needed to work smarter. Office XP greatly improves personal productivity through simplifying the way people work and providing tools that people can rely on; enables collaboration by making it easy to collaborate on documents and work more effectively with others; and extends Office beyond the desktop by enabling people to integrate additional services into Office and easily access information any time. Office XP will be broadly available in the first half of 2001.

Founded in 1975, Microsoft (Nasdaq "MSFT") is the worldwide leader in software, services and Internet technologies for personal and business computing. The company offers a wide range of products and services designed to empower people through great software -- any time, any place and on any device.

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