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Don't Find Windows Vista Guilty until Proven Innocent

Is Windows Vista just another pretty face, or is it the operating system that is best for doing your job? I have to admit that Vista is pretty and, on a computer that meets its greedy hardware requirements, runs just fine. However, people are encountering some glitches that still need a little more time to get ironed out. I'm not talking about how it runs Eclipse. I've been using Vista Business for a while now, with no problems with Eclipse. The Advantage Software website has information for configuring a computer with Vista for Eclipse.

For those of you resisting upgrading to Vista and who are still clinging to an XP system, I find Windows XP still to be just fine. It will do the job; and as far as I know, XP will run almost all of the applications that Vista will. However, as I get more accustomed to it, Vista is starting to win me over.

I've had two computers with Vista, so I'm going to relate my firsthand experience with the upgrade. The first computer I got running Vista was a Lenovo Thinkpad T61. My first impression was that Vista is visually very appealing but also a little confusing because there are quite a few changes from XP — things like where folders are located, the control panel, the layout of the start button, etc. As with anything new, there is a learning curve.

There have been changes made to the audio features in Vista which are of note to court reporters. Microsoft says they did this to improve playback and recording, and it does have much promise. In addition, the settings for configuring the microphone and recording levels in Vista are different than XP. I have to admit I was challenged with configuring Vista for audiosync and a little frustrated at first.

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We have enough Youth.
How about a Fountain of SMART?

Check out CR Forum
Great professional chat and info on Eclipse.
(See the quick link at www.KVincent.com.)

Please keep in mind that because of the volume of e-mail we receive and the fact that we are volunteering our time for this free newsletter, we can't routinely answer individual questions by phone or e-mail, nor can we consult on individual problems or purchasing decisions.

Eclipse Update Seminar at Calif. Reporters Convention Presented by Keith Vincent - Saturday, Oct. 6th, 9AM to Noon (.3 CEU)

Los Angeles Downtown Marriott Hotel
For complete information on the Oct. 5-7th convention,
visit www.cal-ccra.org

New "Simply Magic" Total Eclipse Seminars Presented by Keith Vincent & Amy Enberg

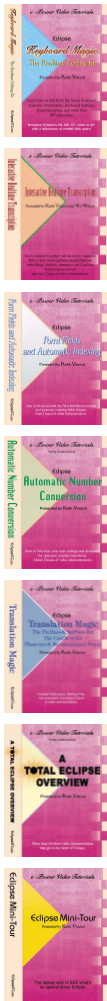
Houston - 9/28-30 Dallas - 10/12-14 San Antonio - 10/26-28, 2007
For complete information, click on the "Workshops" button at www.KVincent.com.

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“Clean” Playback of Synchronized Audio

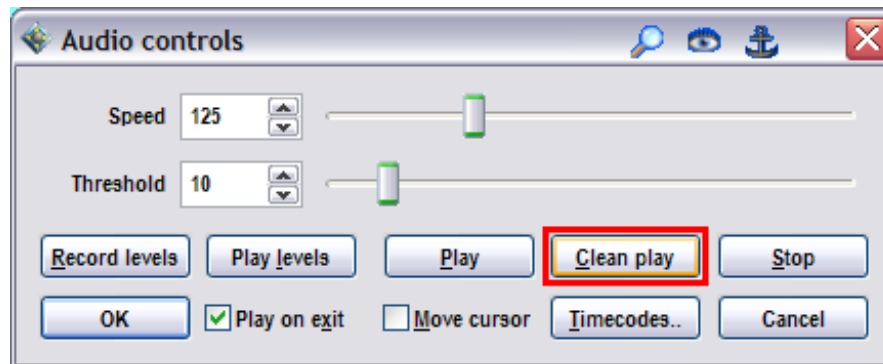
- Keith Vincent -



Keith Vincent

In e-Tip #43 (February 2005), I shared a few macros for quickly switching back and forth between Normal and Faster Playback. Well, the Audio Control Panel of Total Eclipse Version 4.2, now includes a “Clean play” button that serves the same purpose in a much better way.

First, let’s find the “Clean play” button. Open an Eclipse document. Go to the “Tools” menu, “Multimedia,” and “Control Panel.” The “Clean play” button is between “Play” and “Stop.”



“Clean play” does NOT miraculously turn distorted recordings into crystal-clear ones. It does NOT turn whispers and mumbles into perfectly audible speech. So what does it do? **“Clean play” lets you instantly switch from sped-up or slowed-down and/or squelched audio playback so that you can hear what was recorded, at its original speed, without any skipping over silences and pauses.**

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Side Notes on Audio Controls (Speedkey: Shift Ctrl A)

The dialogue shown on this page centralizes many audio playback features. From here you can adjust the volume for “Record levels” and “Play levels.” If the audio is playing too far behind your cursor or too far ahead of your cursor, use the “Timecodes” button to adjust “Timecode offset.”

A check in the **“Play on exit”** box means you could adjust your speed or volume threshold and the playback would begin as soon as you click OK or press Enter or Escape. A check in the **“Move cursor”** box means Eclipse will automatically scroll through your document as it’s playing back the audio. Very helpful if you like to listen to the audio as you proofread. Just keep in mind that you’ll have to stop or pause playback where you want to edit.

On the “Audio controls” dialogue, “Stop” means “stop playback.” It does NOT affect recording. In contrast, if you are recording and the “Audio controls” dialogue is NOT open, then the command for “Pause” will mean “pause recording” and the “Stop” command will mean “stop recording.” A warning dialogue will appear to keep you from accidentally stopping the recording.

So if you’re recording audio during realtime translation and you give the “Play” command, how do you pause the playback without pausing the recording? Just give the “Play” command one more time. The “Play” command is actually a toggle whose function goes back and forth from start playback to pause playback to start playback.

TeleView, Bridge, and CaseViewNet - Keith Vincent

After last month's article on "Your Own Intranet for Wireless Realtime with TeleView," we were asked how this setup compares with CaseViewNet, which is supposed to be released in a few months. Here's the scoop:

1. TeleView clients do NOT have to install special viewing software, nor purchase realtime tokens. **CaseViewNet** clients don't need realtime tokens either, but DO need special viewing software. The software is free to the clients. It can be downloaded from Stenograph.com or it can be run from a flash disk, etc.

2. TeleView clients can view the realtime transcription in their normal web browsers -- that is, Internet Explorer, Firefox, etc. **CaseViewNet** clients must have special viewing software.

3. TeleView clients can use computers running Apple or Linux operating systems, not just Microsoft Windows. The **CaseViewNet** client software needs a Windows computer.

4. TeleView clients can connect via the INTERNet or via an INTRANet. Either way, a wireless router could make the connection a wireless one. **CaseViewNet** uses a wireless router to create an INTRANet.

5. TeleView is something that the reporter buys. The price depends on how many simultaneous viewers one wants to serve. Do you just need a PERMANENT license to serve one viewer? That costs \$195. Need PERMANENT licenses for additional simultaneous viewers? They cost just \$50 each. Add additional permanent licenses as needed. No repeat costs. With TeleView, the reporter is an owner, not a renter.

CaseViewNet is set up along the lines of a subscription. Beginning in 2008, a one-year license will cost \$595, although there's an introductory price of \$295 through the end of 2007. The renewal price after that is at least \$495 per year for the reporter. (The attorney's client software is free.)

6. Any version of Total Eclipse is capable of simultaneously outputting to TeleView, Bridge, CaseView, LiveNote, etc. One might simultaneously have some clients connected through a network, others through a serial connection, others through an internet connection, others through an intranet setup, some wireless, others not. The users of TeleView and Bridge and, soon, a few other programs, could enjoy instant Auto-Refresh of changes made throughout the reporter's entire realtime document ; but programs that rely on the traditional CaseView format would not support the auto-refresh commands.

Simultaneous output to CaseViewNET and legacy CaseView serial output requires an upgrade to at least CaseCATalyst Version 8.04. Legacy CaseView does not support RapidRefresh.

7. TeleView has been available since 2002. It can work with any version of Total Eclipse. TeleView and Bridge expect the same kind of output. Because products should stand on their own merits, Advantage Software believes in open standards. The Bridge auto-refresh interface info has been freely available since its inception, and the same standard covers TeleView. Vendors like LiveNote or Stenograph could easily add code to interpret the Auto-Refresh commands originally developed for Bridge and TeleView.

The **Bridge** program can also accept CaseView-style output. Thus, a client could use the free Bridge program to connect to any reporter in a firm, even those on CAT systems by ProCAT or Stenograph or Stenovations, etc.

The target date for the release of **CaseViewNet** is Fall 2007. If a client wishes to use CaseViewNET, he/she must work with a firm which has reporters who have at least CaseCATalyst Version 8.04, plus an active support agreement, plus a license for CaseViewNet. As of 9/20/07 (NCRA Online Forum), there is no plan in place for Stenograph to publish the new CaseViewNet protocol.

“Clean” Playback of Synchronized Audio (Continued from Page 3)

Is that all it does? Well, that’s already very useful. When I’m transcribing a videotaped deposition, I have to listen to every word. It doesn’t take long to find a speed that lets me hear most things quickly enough (or slowly enough) so that I can transcribe rapidly. I also raise the volume threshold to skip over the pauses, without dropping out the words I need to hear. However, you get the cleanest playback when Eclipse does not have to process the audio to add/remove silences. So there are times when I want to quickly switch to Speed 100 and Threshold 0 in order to hear as clearly as possible. Then I’ll want to switch back to whatever speed and volume threshold I had been using.

In the illustration on this page, Speed is set at 125 and Threshold is set at 10. If you pressed the “Play” button, the playback would be 25% faster than the original, and some silences would be skipped over automatically. If you pressed “Clean play,” it would be as if you temporarily changed the speed to 100 and the threshold to 0. However, you would not see the speed and threshold settings change on the Audio Controls dialogue. So you could just press “Play” to switch back to Speed 125 and Threshold 10. Makes it easy to go back and forth.

Here are the steps that my new “Clean play” macro performs:

- Cmd: Audio — opens the Audio Controls dialogue
- Shift+Tab — moves the cursor out of the “Speed” field. Prepares for the next step.
- Alt+C — presses the “Clean play” button
- Esc — closes the dialogue

The “Clean play” button is a perfect counterpart to all the other commands for adjusting the speed and volume threshold of your audio playback. Here’s a reminder of a few commands:

- Alt J (as in “jump” to audio playback spot) starts audio playback.
- If you do not move your cursor, pressing Alt J again will pause it. (Play/Pause toggle)
- Hyperkey { - Opens menu for popular speed choices: 100, 125, 150, 175, 200, 90, 80...
- Alt Left - Playback, 5% slower
- Alt Right - Playback, 5% faster
- Shift Ctrl A - Audio Control Panel

Because so many people are used to Alt H for Halt, Alt J for Play, and Alt K for Pause, the default speedkeys have NOT been changed. However, **I think it would make a lot of sense to change your keyboard setup just a bit, as follows:**

Alt H - Pause Shift Alt H - Stop Alt J - Play Alt K - Clean Play

If you’d like to do this, you can download the “Clean play” macro from the e-Tips page of my website (www.KVincent.com). Under e-Tip #70, right-click on the line that begins with “To download macro...” Save the macro on your Windows desktop. Then go to the “Edit” section of your User Settings and use the “Macros” button. When the list of macros opens, use the “Import” button and “Look in” your Desktop for the “Clean play.mac” file. Select it and use the “Open” button. That will import the macro. In the macro list, you can then click on “Clean play” and use the “Edit” button to see the macro’s steps. Then use the “Speedkey” button and press Alt and K together. Then click on “OK.” Just pick “Yes” when you’re asked if it’s okay to change the purpose of the command.

Now, to change Alt H to “Pause” instead of “Stop,” just use the “Keyboard” button that’s in the “Edit” section of User Settings. Click “Standard” and scroll down the list until you find Alt+H. Then use the “Modify” button and scroll down the list of commands to choose “Pause.” You can then use the “Add” button to make Shift Alt H the command for “Stop.”

Windows Vista (Continued from Page 1)

What I ultimately determined is that the audio recording on the T61 running Vista became somewhat distorted when the microphone boost was used. It worked fine without the mic boost, but I'd like the microphone sensitivity level to be as high as possible.

Since I knew that the majority of the Thinkpad notebooks have great recording hardware, I decided to install Windows XP on the Thinkpad T61 and discovered that, with XP, it had the same great audio recording characteristics that many of the previous Thinkpads have had. It even worked great using the built-in microphone. What I'm saying is that it's my belief that the same Thinkpad computer had better recording capability when running XP than when running Vista. I would expect that a software update will be released to correct this issue, but that could be some time. In the end, I returned the T61 because I didn't need another computer with XP and was committed to upgrading to Vista.

I have heard from others that they have found Vista computers to have a tendency for poor audio recording on a few other brands, too. For this reason, if you want the latest/greatest Thinkpad computer, you may want to seriously consider ordering it with XP Professional. Definitely test the audio recording on any computer you buy running Vista within the time that you can return it if you find it unsatisfactory.

One of the other challenges in getting a computer up and running with Vista is finding drivers for all of your peripherals; USB-to-serial converters, serial PC Cards, printers, etc. This means you may need to buy new peripherals to get them working with Vista because manufacturers aren't releasing Vista drivers. XP is just so popular that they are a little slow getting on the bandwagon and are not guaranteeing they will make all of the legacy devices out there Vista-compatible.

It's normal for there to be bugs in new releases of Windows in their first year. For the first year after the release of Windows XP, people were saying all kinds of bad things about it and warning others not to upgrade. While these issues are being sorted out, when given the choice between Vista and XP, the safest thing on a new computer is to go with XP Professional at least until Vista Service Pack 1 is released next year.

There are many reporters using Vista every day without any problems, so I'm not saying not to get it. It's just that if you want the trailblazers to get the bugs and kinks worked out first and you're not really the beta tester type, you may want to wait a while before jumping in.

Vista has many new features that are nice to have, but I find that there is no compelling reason to upgrade at this time. I will share more of my experiences with Vista, including info about the other computer I am running it on, in a future e-Tip.

DISCLAIMER:

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