

Microsoft Confirms Dynamics AX Compatibility with Windows 7

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Moving an ERP system to a new operating system is, by its very nature, fraught with peril. But upgrading to Windows 7 won't be a problem for Microsoft Dynamics AX customers because Dynamics AX 4.0 and AX 2009 are compatible with Windows 7, as well as with Microsoft Windows Server 2008 R2, **according to a blog posted on October 7 by the Microsoft Dynamics Sustained Engineering team.**

"This is particularly important for AX because it's a product that customers and partners carefully customize to their business processes," said Rob Helm, an analyst at Directions on Microsoft in Kirkland, Wash. "And once they've got it working they let it run for quite awhile, so it's quite likely that customers would like to move clients to Windows 7 without necessarily upgrading their Dynamics AX installation because of the risk of an upgrade of that particular application."

By supporting Windows 7, even in the older version of AX 4.0, Microsoft has made it possible for customers to move to Windows 7 and Windows Server 2008 R2 while leaving their often highly customized installations of Dynamics AX in place, he said. That means they won't have to go through version upgrades of the application just to get onto the new operating system, he added.

That's important with AX because enterprise resource products' customers are conservative; they don't want to have to update the ERP product to take advantage of a new operating system because of all the problems involved, he said.

And that's a big selling point for Microsoft Dynamics AX partner, Merit Solutions Inc. in Wheaton, Illinois.

"We're excited to see this because we can go to our customers and say, 'OK if you guys have plans to go ahead and upgrade to Windows 7'-because a lot of our customers are now on Vista-'this won't hinder your ability to purchase [the new operating system],'" said Josh Richards, Marketing Specialist, Merit Solutions.

Richards said it will help his company when it tries to sell home the point that Dynamics AX, which is already integrated with other productivity tools like the Microsoft Office tools and Sharepoint, will be further enhanced with the release of Windows 7.

"We can say to our customers, 'When Windows 7 comes out, if you do decide to go ahead and migrate, this won't hinder your ability to use AX be it 4.0 or 2009,'" Richards said. "And it just kind of brings that selling point full circle, allowing your employees to be more productive and the ease of use goes up a little better. So that's where we're seeing the excitement for this."

Helm said not all the Microsoft groups are quite as diligent about making their products compatible with Windows 7. For example, he said, the current version of Exchange won't run on Windows Server 2008 R2 and it won't be updated to run on it, either. So customers looking to move to Windows Server 2008 R2 have to do an Exchange upgrade as well.

"And some of the other products, like some of the security products, will eventually get upgraded but they won't be ready at the launch of the new operating system, so customers may have to kind of stay in place for awhile until the applications catch up," he said.

Richards agreed, adding that while the new version of Dynamics GP, GP 10.0, is already compatible with Windows 7, there are no plans to make Dynamics GP versions 9.0 or earlier compatible with the new operating system.

"Maybe the news that Dynamics AX is compatible with Windows 7 isn't widely known yet," Richards said. "But this is an exciting announcement, for customers who want to migrate to Windows 7."