



United States Department of Agriculture

Research, Education, and Economics
Agricultural Research Service

March 30, 2007

SUBJECT: Moratorium Regarding Desktop/Laptop Computer Software Upgrades to
Microsoft Windows Vista, Office 2007 and Internet Explorer Version 7

TO: Area Directors
Deputy Area Directors
Area Information Technology Specialists
Location Information Technology Specialists

FROM: Douglas L. Page
Chief Technical Officer

I. Purpose:

The memorandum establishes a one-year moratorium on desktop/laptop computer software upgrades to Microsoft Vista, Office 2007, and Internet Explorer Version 7.

II. Scope:

This guidance applies to all ARS Headquarters, Areas, and Locations.

III. Procedures:

All ARS Headquarters, Area, and Location offices will not obtain or install any subject software products until the requisite analysis and reviews have been completed and the Information Technology (IT) Steering Committee approves the products for ARS wide use and deployment.

IV. Responsibilities:

Area Directors, Deputy Area Directors, Area IT Specialists, and Location IT Specialists are responsible for adhering to this memorandum and communicating this guidance to and ensuring compliance from other appropriate officials such as purchase cardholders and Contracting Officers.



V. Background:

Microsoft is deploying a series of new desktop software products and upgrades.

- Windows Vista, which is replacing Windows XP
- Office 2007, which is replacing the Office 2003 suite
- Internet Explorer 7

Based on our internal and external industry analysis, there is no compelling technical or business case for upgrading to these new Microsoft desktop products. Additionally, there are specific reasons not to upgrade:

- ARIS platform. Connectivity to this platform has yet to be tested and validated as working correctly with Internet Explorer Version 7.
- Cisco VPN client software. Cisco is in the process of creating a new VPN client that will work correctly with Vista. Their product is currently in beta testing.
- Office 2007 is incompatible with Office 2003. A “plug-in” is required from Microsoft that has not been fully tested and validated.
- Support. Supporting these new products would be difficult as IT staffs have not been fully trained and introduced to these products.

VI. Contact:

If you or your staffs have any questions, please contact Douglas Page, Chief Technical Officer, at douglas.page@ars.usda.gov or by telephone at 301-504-5662.

cc:

J. Bradley, AFM
L. Cullumber, APD