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- Jefferson Pilot
- Metlife
- Skype

## Answering Questions

In this edition we'll devote most of the space to answering the most popular questions we receive. There are lots of advances happening with both Advisors Assistant and the industry at large.

### Version 6

Questions about the new version, new features, and when it will be available are the most asked. We put that in the article below.

### Hardware

Next, current users want to know how much hardware it takes to run the new Advisors Assistant. There's no hard and

fast rule, but you'll find a detailed discussion of requirements on Page 2.

### Windows Vista

Vista is definitely in the news. There are lots of nay sayers. We'll take a look at Vista from a business perspective. Will Advisors Assistant work with Vista? Should you update to Vista? What kind of hardware will you need to run Vista?

### Remote Access

Remote access over the Internet is a hot topic. We'll discuss Advisors Assistant remote access, advantages of using a Virtual Private Network (VPN) and set-

ting one up. We'll also discuss the advantages and disadvantages of the pure web-based program. I was actually surprised at how many of our users already have a VPN and use it on a daily basis.

### Office 2007

We can't review Office 2007 here. However, we can tell you that it works with Advisors Assistant's current version and the upcoming Advisors Assistant Version 6.

Microsoft has moved some of the icons and menus around, but it only takes a few minutes to get used to the new look. Upgrading to Office 2007 is an easier decision than upgrading to Vista. ■

## Version 6 New Features

We've had lots of questions about the release of Advisors Assistant 6. Contact Management and Insurance Modules are scheduled for very soon. Investments will be released in stages as we convert the various downloads.

### Many New Features

We had never counted the new features, but now that Contact Management and Insurance are complete, we compiled a new feature list of over 200 items which is available from our home page, [www.AdvisorsAssistant.com/aa6.htm](http://www.AdvisorsAssistant.com/aa6.htm) just below the movies.

By the time we have the Invest-

ment Module new features listed, it will be over 250 items.

### Staged Release

Contact Management and Insurance will be released at the same time, but Contact Management can be purchased without the Insurance Module.

If you're current with your support subscription, you can update at any time when the released version contains the modules you use. If a particular download is not available, you should continue to use the current Advisors Assistant until your download is ready.

As download modules get completed, they will be released.

Conversion of data from Version 2.8 to Version 6 is a one-way process. Changes entered in Advisors Assistant 6 will not show up in Advisors Assistant 2.8 — ever! (unless you enter them or download them directly into Version 2.8.) You would have to start over with a new conversion.

### Investment Module Features

The New Features Document also contains a list of Investment Module new features, but that list is still not complete. There is still a very short list of new features left to code and there will be a few suggestions we pick up

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# Hardware Requirements?

**A**dvisors Assistant 6 will have two different sets of hardware requirements because there are actually two programs running, Microsoft's SQL Server and Advisors Assistant.

## The SQL Server Computer

SQL Server Express is distributed free with Advisors Assistant 6. This is the "database engine" that does all of the work retrieving data to display on your screen.

SQL Express does not have to run on a server class computer. We've tested on standard Windows XP Professional desktop and laptop computers, and it will run just fine.

## Memory

SQL Server likes memory! The more it has, the faster it will run.

The computer you use for storing your data, the "server" must have at least 512 MB of memory. That is the MINIMUM and assumes that you're not running any other programs, like Word or Outlook, on that computer.

We tested with 1GB on a standard Windows XP computer being used only as the "server" and it ran just fine with over 20 users. When we added a second Giga Byte, it ran very fast!

One of our Beta Testers had a server with 1.5 GB memory and Advisors Assistant sometimes ran fine, and sometimes ran slow. On further investigation, that same server was running 2 other processes, all of which had minimum requirements of 512 MB memory. When all three were running, everything slowed down because they were all fighting for the memory and ended up using the hard disk for memory.

## Virtual Memory

When Windows runs out of "real

memory" it starts to use your hard drive to satisfy its craving for more memory. Your hard drive is hundreds of times slower than your regular computer's memory, so programs start to run slowly, and your hard drive light blinks like crazy.

That's when it's time to drop a hundred bucks or so and get another 512 or GIG of memory.

## Memory vs. Processor Speed

More memory is the cheapest way to speed up your computer, whether it's a server or a desktop. Memory rocks! I recently saw 1GB desktop memory chips for \$89 advertised at Staples. That means that web prices may be even cheaper.

## Server Requirements

If you're running a real server, such as Windows 2003 Server, 2 GB memory will serve you well. If you're also running Microsoft Outlook's Exchange Server and any other servers on the same box, you should increase memory beyond 2GB if you have speed issues with any programs. Processor speed should be 1Ghz or higher, but if you currently have a slower processor, it won't hurt to try.

We did a test by searching 70,000 names, searching for those with a primary address in Los Angeles. The "server" was a Windows XP Desktop, 2.8 GHz Pentium 4 processor with 2 GB memory. The results took less than 1 second. I actually thought that it didn't work until I printed the report. With 1 GB memory, it took about 2 seconds.

There is a range of hardware that the Advisors Assistant 6 server component will run on. It depends on what else you're running on the same computer, and how fast you

want to run.

## The Station Computer

The "station" is where the user sits and where most of the program actually resides. The station requests data from the server, and then displays the data on the screen or on a report.

Like the server, the station will run faster with more memory. However, since the station is not running the SQL Server component, the memory requirements are much smaller. (In a single user configuration, the station does run the SQL Server component.)

Your station should have at least 512 MB of memory. Advisors Assistant will run in less, but if you want to run another program, such as Word or Outlook, you'll need a decent amount of memory. One GB is more realistic for running a few programs at the same time.

Just remember, if any program starts running slower than expected, add memory.

## Single User Configurations

A single user is running both the SQL Server Express and the Advisors Assistant program on the same computer (no network.) It will need the 512 MB of memory for SQL Server Express, and some more memory to run the programs. Therefore, think about having 1GB or more for single user machines and 2 GB of available disk space to install.

## Peer To Peer Networks

If you are using the same computer as both a server and a workstation, that computer will need the requirements of a single user. To get decent performance, it should also have at least a 2 GHz Pentium 4 processor because it's going to be doing file server and station work. ■

*Adding memory is the most efficient way to make a computer run faster!*

## What About Vista?

First, Advisors Assistant 2.8 and Advisors Assistant 6 will work with Vista. Vista, however, dropped support for the help file type used in version 2.8. (More on that later.) The question is how and when should you upgrade?

### Vista Upgrade Advisor

You may or may not be able to run Vista. Microsoft has developed a program called the Windows Vista Upgrade Advisor. It will scan your system and give you the answer. It is located at: [www.microsoft.com/windowsvista/getready/upgradeadvisor/default.mspx](http://www.microsoft.com/windowsvista/getready/upgradeadvisor/default.mspx)

Type the above web site into your browser, download the Vista Upgrade Advisor, install, and run it.

Don't let all of the "minor incompatibilities" scare you off. There is a very easy way to reverse a Vista Install if you have the right hardware and software. I'll tell you how later in the article.

### My Personal No-Go List

After running the Upgrade Advisor, I didn't find any major problems, other than the fact that I didn't have enough disk space on any one drive. I will definitely need to do some major reorganization of my hard drives. I can probably erase the equivalent of a wing of the Library of Congress and not miss it.

Here are some quick rules that I'd apply before deciding to update:

### Hard Disk Size And Space

*"My hard disk is less than 60GB or I have less than 20GB free space."*

Forget it, you probably won't be able to do enough cleanup to install Vista.

### Internal Memory

*"I have less than 1GB of RAM and no way to expand to 1GB."* No-Go, you won't have a good Vista Experience. Personally, I would not update without 2GB of memory.

### Video Memory

*"I have less than 64MB video memory."* You probably won't be able to run the new Aero video interface, so your Vista Experience will be watered down. A video card with 128 MB of memory is desired.

### Processor Speed

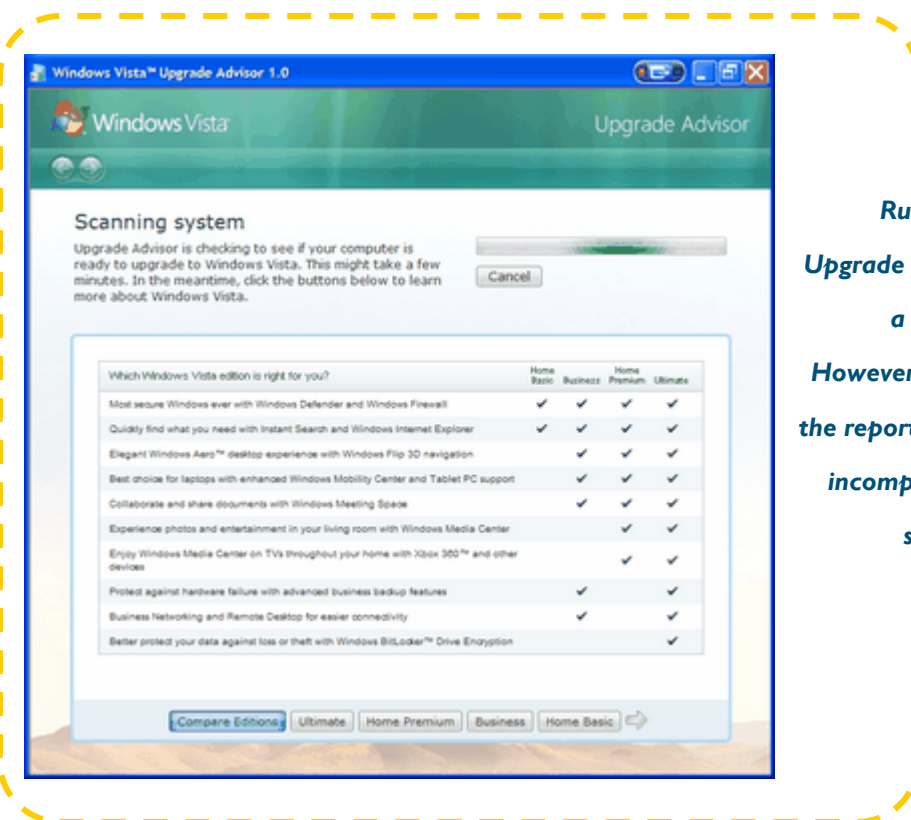
*"I have less than a 2 GHz Pentium 4 processor."* You should probably wait because you'll have slower response times than Windows XP.

### Vista And New Computers

If you need a new computer, you should buy Vista Compatible or Vista Ready. Since you should keep

- A video card with at least 128 MB video memory, with 256 MB if you use 2 monitors at the same time.
- At least a 100 GB hard disk, but if you're going to store any kind of multi-media files on the computer go for 160+ GB.
- A dual core processor. It's like having two processors, so one can run Vista and some of your programs, and the other can run programs. The Intel Core 2 Duo with the 4 MB cache is very nice!
- At least 4 USB-2 ports. The

**Be sure any new computer you purchase is Vista Premium Ready, not just Vista Compatible. Vista Compatible will not run the Aero interface.**



**Running the Upgrade Advisor is a first step. However don't let the reported minor incompatibilities scare you.**

it for 4 or more years, I'd look for these features:

- Two GB memory with the ability to expand to 4 GB. Be sure to ask if all the memory slots are filled. You want empty slots for expansion.

more you have the better.

### Upgrade Or Reformat

Assuming your current computer is a "Go" should you install Vista right over XP or should you start over

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## What Does Web Enabled Mean?

Advisors Assistant Version 6 is Web Enabled. This means that you can make changes to your database from any place you have access to the Internet.

### The Need For Security

Anytime data travels on the Internet or is exposed to the Internet, there is a need for security. The data not only has to be secure from break-in, but it must also be secure while traveling over the Net.

Different programs use different security measures, depending on the requirements and capabilities of the program's target audience.

### Virtual Private Networks (VPN)

At one time, the VPN was only used by very large companies because of the expense in setting one up. Now, every small business can afford a very secure virtual private network.

A VPN is nothing more than a little piece of software that communicates with your Internet router and

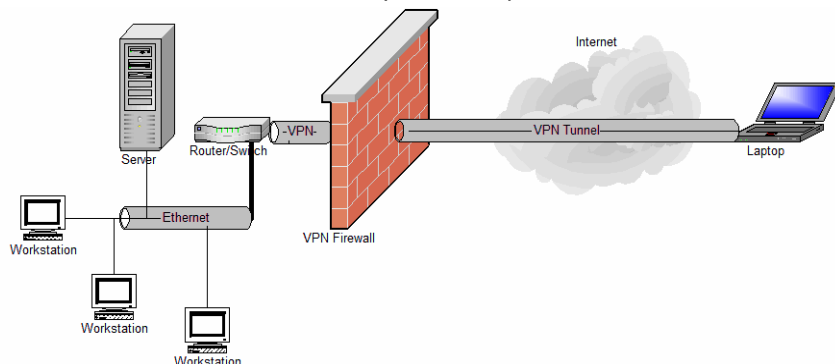
automatically sets up a secure, encrypted, "tunnel" through the Internet between your remote computer and your main server.

### Why VPN Remote Access?

We chose VPN access as our remote data model for our users who do not have their own IT department for the following reasons.

- VPNs have been around long enough to prove themselves very secure.
- VPNs are one of the least expensive methods to provide remote access security.
- VPNs are reliable and trouble free. Once set up, they need very little care.

- The VPN gives you access to more than just one program on your network. Your network security model can provide



vide access to other files and programs

### How Hard Is It?

Once your VPN is set up, you're ready for remote access. You just click on a desktop icon, and the connection is made for you. Start Advisors Assistant with a second icon and you're connected to your office! ■

## VISTA (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3)

and install from scratch, reinstalling all of your software, printer drivers, etc?

If you've been running Windows XP for longer than a year, you definitely want to start over. Even without the arrival of Vista, Windows XP can become tired after 2 or 3 years, and reformatting and reinstalling XP can cure lots of ills, like long startup and speed problems.

If you have a fairly new computer and the Upgrade Advisor tells you you're ready to go, try to just do an upgrade of your system. However, take the following precautions, or be sure your IT consultant takes them.

### How To Set Up A Safety Net

Imagine having a Vista upgrade go wrong, and not being able to go back to the old system without reinstalling everything from scratch. Ring up some big bucks in lost time and consultant costs!

Or, spend \$150 to \$300 now for a backup program, such as Norton Save & Restore (\$49.99 on the Web,) which will back up Windows XP, and obtain a USB-2 external hard drive (\$89 to about \$200 depending on size.)

You can make a full Image of your Windows XP hard disk before you install Vista. If things go wrong, restore the XP image back to your drive and you're up and running in about 15 minutes or so with every-

thing back exactly the way it was.

If everything goes right, you can use the USB drive with Vista's new built in backup program!

### Your Outlook Files

So that you don't lose your email history, it's always a good idea to set aside your Outlook folder. This is usually located on C:\Documents and Settings\[login name]\Local Settings\Application Data\Microsoft\Outlook. Copy all of the files in that folder.

### Pre-Vista Checklist

Before starting your upgrade, make sure you've covered your bases:

- Your personal Go-No Go list is a Go.

*Vista is absolutely the best excuse to buy yourself a new computer to come along in years! It's a dream come true for the early adapter and technophile!*

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## Can You Lose Control Of Your Data?

We get questions about web based systems and putting data on the Web.

One set of questions wants to know about putting their data on the web. The second set wants to know how to get their data back from the web.

### Web Based Systems

A web based system has everything on the Internet. The data and the program both live on the web. They are typically accessed by using a web browser, known as a "thin client."

A web based system runs on an Internet server or group of servers, and is maintained by IT personnel. The program that accesses the data runs on the web and is specially designed to run on Internet servers.

### Advantages Of Web Based Systems

With a web based system, someone else takes care of your data and the special servers that run it.

You have remote access over the Internet.

You don't have to worry about backing up your data because the people who have it back it up.

Some web based systems download data from other sources.

### Disadvantages Of Web Based Systems

In the web based scenario, you are turning your data over to a third party. All of your client names, notes, policies, and investments are stored by, and controlled by a third party. With the exception of Al-bridge, which has a download feed to Advisors Assistant and others, turning your client base over to a web based system has the potential

of being a one way proposition.

### Some Questions

You may want to ask a few questions of the web vendor.

Can you ever be denied access to the web based program, and your data, because you changed affiliations, or lost your contract directly with the party who controls your data? (AKA Being Cut Off from your data.)

If there is a price increase, and you dispute it, will you be denied access to your data? (AKA Being at their mercy.)

If you break with the third party provider, what data will you receive? Will it include any history? Will the third party remove it from their system? (AKA The relationship details.)

If you do receive your data, will you also receive, or be able to acquire, a version of the program so that you can continue to access the data? Or, will you get raw data files that require additional programmer time and expense before it can be used? (AKA Parts is Parts!)

### How Important Is Your Data?

Aside from your employees, most believe your client data is your most valuable business asset.

The time and expense of replacing your client information, along with the loss of business momentum, could run five to six figures for even a modest size office.

### Do Vendor Relationships Last Forever?

When we first set up business relationships, we hope they will be long term, but we don't know for sure.

It makes no sense to hand over control of your data and be disadvantaged at the very beginning of

the relationship, and to have the disadvantage increase (because the amount of data increases) as time passes.

### How Is Advisors Assistant Version 6 Different?

Advisors Assistant 6 is Web Enabled rather than Web Based. This means that it uses the Internet for access to your data just like a web based system. However, the program runs in your office on your computers. You can also host the data in your office, or have it hosted by a third party. No special server hardware is required.

When you're running the program, you can't tell whether it's web based or web enabled, and you shouldn't care. You should care about how the program runs, how it is supported, and if the data is really yours to use and keep regardless of circumstances.

The main Advisors Assistant program does not stop running based on any vendor relationship. There is no mechanism that will deny you access to your data.

If you're using Advisors Assistant through someone else's server (AKA a third party,) and you acquire your data from that party, you can purchase a copy of Advisors Assistant, and restore the data to it. You can be up and running quickly.

### Data Ownership vs Data Access

We had a user tell us, "He who has the data, owns the data." There is an important distinction between owning and renting, but sometimes it's not obvious in the virtual world of intangible assets, such as client data. ■

*What does, "We'll give you your data at any time." really mean? Is there any way to use it once you get the data?*

*Is turning your data over to a 3rd party vendor, with no reasonable exit clause, like selling a client an investment with no withdrawal privilege?*

## Test Your Connection Speed

<http://www.speakeasy.net/speedtest/> tests the speed of your Internet connection. Are you getting what you're paying for? Log on to this site and test both your up and down speed on any of several servers near and far! You should be getting about 90% of the speed advertised by your provider.

# How To Set Up A VPN For Remote Access

**A** Virtual Private Network, (VPN,) is inexpensive and straight forward to set up.

The illustration below is the TZ-170 Sonic Wall router with VPN capabilities. It starts at \$329 for a 10 user model (10 people accessing the Internet at the same time,) and



goes up to \$747 for the unlimited user model which is designed to support up to about 50 users.

This basic router / firewall supports VPNs, and you can add in spam filtering, virus filtering, and all kinds of other services for as much security as you want to provide.

We like the idea of the technology used in large company firewalls being available to smaller companies.

No matter what level you need, small business to enterprise, Sonic Wall has a product line designed for you.

## Getting Started

I always like to do a little research before getting my computer brain trust involved, AKA "The Computer Guy,"

This starts with finding out what's available, price ranges, and some of the questions I should ask my consultant. We actually have people on staff, but that doesn't get them off the hook. I still ask lots of questions and also get their opinions.

## Pricing

Your firewall / router is not the place to save money. It's the rampart that keeps out the bad guys.

Though picking one up at Staples may be fine for your home, your office where your vital information is located, should have stronger protection. A \$49 Linksys is not

where you want to be. Figure on spending in the \$300 and up range for a good firewall that will support a VPN.

## Firewall Installation

The person who set up your network is probably the right person to set up your VPN. It's not a do-it-yourself situation unless you know IP addressing and other network technology. It's also very easy if you know what you're doing.

Depending on the size of your office and the number of computers, you can figure on 2 to 4 hours of time involved in both setting up the firewall and configuring the VPN.

## Setting Up The VPN

The typical VPN consists of two components, the firewall and the VPN "Client."

The firewall is the hardware that stands guard, and only allows authorized computers to access your network.

The VPN Client is just a small program installed on your remote computer. When you start the "client," it knows the address of your router, and has the password built in that tells the firewall that you're OK to access the network.

At that point, you'll get the same login screen as if you were sitting in your office and booted your computer onto the network. You still have to know your password to log into your network.

## Just Like Being There

Once you're logged into your network, it's just like being at the office. You can drag and drop files using Windows Explorer, and do all the things you can do as a member of your network.

## What About Security?

Security is what a VPN was designed to deliver. There are several levels of security.

First, in order to access your VPN, the remote computer has to be using the VPN Client designed to

talk to your brand of router. If you have a Sonic Wall router, the remote computer will need the Sonic Wall client software.

Second, the VPN client software must have your IP address and your password to get past your firewall. You should be sure the password is a "strong" password with at least 8 or more characters, including letters, numbers, and other characters. The client logs you into the VPN, so you don't have to remember the password.

Third, once the IP address and password is saved in your client by your IT person, they can assign an "installation password" so that even if someone got a copy of the client software, they would not be able to install it. That way, you can set the client up once, and install it on several computers with no further setup.

Fourth, all of the communications between your remote computer and the router are encrypted, so people can't "listen in."

Fifth, if someone were to get past all of the first 4 levels, they still need to have the password to log into your network.

## Costs

There are 3 elements to the cost: The firewall, installation, and the VPN Client program. The latter runs from \$30 to \$45 per remote computer and is a one time expense. A small office can set up a VPN for \$500 to \$1,000 and have access to their entire network from anywhere. That's a bargain!

## Summary

You don't need a VPN to run Advisors Assistant 6, but if you want remote access, it's the best approach for the small to medium office. Advisors Assistant Enterprise can use a different access method called web services, but it will also require a web server and at least an IT person to set it up.■

**Based on our 4 years of experience, take a look at Firewalls.com for good prices on Sonic Wall, and an excellent source of information and support.**

**You don't need a VPN to run Advisors Assistant 6, and if you're just one person who needs remote access to your office computer, you can always use GoToMyPC or a similar program.**



- ☑ Vista Upgrade Advisor indicates a Go.
- ☑ You have a safety net in the form of an image of your XP drive.
- ☑ You have a separate backup of critical data such as Outlook, your accounting and Advisors Assistant.
- ☑ You have at least a full day to devote to the project. Two days are recommended!

Whether you upgrade, or buy new, be sure you keep at least one Windows XP computer on your network just in case you run into any program compatibility issues!

**Vista Does Work**

We upgraded some of our computers in our testing lab to Vista and Office 2007 so we could test Advisors Assistant.

We were impressed with the interface, and liked the fact that all of our Advisors Assistant Version 2.8 code ran very well.

We did have to make a few screen changes because the Vista Aero graphical interface didn't always draw the border around the View Screens. Our next 2.8 release, very soon after you read this, will rem-

edy that cosmetic problem.

The new Advisors Assistant 6, in beta, required no changes.

**Help Files**

One thing we noticed is that Microsoft Vista dropped support for the Windows Help that uses the file extension .HLP. Advisors Assistant Version 2.8 uses this style of help. Advisors Assistant 6 uses the newer help style which is supported by Vista.

When you click on help in ANY program that uses the HLP help, you get a message box from Microsoft telling you it is no longer supported. I have to wonder why they put up a message instead of just assigning a dozen programmers the project to make the help work.

I did a file search on my C drive and came up with over 500 HLP files, most of them used for Windows XP Help!

**HLP Is On The Way?**

Microsoft promises a downloadable file that will allow Vista to run Win-Help32 in "Early 2007." We've checked the Microsoft Download Center, but it is not yet there.

**Printer Drivers**

We looked for Vista printer drivers for Vista on the HP web site and also the Dell web site. We found Dell drivers. HP indicated the Windows XP drivers should be installed and that they would have Vista drivers very soon.

We installed the HP Windows XP drivers and they seem to work ok.

**Vista Hardware Compatibility**

Computers can be advertised with two levels of Vista compatibility.

"Vista Capable" will NOT run the Aero graphical interface, so don't bother buying a Vista Capable computer.

"Vista Premium Ready" means that you will be able to enjoy the Vista Aero interface. You'll have at least 128 MB of video memory and several other bells and whistles required to be considered Vista Premium Ready. Be sure your new computer is Vista Premium Ready.

**Which Version To Choose**

Vista comes in 6 editions, two are labeled Home, one is the "Business" edition, and there's "Ultimate!" We never recommend any kind of Home edition for business use. However, you can go to <http://www.microsoft.com/windows/products/windowsvista/editions/choose.msp>

to see a comparison. There is also a Starter edition, an Enterprise edition, and various 64 bit editions. As a business user, you will probably want to choose either the Business, Ultimate, or Enterprise editions.

**Upgrade Or Buy New**

One important cost you must consider when you upgrade is the cost of the time it will take to get everything working on Vista. If your computer is 2 or more years old, even though it's fast, strong, and has lots of memory, you could spend many frustrating hours getting some important piece of planning software, or a printer or scanner to run under Vista.

You have to ask, "What's my time worth?" ■

*Microsoft left the games out of the Vista Business Edition, and you can't make high definition movies at the office, but they added a nice scheduled backup feature. If you want the ultimate in security, the Enterprise edition has BitLocker Drive Encryption, so if your laptop gets stolen, they can't read your files.*

**FEATURES (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)**

during the Beta of Investments.

**The Criteria For Release**

Advisors Assistant has thousands of users. The most important criteria for release is that the new version is ready. This means that:

- There must be a smooth up-

grade path so your data moves seamlessly from Version 2.8 to Version 6;

- The installation and update process must be easy and consistent;
- The program, itself, must work

as expected, be easy to use, and powerful.

This involves thousands of hours of testing and a commitment to a quality release. ■



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The Leader In Client Management Since 1985

Client Marketing Systems, Inc. has provided office automation software to the financial services community since 1985.

Advisors Assistant® tracks contacts, clients, calendar items, investments, and insurance. Since our first day of business, Client Marketing Systems, Inc. has provided toll free technical support to our users who stay updated.

With thousands of users worldwide, premier support, and a twenty-one year record of service to the financial community, Client Marketing Systems, Inc. is the clear choice for financial professionals.

# How To Join Our User's Group

ClimarkCommunity.com is a web site forum specifically for Advisors Assistant users to provide information to each other and Client Marketing Systems. To register please follow these steps:

1. Go to [www.ClimarkCommunity.com](http://www.ClimarkCommunity.com).
2. Click on Register under the logo.
3. Fill in your User Name.
4. Fill in your email address and password. This information is not exposed to other members.
5. Be sure to leave the box about receiving email from forum administrators checked, (located under the Submit Button in the Additional Options section,) or you won't receive special announcements. If you don't want to receive any email from other members, uncheck the second privacy box. (When a member sends you an email, they still don't see your address. The forum actually sends you the email!)
6. Confirm the verification code. This is designed to keep automated web robots from registering.
7. Click on the Submit Registration button. You'll receive a verification email. **BE SURE to click on the link in that email to verify your email address.** Other-

wise, you won't be given access to the forum.

8. If you don't receive the email from [ClimarkCommunity.com](http://ClimarkCommunity.com) with the link, please call or email us at [cms@climark.com](mailto:cms@climark.com).

### Your Profile Is Important. Don't Leave It Blank!

After you register, you'll receive an email from [admin@climarkcommunity.com](mailto:admin@climarkcommunity.com). It's a good idea to put [climarkcommunity.com](http://climarkcommunity.com) on your list of acceptable email addresses if you have a spam filter. After replying to the verification email:

1. Log back into the forum and **fill out your profile.**
2. Click on **Control Panel** on the second line on the right side of the screen.
3. In the "Your Profile" section on the left side, click on **Personal Details**. We need to know if the person registering is the registered Advisors Assistant user or a member of the staff.
4. **In the Biography Section, put the real name of the Registered User for your system (such as John Smith.)**

Once we identify you as a user, we'll upgrade your forum status from Forum Member to Advisors Assistant User, and you'll have access to several new interesting areas of the Community. ■

*ClimarkCommunity  
Members receive  
pre-announcements  
through blast emails  
and postings on the  
forum.*