Microsoft Windows XP Professional Administrator's Guide
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Reviewed by Michael S. Hines

Two months ago I reviewed **MVS Systems Programming**. Last month I reviewed **UNIX System Administration Handbook**. This month I will review **Microsoft Windows XP Professional Administrator's Guide**. That list should pretty much cover the major systems in place today (there does not seem to be a way to compare market share of each system, since there is no common way to establish measures to compare).

Microsoft Windows XP Professional Administrator's Guide covers a vast array of materials in its 801 pages, 29 chapters, 2 appendices, a glossary organized into five parts.

Imagine you've just finished working through a chapter in **Building the Perfect PC** by Robert Bruce Thompson & Barbara Fitchman Thompson. Here you sit with a beautiful piece of hardware. You turn on the power, and… nothing. You see hardware without an operating system is only good as a door stop or boat anchor. In your hand you hold a Windows XP Professional system CD. Now what?

Well you can just insert the CD and see what happens. But I would suggest you grab your copy of **Microsoft Windows XP Professional Administrator's Guide** to help you get Windows XP Pro installed and functioning properly. In addition, this book will guide you through routine system administration task that are necessary to keep the system functioning properly and most efficiently and effectively.

Part one, covering 217 pages, provides an Introduction, Installation & Upgrade, Help and Support, Application Management, and Printer and FAX Administration. It answers such questions as 'should I upgrade an older system or do a clean install of Windows XP Pro?' and many more pre/install/post install tasks that an Administrator should do.

Part two, covering 84 pages, addresses Windows Desktop Management. Windows XP includes many options which all you to view options in WinXP more or compatibility mode so it looks familiar to users coming from older versions of Windows. This is configured in Desktop Management. This is also where to can set up shortcuts to applications, folders, URL's, or other special needs for quick access from the desktop. There are a variety of other tasks Administrators can perform to set up the machine for users – these are covered in this part.

The next part, covering 222 pages, addresses what the authors call "Advanced Administration" which covers many other topics such as Security, Windows Management Console, Disk and File Systems, System Files, Performance Tuning, Shell Scripting and the Windows Shell. Many details and examples as well as screen shots are provided to aid in performing these tasks. This part could be called "all other tasks" except for networking which is next.

The Networking part, covering 164 pages, covers all aspects of connecting the PC and Windows XP Pro system to the networks such as the Novell Networks, Local Area Networks, and the Internet. This includes sharing resources with other computers, as well as connecting to other computers to use remote services. Networking security is an important part of this section. This part also addresses setting up mobile users for access to home base computer systems – an important issue for many staff who travel or work remotely.

This brings us to the last part, covering 174 pages, which contains two appendices, a glossary, and 21 page index. One appendix provides a Windows XP Command Reference which lists the commands which can be used from the command prompt. The other appendix (which becomes critical at various times) covers troubleshooting system startup.

At this point you might be asking – why are you covering Windows XP Professional? Good question! According to one market share analysis[1] Windows XP is used on 59% of all Windows desktop systems, 18%

use Windows 7, and 13% use Windows Vista. So, while XP is showing its age, it is still the most widely used Windows desktop operating system in use today.

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[1] http://marketshare.hitslink.com accessed November 3, 2010.