Will Windows 7 force you to change your e-mail program?
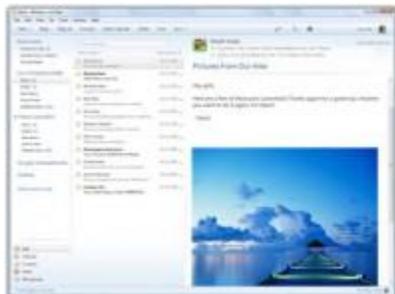**September 29th, 2009, 4:03 pm · 7 Comments · posted by Ed Schwartz, NOCCC**

Stump the PC Club is a free tech-advice column written by members of the **North Orange County Computer Club***, which has been in existence since 1976. Visit the club's site at* noccc.org*. And don't forget to stop by the Gadgetress' home for the PC Club, at* ocregister.com/link/pcclub*, to find out how to ask a question and read past answers.*

QUESTION: I currently use Windows Vista and consequently Windows Mail for e-mail. I'd like to upgrade to Windows 7 when it's available and would like to know what my choices for e-mail will be?

PC CLUB: It's unfortunate that Microsoft is abandoning many of its customers by discontinuing e-mail programs that millions have been using for quite some time, Outlook Express and Windows Mail.

With the advent of Windows 7, which launches October 22, Microsoft is now pushing its Windows Live Mail program which will work with XP, Vista or Windows 7. Before discussing your options you may want to review the previous article "How to move your E-mail to a new computer" (link: http://bit.ly/nex0N), which discusses Internet Mail versus Web Mail.

Here are your options if you choose to upgrade to Windows 7 or just stay with your current Windows version:

1. Download the free Windows Live Mail program available at download.live.com/wlmail which is an Internet Mail program. While installing Live Mail, be sure to **uncheck** all of the other

programs that will be installed along with Windows Live Mail unless you want them. Also, carefully read the details at every step since Microsoft will change your default search engine if allowed to. If you should switch from Outlook Express or Windows Mail to this program, you can continue to use your existing e-mail address. In fact, Windows Live Mail will set up your account automatically.When you install Windows Live Mail it will also import your messages and address book from Outlook Express or Windows Mail. You do not have to sign up for a free Windows Live ID but if you do there are several additional features.

2. Switch to the free Thunderbird e-mail program which is also an Internet Mail program (link: http://bit.ly/2zxpYm). You will be able to continue to use your existing e-mail address. Once Thunderbird is installed you can use the Import function to import your address book and messages from your previous program.

3. Switch to a free web mail client such as Google's Gmail or Yahoo Mail. Changing to any Web mail program from an Internet mail program does require that you change your e-mail address. All major online web mail systems allow you to import contacts from Outlook Express or Windows Mail into their programs. To move your contacts, use the export function built into Outlook Express or Windows Mail to convert them to a comma separated values (.csv) file and then import the contact list into Gmail, Yahoo Mail, or other web mail system.

4. Microsoft Outlook, which will work with XP, Vista and Windows 7, is another choice if you already have it or if you are willing to shell out the money for the Microsoft Office Suite that includes Outlook or the stand-alone Outlook Program. The cost for these options is roughly $399 for the Standard Edition at your local retail store and $109 for the stand-alone version of Outlook. There are also academic versions available (the whole Office package is only $59 if you're a student) at sites like www.softwareking.com. (This online store has a phone number at its web site and you can check them out at www.resellerratings.com.) It charges $175 for Office 2007. You will be able to keep your existing email address. Outlook will ask you if you want to import from Outlook Express but I haven't done this with Windows Mail. This article, "How to export e-mail messages from Windows Mail & Outlook Express into Outlook" (link: support.microsoft.com/kb/196347) explains how to transfer messages from Windows Mail to Outlook.

My advice, if you plan to do this, is to do it well in advance of your switch to Windows 7 before you will be forced to make a choice. For example, just go to gmail.com/signup and set up a Gmail account and then go to the Settings page and have it continue to retrieve messages from your existing account until you make a complete transition. Once in Settings, select the Accounts and Import tab, scroll down to "Check mail using POP3:" and add an existing email account that you want Gmail to check. You will have to know your user ID and password. *- Ed Schwartz, NOCCC member. View his blog at www.edwardns.com/blog*.