



Windows Vista and Microsoft VPN Compatibility Issue

Introduction

Windows Vista, being the newest operating system available, is now shipping with most new PCs and it is becoming harder to source PCs with Windows XP Professional loaded.

Problem

Ranmor have discovered that Vista will not work with Cisco PIX firewalls acting as PPTP servers.

A majority of customers that have a PIX firewall will experience this problem.

The main problem is that Vista no longer supports MSCHAP v1 and only supports MSCHAP v2. The PIX firewall, when providing VPN services, only supports MSCHAP v1.

It should be noted that if the customer uses Windows RRAS services then there should be no issues with Windows Vista VPN connections.

Solution

The solution to this problem is to change the VPN connection method for Vista PCs. This does not require the purchase of any additional software, but does require configuration changes on the PIX and the Cisco VPN client software installed on the PC.

It should also be checked that the customers' internet connection at the remote side supports IPSEC connections.

The VPN Client software can be distributed via CD / email and sent out to the customer as the installation is quite straight forward with a small amount of configuration required on the PC.

The configuration changes to the PIX can be done remotely, however they are more involved than the VPN Client and should not be attempted by anyone unfamiliar with the device. Changes can normally be made and tested within an hour.

The configuration changes made to the PIX still allow clients using Windows XP to connect in the same way without any updates required.

Conclusion

There is no reason why a customer cannot update to Windows Vista. The VPN solution detailed above is just as secure and as fast as the previous VPN system used for older Windows versions.

Customers are urged to contact us for more specific information and advice.

