Configure DMDX for use under Windows 7

\*\*\*\*\*\*

With computers being updated more often that what software producers can cope with, experimental software we need for laboratory work sometimes stops working under a new environment. A clear case was the catastrophic Windows Vista, under which programs such as E-prime and also DMDX did not work properly. Some relief was provided with Windows 7, but there are still some “bugs” to take care of. Here is a piece of information provided by Aaron Albin regarding using DMDX under Windows 7.

If you have any specific questions, you can ask Aaron: aaalbin@imail.iu.edu

++++++++++++++

The official DMDX help page [http://psy1.psych.arizona.edu/~jforster/dmdx/help/dmdxhdmdx.htm ]

says the following about using DMDX:

"While DMDX will work with Vista and Windows 7 in addition to your display and audio drivers needing to be good (a long standing feature of DMDX being the ability to expose poor drivers) you should also turn off Desktop Compositing."

'Desktop Compositing' refers to the fancier visual features of the 'Windows Aero' theme - like see-through windows and the 'Flip-3D' feature that lets you switch between windows with [WindowsKey] + [Tab]. (If you haven't ever done the latter, try it - it's cool!) Apparently this kind of thing slows your PC down, which could potentially contaminate the reaction times you obtain with DMDX. The good news is that it's easy to turn this off. Just do the following:

(1) Open the start menu.

(2) Search for 'services.msc'. (In case you're curious, the '.msc' means '[M]anagement-console [S]nap-in [C]ontrol-file'.)

(3) Only one thing should pop up - called 'services', with a little gear icon. Click on this.

(4) Once the 'Services' window comes up, scroll down to 'Desktop Windows Manager' and click on it.

(5) On the left hand side of the window, click on the blue underlined part of 'Stop the service'.

Honestly, I don't know how much of a difference this will make. For sure, when we're playing around with DMDX just for learning purposes the next few months, it's probably not so important. But since the official help manual for DMDX explicitly warns about this, when it comes time to collect our real data on clicks this November/December, it would probably be a good idea to remember to turn off this 'Desktop Windows Manager' thing just in case.

++++++++++++++++

Thanks to Aaron for this information!