Migrating from Vista MC to SageTV 6.x

So, you've decided to take the plunge and move from Vista Media Center to SageTV. **Great!** The migration can be pretty intimidating and there are going to be times when you're ready to pack it in and scurry back to that comfortable, very slick UI. Particularly the very first time the SageTV UI pops up in your face and you try and imagine the reaction of the rest of the family when they lay eyes upon it; "You paid **money** for **that!?** I want my pretty menus and side scrolling stuff back!"

Fear not. The Achilles heel of SageTV is also its greatest strength. Its highly customizable architecture lends to its ugliness, but is certainly trumped by the benefit of having something so open at your finger tips. Let's get started.

Install SageTV, configure the system

- Grab the latest version of Java and install it. Sage includes Java, but some people ran into problems installing when no prior version, or an outdated version was installed.
- If UAC is enabled on your PC, consider disabling it. If you do not, you're going to have to get into file permissions and other ugliness in your SageTV directory.
- Download SageTV, install it. Period. It's that simple!
- Service setup options. Running SageTV as a service is probably the most effective way of running it. If you're like me, you have several files (music, video, etc) stored on another computer. Generally, the local system account will not have access to those files on the remote PC, so, you'll lose access to those files if you run as a service. The work around I've employed is to create identical user accounts on my SageTV system, as well as my media file server. Both machines have an administrative user account called *sageguy* with the same password. Then, within the SageTV Service setup UI, just indicate that user ID and password, turn it on and check off another step on your migration list. Have a beer, you're making progress!
- Disable Vista MC services. Go into Control Panel → Administrative Tools → Services. Scroll down to the Windows Media Center xxx services. There will be 3 or 4 of them. Set them all to Disabled. Now, **for each user who will be logging into the PC**, perform the following:
  - Log in as that user
  - Start → Search → type 'regedit'
  - Navigate to HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Run
  - Right click on the folder in the left pane and select export. (Just in case you want to enable it again, you can just run the resulting .reg file.)
  - Find ehtray.exe in the left panel and delete it.
  - Repeat when logged in as each user who will be logging into that computer.
  - Reboot. After reboot, check task manager for any running ehtray.exe processes. If you find any, you missed a step. Go back and confirm everything.
  - Take another sip of beer…more progress.

- Your remote control. The MCE/Vista MC remote and IR blaster is not natively supported by Sage when used with an STB. Fortunately, SageTV's open architecture comes to the rescue again. Check this thread for the download link and instructions for LM Remote. This little application runs "blocker" between SageTV and your existing Vista MC remote setup and does a great job. Install this app, send a donation to the developer as he most certainly deserves it, and go through the configuration. Be certain to take the time to read all of the steps on his web page, as this does get a little tricky. Once done and installed, be sure to test channel changing on all applicable STBs. I had 2 of the same brand that required different delay settings (no joke!) This step is essential if you're going to be using IR Blasters.
- Download and install babgvant's excellent SageTray application from here. This will enable the Green Button, Recorded TV, and Guide buttons within SageTV.
- More progress, open another beer.

Configure SageTV
- Launch SageTV (Shield your eyes from the ugliness for now…we'll get to that later!)
- Step through the configuration steps as prompted. When you get to the source setup, setup only 1 tuner at a time. Once you get it setup as you like it, then you can move onto the next. Do **not** move on until you've confirmed that the IR blaster is working as needed on that particular STB! If you hav an HDHomeRun, do not set up that source yet. Save that for after you have the regular sources established.
- Ensure you have followed the instructions for setting up LMRemote within SageTV. This is essential!
- After your TV Sources are setup, it's time to move onto your video library. The first thing you want to do is add your old Vista MC Recorded TV directory to your import list. After adding this, run the rescan action to get your old TV recordings in place. Now, your old TV recordings are part of your existing video library. If that is sufficient, then you can skip the next step, although I recommend just going through the SageWebServer install as it's a great utility!
- OK, so, exit Sage TV and download the SageWebServer utility. Follow the instructions for installing it.
- Now, download and install Babgvant's MigrateMCtaSage application here. Run it and point to your MC's recorded TV folder. This will move your old recorded TV into Sage. A very nice addition that scores hufe on the WAF front.
- Now, before another beer, let's pretty things up a bit. Grab SageMC and install it per the instructions. If you were a user of Media Center 2005 and earlier, this interface will look slightly more familiar to you. It's not as slick and polished as Vista MC, but it works, and passes the WAF tests I've put it through. Jump into SageMC's customizations and tinker with them. I can't tell you what works best for you, but it is pretty open.
- Add MS MPEG Encoders to Sage TV
  - Encoders are an essential evil. None of them is perfect, and each has their own benefits over others. Personally, I like the MS Vista video encoder for most things, but it's not an

option by default with SageTV. You can add them by shutting down SageTV, if you're running SageTV as a service, please remember to shut that down as well. Then, in the Sage.properties and SageClient.properties, locate the following lines:
videoframe/additional_audio_filters=
videoframe/additional_video_filters=
Change them to:
videoframe/additional_audio_filters=Microsoft MPEG-1/DD Audio Decoder
videoframe/additional_video_filters=Microsoft MPEG-2 Video Decoder
Relaunch SageTV and you will now have the MS endocers as options within your advanced setup options.

- Install the IMDB Search Plugin
  - While this is not essential, it's a nice little utility that pretties things up a lot and is well worth the 3 minutes effort. See this page for instructions.
- Install Commercial Skip
  - My favorite thing about HTPCs is timeshifting and zapping past commercials. In Vista MC, we had babgvant's DVRMSToolbox. By a wonderful coincidence, babgvant has "Sage-ified" DTb for us! Just grab version 1.2.1.3 or greater from here and install it. After installing and rebooting, go into the Configure application for DTb and enter the SageWebServer login data you set up when you installed SageWebServer.
- Setting Up your Movie Library
  - This is the one place where I do miss Vista MC. Well, not MC, but Brian's My Movies application. Unfortunately, there are no SageTV plugins that are as finely polished as My Movies. The trade off, however, is greater flexibility and functionality. Basically, as long as the folders contailing the movies or the movie files themselves contain the name of the movie, you'll be all set. Also, SageTV supports ripped DVDs without any additional work. Add your videos/ripped DVD directories to your watched folders list and give it time toi populate. Once it does, edit each item and do an IMDB Lookup on each item, and you'll have everything there.
- Setting up clients
  - This is where SageTV accels. With *Softsled* existing only in our minds, SageTV's true client/server architecture is exactly what I needed. Really, installing the client is as easy as installing any application. Just run the setup and you're all set. You'll have to install SageMC on your client machine as well, and if you want to use the MS Encoders on your client, you'll have to edit the SageClient.properties file on your client machine. Other than that, everything that's on your main system, works on your client system. It's a beautiful thing. As a side note, I'm running a couple of clients off of my main SageTV system. I'm giving serious consideration to moving the server into a closet and running it headless, just feeding the clients. It's really **that good!!**

Now, go ahead and have that last beer as you put your feet up and watch your new SageTV rig.