

TECHNICAL GUIDE No. 8

Keeping Your Windows Operating System Updated

To update your Windows operating system follow these instructions:

STEP ONE

Save all of your work, and close any open programs. As always with new software installations we recommend that you ensure you have sufficient backups of any data stored on the machine before proceeding.

STEP TWO

Look for a Windows Update Icon on your start menu, or under All Programs on your start menu and click it. If you do not have one, open Internet Explorer and go to the address www.windowsupdate.com

STEP THREE

If any boxes appear asking you if you wish to trust content from Microsoft, then click yes – you may also tick the box to indicate you always wish to trust content from Microsoft without being asked again in the future, if you prefer.

STEP FOUR

After the web page opens, follow the onscreen instructions by clicking on scan for updates.

STEP FIVE

If updates are available for your computer you will be given the option to review and install them

STEP SIX

We recommend as a minimum that you download and install ALL critical updates and service packs for windows.

STEP SEVEN

You will probably see a benefit in performance and reliability if you also download any other updates that are offered through this site.

To help keep your computer running smoothly and virus free we recommend that, unless you have specific reason not to do so, you should regularly visit the Microsoft Windows Update site to download and install the latest updates for your version of Windows.

It is true that for some users installing Microsoft Windows updates can actually cause a problem itself, but in general our advice is the increased security risks associated with not keeping your system updated out weigh the risk involved in updating regularly.

Windows updates are either enhancements, or security fixes for your Microsoft Windows operating system – they are nothing to do with Anti-virus software definition updates. To ensure the protection of your computer system against viruses you should also ensure that your anti-virus definitions are up to date.

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Some of the updates you install may require that your computer is restarted part way through the installation. If this is the case, follow the instructions to shutdown and restart the machine, and once the installation has finished, revisit the windows update site to continue installing additional updates if necessary.

To fully update your computer you may have to visit the windows update site multiple times, continue to follow the instructions (left) from step 2 repeatedly until you are told there are no updates to install for your computer – at this point you know your Microsoft Windows operating system is fully updated.

In Windows XP – you can instruct your computer to automatically download and install updates as they become available. To do this right click your My Computer icon and select the Automatic Updates tab. From there you can select to either automatically download updates, with the computer prompting you to install them when they are ready, or simply to notify you when updates are available so you can download and install them yourself.