

CÓRAS IT

Using Windows Update

Windows Update is an online service from Microsoft which helps you to maintain Windows and keep it up to date. It allows you to download and automatically install Service Packs, updated drivers and 'patches'.

Patches are small add-ons or repairs to Windows and some programs such as Internet Explorer. Most important are the 'Security Updates' which address vulnerabilities that have been identified. For instance Security Update 'KB824146' will protect your system from the Blaster Worm.

Service Packs are major updates to your operating system. These should include all the patches that were issued prior to the release of that particular Service Pack, where several Service Packs have been released: SP1, SP2, SP3 etc. It is only necessary to install the latest.

N.B. Service Pack 1 for Windows XP has been known to cause problems in a number of cases. Make sure that you have a complete back-up of your system before installing this one **and also** (see below) choose the option which allows you to back up your existing files, so that you can roll back later if need be.

Usually, major updates such as Service Packs need to be installed separately from other updates. It is best to install those first, because there may be a separate set of patches appropriate to them.

Running a Windows Update can take any time from 10 minutes to over an hour, especially over a dial up connection; although some single patches may take only a few minutes. So it is best to carry out the updates when you know you will not need the PC for a while, such as just before the start of your lunch break, and then leave it running. {Note: it usually requires about 4 or 5 minutes of your time before it can be left to run on its own}

Running Windows Update:

1. Open Internet Explorer and type in the web address:
<http://windowsupdate.microsoft.com>. (Alternatively, you may have an icon on your Start menu to do this)
2. The first thing which will occur is a message saying checking for latest version of Windows Update Software, after which you may be asked to download and install an initial program. Follow the instructions and confirm the next step at each stage.
.....Or may be taken straight to Step 3
3. You are now invited to "scan for updates", click this link and wait about a minute or two until the scan is complete. You will then be shown a list of critical updates. The list will give an estimate of the download time for each one, allowing you choose which ones to do at this time. Bear in mind that there is installation time (of many minutes) on top of download time and a restart may be necessary
4. Click the 'Remove' button under the ones you don't wish to install at this stage. In the case of Service Packs this will be everything else
5. When you have made your choices, click the link to "Review and Install Updates", followed by the button "Install Now" on the next page.
6. A dialogue box appears containing a licence agreement, click the "Accept" button, and the download will commence, you can leave it to run at this stage.
7. After the download, the installation phase may take quite a while - 10/15 minutes is not unusual, and then you will almost certainly be asked to restart your system.

Special Notes for Service Packs:

The time given for Service Packs may look quite short (a few minutes); **but** this is the time to download a short installation program which then runs to start the main download, often taking more than an hour.

When this installation program starts, you will be given some options including one to save back-up copies of your existing files. This is invaluable if you decide you need to revert to the old installation.

Do your updating and patching over a period of days in small doses. Until you have downloaded at least all of the critical updates, then keep checking back each week or two. Installing the odd security patch every now and again will not take too much time. If you are using a shared internet connection and everyone in the office is trying to use Windows update at the same time, this will slow everything down considerably.

Recommended Updates and Driver Updates:

On the left hand side of the Windows Update window, you will find these two listed in addition to 'Critical Updates'. Check through both of these, Recommended Updates may be for particular programs or even CDs, and may not be relevant. Unless it is something you are likely to use, don't bother. Likewise driver updates will be newer versions from Microsoft of the driver for your printer, modem etc. If the device is working normally, there may be no advantage in updating.

Note: If you are using a shared printer on an office network don't update the drivers, leave it to network admin.

Automatic Updates:

It is possible to set your computer to check automatically for updates: Go to the following webpage, select your operating system, go to step 2 and follow the instructions on there.

<http://www.microsoft.com/security/protect/>

*Should you be uncertain about any of the above, **Córas IT** will be happy to visit your office and demonstrate the procedures involved.*

Important Warning:

Frequently people receive emails purporting to come from Microsoft and claiming to have an update file attached. These are always malicious and contain viruses, delete the email do not open the attachment. Microsoft never distributes updates by email.

Further Security Measures

Córas IT are resellers for both the AVG range of anti-virus products; and Kerio firewall to prevent malicious intrusions into your system. WE can install and configure both

With a fully patched system and both a firewall and anti-virus software running you can be reasonably confident that you are well protected.

Get Protected Not Infected !