

# HOME CYBER DEFENSE

ARE YOU SAFE FROM CYBER CRIME?

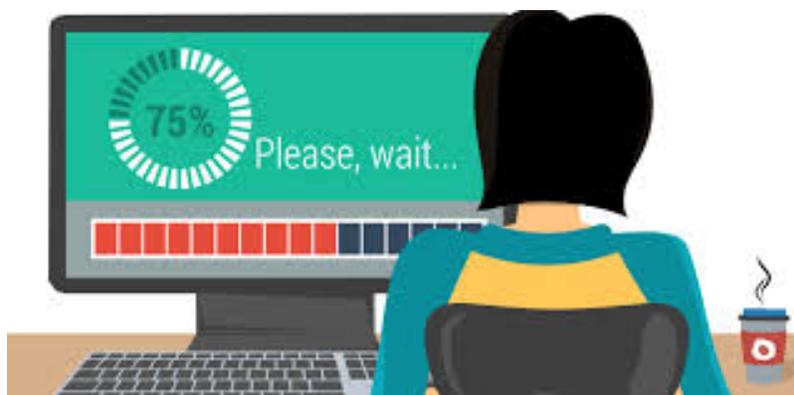
## WEEKLY

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This is a weekly publication dedicated to your personal cyber security. Our newsletter is designed to help the public recognize and avoid cyber threats while they are online. If you are not a subscriber, please go to [HomeCyberDefense.net](http://HomeCyberDefense.net) to sign up.

## Importance of Software Updates



A major preventative measure to take to keep your computer secure is to always have the latest updates installed. Unfortunately, many people find software update notifications and the process of installing new software updates insignificant and disrupting. The truth is, people ignore such notifications for various reasons, such as, 'Do I really need to install this update?', 'My computer is working just fine, I don't think this update is for me!', 'I don't have time to reboot my computer', etc. If you are accustomed to dismissing those update notifications, you need to reconsider that practice. Applying software updates is one of the most important things you

can do with your computer. In fact, if you don't do it, you're very likely going to get some kind of malware in your system and even get hijacked. A software update, also known as a 'Patch' or a 'Service Pack', is a piece of software released by software vendors, mainly to address security vulnerabilities in their existing products. Software updates occasionally contain bug fixes and product enhancement. These updates are installed over the current installation and do not require uninstallation or re-installation of the software in question. In simple words, when you need to update a program, you don't need to do anything other than let the updater do its thing.

**A software update may contain:**

- Security Vulnerability Fixes: More than 90% of software and operating system (OS) updates are to patch security vulnerabilities in programs. A software program with a security hole in it can allow very bad things to happen to the computer. Exploiting security vulnerabilities in programs to deliver malware is a common method employed by cybercriminals.
- Bug Fixes and Product Enhancements: Though most software updates are developed mainly to address security holes in programs, you may come across software updates with bug fixes and product enhancements to improve program's performance.

The term 'software update' is often confused with the term 'software upgrade'. Though both the terms sound similar, there is a huge difference. A "software update" updates your existing version of the program to the current version, but does not upgrade it to the next major version. For example, when you install Service Pack 1 on your Windows 7 computer, you are actually updating your Windows 7 computer with Windows 7 Service Pack 1.

On the other hand, a "software upgrade" allow you to upgrade a program to its next major version. For example, if you are moving from Windows 7 to Windows 10, you are actually performing a software upgrade. While a software update usually comes free, there's usually a cost for a software

upgrade. (Note that Microsoft is offering free a upgrade to Windows 10 for its first year of release.)

Software updates exist for a very genuine reason. When a software program is developed, the software goes through rigorous tests and quality checks. The final version of the software is released to public only when the software vendor is fully satisfied with the product's functionality and stability. Unfortunately, when the software is used by users in a real-time environment, they may come across several issues with the program and same gets reported back to the software vendor. To address those issues, software vendors write patches for that particular software and release it as software updates.

In order to get the best performance from your computer, and most importantly, to stay protected against cyber-attacks and malicious threats, it is very important that you should not neglect any critical software updates. Using an unpatched/outdated computer is like living in a house with no locks on the doors, inviting unwanted intruders. When you ignore updates on your computer, you are choosing to leave your computer open to infection. Cybercriminals depend on the apathy of users around software updates to keep their malicious endeavor running.

Downloading updates and installing them can sometimes be tedious, but the advantages you get from the updates are certainly worth it. The good news is you don't even need to manually download and install most updates for each piece of software. Operating systems and a majority of programs installed on your computer can do the job for you with very little or no intervention. All you need to do is simply grant your consent when asked, by just the click of a button.

It is important to mention that software updates are not limited to computers. Software updates are also available for mobile devices like your smartphone, MP3 player, digital camera, etc. The updates for such devices are usually known as 'firmware updates'. In the case of smartphones, you

may also receive updates for the applications installed on your phone, just the way you receive program updates on your computer. The bottom line is, do not restrict yourself to just updating your computer. When you see updates for your other devices, make sure you install them as well for better performance and enhanced security.

## **This Week's Cyber Alerts:**

**Alert Issued 3/30/18** [Security Flaw in Grindr Exposed Locations to Third-Party Service](#)

**Alert Issued 3/29/18** [Your Online Identity Sells for \\$1,170 on the Dark Web -- Here's How to Block the Sale](#)

**Alert Issued 3/28/18** [Facebook Logs Every Call and Every Text Users Make and Receive on Their Phones](#)

**Alert Issued 3/28/18** [It's Not Just Facebook. Thousands of Companies are Spying on You](#)

**Alert Issued 3/26/18** [How On Earth Did Russia Hack Our Energy Systems?](#)

**Alert Issued 3/22/18** [The Password to Your IoT Device is Just a Google Search Away](#)

**Alert Issued 3/21/18** [880,000 Payment Cards, User Info Hit in Orbitz Data Breach](#)

**Alert Issued 3/20/18** [Cyber-Crooks Find a New Way to Share Malware](#)

**Alert Issued 3/19/18** [Google Tricked into Serving Scam Amazon Ads](#)

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