



# Which Updates Do I Need To Install?

As technology progresses updates are often made to programs that you may have installed on your computer or need to use when accessing the internet. The updates often contain bug fixes in the software which may have been reported to the developer or by users like you and me. They may also contain added security to deal with the ongoing security threats out there. They could also be enhancements to make the software run better or faster. So yes, these types of updates should be downloaded and installed.

These are the main updates that I recommend that you download.

## Microsoft Operating System Updates

Microsoft throws a lot of stuff at you, often with little information. And somehow you have to figure out what you really need, what you might like, and what Microsoft wants you to have for their own purposes.

It doesn't help that most of the updates have totally useless names.

Microsoft assigns each update three (3) different levels.

\*Important: Most of these updates are security fixes for your computer, that you really need to safely use your computer.

Microsoft occasionally throws something into this group that they really want you to have for their own purpose, not yours, such as Windows Genuine Advantage.

This is a tool that is installed on your computer to verify that you have genuine copies of Microsoft products such as the operating system and Microsoft Office. If it discovers that you are not running genuine software a message will appear on your screen telling you that the software is not genuine.

\* Recommended: Nothing horrible will happen if you skip these, but you might miss something that will make your PC work better. Read the descriptions and make your own decision.

Optional: You might occasionally find a useful driver update here, but more likely you'll just find marketing hype. Most updates, for any version of Windows, are not cumulative. This is true even for the Important and High Priority ones. If they were cumulative, you'd only have to update one of them. Sometimes Microsoft releases a cumulative update and removes several others from the list. Microsoft from time to time releases service packs for their products. I would highly recommend that these be installed as they contain important updates and security fixes.

### Microsoft Silverlight Plugin

Microsoft Silverlight is a powerful tool for creating and delivering rich Internet applications and media experiences on the Web. Website that run live broadcasts usually require this to be installed.

### Java

Java is a programming language and computing platform. There are lots of applications and websites that will not work unless you have Java installed, and more are created every day. Java is fast, secure, and reliable. From laptops to tablets, game consoles to scientific supercomputers, smart phones to the Internet, Java is everywhere!

If Java is installed on your computer it will periodically check for available updates, which are released roughly every month or so.

There's really no need to constantly update it, any web-based program which requires it, will prompt you when an update is absolutely required.

### Adobe Flash

Flash is streaming animation for web pages.

Sometimes Flash is a portion of an html web page, and sometimes a web page is made entirely of Flash. Either way, Flash files are called "Flash movies". These are special files that beam to your web browser screen as you watch them. When you watch movies on You tube you are using Adobe Flash.

#### *Why Do you Need To Update It?*

**Performance and Reliability** - The latest version provides better memory management and improved video performance. This will make videos run smoother on sites like Youtube.

**Security** - Because Flash use is so widespread it is often the target of virus attack. Regular security updates help block any security holes found in Flash and keep your computer safe – using an older version leaves your computer more exposed to viruses.

### Adobe Acrobat Reader

This is a free program that reads PDF (portable document files) which is probably the most popular document file format on the internet. You should download updates for this to take advantage of the new features.

#### **Be Wary!**

Although updates such as Adobe Flash, Adobe Reader & Java are free to download they may contain other software attached to them. This may include web browser tool bars that can change your homepage or trial versions of anti-virus or spyware programs. During the installation process make sure you read what the program is actually installing!

If you have other programs on your computer such as Nero, MYOB, Photoshop etc , these programs may be setup to periodically check on the internet and notify you of any updates. If you receive a message advising of an update, and you recognise the program or the maker of the program it should be safe to download. If you don't know the program or are unsure, don't download and install it.

### Internet Security Programs

Programs such as AVG, Trend, Kaspersky, Norton etc will automatically update their virus definitions, usually every day, so you shouldn't have to worry about this.

### Mac Computers

It's the same for the Macintosh Operating System. Install the Operating system updates and follow the same procedure for third party software (Java, Flash, Acrobat etc)

### Updates for Tablets & Smartphones

If you own an Apple iPad or iPhone you may also be asked to download updates. If the update is an operating system update a message will appear in the "settings" icon on your iPad and will prompt you to update. This is an important update and fixes problems that have been found.

If you have apps installed you will receive notifications to update them. The updates will contain improvements and bug fixes. You have the choice to update or not.

If you own an Android tablet it is usually set to receive updates automatically for the operating system. If you have apps installed you will receive notifications that updates are available and you have to decide to update.