



Factsheet 2—Setting up automatic updates in Windows XP

Automatic Updates¹ is a feature of the Microsoft Windows operating system that downloads and installs software updates for these operating systems automatically.

It is important to enable these features to update automatically because they correct security bugs in the operating system software, which, if exploited, could allow an attacker to steal sensitive information from your computer or delete or modify your computer's files.

Configuring your computer to automatically update its operating system will ensure you do not miss or delay important security updates and unnecessarily increase the risk of compromise to your computer.

The software updates, also known as patches or fixes, only install updates for the particular Microsoft operating system installed. Other vendors generally provide their own automatic update tools.

To set up automatic updates on your computer, you must log in with an account that has administrator rights. These settings apply to the computer system and do not need to be set up for every user.

If you attempt to follow the instructions below but find the **Automatic Updates** settings are disabled, then you are logged on as a limited user. You need to log out and log on from an account with administrator rights.

1. Click the **Start** button in the lower left corner of your screen.



Figure 1: Start button icon

2. Single click on the icon labelled **Control Panel**.

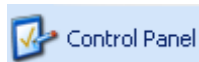


Figure 2: Control Panel icon

3. Select the **Security Center** icon.



Figure 3: Security Center icon

4. Open the icon labelled **Automatic Updates**.



Figure 4: Automatic Updates icon

5. Select the **Automatic (recommended)** radio button. For example:

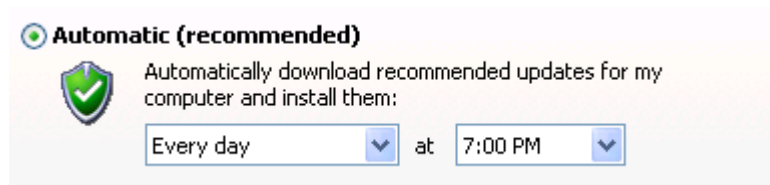


Figure 5: Automatic radio button

6. While you are required to select a time for the installation of updates, it is not necessary to have your computer turned on at this time. The next time your computer is turned on and connected to the internet, it will automatically check for any new updates and install them, regardless of the scheduled time.
7. Click the button labelled **OK**.
8. Automatic updates are now enabled.

¹ <http://update.microsoft.com/windowsupdate/v6/default.aspx?ln=en-us>