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Why Windows Update didn't

Last week, Microsoft issued an important update to fix a serious exposure to Windows XP, Vista and 7. The problem was in the way application shortcuts were handled but that's not the point of this story.

When such situations arise, I always contact my friends to ensure they are aware of the problem and that they apply the solution as soon as possible. They all use Windows Update to automatically download and install fixes so when, over a day after the update in question had been received by everyone else, one friend reported he hadn't yet seen it, we took a closer look.

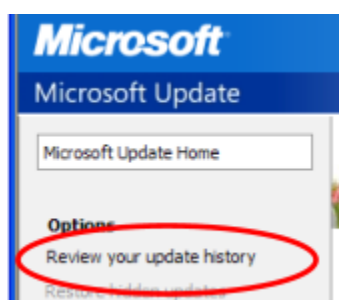
On his PC, we confirmed Windows Update was set to download and install updates, both for Windows itself and for other components of his system. He regularly sees the Windows Update icon at the bottom of the screen so knows the system is working but, quite reasonably, leaves it to its own devices.

There was a possibility the new update had actually been received and installed but had not been spotted so, to check this, we looked at the history of updates on the PC. This facility of Windows Update logs every fix received and whether it was successfully installed (or not) and, to our horror, showed that while most components had been updated regularly, not a single update for Windows had been received for almost two years. There followed some rapid investigation into why this should be and how it could be fixed.

The reason turned out to be the update of Windows XP to Service Pack 3 in August 2008; although this, too, was managed by Windows Update we found the version of SP3 it downloaded and installed was actually incorrect, the build number was lower than that of the "proper" SP3. We have no idea why this should have been – maybe the wrong build was briefly made available by Microsoft and my friend was just unlucky – but the effect was it stopped Windows Update from looking for further updates.

The solution was to install the *correct* version of SP3 then run Windows Update. That worked! Over 100 high-priority updates, half a dozen reboots and an evening later, my friend's PC is up to date and secure.

The moral we learn from this is don't just assume Windows Update is doing its job properly, check it yourself from time to time.



You can review the history of installed updates by following: **Start > All Programs > Windows Updates** then clicking on the **View update history/Review your update History** link (the wording depends upon your version of Windows).

If you would like help or feel there might be a problem with your updates, please contact us.

Which version of Office do I need?

Microsoft Office 2010 is now available so, if you are thinking of making the upgrade - or of installing Office for the first time - you'll need to consider which "commercial version" of Office best suits your needs. The difference in purchase price between the versions is significant so it makes sense not to pay more than is necessary.

Microsoft have released three discrete packages for Office 2010:

Office Home and Student 2010 which includes:

- Word 2010
- Excel 2010
- PowerPoint 2010
- OneNote 2010

Office Home and Business 2010 which includes:

- Word 2010
- Excel 2010
- PowerPoint 2010
- OneNote 2010
- Outlook 2010

Office Professional 2010 which includes:

- Word 2010
- Excel 2010
- PowerPoint 2010
- OneNote 2010
- Outlook 2010
- Access 2010
- Publisher 2010



A little note of warning about the Home & Student version...

Although Outlook is not part of this version of Office, it *is* included in the installation as a trial product. This has caught out many people who, following the default installation options, have installed, discovered and started using Outlook. They then wondered why it stopped working 30 days later!

Tip of the Month - Keep that LCD screen clean!

Most of us now use "flat" LCD or TFT monitors with our computers, the days of the bulky, hot, power-consuming CRT screens being well and truly numbered. LCD and TFT screens bring so many advantages there really is no argument about their superiority but there is one disadvantage - it is very easy to damage an LCD or TFT screen when cleaning it.

The surface of most flat screens is a film which is quite soft in comparison to glass so attempting to clean one using a paper towel and 'windowclene' may cause irreparable damage. The best way to clean your screen is to:

- for safety reasons, always disconnect your screen from its power source before cleaning
- use a very soft 'microfibre' cloth* and a cleaning solution specifically for use on a flat screen*
- use the solution sparingly and the cloth gently!
- use a soft brush* or air blower* to clean corners you can't get to with a cloth
- let the solution dry before switching on your screen again

* Tarragon can provide kits containing all you need - please contact us for pricing, etc.

Please let us know what you think of **Solutions!** - email solutions@tarragon.co.uk