

# Crime prevention advice for Patching



Patching is another term used for 'updating' and is used when referring to your computer systems. These updates refer to the software that is on your computers and other devices. Updates are released for a number of reasons ranging from bringing in new features to security management.

## Principles behind updating software

As mentioned above, updates are released for a variety of reasons including:

- Advancements in technology - Software companies will constantly be developing new features and versions of their software for the benefits of their customers, e.g. voice control.
- Preventing crashing or update the performance.
- Address security issues - Updates will also be released to address (patch) vulnerabilities in the coding of software. These loopholes are areas which could potentially be targeted by hackers and therefore when these updates are released it is important that they are installed.
- Zero-hour - These occur when hackers identify a vulnerability in a system and are able to exploit it before the developer has chance to release an update or maybe even realise there is an issue. When the update is released it is important that it is installed as soon as possible as hackers will then know for certain that there is a weakness and go after any system that hasn't installed the security update.

## Obsolete software

Updating software is important but as well as releasing updates for security and other purposes, developers may release entirely new operating systems. Over time support and updates for very old programmes may be discontinued while they focus on updating more recent software and developing new programmes. An example of this is Windows XP, this stopped receiving updates in 2014. Therefore it is important to keep an eye on when your software may stop receiving updates so you can plan around this.

## When to update

Software should be updated as soon as possible. It is a good idea to either set your system to automatically update when a patch is released or at least notify you when one is ready.

If you run up to date software and follow some of the other advice sheets such as anti-virus, firewalls and passwords you will have a better chance of protecting yourself online.

