

Small business IT | Medium | 2 min read

Keeping software up to date across several PCs

Updates fix security holes that criminals actively use. With one computer it is easy to keep up. With five, it is easy to miss one.

Why it matters

Out-of-date software is one of the most common ways attackers get in. Cyber Essentials expects security updates to be applied promptly, generally within 14 days for those rated high or critical.

Step 1: know what you have

List every computer, phone and tablet, plus what runs on it: Windows or macOS version, browsers, Office, PDF readers, and so on. Also include the router and any other network devices, since they need updates too.

Step 2: turn on automatic updates

1. Windows: Settings, then Windows Update. Make sure updates are on and set active hours so restarts happen outside work.
2. macOS: System Settings, General, Software Update, and turn on automatic updates.
3. Browsers and apps such as Chrome, Edge and Office: leave automatic updates on.
4. Phones and tablets: turn on automatic updates in settings.

Step 3: check regularly

- Once a month, spend 15 minutes looking at each machine to confirm updates are installed and nothing is waiting for a restart.
- Ask staff to restart at least weekly. Many updates only finish after a restart.
- Keep a simple sheet noting date checked and by whom.

Deal with old software

- Check which version of Windows each PC runs. If a system no longer receives security updates, it should be upgraded or replaced.
- Remove programs nobody uses.
- Old printers and routers also stop getting updates, so plan to replace them.

When something breaks

Before large updates, make sure your backups are working. If an update causes a problem, do not turn updates off for good; ask for help instead.

When to get more help

Get help if you have more than a handful of machines, if some will not update, if you run old software for a special reason, or if you would like updates managed for you.

Still stuck? Email admin@visiontech336.com and tell us what you can see on the screen. Menus and button names can differ slightly between versions and makes. If something does not match, stop and ask rather than guess. Please never send passwords or card details.