Updating Software

Patching the holes is key
WHY ARE UPDATES SO IMPORTANT?

• Updating your operating system, applications, and browser plug-ins is essential to maintaining your privacy and security

• Vulnerabilities are bugs or weaknesses in your software that cyber attackers can exploit
  – New vulnerabilities are being discovered constantly
  – Software vendors, such as Microsoft and Apple, issue updates (or patches) regularly to correct these vulnerabilities
OPERATING SYSTEMS

• Microsoft Windows - includes a utility for checking and updating your system automatically

• Microsoft Update covers not only Windows but also many Microsoft applications you have installed, such as Office

• Mac OS X has a similar autoupdating feature for OS X and Apple applications

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OPERATING SYSTEMS (Cont.)

- Some updates require rebooting your system before they take effect – When prompted, restart without delay

- Set your system to check for updates every day
  - Pick a time of day when your system will be powered on, awake, and connected to the Internet.
MOBILE DEVICES

• iOS, for mobile devices like the iPhone and iPad, does not include an auto-updating tool
  – Check iTunes periodically for updates

• Android 2.x has an auto-updater that covers both the OS and installed apps
  – It requires your permission when they are ready to install

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SOFTWARE APPLICATIONS

• Yes, all that software on your computer can be vulnerable too!

• The key to keeping your computer and mobile device apps updated and secure is to know which ones you have installed
  – Many do not have a built-in auto-update utility or it’s not activated
    • Adobe Acrobat Reader, and Java, include an auto-updater
    • Use other software’s update notifications as reminders to check things that won’t autoupdate
SOFTWARE APPLICATIONS (Cont.)

• Uninstall unused software - The more apps you have installed, the greater the risk you run of having a vulnerable system

• On your personal machine – Use tools like Secunia PSI (Windows Only)
  • PSI scans your computer for known applications and attempts to determine which are out of date and provides links so you can update them
  • ITS is currently in the planning stages on implementing a patch management solution for campus – In the future, we’ll be able to do this for you!
BROWSER PLUG-INS

• Small software applications that enhance the functionality of your browser
  – Adobe Flash Player
  – Apple QuickTime
  – Microsoft Silverlight
  – Many others

• Popular target for cyber attackers because they are difficult to keep updated

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• Qualys’s Browser Check
  – Web-based tool that determines which plug-ins are installed, which are out-of-date, and how to update them
  – https://browsercheck.qualys.com/

• Mozilla provides a web-based tool for Firefox that detects third-party plug-ins and provides links to updates
BROWSER PLUG-INS (Cont.)

- Chrome disables out-of-date plug-ins automatically.
  - Click on “Update plug-in” - takes you to that plug-in’s website where you can download its latest version.

- Safari has automatic updating for plug-ins (extensions), but by default it is not enabled. To activate it:
  - Open the Preferences window in Safari and select Extensions.
  - Then select the Updates link at the bottom of the extensions list, and put a check in the Install Updates Automatically box.
Questions?

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