**How do I update drivers on my computer**

It seems like a day doesn't go by where our computer isn't politely urging us to please install an update for something or other. While most of these allow us to explore new features in our music library or help software run with more security, there's also the need to update so your computer can run what you want, period.

In a computer, a driver is a piece of software that tells hardware how to run on a certain operating system. That means your PC card, DVD drive, video card and other hardware all use drivers to make their operations work. If you're using your computer right now, you probably have a ton of drivers already installed and working.

That's one of the reasons, in fact, that people don't know that much about drivers. Whenever Windows or Mac has an update, the drivers are generally installed along with it; you don't even realize you're getting a fancy new way for your hardware to communicate as well. In general, you don't need to fuss about whether or not to update your drivers. While there are some drivers that Windows doesn't automatically update, they're by and large covered.

But how do you know when you need to update your drivers? According to programmer and writer Leo Notenboom, there's no reason to update for the sake of updating. Instead, decide to update using some common sense signals [source: Notenboom]. If you're having issues with your hardware, checking for a driver update is a great place to start troubleshooting. If Windows or the software itself tells you an update is available, it also doesn't hurt to take it.

So let's upgrade ourselves a page and discover how we can update any drivers that might need our attention.

**How to Update**

Before we get into the actual steps to update our drivers, a word about why we're speaking primarily about Windows here. Because Apple uses their Mac operating system on all their computers, you'll find that you don't need to update drivers beyond the system software update. Windows can be run on many different computers (Dell, Gateway, HP, etc.), which means that hardware has to communicate in a singular way with each computer. Thus, the need to update drivers more specifically and regularly.

But let's say at this point you've decided it might be a good idea to get your drivers updated. How do you do it? Start with the simplest procedure, by simply checking Windows Update. (Do check "optional updates," too.)

Next, check with the company that made your computer to see if they have updated drivers available. On their website, you'll usually find a support page that will let you know about updated drivers that are available. In general, you can install the drivers with an easy download.

Next, you'll want to see if the company that made the component (the video card, for example) has an updated driver available. To do that, you'll want to check your Device Manager on your computer to get the device, manufacturer and name of the component. Go to the manufacturer's website to find a download or drivers support page; look for your device and then download any recommended updates.

Now, there's another option for those who are wary of keeping up with out-of-date drivers. There are disk utility programs that promise to scan your computer and make sure you have the most up-to-date drivers. However, caution should be exercised with these. Remember that you can easily check (at no cost) if you need drivers, not to mention the fact that Windows Update is making sure you have the most secure, necessary drivers at all times anyway. Here's the other thing: these utilities are sending you directly to the manufacturer's site to install the update, so it's really just one more step to check directly.

So be diligent but not overly enthusiastic about updating your drivers.

From doing my research about updating drivers, the overwhelming advice seems to be ... don't. Really, the general wisdom seems to be that Windows or Apple will provide pretty much everything you need for your hardware to talk to your computer. In the words of one resource, "don't fix what ain't broke." Wait until a vetted, secure source presents an update to you, and take it.

**Is downloading free software safe?**

It happens all the time. We're minding our own business, quietly scanning the Internet, only to be suddenly confronted with a pop-up urgently telling us that we must download free software to prevent World War III from happening on our computer (or maybe from just happening in general). We're confronted with an issue: Is this a serious warning, or is it just a company preying on our fears? Worse, is it actually a virus or malware in disguise?

Or here's another scenario. Say you've been struggling to transcribe recordings from meetings and you stumbled upon some terrific transcription software that's free and ready to use with a quick installation. It seems reputable, but how can you be sure?

Here's the bottom line: Free software on the Internet can be convenient, helpful -- and totally unreliable. Is there any way to ensure that the software you're downloading is safe?

While there's never a guarantee, there are a few tactics for making sure your computer isn't a playground for digital thugs. First off, you'll want to know what kind of software you're dealing with. Freeware is software that's entirely unrestricted for copying and downloading (but you wouldn't have access to the code, unlike open-source freeware). It can be offered by large commercial companies, too: think Microsoft's malware protection, which you can download directly from their site. Shareware is actually owned and maintained by a company or individual and usually requires payment after a trial period. (There are also updates and plug-ins, required by something like Adobe when software is updated.)

There are a lot of different software possibilities, and not all of them can easily be identified as safe. So let's explore free software further to get some hints -- and warnings -- about the freeware and shareware that might be too good to be true.

Is it safe?

For one, be realistic. A huge, well-known company is not setting up its customers to download viruses and bugs. If the software is coming from a company like Microsoft, it's probably going to be fine. Chances are, you're getting it from their direct site and you've sought it out.

Keep that in mind: Seeking out software is different than having a pop-up forcefully inform you that it's imperative you download a program ASAP. If you're being advised--without any solicitation--that you can hardly live without the program flashing on your screen, better avoid it.

While it sounds obvious, do your research! If a company called "Malevoware" is asking you to pretty please click the "accept" button on their popup so you can surf the web with ease, best you do some internet searching to see what people are saying about the company. Better yet, McAfee Secure has a Site Advisor search that allows you to search different sites to get a safety rating. If you're considering downloading freeware or shareware, just type in the domain and you can see how reliable it is. (And if it isn't, they'll let you know why.)

Remember, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. Before you set about downloading a free program, do yourself a favor and make sure you have backups of your hard drive or important documents -- a good practice in general.

We would be remiss to ignore another huge, lurking issue that could come with downloading software for free. If you're using BitTorrent or another program that shares pirated software or files, you're exposing yourself to enormous risk. Not only is it (obviously) illegal to download copyrighted software, but you simply can't practice the due diligence described above if you're downloading shared files from users with no trace. So is downloading free software safe? It can be. But forget about blindly clicking and accepting when it comes to adding programs to your computer. A little research and a lot of caution will keep your computer safe in the end.

Ссылки на источник

https://computer.howstuffworks.com/update-drivers-computer.htm

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