Windows Update

Windows Update is a free service from Microsoft that is used to automatically deliver and install software updates on your system. These updates include security and reliability updates that provide your computer system with the most current software to help protect your system from malicious software and instability.

Microsoft provides updates only for those versions of Windows that it currently supports. This includes:
- Windows XP with Service Pack 3 ("SP3") and Windows XP 64-bit with SP2
  - All other versions of Windows XP are no longer supported
  - All Windows XP support will end on April 8, 2014
- Windows Vista with SP2
  - All other versions of Windows Vista are no longer supported
  - All Windows Vista support will end on April 11, 2017
- All versions of Windows 7
  - All Windows 7 support will end on January 14, 2020

Even if your version of Windows is no longer supported, it will continue to run. However, you will not benefit from the constant updates and your system will likely not support any new software or hardware you wish to purchase.

To check the settings of Windows Update on your computer:
- On Windows XP, just double click on "Automatic Updates" under the Control Panel.
- On Windows Vista and Windows 7, click the Start button and type "windows update", then press enter.

You can also run Windows Update manually by opening Internet Explorer and going to http://update.microsoft.com

If you set up Windows Update to run automatically at a certain date and time (this is the default), then keep in mind that the computer has to be running at that moment (i.e., it cannot be in standby or hibernate).

Most of the time the updates will be applied in the background, but occasionally, you may be asked to approve an update and also occasionally your computer will automatically restart after the update has been installed.

On Windows XP, Windows updates are either High Priority or Optional and on Windows Vista and Windows 7 they are Important, Recommended, or Optional. Optional updates are never installed automatically and are left to you to install manually if you want them.

There is an expanded version of Windows Update called Microsoft Update that adds automatic update of Microsoft Office, Windows Live, and other Microsoft applications to Windows Update. Microsoft Update is typically enabled when one of the supported applications is installed.

For you Mac users, there is a similar facility. On Mac OS X versions it runs automatically by default or can be invoked by selecting "Software Update" under the Apple icon. With Apple's latest release of its operating system, called Mountain Lion, it has been incorporated into the App Store just as it is on your iPhone or iPad.

As always, I hope you have found this information useful. If you do not wish to receive these emails in the future, let me know.

This newsletter, as well as all past newsletters, can be found on my web site (http://steve.gimnicher.com).