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'Forced' SP2 updates from April

By Sam Varghese

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Windows XP systems configured to auto update will be unable to prevent the downloading of service pack 2 from April 12 onwards, according to information available from Microsoft.

At the time when SP2 was released, there was a request for a means of blocking the pack from being installed even though systems were set to auto-update.

According to Microsoft's Australian senior product manager (security), Ben English, some customers had asked for the ability to temporarily block the delivery of SP2 in order to provide additional time for validation and testing of the update.

"In response to these requests, Microsoft provided guidance and tools to do so. This temporary measure is now coming to an end," he said.

"At the end of this period, Automatic Update and Windows Update will simply ignore the presence of the registry setting and will deliver Windows XP SP2 to the machine," English said.

April 12 is also the second Tuesday of the month, the day on which Microsoft normally releases security fixes for its products.

"Microsoft strongly encourage customers to take the appropriate steps to implement SP2 deployment decisions by that time," the notice said.

English said later that Automatic Updates would only download SP2, not install it. "Users who do not want to run SP2 on their computers simply need to decline the option to install SP2 when prompted by Automatic Updates or decline the end-user license agreement that accompanies it," he said.

"That said, Microsoft urges customers not to disable Automatic Updates since this will disable ongoing delivery of critical and security updates to all these systems, leaving users vulnerable."

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