

Check Your Computer For Software Updates

By

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It is an unfortunate reality that using a computer requires us to keep our software up to date to prevent issues. Issues can be as minor as incompatibility with certain types of files or websites through exposing your computer to malicious hackers. Though most of us know this is important it is like changing oil in your car – you know you should do it, but we aren't always as diligent about it as we should be. Microsoft has tried to make it easier to keep their software up to date with Windows/Microsoft Update but this tool doesn't update software from other companies. Most of us use programs like iTunes, Quicktime, Java, Flash Player, Adobe Acrobat and Firefox so keeping everything up to date can be a seemingly insurmountable task.

Use Secunia Software Inspector To Keep Software Updated

Secunia (www.secunia.com) is a well-respected security company that offers a lot of information, advisories and tools for the geek crowd. They also offer a free tool to scan your computer to find common programs that are out of date. Best of all, it's Web-based, so there's no software to install though you do need to install a Java application the first time you visit.

Software Inspector works fine with Windows XP or Windows Vista using Internet Explorer or Firefox. You need to be using Windows though, so Mac and Unix/Linux users will not be able to make use of this great tool. That said, this tool has a comprehensive coverage of common programs and best of all - it's free.

Running A Scan

Running the scan is pretty simple. Just follow these steps:

1. Run *Microsoft/Windows Update* and install all pending updates.
2. Open Internet Explorer or Firefox and go to www.secunia.com/software_inspector
3. Click the START NOW button near the middle of the webpage.

Secunia Stay Secure

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Software Inspectors

Scan Online Personal (PSI) Network (NSI 2.0)

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Secunia Advisories

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Secunia: Online Software Inspector

Feature Overview - The Secunia Online Software Inspector:

- * Detects insecure versions of common/popular applications installed on your computer
- * Verifies that all Microsoft patches are applied
- * Assists you in updating your computer and problems
- * Runs through your browser. No installation or download is required

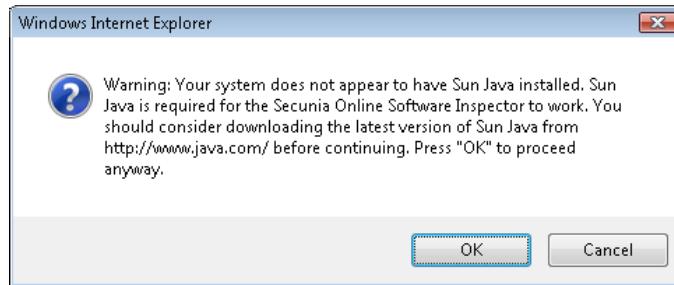
Besides this free Online Software Inspector, we also offer two installable programs capable of conducting very thorough and indepth scans of computers.

The free [Personal edition](#), the Secunia PSI, for private individuals and the commercial [Network edition](#), the Secunia NSI, for businesses.

Start Now

How Does it Work:
The Secunia Online Software Inspector relies on carefully crafted [Secunia File Signatures](#) to recognise applications on your system. The detected applications are then matched against our [Secunia Advisory Intelligence](#) to determine whether an application is up-to-

4. If you receive a message similar to the following, you need to click the CANCEL button and then visit www.java.com to install the latest version of Java on your computer before running the scan.



5. If you see a prompt similar to the following, click the RUN button.



6. Wait until you see ***Java Applet loaded successfully. Press "Start" to begin*** before proceeding.

Secunia: Online Software Inspector

The Secunia Online Software Inspector will inspect your operating system and software for insecure versions and missing security updates. A default inspection normally lasts 5-40 seconds, while a thorough inspection may take several minutes. Note: If you have anti-virus software or similar enabled, an inspection may increase significantly in duration.

Detection Statistics:
0 Applications Detected in Total
0 Insecure Versions Detected
0 Secure Versions Detected

Start

Stop

Enable thorough system inspection
Enable the Secunia Online Software Inspector to search for software installed in non-default locations.

Did you find this scan useful?

Then you might find it even more useful to run our powerful installable programs, capable of conducting very thorough and indepth scans.
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Status / Currently Processing:

Java Applet loaded successfully. Press "Start" to begin



7. Click the START button to initiate the scan.

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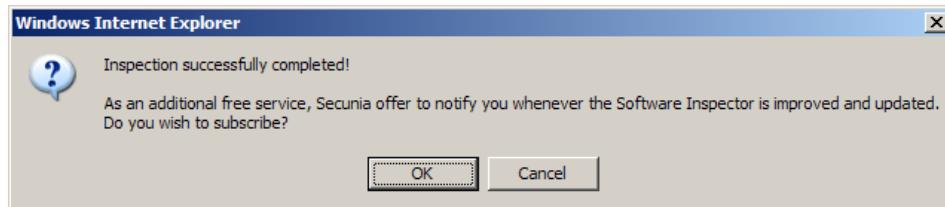
Status / Currently Processing:

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The scan will run anywhere from a couple minutes to 10-15 minutes depending on the software you have installed and the speed of your computer.

8. When the scan completes, you will see a dialog box similar to the following:



9. I suggest you click the CANCEL button, but you can click OK if you would like to receive reminders from Secunia.
10. That's it! You have successfully scanned your system!

Ok, I See Programs That Need To Be Updated, So Now What?

After the scan completes, the website lists the programs it detected and whether there is an update available. You will see a listing similar to the following:

Status / Currently Processing:
Detection completed successfully

Applications / Result	Version	Detected	Status
- Microsoft Windows XP Professional	Service Pack 2		X

This installation of Microsoft Windows XP Professional is **insecure** and potentially exposes your system to security threats!

Your system does not have all security related patches from Microsoft installed. Please see list below for details about the missing patches.

Update Instructions:
You do not have the following Microsoft security updates installed:
[KB941569](#)
[KB950749](#)
[KB950760](#)
[KB950762](#)
[KB951376](#)
[KB951698](#)

Visit [Windows Update](#) to install the missing patches.

- Adobe Reader 8.x 8.0.0.456 X

This installation of Adobe Reader 8.x is **insecure** and potentially exposes your system to security threats!

The detected version installed on your system is **8.0.0.456**, however, the latest secure version released by the vendor, fixing one or more vulnerabilities, is **8.1.2.215**.

Update Instructions:
Update to Adobe Reader 8.1.2.215 and apply Security Update 1.
<http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html>

Vulnerabilities Fixed:
Read about the vulnerabilities fixed with this update in [Secunia advisory SA30832](#)

Now you have to start updating everything. If this is the first time you have run Software Inspector or it has been a while since you last ran it you may have a lot of updates pending. If you update your system regularly – such as monthly – the process will go fairly quickly since you will have a much smaller number of updates to load.

Secunia is very good about including links to the newest version of programs so for many programs you just have to click the link and download the latest version or update. There are some programs that you will want to handle carefully to ensure they are updated optimally. Most programs not noted below can be updated simply by following the link provided by Secunia and installing the new version or update.

Java

As noted previously, Java won't remove old versions so you will need to take care of this yourself. The easiest way to do this is to open **Add/Remove Programs** in the Control Panel (**Programs and Features** in Vista), then uninstall all versions you see listed. Once that is done, install the latest version from the Java website (www.java.com). **IMPORTANT:** If you see any versions labeled with **SE** or special edition, do not remove them as they are likely needed for programs on your computer like SAS or Banner.

Flash Player

Flash is another application that usually leaves old versions installed when you install the latest version, so you will need to uninstall it yourself. The easiest way to do this is to open **Add/Remove Programs** in the Control Panel (**Programs and Features** in Vista), then uninstall all versions you see listed. You can then install the latest version from www.adobe.com/go/getflash. If you have problems uninstalling Flash, you may need to use one of the following methods to remove it:

Uninstaller for version 5+:

<http://www.adobe.com/support/flashplayer/downloads.html#uninstaller>

Manually remove Flash:

http://kb.adobe.com/selfservice/viewContent.do?externalId=tn_12727&sliceId=2

Do You Get A Java Error When Trying To Run Software Inspector?

If you attempt to run Software Inspector and the process doesn't complete or you receive a Java error it likely means you need a more recent version of Java installed. Yes, you need a working copy of Java to scan your system for flawed versions of Java. You can download and install the latest version of Java from the following site: www.java.com.

Do You See Duplicate Programs Listed?

Does the report show more than one version of programs like Flash, Acrobat or Java? This is likely because you have multiple versions of some programs installed without realizing it. This means you can have one version that is secure and more than one version of the same program that is not. In the case of programs like Java and Acrobat the old version often remains as opposed to upgrading or removing the old version when installing a newer one.

If I Use Software Inspector And Microsoft Update, Does That Mean Everything Is Up To Date?

Using Microsoft Update and Software Inspector will definitely ensure a majority of the programs on your computer are up to date. That said, the combination of these two tools may not catch everything on your system. If you are aware of any programs on your computer not listed in the Software Inspector results you may want to check them individually to be sure. Most programs have an option to check for updates off the HELP menu to make this process a little easier.

That's It

Hopefully this information helps you keep your computer running well for the long haul. If you run into any snags using Software Inspector or have questions about something you see on the results, make sure to touch base with your IT support person.