

SFO Technology News

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Don't Worry About the MS Update Chore Anymore

Setup Automatic Updates

Automatic updates for your Windows PC may be a blessing in disguise. Microsoft has moved to a monthly update schedule, which has the benefit of making update management easier. You can be reasonably sure that every month you need to do one update, usually right after the second Tuesday of every month, and until that same time next month you are free to not worry about missing a critical update.

When you have a network of 10 to 20 users, the chore of monthly updates can take a significant amount of time – often taking ½ hour or so per computer depending on the types of updates and the speed of your Internet connection. In order to ease this process Microsoft recommends using a product called SUS, which is a free addition to Windows 2000 Server that automatically updates desktops. **Our experience has been**

continued on page 2

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 Don't Worry about the MS Update Chore Anymore
- 1 Cheap Color Laser Printers
- 2 Managing Your Inbox
- 3 Remote Worker Security Checklist

Cheap Color Laser Printers

Are They Really That Affordable?

The next time you are out looking at PC products you may notice a color laser printer sitting on the shelf – at a price that is nearly equal to that of a normal monochrome laser printer.

While the price may seem like a bargain initially, beware. Although color laser printers have dropped significantly in price in the last year, as a consumer you still need to be careful when purchasing. Color laser printers are big brothers to their low-cost inkjet siblings. And like their inkjet siblings, the initial cost of the printer is nothing when compared to the cost of the toner. Most of the toner cartridges, when they are all replaced, are in the \$400.00 dollar range,

(continued on page 2)

You are invited to logon...

WWW.SFOTECHNOLOGY.COM

We recently completed the finishing touches to the SFO Technology Professionals website, which went up unofficially in February. On the page you will find the information on security notices that we email to you, archives of these newsletters and our contact information.

Please feel free to logon and check it out!



(continued...MS Update Chore)

that this product is expensive to setup and difficult to use. For most small businesses the product just does not provide enough benefit to justify its use.



Another more simple option for small businesses is the use of Microsoft's Automatic Update feature. Automatic Update can be setup and configured on Windows 2000 and XP to provide computers with automatic silent installations of windows updates – on a schedule that you pick and manage.

So long as Microsoft is updating their products monthly we recommend setting these updates up to execute twice a month, usually on a Friday afternoon or evening. With automatic update setup, the only requirement needed is to make sure that the computers are powered up – a large time savings for anyone with more than a few computers to update.

For instructions or assistance on installing Microsoft's Automatic Update please contact Jeff or Michael.

More information on setting up Automatic Update for Microsoft Windows XP can be found at http://www.microsoft.com/resources/documentatio n/windows/xp/all/proddocs/en-us/hsc_autoupdate_turn_on.mspx

(continued...Cheap Color Laser Printers)

a cost which averages out to around \$100.00 per cartridge (or color). Initially this may seem expensive, particularly when compared to black and white laser printers, though the high cost of toner is justified when you examine the per page cost of color documents. Toner cartridges for most color lasers last for between 4,000 and 5,000 pages. For a typical color document you

will be looking at somewhere between 8 and 10 cents per page, which is not bad when you consider that some inkjet printers cost twice this amount.



Color Printers vary significantly by model and it is worth taking some time to check on the price per page, the cost of toner cartridges, the cost of maintenance and the printers total memory. For example, the Panasonic Workio CL-500 printer is a color laser designed as a replacement for your network's B&W printer. At an initial cost of around \$1,500.00, it has a higher initial cost than a monochrome laser printer but is a great value when you look at the price for cartridges. Black cartridges are only \$24.00 and they last for around 5,000 pages. That is only .5 cents per page! As a comparison, an HP 2300 B&W laser cartridge is around \$110.00 and prints costs almost 2 cents per page.

So long as you are not wasting dollars and printing color documents that should be printed in monochrome, a color laser printer could be a valuable addition to your company for printing marketing materials and other color documents. In addition, the up-front cost and the price per page warrant at least some consideration if you are considering replacing an older monochrome laser printer.

If you have questions you are always welcome to call or send an email to info@sfotechnology.com.

Also, for information on color laser printers visit www.color-laser-printer-reviews.com, a great website loaded with useful information on many color laser printers.

Manage Your Inbox

A decade ago nobody had email. Today it is just as important to your business as the telephone. Unfortunately, many people end up letting their email inbox manage them rather than they manage their email inbox.

Often times I see people with 3000 messages in their inbox, with 700 unread. This creates several problems. You may overlook an important message swimming in the sea of messages. Having an abundance of messages can make it much slower to access your email remotely. You can slow down the entire server causing issues for everyone. If an important email is lost it is much more difficult and time consuming to recover from your inbox backup than if it is stored elsewhere.

It isn't easy keeping up. You become overwhelmed. There are strategies to cope.

- Ø If you are on mailing lists such as a professional organization that keeps you apprised of issues in your industry consider setting up a rule that moves them to a folder specific to that organization. Then set aside some time to open that folder and read the messages.
- Ø Many emails don't need to be saved. If you get an email from Bob asking you to call John to make an appointment – just delete it. There is no reason to save it. If it's a joke or a message from a friend reminding you of your bowling match – mark it on your calendar and delete it.
- Ø In a small number of instances the email is something that needs to be saved – in this instance move that email to a folder on your network. It is safer there, it gets backed up and is much easier to recover in case it is lost.
- Ø In all cases make good use of your rules wizard and the filters on your email box.

Most email software has the ability to “auto-archive” the mail. What this does is periodically move mail that is older than a set period of time to a folder. The advantage of this is that it is set and forget. You don't even have to think about it. The down side is that you lose some control and not everyone is best served by a one size fits all approach.

If you buckle down and adopt the strategies outlined here you should be able to tame the email inbox monster and get back to

doing what you do best.

Remote Worker Security

Tips

Working from home is great, until the virus that you receive in your personal email spreads to the network at work, or your home computer misses a critical update that you later find out let a worm spread in to your work's network.

Keeping home computers that use a VPN up to date is often a difficult and ignored task. Here are some tips to help you ease this chore:

- Ø Make sure that all of the home computers that access the VPN have a network or personal firewall installed. If you are using Windows XP, this feature is included and can be enabled quickly and easily.
- Ø Make sure that all remote access employees have anti-virus software installed on their PC and that it is set to automatically update. Once it is setup you won't have to worry about it until the license needs to be renewed, which typically needs to be done annually.
- Ø When your office PC's are updated, make sure that your remote workers either have automatic updates setup or know that they need to visit www.windowsupdate.com and install the latest updates to their PC.

Make sure to keep in touch with your users and treat home issues that they report, such as a malfunctioning antivirus program or strange emails, as seriously as you would if they were in the office. This can help to avoid future problems and insure that the computers connecting to your network are protected.

