

# SFO Technology News

Quarterly Technical Updates for SFO Clients and Contacts

August 2004

## Should You Switch Web Browsers?

### You May Experience Challenges

The most recent virus scare that occurred with victims of the Download.Ject worm caused an increase in the press coverage of the insecurities in Internet Explorer (IE). This most recent virus tracked user's web usage and transferred usernames and passwords for financial websites (some that you might even use) to a remote server, most likely so they could be used for malicious purposes.

Much of the discussion in the press, particularly in technical and business publications, focused on a solution that its proponents argue solves the immediate IE security weakness – just avoid the use of IE entirely. By turning to other Internet browsing products such as Mozilla or Firefox you can avoid some of the problems that plague IE. **But you may be introducing yourself to other problems**, particularly with websites you visit that do not work correctly with the other browsers. While it is not likely that you will have problems with big name sites such as Yahoo.com or MSN.com there is a possibility that

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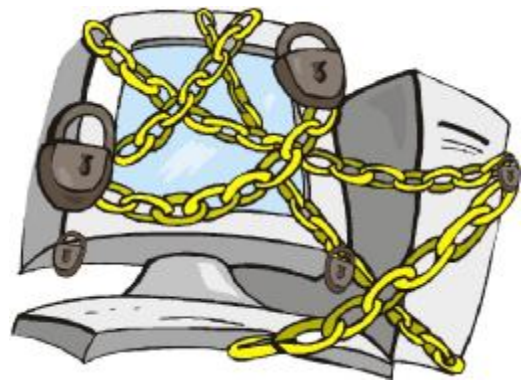
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## Major XP Update

### What to watch for in Service Pack 2

It is large, significant and will probably only help your PC. That is much of what is being said about MS's upcoming release of Windows XP Service Pack 2, an update to XP systems that is supposed to offer increased security and several new features. Here is your list of what to look for:

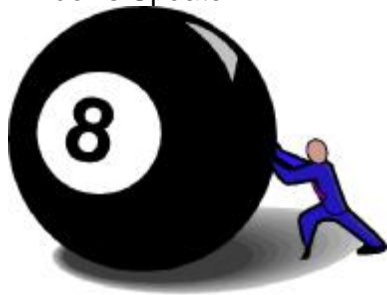
- The expected release of Service Pack 2 (SP2) will most likely occur sometime in late summer. The actual date has not been confirmed, though it may out by the time you read this.
- Expect a large update from an improved Windows Update site. The new version 5.0 of Windows Update is supposed to be released prior to the availability of SP2. **The best new feature?** In the event of a disconnection from the update site users will now have the ability to continue downloads from where they left off once they return to the update site. This is a great feature for dialup users and it is expected to help increase the number of dialup sites that are patched.



- The majority of the updates done to XP center around security. The most significant developments

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smaller sites you use with business partners or vendors will encounter problems when you use a non-IE browser. A great example of this is Microsoft's Windows Update site – the technology that drives the site will only work with IE. If you are interested in taking a look at Mozilla or Firefox we encourage you to do so, but we also recommend that you keep in mind that you will probably still need to use IE from time-to-time for sites such as Windows Update.



On a side: Interestingly enough the week after the articles harping on IE's security woes and praising Mozilla came out a flaw was found in the Mozilla browser that is similar in nature to other flaws found in IE. See the link below for more information. ◀

Security Problems in Mozilla  
[http://zdnet.com.com/2100-1105\\_2-5262676.html](http://zdnet.com.com/2100-1105_2-5262676.html)

To Download Mozilla  
<http://www.mozilla.org>

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### (continued...Service Pack 2)

are the improvements to the Windows Firewall Software and its activation by default. **What does this mean for your business?** If you already have a firewall, having the new protection will be helpful but most likely not that significant. As a business user you will need to be aware that since the firewall is turned on by default you may have difficulties sharing printers and folders on your client PCs after the SP2 installation.

- SP2 will contain several updates to the Internet browser, most significantly changes in the way that pop-ups are handled. MS has indicated that the tricks caused by spyware such as pop-ups, pop-unders and ads larger than the screen will no longer be supported.

This will hopefully result in less effective pop-up advertising. ◀

If you have questions on SP2 you are always welcome to call or send an email to [info@sfotechnology.com](mailto:info@sfotechnology.com).

For more information on SP2, go to Microsoft's website at: <http://www.microsoft.com/technet/prodtechnol/winxpro/main/sp2chngs.msp>

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## Is Your Company Ready for Better Email Anti-Virus?

Sitting here at my desk I am usually the recipient of one or two antivirus notifications per day from our email system. After our email is filtered by a 3<sup>rd</sup> party filtering service we still receive on order of 50 or so infected messages per month. With the primary means of virus and worm infection these days being via email it can't hurt to have two layers of protection for your business.

**Having two layers of email anti-virus protection can often be done at little to no additional cost.**

For smaller companies the ideal solution is often to use an Internet service provider that offers email antivirus filtering. With this type of service the messages are scanned as they come in to the service providers network. This insures that your messages are scanned even before they reach your inbox and your desktop anti-virus software. There is often an added bonus to using this kind of service – the email filtering is often bundled with anti-spam capabilities. We suggest that if you are interested in this type of service you search for an Internet provider that filters email on all of their accounts for no additional charge – there are several in the Minneapolis area that offer this service with all of their email accounts.  
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**We couldn't have said it better ourselves...**

For a published list of the top 10 security exposures for your network visit:

<http://security.ucdavis.edu/securityexposures.cfm>

This is a great site published by UC Davis with great tips for safe computing and a ton of links to relevant computing resources.

(continued...Better Email Anti-virus)



For companies hosting their own email with a product such as Microsoft Exchange or Lotus Notes there are two very economical options. For a monthly fee companies such as Appriver ([www.appriver.com](http://www.appriver.com)) will filter your email for spam and viruses before the mail is delivered to your mail server. Because these services scan so much mail their anti-spam capabilities are typically quite advanced. In our experience we have been able to reduce spam by as much as 90% - 95% with some of these services.

The other option is to purchase anti-virus protection for your email server. Several products out there from major vendors offer small business products that perform this function very well for only a few hundred dollars. This is a small amount to pay when considering the damage that just one virus can have on your companies network and data. ◀

## HP and Office Depot Offer Limited Time Free Recycling Program

From July 18 through September 4, 2004, Office Depot and HP will be partnering to offer businesses and consumers electronic recycling. The program is going to be offered at over 850 nationwide Office Depot stores free of charge. Products that are brought to Office Depot stores will be sent to HP recycling facilities in California and Tennessee. There is one catch: the offer is limited to only one item per customer per day. Qualifying items include: Handhelds, Monitors, LCD Displays, Printers, Scanners, Digital

Cameras, Fax Machines, Desktop Copiers, TV's (27" and smaller) and Cell Phones.

For more information go to:  
<http://www.officedepot.com/recycle>

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## More Music, Smaller Size and Longer Battery Life

Apple Computers recently announced its new 4<sup>th</sup> generation IPOD. The new units come in 20 and 40 gig versions that run in the \$300 - \$400 dollar range. Holding up to 10,000 songs, the new versions of the IPOD feature a slimmer design and playing time that approaches 12 hours on a full charge. The new design also features the click wheel found on the IPOD Mini rather than the classic IPOD thumb interface.

And with your BMW...

BMW and Apple Computer also announced that they will be offering integration of IPOD music players with BMW's. For a small installation fee your BMW dealer will install a special adapter in your BMW that will allow you to control your IPOD from the existing stereo system or multi-function steering wheel. Now that is cool!

For more information on the new IPOD visit:  
<http://www.apple.com/ipod/>

For more information on the IPOD and BMW offer visit:  
<http://www.apple.com/ipod/bmw/>

