

You may be an update “seeker” without knowing it!



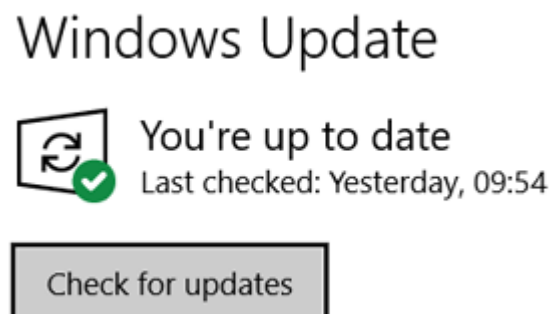
Microsoft release monthly Windows updates on the second Tuesday of every month. For this reason, this day has become known as “Patch Tuesday” (“patches” being chunks of programs written to correct previous problems). They may also release important security updates during the month, but we don’t expect any other updates. Also, unless we have signed up for the “Windows Insider Program”, we do not expect to be served updates that are not completely tested and released for use by everyone.

In Windows 10, you can find out whether your machine is up to date as follows:

- Click on the Start button
- Start typing the word “update” (without the quotes)
- Click on “check for updates” when this option is offered

You may well be reassured if you then see the message “You’re up to date” (see figure 1). But notice in Figure 1 that, despite telling you that you are up to date, you are invited to “check for updates”. For many months I have been very puzzled by the fact that nearly every time I click to “check for updates” they seem to find something new, even though I’ve just been reassured that I’m “up to date”.

Well, I’ve now found out how these seeming contradictions are reconciled. The complete, bundled-up, update that is released on Patch Tuesday is known by Microsoft as the “B” update as it occurs in the second week of the month. It now transpires that they also have “C” and “D” updates that are released in the third and fourth weeks of the month. These are not sent out to users as a matter of course, but if you click on the “check for updates” then you will be given any available “C” and “D” updates.



One blog that I saw that discusses this is a bit over-dramatic in that it refers to these updates as “beta” versions. A “beta” version of a program is

*Figure 1. Clicking on “Check for updates” could bring you updates not yet in the monthly roundup*

one that is probably nearly ready for final release, but one in which some problems may still be found. Microsoft has made a clarification in their blog post describing the update process that *“C” and “D” monthly releases are validated, production-quality optional releases*. In other words, these are definitely not “beta” releases. They are, in fact, updates that will be included in the following month’s Patch Tuesday “B” update.

Nevertheless, it’s a bit strong of Microsoft to refer to people who click on the “check for updates” button as “seekers”. There’s almost a suggestion that such people are stepping outside of what is “safe” and “normal” and, therefore, potentially responsible if something goes wrong. Maybe this is a pointless semantic consideration, but I can’t help feeling that Microsoft is, at best, being a bit disingenuous.



Microsoft’s Michael Fortin

Anyway, the real importance concerns what we should do with this new information from Microsoft. If I am checking “Updates” because a machine has a problem that I’m trying to resolve, then I will continue to click the “check for updates” button as it’s just possible that a “C” or “D” update will solve the problem. What I will no longer do is click on it “just to make sure the computer is up to date”.

The complete blog post from Microsoft’s Michael Fortin, Corporate Vice President, Windows, is available [here](#), but I warn you that you’ll need to navigate through sentences such as :

“The scale and diversity of the Windows ecosystem requires us to take a data-driven approach to quality and to leverage automation for testing, validation and distribution”.

If you say so.

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