

## Why Patch?

Software patches are a critical part of a managed computer security program. Some patches repair undocumented features (bugs), others incorporate additional features and address risks that were unknown when the software was originally created. Patches can be freely downloaded from your software vendor's Website.

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To be security you must keep your operating system and applications patched and updated.

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## *What Is Computer Security?*

Computer security is the process of preventing and detecting unauthorized use of your computer. Security prevents intruders from accessing any part of your computer system. Detection helps you to determine whether or not someone has attempted to break into your system, if they were successful, and what damage they have done.

## *Why Should I Care?*

You use computers for everything from online banking to shopping to communicating with family and friends.

Protecting the privacy of your transactions and e-mail is only one benefit of sound computer security. Another is preventing your computer from being used to attack other systems (such as the Blaster worm of 2003) or sending forged e-mail with infected file attachments (Mimail virus of 2003). Or worse, an intruder could gain full access to all files on your computer.

## *Who Would Break Into My Computer?*

Intruders (also known as hackers, attackers, or crackers) may not care about your identity. Often they want to gain control of your computer so they can use it to launch attacks on other computer systems.

Once the intruder has gained control of your computer he can use your computer to become a remotely-controlled robot working as a part of a Distributed Denial of Service (DDOS) attack aimed at a specific target Internet site. The Blaster worm, which first attacked in August 2003, was targeted at the Microsoft Website. Thousands of infected computers were used in a coordinated attempt to disable the Windows Update site, effectively bringing it offline by overloading it with concurrent requests for service.

By using your computer from which to launch the attack, the intruder has effectively masked his identity and made it appear that you are the attacker (which you are, albeit unwittingly).

## *Am I At Risk?*

If you have a high-bandwidth Internet connection, such as DSL (Digital Subscriber Line), cable, or satellite modem, you are at significant risk of being targeted by intruders.

We recorded over 200 intrusion attempts within the first 15 minutes of connecting our Internet service; don't think you're just one of the many and you can hide in the mass—we're at risk.



However, if you connect to the Internet using a dial-up modem, don't consider yourself safe; you're still a target. One of our clients received a computer worm every time he connected to his dial-up Internet Service Provider (ISP). The worm attacked within ten seconds connecting, proving that even modem users are at risk.