![Personal Computer Tutor logo "Your satisfaction is my success" ™]
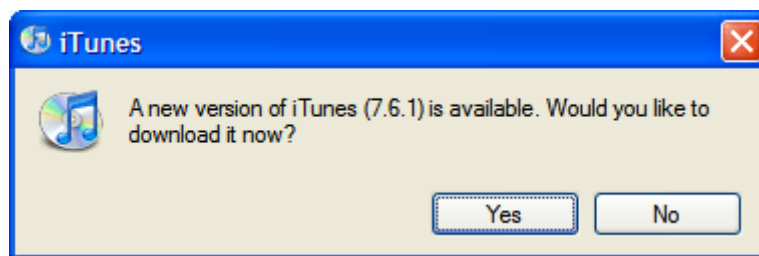
Hi ,

Have you noticed how many updates we are being asked to download and install lately? I have been receiving a lot of questions about different update notices and whether they are safe to install or not. This month I thought I would talk a bit about software updates and new versions and try and make some sense of it all.

Why all the updates?

Fix program glitches
Computer software programs are wonderful when they work and maddening when they don't. Sometimes software vendors need to update their software when they learn that something does not work right. You may never know that their program is not functioning properly until it does not perform the way it should when you need it to do so.

From time to time software vendors might also want to add some features to their program so they ask us to download an update or new version. You may or may not need or want the new features but they make it look like we should update our software (Apple iTunes is famous for this one).
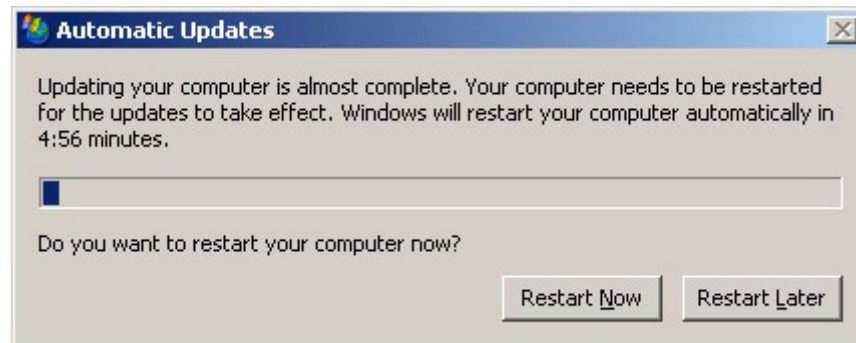

Update vs. New Version
Should you download a new version of a program? Maybe if you want the new features, maybe not if everything is working fine and your needs are being meet. For example if your iTunes and iPod are working fine do you really need to go through all the trouble to add new features that are designed for a newer iPod or an iPhone? And since the new version is going to do more it might slow down your computer.
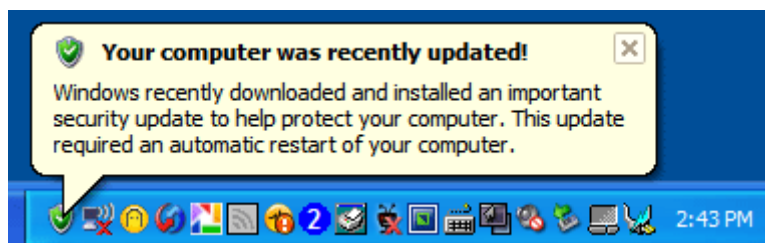
Fix a security hole
Unfortunately, there are some very smart computer people out there with too much time on their hands and they sit around figuring out ways to harm our computers. This usually involves finding a back door hole in the software

program that they can exploit. When software vendors learn about the security hole they scramble to fix it and send us an update to their software (Microsoft is famous for this one). If we don't install the update our computer remains vulnerable to the security risk. If the computer is part of a network (work or home) then all the computers on the network remain vulnerable until all the computers are updated.

Microsoft has even started to download, install and then restart our computers all by themselves. If you see this message then Microsoft has installed an update and restarted your computer for you.
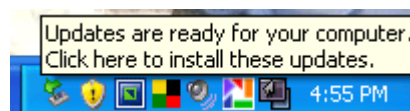

Windows Automatic Restart

Who are they?

So who are the software vendors that we should trust with updating our computers? Sometimes it is hard to tell a legitimate update from a scam. Unfortunately, the same smart people who are out to harm our computers are also smart enough to make bogus update notices that look like updates from legitimate software vendors. To help you distinguish between fake and real update notices all the update notices in this email are legitimate.
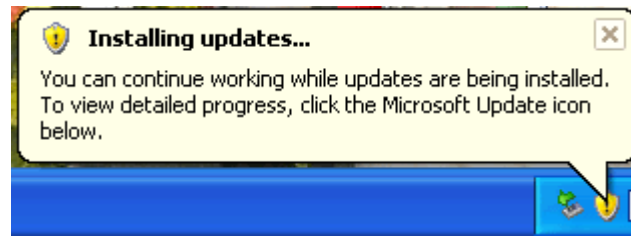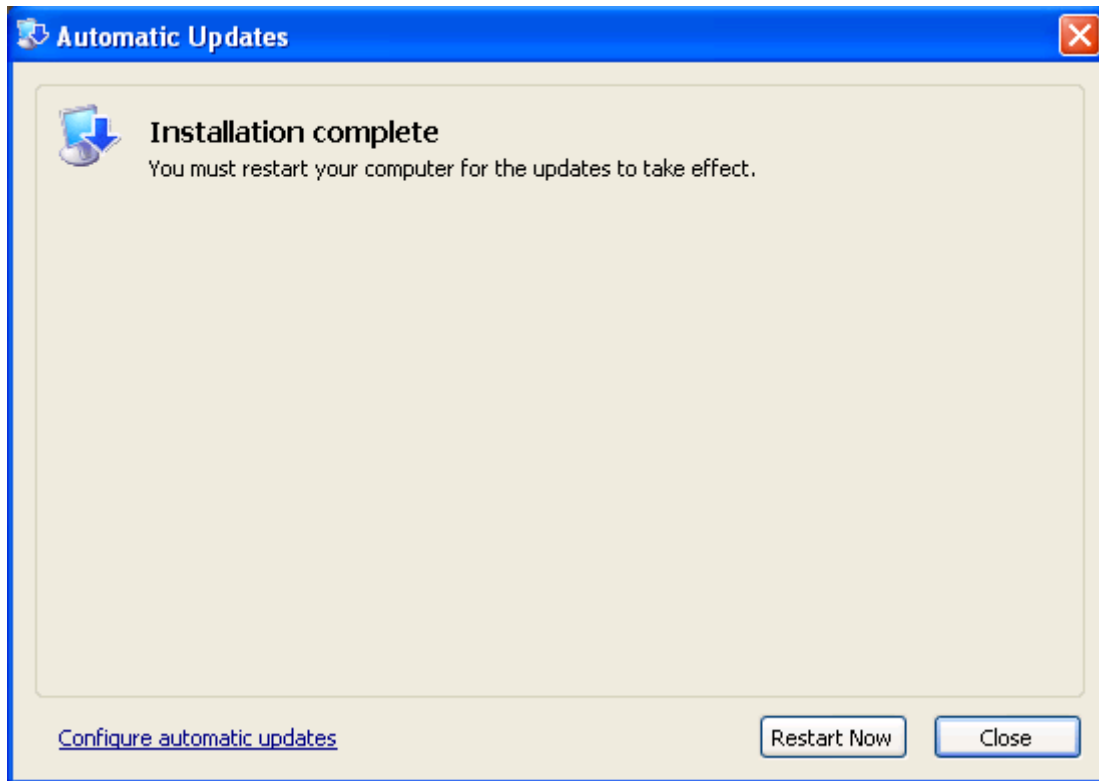

Windows Automatic Updates
Microsoft Windows updates usually happen automatically, but not always. Sometimes you will see a notice in the bottom right near the clock.

If you see the yellow shield with the message "Updates are ready for your computer", at your earliest convenience click on the message to start the update process (you don't have to do it right away but it would be good to do it as soon as you can).

The message will change to "Installing updates...". You can continue to work on your computer while the updates are being installed. If you notice a slow down in the performance of your computer then try to install updates when you do not need to be on the computer.
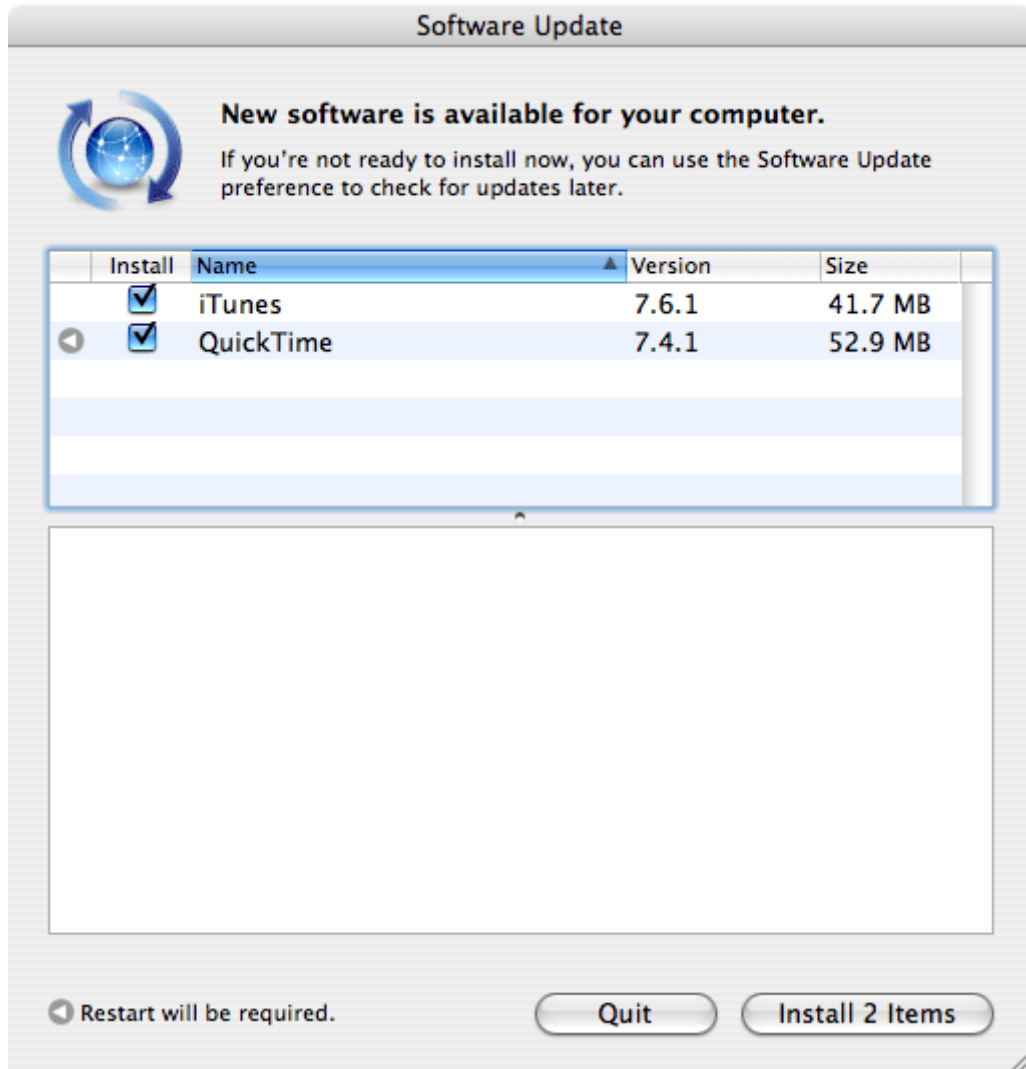

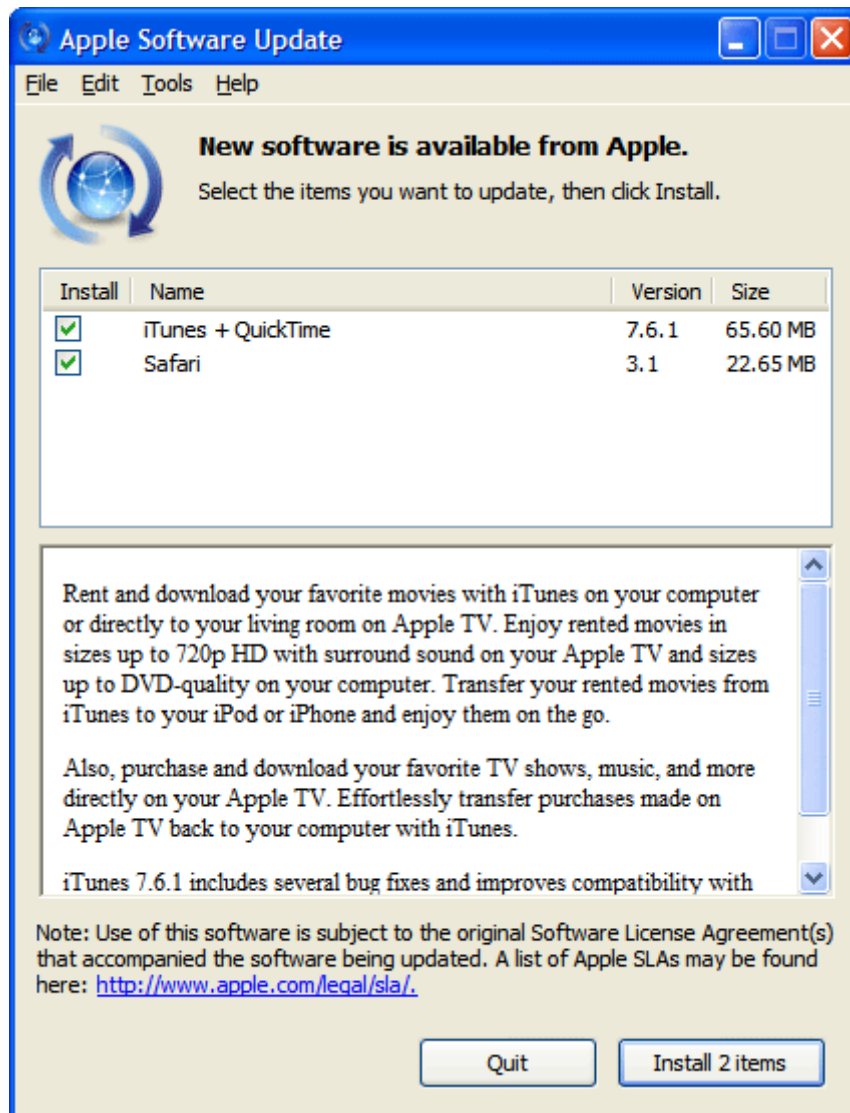**Close all your programs and click Restart Now for the changes to take effect.**

Your computer might need to be restarted after they have installed a very important security update. (Sometimes the update is so important that Microsoft will restart the computer for you and then simply give you a notice that they have done so. You will see a notice of the restart in the bottom right.)
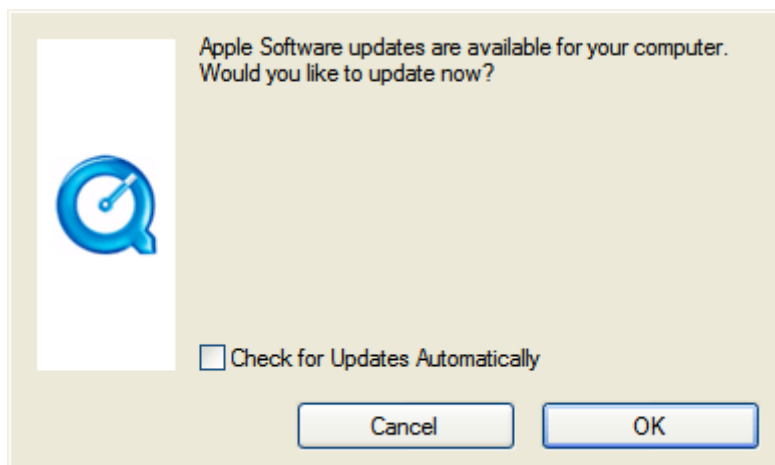
Apple Updates

If you are a Mac OSX user you have probably seen the Software Update window but Windows users may also see the Apple Software Update window if you have iTunes, QuickTime, Safari or any other Apple software installed.

Software Update

New software is available for your computer.

If you're not ready to install now, you can use the Software Update preference to check for updates later.

Install	Name	Version	Size
☑	iTunes	7.6.1	41.7 MB
☑	QuickTime	7.4.1	52.9 MB

Restart will be required.   Quit   Install 2 Items

Apple Software Updates on a Mac
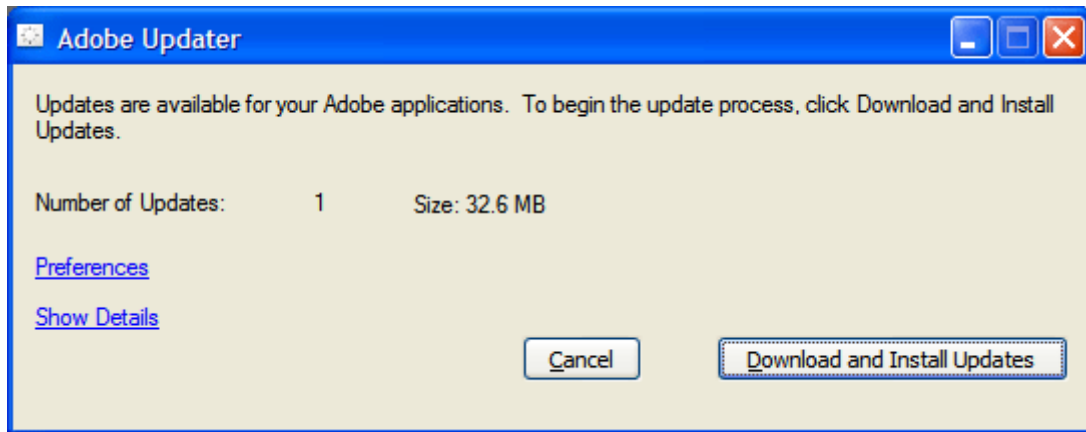
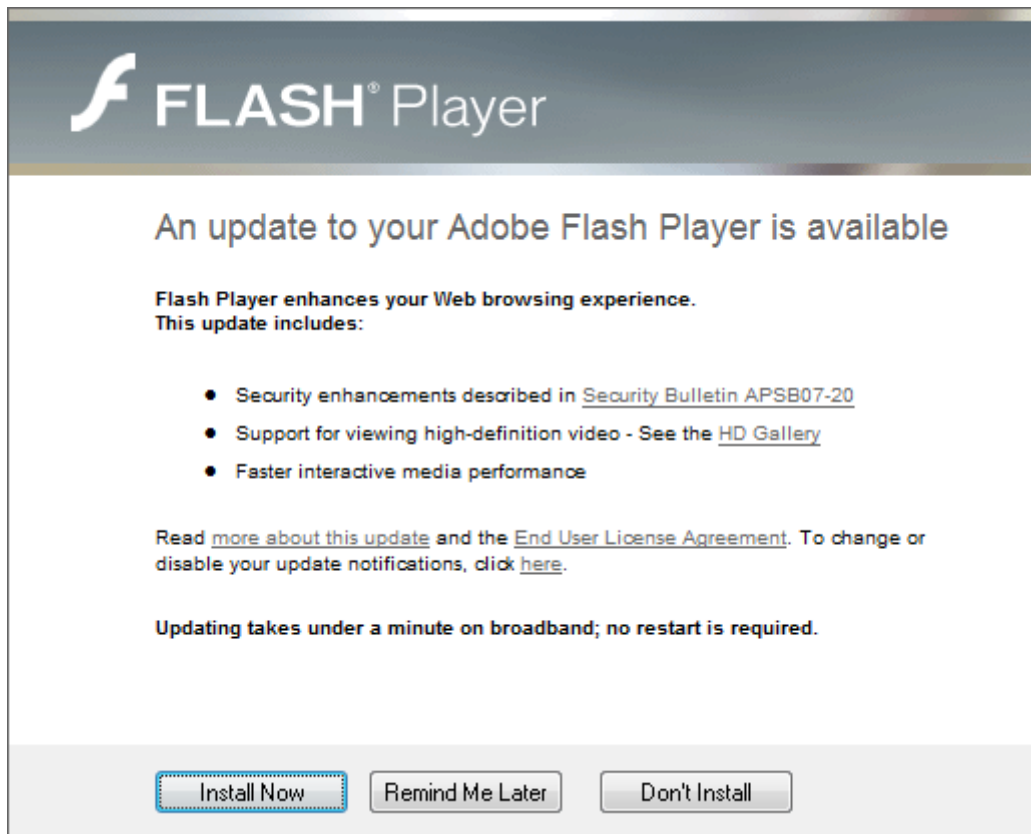**Apple Software Updates on Windows**

QuickTime Update

Other Software Updates

If you see updates for the following products it is OK to continue. Follow the onscreen instructions when it is convenient for you. You will often have to restart

your computer after the installation is complete so do these updates when you have finished working on your computer.
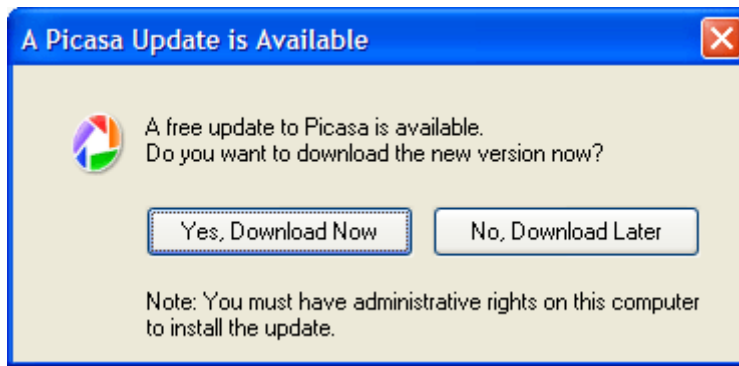

Adobe Products

Adobe Flash Player

Symantec Products

Java Updates

A Picasa Update is Available

A free update to Picasa is available.
Do you want to download the new version now?

Yes, Download Now   No, Download Later

Note: You must have administrative rights on this computer to install the update.

Picasa Updates

Printer Software Updates from HP, Epson, Brother, Lexmark, Dell, etc. are also OK to download and install.

It is sometimes difficult to tell if an update notice is real or not. If you are not sure if you should download and install an update or a new version send me an email with the details and I will set you straight.

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