

How do I disable automatic restarting when using Automatic Updates in Windows XP?

If you have enabled automatic updates on your Windows XP Machine, now the computer will restart by itself. Sometimes this causes problems because people will have programs open and can lose data!

Here is how to get around this problem, and it is only for WinXP Pro:

Ever since Microsoft release Windows XP Service Pack 2, the company keeps emphasize the fact that you should enable Automatic Updates on your computer.

Automatic updates are usually a good thing but there is a serious problem with it.

Sometimes updates need to restart the computer to finish the installation. Until SP2 Automatic Updates would not restart your computer automatically. But this is not the case with SP2.

Once you scheduled Automatic Updates to be installed (by default at 03:00 AM), if the update requires restart Windows will notify you that it needs to restart. If you are not logged in and do not restart within 5 minutes, Windows will automatically restart your computer.

This behavior can cause a lot of problems. Documents you left open and did not save will be lost, downloads you started that have not finished will be terminated, and even hard disk maintenance like defrag that is working will get terminated, which might cause lost of data.

Unfortunately Windows XP Home users can not do much to change this behavior, except saving all the data before going to sleep or disabling the automatic updates.

On the other hand Windows XP Pro users can tell Windows never to restart the computer automatically. In order to do that follow these steps.

- In the Start Menu go to Run type "gpedit.msc" and press Enter
- Now a Group Policy editor will open. In this window navigate to: Computer Configuration → Administrative Template → Windows Components → Windows Update
- Double click on No auto-restart for scheduled Automatic Updates installations
- In the settings window Choose Enabled and click OK
- Close Group Policy Editor

The next time Windows updates your system it will not restart the computer automatically, but will notify you that restart is needed in order to finish the installation.

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