MIT Windows Automatic Update Service - WAUS

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What is MIT Windows Automatic Update Service?

The MIT Windows Automatic Update Service (WAUS) enables the MIT community to utilize Microsoft's "Automatic Update" feature with a more conservative selection of patches – focused on critical security updates – than those available directly from Microsoft. This service may be used by MIT faculty, staff, and students on MIT-owned and personal machines. Computers in the win.mit.edu domain are subscribed to MIT WAUS by default.

Supported Operating Systems

This service currently supports Windows 10, Windows 11, Windows Server 2012, Windows Server 2016, Windows Server 2019 and Windows Server 2022. Both the 32-bit and 64-bit versions of these operating systems are supported. Itanium based systems are also supported where applicable. MIT WAUS does not deploy updates for beta versions of any product.

Deployment Policy

WAUS provides a subset of updates to those available through Microsoft's Windows Update (or Automatic Update) Service. This service provides MIT with the ability to not make available certain patches which have shown to be harmful or are not critical. Security patches for Windows, Internet Explorer, Microsoft Office, etc. for vulnerabilities that are considered "Critical" or "Important" by the Microsoft Security Team and are available from Windows Update will be available from the WAUS Service within 48 hours of their availability on Windows Update. In some instances patches rated "moderate" will be included depending on their relevance to the MIT community. During the 48 hours before the patch is available, IS&T will monitor various industry lists for reports of that patch causing problems in other environments. IS&T has the ability to make the patch available more quickly if the conditions necessitate. Should Microsoft release an "out of cycle" critical security patch, that is a patch which Microsoft has deemed critical enough to release ahead of their monthly deployment schedule, IS&T will release the patch on an accelerated schedule. WAUS also has the ability to deploy Service Packs for many Microsoft products. The policy for service pack deployment differs from patches, we do not deploy them immediately after their release. Deployment usually depends on the demand for the new features included in the pack. MIT WAUS also includes support for Microsoft Office products.

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Subscribing to WAUS

Any PC running Windows 10, Windows 11, Windows Server 2012, Windows Server 2016, Windows Server 2019 and Windows Server 2022 can be configured to use this service. Both the 32 bit and 64 bit versions of these operating systems are supported. By using this service, you agree to have your patch installation statistics recorded by the server. These statistics are extremely useful for IS&T to determine what percent of the Windows community is protected when high-profile vulnerabilities arise and to warn system owners if that system failed to apply a particular patch.

Basic Installation

Note: See the Domain Installation Instructions for configuring machines in a domain via Group Policy.

1. Download one of the following registry files, depending on the way you would like WAUS to be configured for your machine:
    a. *Option 1*: Download **mitsus.reg**

This is Microsoft's Automatic Download and Install option (polls after 17 hours and installs the next 1 A.M.).

b. *Option 2*: Download **mitsus-n.reg**
This is Microsoft's Automatic Download and Notify option (manual confirmation to install and reboot, polls after 17 hours).
Note: The mitsus-n.reg file allows a local administrator to deselect and select downloaded patches for installation.

2. You may select **Open** when prompted, or run the registry file (.reg) you just downloaded by double-clicking on it. You will then be asked if you want to add the information in this .reg file to your Windows registry.
3. Click **Yes**, then **OK** when the operation is complete.
4. Restart the machine to make the settings effective. You can verify the proper contents of the .reg file online.

If you are in a domain, it is likely that these settings will be over written by the domains Group Policy. You should check with your administrator to apply the change via group policy. Refer to the Administrator Control via Policies document for instructions on configuring for WAUS via Group Policy.

Unsubscribing from WAUS

The un-registration process removes SUS policy settings from your registry and leaves the AutoUpdate service pointing at the Microsoft site, which is the Windows default setting. This unregistration process is only valid for machines not controlled by SUS settings set via domain group policy.

Note: See the Domain Installation Instructions for configuring machines in a domain via Group Policy.

1. **Download unregister-mitsus.reg**
You may select Open when prompted, or run the registry file (.reg) you just downloaded by double-clicking on it. You will then be asked if you want to add the information in this .reg file to your Windows registry.
2. **Run forceupdate.exe or restart the AutoUpdate service**
The AutoUpdate service should start polling the Microsoft site within ten minutes.

Related Links

MIT WAUS - Advanced Installation and Configuration Instructions
MIT Windows Update Service - Explanation of Registry Settings