



HOME BUSINESS REVIEWS NEWS FEATURES SLIDESHOWS TUTORIALS IT JOBS FORUM SHOP & COMPARE

Join PC World | Login



Latest News Reviews Slideshows

Home [Mobility & Wireless](#) [Networking & VoIP](#) [Notebooks, PCs & Printers](#) [Security & Email](#)
[Servers & Storage](#) [Software Development](#)

Apple, Opera slammed over browser patch regimes

Google's Chrome and Mozilla's Firefox come out on top for delivering prompt patches to users

Jeremy Kirk (IDG News Service) 06/05/2009 04:44:00

Tags: [web browsers](#), [security patch](#), [opera](#), [apple](#)

Apple and Opera lag behind Google and Mozilla when it comes to distributing Web browser updates due to how they've structured their patch programs, according to new research.

Only 53 percent of users on a 3.x version of Safari applied a new update within three weeks, wrote Thomas Duebendorfer of Google Switzerland and Stefan Frei of the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (ETH Zurich) in a [research paper](#).

Also, people running a 3.2 version of Safari are required to apply a Tiger or Leopard operating system update first before getting new browser updates, which slows the overall patch process. Within three weeks of the release of Safari version 3.2.1, for example, only 33 percent of users had it installed.

Opera's browser will check for updates once a week, but a user must go through the same installation procedure for updates as if they were installing Opera for the first time. It's a cumbersome process, the researchers wrote.

Three weeks after a new release, only 24 percent of active daily users of Opera version 9.x have the newest version installed. However, Opera plans to incorporate an auto-update mechanism in its next planned release, version 10.

"All in all, the poor update effectiveness of Apple Safari and Opera gives attackers plenty of time to use known exploits to attack users of outdated browsers," the researchers wrote.

Frei and Duebendorfer collected their data on browsers by analyzing Google's Web logs, which records the user-agent strings of browsers. A user-agent string is data that usually reveals the type of Web browser and version a person uses.

Microsoft's Internet Explorer browser was excluded from some parts of the study since its user-agent string does not reveal incremental version changes for security reasons.

Google's Chrome came out on top. The study found that 97 percent of Chrome users on version 1.x received an upgrade within three weeks. Chrome uses a silent update mechanism where updates are downloaded automatically without user prompts and then applied when the browser is restarted.

Google has also open-sourced its auto-update technology, code-named Omaha, which means anyone can use it. Omaha will poll Google for updates even when Chrome is not running, the researchers wrote. Chrome checks for updates every five hours.

Chrome users may not hit a 100 percent update level due to other problems, such as people not restarting the browser, firewalls blocking updates and some computers, in place such as Internet cafés, that run read-only software images in virtual machines that don't allow software updates, they wrote.

Mozilla's Firefox browser came in second best, with about 85 percent of users employing the latest version 21 days after its release. Firefox frequently checks for updates and also prompts users to install the new version, which contributes to the speedy updates, they wrote.

Updating a Web browser is important as it is one of the most frequently attacked applications. Frei and Duebendorfer wrote that overall, 45.2 percent of Web users were not using the latest version of their Web browser, according to the Google server logs they analyzed.

"Web browsers are in dire need of a very effective update mechanism or they will lose the battle for securing vulnerable Web browsers before their users fall victim to attackers," they wrote.

- [Apple, Opera slammed over browser patch regimes](#)
- [Velvet Assassin](#)
- [Apple-Twitter Deal: Just a Rumor?](#)
- [Microsoft's Windows 7 release candidate goes public](#)
- [Plantronics GameCom 777 PC gaming headset](#)

[More >](#)



Latest Reviews Editor's Choice Best Buys Top Rated



[Plantronics GameCom 377 PC gaming headset](#)
 The Plantronics GameCom 377 is a comfortable gaming headset
 ★★★★★



[Seagate Momentus 7200.4 \(ST9500420AS\) hard drive](#)
 Seagate's Momentus 7200.4 is a 7200rpm hard drive that will fit in a notebook
 ★★★★★



[Nokia E75](#)
 The latest Nokia E Series smartphone has dual keyboards and is the first mobile phone to come bundled with Nokia Messaging
 ★★★★★

[Plantronics GameCom 777 PC gaming headset](#)

References

- Why Silent Updates Boost Security by Thomas Duebendorfer and Stefan Frei

More about [Apple](#), [Google](#), [Microsoft](#), [Software Images](#), [Mozilla](#),

Recommend this article?

Yes
1 votes

No
0 votes

Comments

Post new comment

[Login](#) or [register](#) to link comments to your user profile, or you may also post a comment without being logged in.

Your name:

E-mail:

The content of this field is kept private and will not be shown publicly.

Homepage:

Enter the fully qualified URL, eg. <http://www.example.com/>

Subject:

Comment: *

- Web page addresses and e-mail addresses turn into links automatically.
- Allowed HTML tags: `<a>` `` `` `<cite>` `<code>` `` `` `` `<dl>` `<dt>` `<dd>`
- Lines and paragraphs break automatically.

[More information about formatting options](#)



A Plantronics gaming headset that offers multiple connection options, good comfort and expansive sound



Plants vs. Zombies

An incredibly zany yet infectiously fun study of what happens when an irresistible force meets an an **unmovable** flesh-eating objects



[iPhone Centre](#)

[What's Behind the Apple-Verizon Rumor?](#)

[Bioware reveals new Mass Effect game coming to the iPhone](#)

[Apple Bans Nine Inch Nails Update from AppStore](#)

[Get job alerts](#) | [Build a resume](#) | [Interview tips](#)

Job Search

Top jobs

CLIMATE ICT OFFICER	Senior Infrastructu..
C# Developer	Not For Profit Agen..
Corporate IT person	Program Manager
Level 1 Service Des..	Content Architect
Project Manager (M4..	Linux Redhat System..

Jobs in IT&T

[Cisco](#) [Linux](#) [Oracle](#) [HelpDesk](#) [LAMP](#) [PHP](#) [Ruby](#) [Web Developer](#)

Resources

[Legal Work Rights](#) [Pay Rise Calculator](#) [Salary Survey](#)

DISCUSSIONS ON THE PC WORLD FORUM

won't play or read DVDs any longer

Running XP core2 duo 2g ram Asus DL burner. I don't usually watch DVD on my PC (like ...

CD ROM drive

Can anybody please tell me how to make my Samsung SH-S202 burner region free?

Searching for a Game Demo

Hey there, well umm im searching for a game demo that i think was on a PC world CD ...

Direct X 10

I am running Windows XP Pro SP3 using an AMD Dual Core CPU, 2GB Ram,and a nVidia ...

Missing drive

Hi there, Just wondering how a drive can disappear off a computer? When I originally ...

[CREATE NEW TOPIC](#)

[MORE FROM THE FORUM](#)



[Pioneer Plasma Tv](#)
Nur hier Pioneer Plasma Tv von Pioneer
super günstig kaufen!
www.Preisvergleich.de/Pioneer

[Plasma tv](#)
Auf Ihre Bedürfnisse zugeschnitten: Hier
finden Sie eine Riesenauswahl!
www.brack.ch/Fernseher

[Pioneer Plasma Tv](#)
LCD & Plasma TVs im Preisvergleich!
Testberichte lesen & sparen.
www.ciao.de/Pioneer

Market Place

Access Your PC from Anywhere

Fast, easy & secure.

ASUS Eee Top Air One Touchscreen PC. Does it all. All your computers with LogMeIn Pro.

[Try It Free](#)

LogMeIn PRO

Eee Top
ASUS Eee Top Air One Touchscreen PC. Does it all. All your computers with LogMeIn Pro.
Touch at Harvey Norman & Bing Lee stores.


CISCO
Cisco Network Magic Pro Download a FREE Trial Now >>>

D-Link
Building Networks for People
Easily connect and share USB Storage, Printers and more over your Network!

vodafone
Grab the Prepaid Mobile Broadband Starter Pack for just \$149

LogMeIn PRO
Access & Control Your PC from Anywhere. Transfer Files, Print Remote Documents, Hear Remote Sound. Try it Free >>

[Send Us E-mail](#) | [Privacy Policy](#)
[Corrections](#) | [Editorial Contacts](#) | [Advertising Information](#) | [Disclaimer](#) | [IDG Online Contacts](#)

 Copyright 2009 IDG Communications. ABN 14 001 592 650. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part in any form or medium without express written permission of IDG Communications is prohibited.
IDG Sites: [GoodGearGuide](#) | [Australian GamePro](#) | [Computerworld Australia](#) | [CIO Australia](#) | [CSO Online](#) | [LinuxWorld.com.au](#) | [Techworld](#) | [ARN](#) | [CIO Executive Council](#)