

## Re: Is a Windows 98se computer more, or less, of a security threat with IE 5.5 (unused) & Firefox, or with IE 6.0 & latest updates (unused) & Firefox?

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*Source:*

<http://www.tech-archive.net/Archive/Windows/microsoft.public.windowsupdate/2006-07/msg00810.html>

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- *From:* [askifyouwant@xxxxxxxxx](mailto:askifyouwant@xxxxxxxxx) (Nate Goulet)
  - *Date:* Thu, 13 Jul 2006 18:31:52 GMT
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"Noel Paton" <NoelDPspamless@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx> wrote:  
IE5.5 was only supported for as long as it was, because it was the base version for ME – otherwise it would have died on the vine in 2002 – your reasoning fails from that point on.

Thanks for the reply Nolan, and I appreciate you discussing it with me.

We aren't using any Windows ME machines at all.

If FireFox is so good – why aren't you using it on the new machines as well? – it has more updates than IE6 does/did, and those updates require more work!!

We are using FireFox as the primary browser on all of the machines, and IE is allowed to be used only on a machine or two for a particular web site that is not compatible. Very few sites are not FireFox compatible.

As for the frequency of updates, they are certainly much less. And i've never experienced or heard of a case where updating FireFox has caused a problem with a machine. With Microsoft critical updates (either for IE or Windows), i've experienced problems a few times (not too often), but constantly read about major problems. Still, i'm doing the updates, just not immediately after they come out.

Irrespective of whether IE is used as the browser, it is used a lot in the actual day-to-day use of Win ME particularly (and to a lesser extent in 98), and not updating it reduces the security of the whole OS, as well as the network.

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I assume your referring to using IE for help files and that kind of thing. I can say it happens very rarely around here.

This can be tolerated for a period – but should be minimised by the use of proper 'push' technology for patches allied with testing (or if you can't afford testing wait a week or two and research the NG's for problems before applying the patches by 'push') then it's a minimal job to ensure that all networked machines are updated. Note that I'm not sure whether Win98 clients are supported on Windows 2003 Server.

That might be a better solution, however Windows 98 does not support WSUS. On top of it, my MSCE is hesitant to recommend WSUS even if it were an option. He's very knowledgeable about network security, and i've even seen him interviewed on tv discussing it. He doesn't seem to feel our replacing all of our Win98se systems is urgent, but I like discussing it with many experts, such as this group.

We currently have a Windows 2000 Server, and i'm pushing to replace it very soon with a Windows 2003 Server for many reasons. I believe Win98 is supported, but i'll need to verify that again.

How many clients are you talking about here? how many are not networked?  
Noel Paton (MS–MVP 2002–2006, Windows)

I'd say roughly 20 – 25 Windows 98se clients, and we have about 8 – 10 newer systems with XP Pro.

So far these strategies have worked fine for us. I don't think we've even had an infection is over 2 years. Why am I bothering to bringing this up then? I'm just concerned about the future possiblity of some vulnerability that could attack all the machines through the network somehow at once. If a single machine got infected once in a while, I could deal wth that.

What is the likelihood of a network wide infection? Can an infected Win98se system start attacking all the other systems on the network via IP address or the server itself? That's my main concern.

Again, thanks for discussing this.

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