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To Update Your Apps

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Our computers, smart phones and tablets all run software called “apps” – or “applications”. Well, that’s the current “hip” name for them anyway; they are just programs. Every computer comes with some apps. You do not need to install them; they are already on your device and ready to go. In addition, you can (and should) install more apps – applications of games, news, weather, word processing, email, and whatever else you are interested in. Every app, sooner or later, will need to be updated. These updates are provided free to you from the company or group that created the app in the first place. And yes, you should always update your apps. The updates contain “bug fixes”, corrections, and perhaps some additional services. Updates may also change the appearance of your app, both in the “logo” that appears on your start/home screen and the screens you see using the app. One more thing, your device also runs the “boss program”, usually called the operating system. This “boss” app is running as soon as you turn on your device and all other apps are running with its permission and oversight. This app, called “iOS” on the iPhone or iPad, and Windows on a Windows computer, also needs to be updated. On my iPhone now, I am running iOS 11.2.5 – the numbers indicate the release or version number. Every time you update the iOS, these numbers will change upwards. When updating the iOS, you cannot use your device at all until the update is complete. When updating other apps, however, only those apps in process of being updated will not be available until the update is complete.

Is there a downside to updating apps? Yes, I think so. An updated app may include more or different “pop-up” advertising, or gather more information from you and your device, or may change the way the screen works. But the alternative of not doing the updates is not worth it.

To update your apps on your iPhone or iPad, look at the “App store” icon – it should have a small red circle with a number in it if updates are pending. Touch on the App store icon and, at the bottom of the screen, touch “Updates”. You will see at the top of the next screen the apps that need updating – you may touch individual apps or “update all” and the updates will take place. You may also turn on “automatic updates”. This option is found by touching “Settings”, then your name with “Apple ID”, then “iTunes and App Store”, then “Updates” (which is under the “Automatic Downloads” heading). If “Updates” is green, it is “on”, if no green, it is “off”. Touch to turn it on or off. If “on” it will automatically apply all updates when they are available. I prefer to keep it “off” so that I can see the updates being made and choose when to update them. Whatever you like is ok. After an app has been updated, the app icon will have a small blue dot under it – this indicates the app has been updated but not yet used since the update. The blue dot should disappear after you open and use the app.

On my Windows computer, I like using “Glary Utilities” (which is free). One of the helpful options of Glary Utilities is to scan my computer and find all the applications that need updating. Then, through Glary, I can download the updates (one at a time) and run them. A typical update requires that the app company first determines your current version of their app and if you need to update it. Then you “download” the update to your Windows computer, then “run” the update. Glary makes this easy to do – you do not have to search the internet for each app update. Glary can also scan my computer, look for problems, and fix them – all in just a minute or two.

So, don't be afraid to update your apps; it is the way to go to keep you and your device current