

Static vs. Dynamic

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Preamble

This article was written back in February 6th, 2002 – but is still applicable to today. However, I have re-read this article and updated accordingly in light of today's computing environment.

Introduction

In this article, I would like to discuss with you the terms *static* and *dynamic* – especially as these terms are used to refer to just how well or how poorly a computer system is functioning at any particular time.

Most of the problems that exist with computers are the direct result of some type of faulty software being installed on the computer. In the "old days", the only way to install software on a computer was by being directly in front of the computer itself. For example viruses were often transferred to a computer via an infected floppy disk. But again, someone needed to *physically* there to initiate this whole process. Troubleshooting a computer in those days was generally easier as you were able to trace the problem to something that occurred with the computer at that particular time. Computers being used in such a manner are what I refer to as "static" – and this "static-ness" of the computer greatly simplifies troubleshooting problems that may occur.

Well, the Internet has changed all of that! Any computer that is connected to the Internet *is now in a very dynamic state* – simply meaning that such a computer *is in a continual state of change* – and often without the user's knowledge. Another way to state this dynamic state is that changes made to software can be taking place at any time – as long as that computer is connected to the Internet. And these changes to software can be either good or bad – entirely dependent on what software is being either installed or "altered" at any particular time. Also, no longer is anyone required to be actually sitting in front of the computer for these changes to the software to occur – as these changes can occur as the result of simply being connected to the Internet.

Software Updates

The best example of such changes to software is "software updates". Take for example Adobe Flash. Adobe Flash – or just Flash, for short, is a piece of software that is required to view video content available via the Internet. Web sites such as YouTube require Flash to be installed in order to be able to view the content on the YouTube Web site. Accessing a site where Flash is required may prompt a pop-up screen such as shown below:



The way in which Flash gets on your computer is through that software being first "downloaded" and then "installed" on your computer system – all of this taking place "seamlessly" and without your intervention, just by being your computer being connected to the Internet. Now, Adobe Flash is


generally safe and often a necessary piece of software. However, back in January of 2002, a "fake" version of Flash was being made available via the Internet. This fake version was actually a virus and thankfully – it did not last very long. However, it did manage to infect some 10,000 computers before it was detected and then removed. The point here is this, "Computers are no longer static – but are indeed are very much dynamic – as a direct result of the Internet."

Add-Ons

Some software applications will often come with what is referred to as "add-ons" – that is, free software provided by either the developer of the software itself or by other "third-party" developers. For example, if we take Flash again as an example, notice the following:

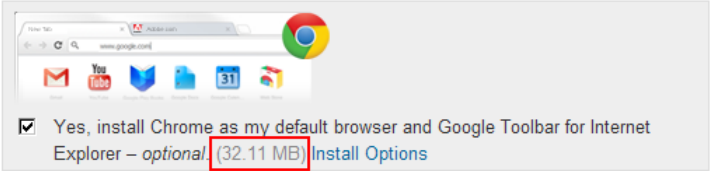
Home / Downloads / Adobe Flash Player /

Adobe Flash Player



Adobe Flash Player 11.7.700.169 (16.1 MB)

Your system: Windows 32-bit, English, MSIE
Do you have a different operating system or browser?



Yes, install Chrome as my default browser and Google Toolbar for Internet Explorer – optional (32.11 MB) [Install Options](#)

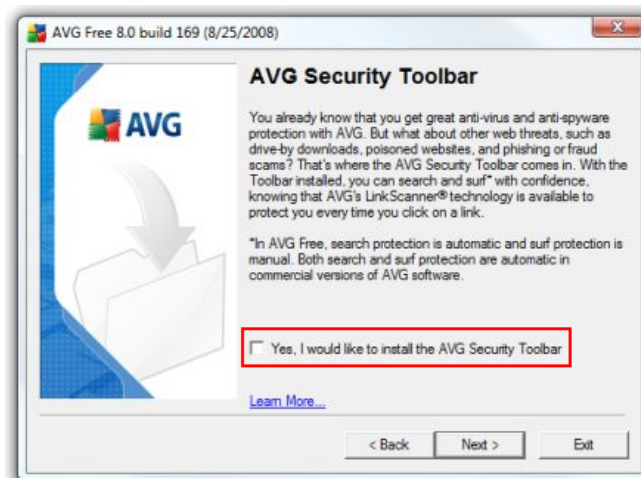
By clicking the Download now button, you acknowledge that you have read and agree to the [Adobe Software Licensing Agreement](#) and the [Google License Agreement](#).

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Please note, depending on your settings, you may have to temporarily disable your antivirus software.

By installing Adobe Flash, you will also install Chrome – which is an alternative "Internet browser" provided by Google. Google Chrome then is an add-on to Adobe Flash – and there are many software developers that do the very same thing. Also, notice that the Flash "installer" is suggesting that you may have to disable your antivirus software to allow for this installation of Flash. Very interesting!

Another common add-on comes with the free AVG anti-virus software package. In the following diagram, you are being asked if you would like to install the AVG Security Toolbar.



If you choose to install this toolbar, the next time you launch your Web browser, you will see the following:



- Note: This particular toolbar has been known to cause issues that directly affect you Internet usage. Again, interesting!

Virus and Parasites

Viruses are software – just "bad" software. And viruses are transmitted via the Internet – and the methods used to transmit them can be as varied and as creative as the developers of such viruses. This is the reason for installing "anti-virus software" – to protect your computer from being infected by such bad software. Sad to say, viruses are often created first and then fixed afterwards. I refer to this as a "reactive approach to problem solving".

- Note: For more information on this point, please see my article on Proactive vs Reactive. You can get it from my Web-site at www.customerfirstcomputing.com/articles.htm

What does this really all mean to me?

To answer this question correctly, there are two points that need to be mentioned, first, a computer consists of two main components namely, hardware and software. Hardware is that component that we physically see and can touch, such as a keyboard and mouse, the computer "tower", and the monitor. Software, on the other hand, is what makes a computer system *functional*. Without software, a computer system is really nothing more that a glorified paper-weight.

Second, a service technician cannot – and should not, be held responsible or accountable for either the hardware or the software component of a computer system. The following are two examples of service agreements from two different sources that a client is to agree to before a repair to a computer system is begun:

Example #1: In the case of accidental damage of data to your system or data loss caused by already existing problems in your system such as viruses, bad configured software, or hardware problems/failures - you agree to hold [name of computer shop] and any person(s) associated with [name of computer shop] or involved in the work being done for you harmless from damages resulting from such problems.

Example #2: Software: There are absolutely no guarantees or warranties whatsoever on software. This is software that was: (a) previously installed on your computer system prior to your system being serviced or (b) installed as per your request, by me for diagnostics or repair purposes, or for improving the performance of the computer system.

Hardware: Warranties are dependent on whom the hardware was originally purchased. Therefore, the original suppliers will be responsible for determining the warranty status of a particular piece of hardware installed on the computer system.

In Closing

The sole purpose in providing you with this information is simply this,

"If you want your computer to run well and with the least trouble and cost to you, then, as much as it is possible, be careful of just what software is being installed on your computer and how this software will be installed on your computer".

Thank you for your time and interest in the above.

Sincerely,

Dell Krauchi