



# Microsoft sets mammoth Patch Tuesday, will fix 64 flaws

'Out of line with anything normal,' says security expert

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Microsoft today said it will patch a record 64 vulnerabilities in Windows, Office, Internet Explorer, Windows graphics framework, and other software next week, and tie a December 2010 record for the number of security updates it issues.

The 17 updates -- Microsoft calls them "bulletins" -- tie the count of December 2010. The bulletins that will ship next Tuesday will include 64 patches, Microsoft said, 15 more than the previous record of October 2010, and 24 more than the 40 of the former second-place collection of December 2010.

Of the 17 updates, 9 will be rated "critical," the highest threat label in Microsoft's four-step scoring system, while the remaining 8 will be marked "important," the second-most-dire ranking.

"We were expecting the larger release this month, based on the normal cadence," said Andrew Storms, director of security operations at nCircle Security, referring to Microsoft's habit of issuing a larger number of updates on even-numbered months.

"But a whopping 64 CVEs is out of line with anything normal for Microsoft," Storms observed, talking about the Common Vulnerabilities and Exposures labels that identify individual bugs. "All hands on deck will be required next week."

Microsoft said it will close a pair of outstanding issues that have already resulted in security advisories, including a [vulnerability in Windows' MHTML \(MIME HTML\) protocol handler](#) that it acknowledged last January.

The MHTML flaw went public that same month when the Chinese Web site WooYun.org published proof-of-concept code.

Next week's patches will also quash a bug in the Windows Server Message Block (SMB) network and file-sharing protocol that was disclosed in February on the Full Disclosure security mailing list.

Microsoft later [downplayed the threat](#) posed by the vulnerability, saying it was unlikely the bug could be exploited to compromise a computer.

Other updates will address one or more vulnerabilities in Office, Internet Explorer (IE), Visual Studio, .Net and GDI+. The latter is Windows' Graphics Device Interface, the graphics rendering component of the operating system.

"As usual, [the IE update] will be on the top of the list for deployment," said Storms.

The monthly advance notification -- where Microsoft alerts customers of the number of overall security patches and updates, as well as what products they will affect -- was several hours late in reaching users.

Microsoft usually issues its advance alert at around 1 p.m. ET, but unspecified problems with the distribution system delayed its release for nearly three hours.

The 17 updates will be released at approximately 1 p.m. ET on April 12.

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