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Windows Live
Messenger
Microsoft

[Microsoft's Forced Upgrades to Windows Live Messenger 8.1 Plagued with Problems](#)

The company's position is that security comes before functionality

In September, Microsoft announced that it was delivering forced upgrades for all Windows Live Messenger users, with little exceptions, due to a security vulnerability in the older versions of its instant messaging client. Essentially, only users that were already running [Windows Live Messenger 8.5 beta or 8.1](#) along with MSN Messenger 7.0 were spared the forced upgrades. The others simply had no chance but to conform, as the Redmond company argued that the move was in their best interest. However, such a move from Microsoft generated a wave of protests from end users that considered that the company had no business telling them what software or which edition of a program they had to run, even though their own security was at stake. "The nature of IM networks and certain security bugs, though, is that they may allow the attacker to use your machine to attack other members of the Messenger community. As you can imagine, in a highly connected network like Messenger it would not take long before all Messenger users could be under attack. Because these types of scenarios are possible, we felt we needed to take action to protect all our users and issue the right fix. Another way to think about it is to imagine the security bug to be a disease and that it's our responsibility to inoculate the network so that the disease can't spread. The more clients that are safe, the lower the risk to the entire community," explained [Rick Eames](#), Group Program Manager for Windows Live Messenger. However, the transition to Windows Live Messenger 8.1 was by no means streamlined and problem-free. In fact, users flooded Microsoft with complaints revealing the fact that, following the introduction of the upgrade, they experienced connectivity issues. A member of the Windows Live Messenger team [revealed](#) that users forced to upgrade to Windows Live Messenger build 8.1 run into connectivity issues generated by the settings of the firewall. Microsoft also advised that the proxy settings in the Advanced Settings section be configured accordingly, on top of the correct network configurations. Moreover, users were directed to the Messenger, Tools, Options, Connection tab and Connection Troubleshooter in order to identify and resolve the problem. And on top of it all, Windows Messenger 8.1 in Windows Vista will crash in scenarios where the user has not installed the latest version of the Flash player from Adobe. But of course that there are also other errors for which only the Messenger Support Space can provide a resolve.