

TimeTabler Suite: Delta Auto-Update

Enhancement overview and IT deployment guide

This guide describes how TimeTabler, Options, and StaffCover receive in-year software updates using delta patching. It is intended for school IT departments, managed service providers, and deployment partners (for example MIST).

1. Summary

TimeTabler products will move from downloading and running a full Setup.EXE for every in-year patch to a smaller, signed patch updater (TTAutoUp.exe). Initial installation and annual product-year upgrades continue to use the full installer package. In-year fixes download only changed program files over HTTPS, with hash verification, directly into the existing install folder.

- Applies to TimeTabler, Options, and StaffCover (same pattern across the suite).
- Better suited to Intune, AppLocker, and WDAC-managed environments.
- School timetable data under Data\ is never modified by the patch process.
- IT can disable all in-app update behaviour with a single installer switch.

2. Versions that include delta auto-update

Delta auto-update is available only from the product versions below. Earlier builds do not include TTAutoUp.exe and cannot apply in-year patches using this mechanism - in-app delta updates are not offered on those versions. Schools on an older build need a one-time elevated install of the version below (or later) before in-app patching works. Check for Updates (Previous versions) only lists builds back to these versions; older in-year releases are not offered.

Product	Version	Default Install Location
TimeTabler	6.610	C:\TT4Win
Options	4.606	C:\OPTwin
StaffCover	4.602	C:\Cover

3. What is changing and why

Today, Check for Updates downloads Setup.EXE from timetabler.com and runs it. That self-extracting installer unpacks files to a temporary folder before installing. Many managed environments block or restrict that pattern. For typical in-year releases, only the main program executable (and occasionally help files or libraries) actually change. The new approach installs TTAutoUp.exe alongside the main program and uses it to apply smaller, verified patches instead of re-running Setup.EXE from within the application.

4. How updates work after this change

Scenario	Mechanism	Administrator rights
New installation	Full Setup.EXE or TimeTabler.msi (or equivalent product MSI)	Required - run installer elevated or deploy via Intune as admin
Annual product-year upgrade	Existing order-form / manual upgrade process - no in-app download	Required when IT deploys the new year's full installer

In-year patch (same product year)	TTAutoUp.exe downloads only changed files from timetabler.com	Not required for default install paths (section 2); user-initiated from within the app
Reinstall previous in-year version	User selects an older build from Previous versions in Check for Updates (back to the version in section 2 only)	Same as in-year patch; timetable data is not removed
IT-managed - updates disabled	Installer switch /DisableAutoUpdate - no prompts, no patch runs	Required at install time to write machine policy (HKLM)

5. Administrator rights requirement (important)

From this enhancement onward, administrator rights are required to install the main Setup programs and MSI packages. This is a deliberate change: the application will no longer download and launch Setup.EXE for routine in-year patches. Schools and IT teams must therefore:

- Deploy the initial installation using an elevated account or Intune (device context / system).
- Deploy each annual full upgrade using the same elevated / managed deployment method.
- Ensure users are not expected to self-install Setup.EXE for new installs or year changes without IT involvement.
- For in-year patches applied via TTAutoUp.exe: the default install folders in section 2 (C:\TT4Win, C:\OPTwin, C:\Cover) are typically writable by users after the initial elevated install, so patches can run without further elevation. If IT deploys to a non-default path (for example Program Files), ensure users have modify permission on that folder, or in-app updates will fail. Alternatively use /DisableAutoUpdate and push patches via your own software deployment tools.

6. Files installed with each product

Each full installer (Setup.EXE and MSI) will include, in the application directory (APPDIR):

- The main program executable (for example TT4W.exe for TimeTabler).
- TTAutoUp.exe - the signed patch updater (new).
- Program libraries, help files, and demo data as today.

7. Recommended IT deployment (Intune / MSI)

- Use TimeTabler.msi (or the Options / StaffCover equivalent) for initial deployment.
- Default install paths are C:\TT4Win (TimeTabler), C:\OPTwin (Options), and C:\Cover (StaffCover). To use a different path: `msiexec /i TimeTabler.msi APPDIR="D:\Apps\TimeTabler" /qn`
- To disable in-app updates entirely: `msiexec /i TimeTabler.msi DISABLEAUTOUPDATE=1 /qn`
- Or with Setup.EXE: `Setup.EXE /DisableAutoUpdate` (default APPDIR applies unless you specify one)
- After a managed install with updates disabled, users will not see Check for Updates menu items; TTAutoUp.exe will refuse to run if invoked manually.
- Subsequent in-year patches can be left to end users (if updates are enabled and write access exists) or applied by IT using your standard software deployment - redeploying the full MSI is not required for every small fix once TTAutoUp.exe is present.

8. Machine-wide disable policy (registry)

When `DISABLEAUTOUPDATE=1` is passed at install time, the installer writes a machine-wide registry flag. This survives product rebranding and is independent of the Add/Remove Programs manufacturer name.

Product	Registry Location	Key Value
TimeTabler	HKLM\SOFTWARE\TimeTabler\TimeTabler	DisableAutoUpdate = 1 (DWORD)
Options	HKLM\SOFTWARE\TimeTabler\Options	DisableAutoUpdate = 1 (DWORD)

StaffCover	HKLM\SOFTWARE\TimeTabler\Staff Cover	DisableAutoUpdate = 1 (DWORD)
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9. Network and security requirements

- HTTPS access to www.timetabler.com (patch manifests and file downloads).
- Downloads are Authenticode-signed executables; each file is verified with SHA-256 against a published manifest before it is applied.
- If your school uses an HTTP proxy, configure proxy settings in TimeTabler as today (AutoProxy settings) - the patch updater uses the same configuration.
- Allow TTAutoUp.exe and the main program executable through AppLocker / WDAC as signed binaries from Arbor Education Partners Ltd.
- No inbound firewall rules are required; updates are client-initiated outbound HTTPS only.

10. Data and rollback

- User timetable files (*.TT4), backups, exports, archives, and restore points under Data\ and related folders are never included in patch manifests and are not deleted or overwritten.
- Before replacing files, TTAutoUp.exe copies superseded program files to an UpdateBackup folder under the install directory.
- Users can reinstall a previous in-year build from Check for Updates (Previous versions) without losing timetable data, but only back to the version in section 2 for that product - not to earlier builds.
- Annual downgrade across product years is not supported via in-app patching - use the full installer for the target year.

11. Migrating existing installations

Installations on a version earlier than those listed in section 2 do not include TTAutoUp.exe. In-app delta updates are not available on those builds. After this enhancement ships, users who attempt Check for Updates on an older build will see a message asking them to contact IT for a one-time run of the latest full installer (Setup.EXE or MSI) at the version in section 2 or later. Once TTAutoUp.exe is present, all subsequent in-year patches use the new delta mechanism. Plan a one-time redeploy or on-site elevated install for sites still on older builds.

12. What IT does not need to do

- Redeploy the full MSI for every minor in-year fix (once TTAutoUp.exe is installed and updates are not disabled).
- Allow Setup.EXE self-extraction from user AppData for routine patches - that path is removed for in-year updates.
- Open FTP ports - patches use HTTPS only.
- Modify HKLM policy keys unless you choose to disable auto-update.

13. Support contacts

For deployment questions, contact your usual TimeTabler support channel or managed service partner. For Intune packaging of TimeTabler.msi with custom APPDIR or DISABLEAUTOUPDATE properties, refer to your internal deployment standards and test on a pilot device before wide rollout.