Clear the Windows Update Reboot Flag

This will help with the reset and remediation of a failed Windows Update. This is not for a update that failed to install. This is for a successful update that failed to remove the Reboot flags. This will forcefully remove the "Reboot Pending" windows update notice.

Background

Recently, several computers I manage had a fouled windows update that failed to clear the Windows Update reboot pending flag. The updates were installed and no updates were available. Whenever the PC was turned on Windows Update would ask for a reboot and would do so throughout the course of the day. This caused headache for the end users and myself a lot of pain until I found the solution.

Caution

Please note that this is for a particular case and is not suitable in all cases. This will make changes to Windows Registry and Windows System Files to remove stuck Windows Update Reboot flags. This could even be scripted for an RMM platform using a batch file.

Using Windows GUI

Stop the Windows Update service

- From the Windows start, search for "Services" Shown in the image is Windows 10 or 8/8.1. In windows 7, click run and type "services.msc"

Delete Registry keys

- Scroll down to the bottom and find Windows Update. Right Click and select Stop.
- Now delete some Windows Update registry keys, again search for "regedit" in Win. 10/8/8.1 for windows 7 click run and type "regedit.exe".
- Drill down to the following Key in Regedit.

HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\SOFTWARE\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\WindowsUpdate\Auto Update\RebootRequired

- Delete the RebootRequired key in its entirety, Windows Update will re-create it as needed. Close Regedit as it is no longer needed.

Delete XML Files

- Open Explorer and browse to C:\Windows\WinSXS
There will be lots of folders in here, ignore them. Find two files called Reboot.XML and Pending.XML.
One or both files may exist. They are easily found by sorting by File Type and scrolling to the top or bottom.

Change Ownership

- Right click on the Reboot.XML/Pending.XML file and go to "Properties".
  - Select the "Security" tab. Then Click Advanced. A New Windows will open, select "Change Ownership."
  - On the Select User dialog box, type the current username into the box, and click Check Names. The Account name should be underlined showing that a correct user has been selected.
    - A box may pop-up showing a list of matching users, select the current user account from the list.
  - Click Apply/OK to all open dialog boxes.

Change Permissions

- Right click on the Reboot.XML/Pending.XML file and go to "Properties".
  - Then hit the "Security" tab. Click the "Edit" button the change permissions.
    - Select Add, the Select User Dialog box will pop-up. Type in the user "Everyone" click "Check Names" then OK.
    - Select the Everyone user and check the box for "Full Control" Apply/OK out of all dialog boxes.

Delete File

- Right click on the Reboot.XML/Pending.XML file(s) and Delete it.
- Reboot the PC to verify the reboot notification plague is gone.