

The 5 Minute Guide to Preventing, Detecting and Removing Spyware

If you don't periodically scan your computer for spyware, you may unknowingly be leaving your personal information at risk or causing damage to your computer.

Spyware is a growing threat that all of us have to face as computer users in our more connected world. However, there are a few things you can do to help avoid this troublesome, sometimes dangerous software.

Preventing Spyware:

The best way for you to mitigate spyware is to simply avoid it. Sure, that sounds obvious, but to do so, you have to know how spyware gets onto your computer and what steps you can take to effectively avoid it. Spyware usually gets onto your system via some other program you download. This can be any software application but usually you only need to worry about the free ones, like those available on freeware download sites or peer-to-peer networking software. If you use Internet Explorer, spyware can get onto your system via free toolbars available all over the web. When in doubt, just pass on these toolbars or other software that integrates with your web browser unless it's from a known and trusted source. Finally, be careful of the sites you visit and don't allow sites to automatically add themselves to your web browser or automatically install applications, especially via the Active-X control.

Detecting Spyware:

If you think you might have spyware on your computer, the first step is identifying what you have. You should keep an eye out for warning signs, like random toolbars added to your browser like I mentioned earlier. Other red flags are lots of popups, even when you're not online, slow system performance all of a sudden or a computer that seems to be working like crazy even when you're not doing anything on it. In addition, if your computer starts to perform unreliably, restarts, or freezes up, it's probably a good time to scan for spyware and see what might be on your system. The good thing is that there are several choices for spyware scanners, both free and paid options. While the free ones will do the trick, the paid alternatives usually have more features so I tend to favor those, even for the casual computer user. The paid options almost always have a free trial or offer a free scan, so you can check out the software and scan your system before you buy. That way, you don't pay for software you don't need if your system turns out to already be spyware-free.

Removing Spyware:

Once you decide to scan your computer, you can probably use your spyware software to remove the offending programs as well. Most programs that scan for spyware double as spyware removers, either out of the box or after paying a small fee for the upgrade from the free version to the full version. You should run the spyware program twice and ideally, you'd run two programs. This doesn't have to be two paid versions though, instead one of the freebies and one of the others. The reason for this is that with so much spyware out there and with it being so hard to get rid of, it helps to have two programs pulling info from two different spyware databases to ensure everything that's on your system is found and removed.

Once you get rid of the spyware on your system, pay close attention to the sites you visit and the programs you download and install. The same applies for others that use your computer. By understanding these simple concepts, you'll be well on your way to ensuring your computer stays clear of spyware, both now and in the future.

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About the Author

For a limited time, get exclusive access to our anti spyware mini-course - protect yourself from this growing threat. A \$29.00 value, yours free if you sign up now. Visit: <http://www.fastspywarehelp.com/minicourse>