

Anti-Spyware Tips for Safe Computing: Spyware Detection

As use of computers and the internet continues to grow, so do the myriad of threats prevalent out there in this so-called "cyberspace". These issues can range from the annoying advertisement that you can't seem to get rid of on the low end of the spectrum to incredibly serious issues that could impact the functionality of your computer, your privacy or personal security. One of the latest of the issues is spyware. But you don't have to be a computer whiz to combat this problem. By having a better understanding of what spyware is and knowing what indicators to look for to identify the presence of spyware, you can easily eliminate spyware on your system or completely prevent it before it even becomes an issue.

Spyware is the generic term for any software installed on your computer system without you knowing about it. If the idea of having rogue software on your computer isn't bad enough, to make matters worse, this software doesn't just sit idle on your system, but usually monitors (and sometime controls) your computer. For example, spyware can be used to send pop-up ads...similar to what you might encounter on the web, but these can show up even when you're not online. Imagine having some annoying pop up ad for something "not family friendly" showing up while your kids are working on their homework. In addition to pop-ups, spyware programs can also send you to websites you otherwise wouldn't visit, keep tabs on your internet browsing, or log each and every one of your keystrokes. This information can then be sent through the internet (via your internet connection) and wind up in the hands of someone who can then use the info for identity theft or other malicious acts.

There are several things computer users should look out for that can be signs of spyware being present on your system. Many computer savvy people might already be aware of some of these things, but regardless of your level of expertise, take a minute to run down this list and see if any of these "spyware clues" might be occurring on your system:

- Have you noticed any new toolbars on your desktop or in your web browser? (This is a favorite way of passing along spyware)
- Do you experience a slew of pop-up advertisements?
- Has your computer become unbearably slow, especially when starting up, shutting down, or opening programs?
- Do you see any unknown icons down in your system tray (near the clock in the bottom right-hand corner on most computers)?
- Has your homepage ever changed from your desired start page to some other page without you setting it to do so?
- Do some of your keys seem to get stuck and not work but only for certain commands or on certain screens?
- Does your web browser ever take you to a site other than the address you type into the browser or choose from your bookmarks?
- Do you get a lot of random error messages from your operating system, other than the occasional glitch that we all get from time to time?

If your system is showing any of the signs mentioned above, it might be time to consider scanning your computer for spyware. There are several tools available to perform spyware scans, but only a handful are really worth considering. Be sure you do your due diligence as you seek out an appropriate spyware scanner. And if your system isn't showing any of the signs of the presence of spyware, consider yourself lucky and keep this list handy in case things change sometime down the road. One of the first keys to getting rid of spyware is knowing what to look for in the first place.

Source: <http://www.articlecircle.com>

About the Author

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