

Internet Sleuthing for Beginners

If your computer is shared between yourself, your children and/or your spouse you might want to know what others are using it for. Parents might need to know that their children or teens are safely surfing online and are not involved in anything they shouldn't be. Employers might want to ensure that their employees are truly productive and not jeopardizing company security practices with their online habits and individuals may need some reassurance about what their mate is doing online.

There are several things you can do to investigate what's happening on your computer. Computer browsers such as Internet Explorer, Firefox, Netscape and others generally have an area within the menu of recently visited websites, Internet search history or cached temporary pages. You can manually search through these pages to obtain this information. You can sometimes see cached images or a history of URL visits or cookie listings. Alternatively, you can run software to do this for you.

It may be necessary to take the alternate route, as some individuals tend to cover their tracks by erasing the temporary cache or removing the recent history at the end of each session. Some do this to hide their tracks or protect their privacy and others have set this up manually to protect their information from Spyware. If you can't find the information you are looking for within the computer, you can download software to help you.

One option is to download the trial version of computer monitoring software. If you like the features, you can purchase a permanent edition. Packages will allow you to install this program easily and have it run secretly in the background of the computer system. This will send you an encrypted file to any e-mail address with all the information you want. IT can tell you passwords, keystrokes, screen snapshots and more. If you want a time stamped log of every web page visited, every new instant messenger's chat transcript, every e-mail sent or every file accessed on the hard drive you can have it all neatly sent to you in an e-mailed report.

This information can be invaluable in helping you

- Protect your children and teenagers
- Ascertain what your employees are doing on their computers
- Determine if your spouse is doing anything against the rules of your relationship such as infidelity, gambling or pornography

Investigating what's happening may be necessary to bring you peace of mind or to protect yourself and your family. The Internet is a phenomenal tool that can help you in your day-to-day life but knowing exactly what's going on, on that computer can also be detrimental for you.

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About the Author

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