

## Safely Surfing the Internet and staying free from Spyware.

The internet has quickly become a dangerous place to take your computer without first having sufficient security equipment installed and running. Intruders using viruses were the first threat and spyware has become the most prevalent threat against user's privacy and computer functioning. Having only anti-virus and firewall protection will no longer fully protect your computer from the many internet threats.

Signing online without first having good anti-spyware protection will now invite in privacy intruders you would not normally allow in. With spyware in your computer there is seemingly no end to the personal information that can be extracted. The information the intruder desires is easily logged by spyware programs and sent back to the originator.

Spyware can steal information about your computer's operating system, the computer's address and system specific information such as what type of processor and the type internet browsers you have. It will also record what web sites you visit and other internet usage information. All this information collected by spyware intruders is used to create a profile for you that the intruders use for advertising purposes by bombarding you with annoying pop ups and email ads.

A spyware program with a keylogger can be potentially the most dangerous form of spyware because it works by logging each key stroked into your computer. Your user names, passwords, instant message chats, email messages, credit information and more can all be caught and sold or used by third party intruders. Other forms of spyware take snapshots of your screen as you work online at different times. Any type of spyware infection should be taken seriously and measures to minimize the privacy invasion should be taken.

Users will most likely know they have been infested with adware because it almost always comes with numerous annoying pop ups that signal an infection. Spyware is usually more difficult to detect because it is programmed to work silently. As it builds on your system the computer's functions will become noticeable slower and browser pages will take longer to load.

Spyware can also take control of a computer causing browser crashes among other annoying and potentially dangerous malfunctions. If your internet browser page has been abruptly changed or your printer and CD players begin acting odd then your computer is usually infected with spyware.

You can begin avoiding spyware by knowing what types of programs come with spyware or adware packages when downloaded. Many of the popular freeware and file sharing applications come with adware. Kazaa is widely known for having several adware applications piggybacking their way into your computer as does the free download of Weatherbug and DivX. The newer version of DivX has rid itself of adware so users can feel safer.

Even anti-spyware tools can trick users into installing more spyware because some of the scan and removal tools are produced by the spyware distributors. Spyware Nuker is one such program which tells users it will eliminate spyware when it actually skips over some infections during the scan and can install or let in additional infections. The best spyware tools immunize your system and then block spyware packages from getting in the system.

Any spyware removal tool you choose to use should be updated before each scan and the scans should be run at least on a weekly basis. Many anti-spyware protective tools can be programmed to run automatically at whatever schedule you choose. Some of the top rated anti-spyware tools include AdAware, Hijack This, PestPatrol, Spybot Search and Destroy and SpySweeper and each is a free download. Once you have found a free product that suits you consider paying for a more advanced version to get greater protection.

To continue surfing the internet safely while keeping your privacy it is vital that all users arm themselves with some sort of spyware protection tool. Many computer malfunctions and technical support calls stem from spyware infections.

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### About the Author

Mitch Johnson is a successful freelance author that writes regularly for <http://www.1st-in-eliminate-spyware.com>, a site that focuses exclusively on spyware removal software, as well as tips on how to prevent spyware from popping up on your computer. This site also has spyware guard, <http://www.1st-in-spyware-detection.com/> as well as spyware scanner, <http://www.spyware-removal-made-easy.com/>