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Is There a Spy in Your Computer?

By Maria Marsala, Business Growth Specialist

Is There a Spy in Your Computer? by Maria Marsala, Business Growth Specialist

You may have inadvertently invited a spy into your computer. There you are, shopping on line and little did you know it you caught a spy or two.

The spy is known by a few names "spyware, adware, trojans". Whatever it's called, what it does, once it's in your computer, is start taking statistical information as you travel the Internet. It may also send you pop-up ads and slow down your computer. Wired.com, http://www.wired.com/news_echnology/0,1282,49960,00.html, mentioned it "could even collect your credit card information". According to "OptOut", <http://grc.com/optout.htm>, one spyware program attacks your e-mail signature file.

How did you invite the spy?

Maybe you've gone to a website you knew and enjoyed only to find that it was purposefully purchased by a pornography site. The new company may have imbedded "spyware" or "adware" into that new home page and now, in many cases without your knowledge, it's on your computer, too.

Maybe you've downloaded a free or paid program and as part of the package you were provided with an added bonus - a spyware program.

Maybe you agreed to it! You could have downloaded a program and checked the box that allows that program to take

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statistics from you "for their own use".

What you can do?

A firewall program should let you know when you're on a website and a program is about to download. Note the word "should".

Or you can learn all about spyware, download an anti-spyware program, and schedule time in your weekly calendar to run the program. What I originally found on my 18-month-old computer were: 2 porn and 42 other spyware programs. A week

later, I had 4 new spyware programs appear.

To further reduce the amount of spam that ends up in your e-mail, create a "rule" or "filter" that will take any e-mail containing "certain adult words of your choosing" and send those e-mails directly to your delete or spam folder.

Did you know that you can opt-out of some e-mail ad's and tele-marketing calls, too.

Definition of spyware and adware

<http://whatis.techtarget.com/definitionsSearchResults/1,289878,sid9,00.html?query=spyware>

Learn about protecting your computer from s*pam and spyware

<http://www.unwantedlinks.com/>

Use this link to check for spyware on new software before you download it.

<http://www.spychecker.com/>

Free anti-spyware program. Remember to use it at least monthly and don't delete the items you really want!

<http://www.lavasoftusa.com/support/download/>

Spyware UK – Lots of good information

<http://www.spyware.co.uk/>

Opt out of doubleclick's ads

<http://www.doubleclick.com/us/corporate/privacy/privacy/ad-cookie/default.asp>

More lists you can opt-out of this link does not work

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http://www.networkadvertising.org/optout_nonppii.asp

Removing your e-mail, address and telephone numbers from lists.

<http://www.dmaconsumers.org/consumerassistance.html#mail>

Anti-Spam Tools

<http://www.webattack.com/freeware/comm/fwspam.shtml>

24/7 Phone number that removes you from credit card offers that go through the four most popular credit agencies. Listen to all options before hitting a key. #3 is the best option as it removes you "forever" (well till you change your phone number). Don't forget to get your cell phone number removed, too. Once you call them, they will mail you a confirmation letter, that you mail back to them. Call toll free 888-567-8688.

Spy Scanners - Don't Compromise your Privacy

By Gina Marie Capatar

Spy Scanners - Don't Compromise your Privacy by Gina Marie Capatar

Spies, spyware, internet parasites are among what they are usually called. These are scouts that monitor your web activities. They work undercover to check on your surfing patterns, spending habits, items bought, they extract email addresses, hijack browsers, steal credit card information. These are just some of the things a spyware is capable of.

A spyware is mainly an information hungry parasite determined to gather data from a user or surfer without him knowing it.

The information gathered by these parasites are then sent to the originator without the user's consent. Most often, the information gathered by the spyware are used to generate ads and pop-ups on the user's PC.

Spywares and Adwares aside from being a nuisance and an invasion of privacy can also jeopardize the optimal performance of your PC. They can eat up unused disk spaces and position themselves in an inconspicuous location in your hard drive. They can also eat the bandwidth, crash your system and oftentimes inflict themselves in the Registry or in the memory of your computer.

Spyware and Adwares have become very rampant nowadays. Prevent yourself from being a victim of these by:

Being careful of Freeware and Shareware Downloads

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– Some of these downloads are tagged with spywares which may be unknown to the user. Refrain from downloading sharewares and freewares from unknown sources.

Installing a good spyware/adware scanner and removal software

– There are a number of spyware scanner and/or removal softwares in the market today. A good spyware scanner can effectively locate all spywares installed on your PC and a good spyware removal tool can effectively remove all the spywares detected.

Spy Scanners are programs designed to detect spies in your PC. A good spy scanner can effectively search through the most unnoticeable embedded files that spy on you.

Most Spy scanners include a spyware removal function. Other spy scanners do not entail spyware removal features but display the logs of the spyware detected in your PC. The information in the logs contains the location and nature of the spywares.

For spy scanners with no built-in spyware removal functions, a manual deletion of the spyware files could also be done since the location and the file type is specified in the logs. Some Spy scanner products on the market today have spyware scan available for non-paying users and the removal tool available only for paying users.

Spy Scanners when installed can be chosen to run on demand or periodically.

Gina Marie Capatar is the main writer of <http://www.isnare.com> and is currently accepting freelance technical writing jobs. You can find more of her work at <http://www.isnare.com> and feel free to contact her at gcapatar@gmail.com

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