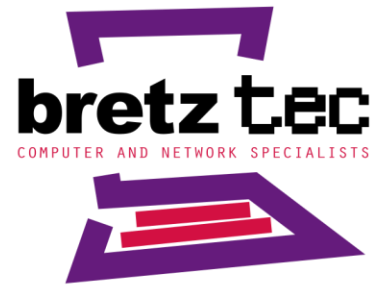


Spyware



What is it?

Spyware is a new class of malware that can manifest itself in several ways.

- It can steal your Browser home page (the page you see when you first open Internet Explorer)
- It can replace your search engine with one of its own.
- It can track your usage of the internet and report the information to someone else. A simple use is to find out your interests so that it can direct advertisements to you based on items you have shown an interest in on the net. A bad use is if it is designed to look for and steal credit card numbers.

Where do you get it?

Simply by using the net.

- You may get a popup with a great offer. Click and they've got you....
- Download a new free killer application.
 - KaZaA Media Desktop (KMD) multimedia file sharing and jukebox. This is a popular free application that allows you to download free music and share your music with others on the net. Most people do not know that versions of this program contains a part that tracks your internet usage and habits and reports that back for analysis. This is your cost for this free program.
- Browse to a page and watch some great graphics move across the screen. These items are generally produced by a program that sometimes can do more than what you expect it to.

What damage can it do?

- Speed – It can seriously slow down your computer or bring it to almost a complete halt.
- It can change settings on your favorite programs or even disable or damage others.
- Some spyware can be almost impossible to remove even using multiple anti-spyware products.
- I have seen cases where the infection was so great that the computer had to be rebuilt.
- Alternative browsers that are not as susceptible to problems as Internet Explorer exist and can be downloaded for free in most cases. A highly rated substitute is firefox available at: www.mozilla.org/products/firefox

How do you know if you have it?

- A machine that normally runs well suddenly begins to crawl.
- Your normal internet browser page is suddenly replaced by a new page and you cannot change it back.
- When you perform a search on the internet, you find that your normal search page has been replaced.
- Certain web pages such as Google are no longer accessible.
- You start getting an unusual number of pop-ups trying to sell you something.

How do you remove it?

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- There are a number of Public Domain (Free) programs that will do a fairly decent job of removing many forms of Spyware.
- For the free programs, simply go to the website and download the program, install, update, and run it.
- There are several commercial products in the \$30 - \$50 price range that are getting real good at removing Spyware.
- Warning!!!!!! There are as many FAKE Anti-Spyware programs out there as there are real programs. Before you purchase online or download that free program, do a web search and find out if anyone has found out anything bad about that Spyware you just saw on a pop-up.

Free Tools to remove Spyware:

- AdAware (www.lavasoft.de)
- Spybot Search and Destroy (www.pcsecuritynews.com)

Some Commercial products to remove Spyware:

- Available at your local computer or office supply store. \$30 - \$50
- Spy Sweeper (www.webroot.com)
- Norton AntiSpam 2005 (www.symantec.com)
- McAfee SpyKiller (www.mcafee.com)



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