

Adware & Spyware on Your PC

Now that your PC is safe from viruses (you have all of course installed anti-virus software and keep it regularly updated), a new and different threat emerges – Adware & Spyware!!

You've almost certainly encountered the ads: A dialog box pops up on your system, bearing the message "Warning! Your computer may be infected with spyware" and suggesting that you scan your computer immediately. Click it, and you often reach a Web site providing a "free spyware scanner" that finds all sorts of malware on your PC--and then offers to sell you software that will clean it all up. Should you buy these products? The answer is no. Tests by *PC World* found that none were as effective as reputable free products such as **Spybot**.

Malicious software packages like worms and viruses have got most of the attention in the computer security world of late. But according to one computer security expert, spyware - software that surreptitiously sends information about your computer and its use to a third party - is the "phenomenon of the year," and not enough users know how to combat it.

Worse still, if you start being bothered by spyware and install an anti-spyware package it could make things a lot worse! Some of these packages are rogues!! There are about 40 of them out there and if you use a search engine (e.g. Google) to find one, it will probably point you to one of the rogue ones

If your PC is already infested with spyware and adware, resist the temptation to succumb to impulse buys of anti-spyware products that you see on the Net, advertised on Google. Instead,

1. Clean your PC as best you can

Download and run one (or both) of these free anti-spyware scanners and remove whatever spyware and adware it finds.

⇒ Ad-aware Personal Edition (www.lavasoftusa.com)

⇒ Spybot Search & Destroy (www.safer-networking.org)

You should also scan and clean your computer with whatever anti-virus program you happen to have installed on your computer. If you don't have antivirus software installed you are just asking for trouble!

2. Once your PC has been cleaned, be sure to take steps to prevent it from being overrun with spyware or adware again by keeping one of the above installed and using the run-time options.

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