

Is There A Spy In Your Computer?

By Maria Marsala

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Is there a Spy in your computer?

You may have inadvertently invited a spy into your computer. 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/technology/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 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/downloads.html>

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

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 tot hem. Call toll free 888-567-8688

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