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Frequently asked Questions about Spyware & Adware

Question: What is Spyware? What is Adware? Is there a difference?

Answer: Spyware and adware are internet jargon for advertising-supported software. This software was created to collect demographic and usage information from your computer, usually for advertising purposes. The terms are also applied to software that 'sneaks' onto the computer system and performs activities hidden to the user.

Spyware is any technology that aids in gathering information about an organization or person without their knowledge.

Adware is any software application which allows banner ads or pop up ads to be displayed while a program is running.

Both make their way onto your system, but for two different purposes.

Question: How did I get these on my computer?

Answer: Spyware and adware are usually hidden components in mislabeled "freeware" and shareware applications or are downloaded from the Internet. These modules can come through software, viruses, web sites, freeware, shareware, and in some cases even from some of the commercial software that you purchase. As you surf the internet and check out various web sites, your surfing activity triggers the download of the spyware and adware.

Question: What are some of the symptoms my computer may experience?

Answer: You may not notice anything at first. But after awhile, certain symptoms can occur. These include--but are not limited to--slower performance on the internet, an increase in pop-up advertisements, new toolbars in Internet Explorer, material that may be offensive, and/or a change in your homepage that you did not make. Often, even if you reset the homepage to one you want, it may return to another one. You may also experience strange problems with your programs not working correctly. Ports (access to the internet) may also become blocked.

Question: But I downloaded a program to take care of this problem and things got worse. Why?

Answer: Unfortunately some programs falsely advertise themselves as solutions. Some of the advertised software actually can cause more problems on your computer. Additionally, spyware and adware integrate tightly with Windows Internet software. If removed improperly, they may cause the internet to not work on your computer at all.

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Question: How can I rid my computer of spyware and adware?

Answer: Because of the potential of damage in your Windows operating system, Computer Heroes suggests that you allow us to analyze and clean up your computer at least the first time. Our service team has selected Spy Sweeper from Webroot Software, Inc. to be the tool our company promotes and sells to clean spyware/adware off of computers. Spy Sweeper checks for problems that spyware and adware may have caused.



Computer Heroes also uses a number of other software tools to diagnose and remove some of the more complex spyware programs.

Question: Will Spy Sweeper prevent spyware and adware from getting on to my system in the future?

Answer: YES. Spy Sweeper was selected by Computer Heroes because our engineers believe it is the best product available for the prevention of and cleaning up of spyware and adware.

If you have any other questions about spyware and adware, or about your computer, please call Computer Heroes, Inc. at (608) 329-4300.