

Spyware Alert

How it works

Spyware is a software that covertly gathers user information through the user's Internet connection without his or her knowledge. Spyware are usually bundled as a hidden component of programmes downloaded from the Internet. Certain spyware may contain keystroke loggers, virus, worms and Trojan horses. Once installed, the spyware monitors user activity on the computer or Internet and transmits that information in the background to someone else. Spyware can be used to gather information about email addresses and even passwords and credit card numbers through some of the keystroke logger programmes.

How to protect your computer from spyware

1. Do not download software from unknown websites.
2. Install reputable anti-spyware software.
3. Disconnect from the Internet when you have finished surfing or working on your computer.
4. Learn more about how to protect yourself from spyware by visiting our Security Advisory pages.

Other terms associated with Spyware

Adware

Adware is any software programme that causes unsolicited advertisements to appear on your computer. These come in many forms, ranging from pop-ups to banner advertisements. These programmes may also track your surfing habits and slow your Internet browser's performance. Some of these are even capable of downloading third-party software programmes into your computer without your knowledge or consent.

Browser hijackers

Browser hijackers are the most distinct form of spyware as they change your Internet Explorer settings, such as changing your default homepage. They may also redirect your web searches to pornographic "pay-per-search" websites through their own search engine. These changes are often irreparable without anti-spyware software.

Cookies

Cookies are markers put on your computer to record information that will speed up your browsing of the web pages that you have already been to. Many websites now store and access cookies that may contain personal information such as surfing habits, usernames and passwords. They are installed and accessed without your knowledge or consent, and the information is often collated and sold.