



F E D E R A L
S T U D E N T A I D
We Help Put America Through School

SPAD Quick Hit

SpyWare

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“We help put America through school”



What is it?

“Spyware” is deceptive software that takes over unwitting victims' computers for the purpose of gathering their personal information and bombarding them with unwanted advertising.

AKA (Also known as)



Adware

Sneakware

Malware



What Spyware does...

It embeds itself deep inside a computer's operating system and spawn windows full of advertising messages, sometimes preventing users from accessing any other application.



What Spyware does...

It often hides in the background, secretly transmitting information about the user's Web-surfing habits to a server somewhere on the Internet.

Who's behind it?



- Spyware and adware developers often pay to have their programs bundled into unrelated software packages.
- The developers in turn get paid by marketers who want as many people as possible to see their ads or visit their sites.

How did it get there?



- Many computer users invited them right in when they installed software downloaded from the Internet.
- Exploit known vulnerabilities in Microsoft's Windows operating system and Internet Explorer browser to sneak spyware onto users' computers without their knowledge.
- Pushing malicious JavaScript and VBScript code to users' Web browsers when they visit a seemingly ordinary Web page.

HOW DO YOU KNOW YOU HAVE IT?



- Find ads popping up all over your desktops without having even gone to a website yet.
- Computer working slower than usual one day -- a common symptom of spyware that occurs whenever the program is uploading information to a remote server or downloading new ads.
- New taskbars/searchbars bolted on to your browser without your knowing



What to do to prevent!

1. Keep Windows and Internet Explorer software up-to-date by applying the latest security patches available from Microsoft's website. <http://windowsupdate.microsoft.com>
2. Do not lower your default security level in Internet Explorer
3. Pay extra attention to offers of free software. Be suspicious! When something's free, there's likely a catch.



What to do to combat!

There are various spy and ad ware removal tools. Be cautious of them too! Make sure the tool is recommended by a valid source such as Microsoft or a major publication.

Three most popular removal tools are:

- Spybot Search and Destroy
- AdAware
- SpySweeper
- PestPatrol

- These tools are available at <http://www.download.com>