HOW TO GET RID OF ADWARE, SPYWARE AND PORN DIALLERS

In today's computing life, pests like adware, spyware, and porn diallers are part of our everyday lives. Not because we want them to be. They tend to install themselves without our knowledge.

WHAT ARE THEY?

Here is a summary of some of the common types:

Adware

Adware are small programs that usually come with free software. They are designed to show or serve ads to users like you and me in the hope we would click them and the advertiser would make some money. They are not viruses or worms - the usual anti-virus program cannot detect them.

Ads shown are mainly pop-ups (small windows that appear on top of existing windows) but occasionally you will see pop-unders - you don't see them until you close a window and there they are hiding underneath.

Spyware

This class can overlap with adware as most of them do come with some sort of ad serving capability - but not all. Some spyware can also be classed under Trojans (read more about Trojans and viruses in our Net Nasties section of the Tutorials). Spyware 'spies' on you by gathering details such as the type of sites you go to and, if combined with adware, will show you ads that are related to the sites you are visiting. It is like 'targetted' ad serving.

Browser Hi-jackers

Here is a type of pest that will take over your browsers and force a new home page and ad-serving toolbars upon you. These are very annoying as sometimes they will intercept your searches and show you sites other than the ones you want to visit.

Diallers/Porn Diallers

These small programs can come through by spam email or by clicking on a link on the internet. Most people are not aware they actually clicked on a link and caused these things to install. They are usually associated with adult oriented sites.

HOW DO YOU REMOVE THEM?

These pests can be removed using adware and spyware removers. I usually recommend using programs like **Ad Aware** (www.lavasoftusa.com) or **Spybot: Search and Destroy** (www.safer-networking.org).

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They first scan your computer and provide you with a report that indicates what pests you have. You can remove them all or have the option to remove only some. I mention "some" because there are programs that use adware and may be rendered useless once the adware component is removed. It is up to you whether you'd like to keep the adware components in your machine or not.

If one type of spyware remover failed to remove your pests, then try another one. Spyware removers usually complement each other - what one cannot remove might be removed by another. There are plenty of spyware removers available from the net. A download site like www.tucows.com should have them listed.

What if none of the adware and spyware removers succeeded in removing your spyware? Some adware and spyware have uninstallers. Check the Add/Remove Programs section of the control panel. Others have uninstallers that can be downloaded from the adware's web site.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I HAVE ADWARE AND SPYWARE-LIKE ACTIVITY IN MY COMPUTER?

The first thing is to do the steps above to try to remove them. If they are persistent, you can usually get more info about them on the net. Just make sure you get some details about them like the name of their toolbars, the characteristics of the ads, web addresses, etc. You can also check our the *NetGuide Helpdesk* section and see if anyone else already had the problem.

This information was taken from the NetGuide website at:

www.netguide.com.au/useful_stuff/tutorials