



QUADSIMIA^{LLC}
Internet Presence Professionals

Spyware Symptoms

Sluggish computer: If you've noticed that your PC has had a serious drop in its responsiveness lately, it could mean that spyware is draining its computing power.

New "favorites": Spyware will often add "favorites" of its own to your browser's favorites' folder. If you notice an unusual number of new favorites and are not sure how they got there, spyware may be to blame.

New desktop icons: Spyware can install programs without your knowledge, and place icons on your desktop enticing you to click them. Once you click the icon, it can direct you to a site that could either install more spyware or an advertisement.

Add/Remove Programs: You can check your Add/Remove Programs in your Control Panel. It will show a list of programs installed on your computer; some spyware and adware provide uninstallers for their program. Remove the program using this method before scanning with an Anti-Spyware/Adware program.

Fishy pop-up ads: Pop-up ads from spyware software are designed to look like they've been served up by the legitimate Web site you're visiting. As a result, you may not recognize them as a symptom of infection. There's no way to be sure, but if the contents of the ads seem strange -- or if you're getting pop-up ads when you're not even surfing the Internet -- it's very likely that they are being served up by spyware software.

Change of your default home page: One of the oldest spyware tricks is to automatically change your Web browser's default or start-up home page. This is the Web page that appears when you start your browser or click the "home" button.

New toolbars added to your browser: If you see a toolbar at the top of your web browser and notice pop-up's while surfing the web. It is a program that hooks URLs, sends them to a predetermined Web site, and then redirects the URL to the correct location. The Web site can log a user's IP address and visited URLs

Unauthorized 1-900 number charges: If your phone bill charges you for 1-900 phone calls you didn't make, you may have fallen victim to a particularly devious form of spyware. These programs will hang-up your normal Internet connection and instruct your computer to dial a 1-900 number -- silently.

Spyware Prevention

Be smart: While surfing the web, there are so many things that you could click, some good, a lot are bad. You must watch out for suspicious advertisements and urls; from clicking these ads, you could be dealing with your worst nightmare, SPYWARE. You can be exposed to spyware and adware anywhere, such as web sites, email, instant messages, and downloads packaged with third party spyware/adware.

Get a new browser: If you are using Internet explorer, you are at risk, because Internet Explorer is the number one target for spyware to hit. Mozilla's Firefox is becoming a popular browser for people to switch to. It is more secure and has built in features that protect you from spyware and pop-ups. It is a quick fix for your web browsing spyware-infested nightmare.

Scan your computer for spyware: There are programs available for download that scan your computer for malicious spyware and adware. Once detected it will ask you to confirm removal, followed by cleaning your system of it. Two popular programs that do the job are Ad-aware SE and Spybot S&D. Both do the same thing, but one may find something the other did not, so it does not hurt to have both installed and ran weekly.

Protect yourself from pop-ups: Google has a free toolbar for Internet Explorer. It does a good job blocking pop-ups and has other uses. There are other pop-up blockers such "Pop-up Blocker Pro" by Panicware, but it is not free and the free Google toolbar does just as good a job.

Window XP Users: Microsoft released a new installation for the XP OS called Service Pack 2. Installing SP2 on any XP machine helps you fight spyware and adware with a new internal pop-up blocker in Internet Explorer and a firewall. You can see if you have SP2 on your computer by right clicking "My Computer" and click "Properties". If you do not have it installed, you should go to the Microsoft site and download the installation or request a CD.