
How to Protect your PC from Spyware?

If its not one thing, its another. That is one of those ridiculous phrases that pretty much goes without saying. Like "wherever you go, there you are." But, in this case it seems appropriate.

Allow me to elaborate. Computers on the Internet are almost constantly bombarded with viruses and other malware- so users employ antivirus software to protect themselves. Email inboxes are constantly flooded with pathetically useless spam- so users employ anti-spam programs and techniques to protect themselves. As soon as you think you have things under control you find out your system has a myriad of spyware and adware programs silently running in the background monitoring and reporting on your computer activity. Hence, "if its not one thing, its another."

The more benign spyware and adware simply monitors and tracks your the sites you visit on the web so that companies can determine the web-surfing habits of their users and try to pinpoint their marketing efforts. However, many forms of spyware go beyond simple tracking and actually monitor keystrokes and capture passwords and other functions which cross the line and pose a definite security risk.

How can you protect yourself from these insidious little programs? Ironically, many users unwittingly **agree** to install these programs. In fact, removing some spyware and adware might render some freeware or shareware programs useless. Below are 5 easy steps you can follow to try to avoid and, if not avoid, at least detect and remove these programs from your computer system:

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1. **Be Careful Where You Download:** Unscrupulous programs often come from unscrupulous sites. If you are looking for a freeware or shareware program for a specific purpose try searching reputable sites like tu cows.com or download.com.
 2. **Read the EULA:** What is an EULA you ask? End User License Agreement. It's all of the technical and legal gibberish in that box above the radio buttons that say "No, I do not accept" or "Yes, I have read and accept these terms". Most people consider this a nuisance and click on "yes" without having read a word. The EULA is a legal agreement you are making with the software vendor. Without reading it you may be unwittingly agreeing to install spyware or a variety of other questionable actions that may not be worth it to you. Sometimes the better answer is "No, I do not accept."
 3. **Read Before You Click:** Sometimes when you visit a web site a text box might pop up. Like the EULA, many users simply consider these a nuisance and will just click away to make the box disappear. Users will click "yes" or "ok" without stopping to see that the box said "would you like to install our spyware program?" Ok, admittedly they don't generally come out and say it that directly, but that is all the more reason you should stop to read those messages before you click "ok".
 4. **Protect Your System:** Antivirus software is somewhat misnamed these days. Viruses are but a small part of the malicious code these programs protect you from. Antivirus has expanded to include worms, trojans, vulnerability exploits, jokes and

- hoaxes and even spyware and adware. If your antivirus product doesn't detect and block spyware you can try a product like [AdAware Pro](#) which will protect your system from spyware or adware in real time.
5. **Scan Your System:** Even with antivirus software, firewalls and other protective measures some spyware or adware may eventually make it through to your system. While a product like AdAware Pro mentioned in step #4 will monitor your system in real time to protect it, AdAware Pro costs money. The makers of AdAware Pro, Lavasoft, also have a version available for free for personal use. [AdAware](#) will not monitor in real time, but you can manually scan your system periodically to detect and remove any spyware. Another excellent choice is [Spybot Search & Destroy](#) which is also available for free.

If you follow these five steps you can keep your system protected from spyware proactively and detect and remove any that does manage to get into your system. Good luck!