

VIRUSES, SPYWARE & HIJACKERS



Has your PC slowed down? You may have malware!

It's not safe being connected to the internet these days with all the viruses, spyware and browser hijackers out there. Just visiting a compromised web site could download "malware" or malicious software to your PC.

Are you getting more and more pop-ups and spam? Is your computer running slower? These are some indications that you have some sort of malware on your PC.

Pop-ups were one of the first annoyances with the surge of internet browsing but they didn't do any real damage. Then came adware and spyware which is installed right on your PC. Some times users initiated the install (like Kaza) other times it installed itself secretly.

Adware can increase the amount of Pop-ups you receive and spyware can potentially send out information about you and your habits on the web.

It's not enough installing an anti-virus software and keeping it up to date. And all too often this basic safeguard is not being done, many users I run across are not even doing this as a minimum or their antivirus definitions have expired.

Firewalls are a must if you connect to the internet. Without one, getting hacked is a virtual certainty.

However, a firewall will not prevent dangerous software from being installed. Malware will try to trick you into installing it.

Most people know they should not open unsolicited e-mail attachments. However just reading an e-mail could let loose a virus with out proper protection.

The best defense is a multi-tiered approach; protecting the points of vulnerability at every step in the flow of data to your PC.



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You heard the words, What do they mean?

Virus: Usually harmful, although not always. Spreads through e-mail, through contaminated storage media or through unprotected internet connection

Trojan: Malicious software that sneaks into computer by pretending to be something innocuous

Spyware: Transmits information from a computer for malicious or unwanted purposes. Can appear to have a legitimate function, but spyware activity is hidden

Hijacker: Seizes control of a web browser and redirects to specified web sites

Adware: Delivers advertisements such as pop-ups. May have additional unwanted functions, giving it the characteristics of spyware

Keystroke logger: Records every keystroke before encryption can take place

What should you do?

Upgrade to Windows XP and install the latest service packs

Keep your patches up-to-date

Install the latest Internet Explorer version

Be careful of e-mail attachments

Use a Firewall

Make sure your Antivirus software is current and up-to-date

Make sure you have backups of important files