

## Spyware can monitor your Internet use and harm your PC

Spyware is a relatively new threat to personal computers which is not addressed by most anti-virus software programs. Spyware can cause mischief on your computer. Spyware can generate annoying pop-up ads (called adware), slow down the performance of your system, monitor your online activities, or gather private information about you. Spyware programs are generally downloaded without your knowledge or approval when you visit an infected website or open spam e-mail.

Fortunately, you can protect yourself from spyware. A number of free or low-cost anti-spyware software programs are available to detect and purge spyware from your computer. Because these programs each find slightly different spyware components, you may want to download two or more of these programs to get better protection. Most anti-spyware programs are designed to run on PCs with Microsoft operating systems which are most frequently attacked by spyware. Some popular anti-spyware programs are described below:

### **Microsoft Windows AntiSpyware (Beta1)** **([www.microsoft.com/athome/security](http://www.microsoft.com/athome/security))**

Microsoft Windows AntiSpyware (Beta1) is a free software program that helps protect Windows users from spyware and other potentially unwanted software by detecting and removing known spyware from your PC. Updates are automatically downloaded to your PC and users can report new threats to Microsoft's spyware community. You can restore any programs that you inadvertently remove with AntiSpyware. You can also schedule regular spyware scans and removal.

### **Ad-Aware SE Personal from Lavasoft Inc.** **([www.lavasoft.com](http://www.lavasoft.com))**

Ad-aware SE Personal Edition, which is free for personal machines, was one of the first applications built

to find and remove adware and spyware. Ad-aware SE can scan your RAM, registry, hard drives, and external storage devices for known data-mining, advertising, and tracking components. After scanning is complete, the program summarizes the results and lists found spyware components as either critical or negligible. You can select which spyware components you want to remove. An automatic update feature keeps Ad-aware up-to-date.

### **Spybot–Search & Destroy ([www.safer-networking.org](http://www.safer-networking.org))**

Spybot–Search & Destroy is a free program that can detect and remove different kinds of spyware from your computer. The *Search and Destroy* function scans your computer, lists any found problems, and allows you to fix any of the problems. The *Immunize* function allows you to take a few preventative measures against spyware including blocking new spyware downloads. The *Recovery* function allows you to restore any changes made to your system by Spybot–S&D. Spybot recommends running the update function weekly.

### **Webroot Spy Sweeper ([www.webroot.com](http://www.webroot.com))**

The Webroot Spy Sweeper program removes spyware, adware and other unwanted programs and protects you from future spyware attacks. It stops unwanted changes to your browser settings. You can schedule regular scans or perform one manually. Spy Sweep includes regular definition updates, ongoing spyware education, and free customer support. Although Webroot Spy Sweeper costs \$29.95, Webroot offers a free web scanner (called Spy Audit) which will identify spyware on your system, but will not remove it.

For more information, contact CTSI at 303-861-0507.

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