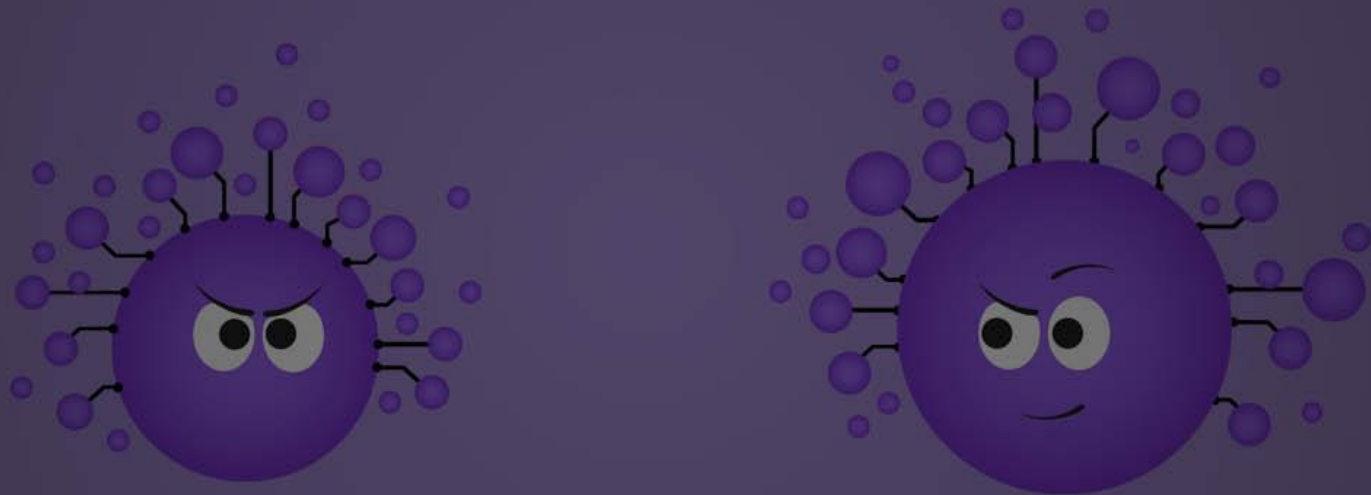


**Spyware - one of the most
dangerous forms of malware**

Understanding spyware is simple: it's spying software. But noticing if you have spyware on your device is anything but simple.



What is spyware?



Spyware is a general term used to describe software that performs certain behaviors, generally without appropriately obtaining your consent

It collects information about your surfing habits, browsing history, or personal information and often uses the Internet to pass this information along to third parties

How did it start?

According to a number of sources, the first use of the term spyware occurred in a 1994 posting that made light of Microsoft's business model. Later, the term was used to describe devices used for spying, such as small cameras and microphones.

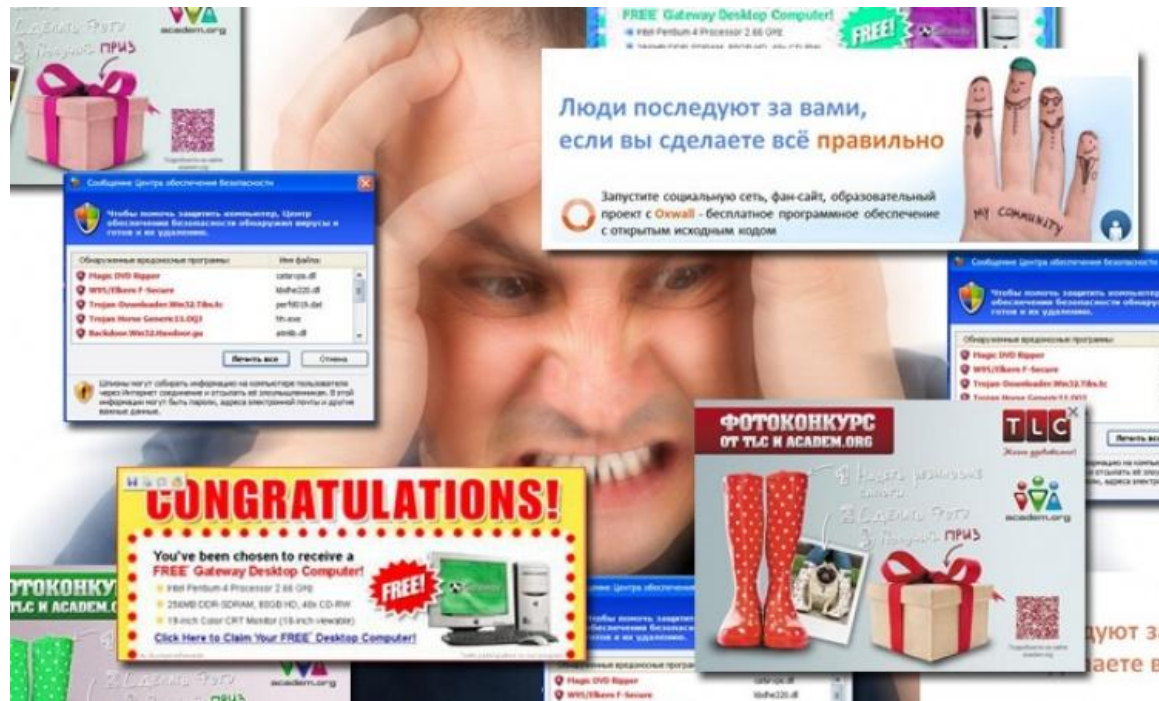


Some examples

- **CoolWebSearch**, a group of programs, takes advantage of Internet Explorer vulnerabilities. It displays pop-up ads, rewrites search engine results, and alters the infected computer's hosts file.
- **HuntBar**, aka WinTools or Adware.Websearch, was installed by an ActiveX drive-by download at affiliate Web sites, or by advertisements displayed by other spyware programs—an example of how spyware can install more spyware.
- Spyware such as **Look2Me** hides inside system-critical processes and start up even in safe mode.
- **Zango** transmits detailed information to advertisers about the Web sites which users visit.
- **Zlob trojan**, or just Zlob. More recently, Zlob has been known to hijack routers set to defaults.

Adware

Adware is any software package that automatically renders advertisements in order to generate revenue for its author. The advertisements may be in the user interface of the software or on a screen presented to the user during the installation process. The functions may be designed to analyze which Internet sites the user visits and to present advertising pertinent to the types of goods or services featured there.



How does Spyware collect data?

- Record your keystrokes: Called keyloggers, this kind of spyware is used to collect passwords.
- Track online activities.
- Take control of your computer: Some forms of Trojan spyware will make changes to your security settings.
- Slow down your device: it steals processing power and internet bandwidth to communicate what it has stolen..

How to recognize spyware?

- New unidentifiable icons
- Different browser home page and/or search engine
- Errors randomly popping up on your screen
- Use a spyware scanner





How do I remove spyware?

Antivirus software can find and remove any spyware on your computer, since these usually include anti-spyware protection as well as spyware removal tools. You can also check Programs and Features for items that don't belong on your computer.

How to prevent spyware?

- Use antivirus and anti-spyware software.
- Ensure that your browser, operating system, and software have the latest updates and security patches.
- Set your browser security and privacy levels higher.
- Use extreme caution if you frequent file-sharing sites.
- Don't click on pop-up ads.

