

Beware of Spyware

I'm not talking about a new tool that James Bond might use in one of his adventure movies. I'm talking about the cause of all the annoying pop ups you get while your minding your own business surfing the Internet. Have you ever noticed that the pop ups tend to be geared toward whatever topic your looking at on the Internet? Where do these pop ups come from? Why do some of your friends seem to have less problems with pop ups then you do? Why does your computer seem much slower then it was just a short time ago? All of these questions will be answered in this article and may even help your sanity.

First, what is Spyware? Spyware also referred to as ad ware are a type of program installed on your computer system. These programs monitor the activity on your computer and try to match advertisers to potential buyers. Spyware became more prominent during the hay days of free Internet service. Net Zero, Blue Light and a host of other services tried to make a living by offering free Internet service in exchange for showing you ads. Well of course we know many of them could not survive and eventually either went out of business or became a low cost pay service with the annoying ads. From there programmer realized they could use the same technology and apply it to virtually anyone that surfs the Internet.

The good news is you can keep from getting the pop ups by simply not installing the Spyware. The bad news is many people don't realize they are installing Spyware. Programmers found they could use the same principles that the first free Internet companies used to earn a living writing their own software. How many of you have downloaded a neat picture for your screensaver, or have a really cool program that tells you about the weather, or maybe a program that keeps your time and date current. Well chances are during the installation of these programs you agreed to the terms of their software when you clicked on "YES" to install the program. If you read the small print you will find that you also agreed to look at advertisements while you use these programs. That's right those seemingly innocent programs are the root cause of most of the pop ups that drive you crazy.

To make matter worse, as if being bombarded with pop ups isn't bad enough, each of these Spyware programs are running in the background. Not that big a deal if you have just a couple of Spyware programs. Many folks have dozens of Spyware programs running in the background though. Those are the folks that come into my shop complaining about their computer's performance dragging. Also some Spyware will permanently change your Internet Explorer's home page. No matter how many times you change the home page it changes back to an advertisement type search page. This can be the worst type of Spyware because even after the program is removed the program keeps changing the home page and becomes very difficult to reverse the affects.

So what can you do when you just can't stand the ads anymore? We use a program called ADAWARE. It is made by Lavasoft and is downloadable for free at www.lavasoftusa.com. No Spyware removal tool will work 100% of the time, but this tool seems to do an excellent job most of the time. If you need help removing your Spyware headaches give Thomas or Roger a call at Computer Depot 947-0749.