

## 2.2.3 Malware Protection Facts

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Malware is software designed to infiltrate or damage a computer system without the owner's consent or knowledge. Some malware even takes control of the computer system. Malware often attempts to hide itself.

This lesson covers the following topics:

- Malware prevention
- Additional preventive measures
- Malware recovery

### Malware Prevention

Regardless of the type of malware, there are some common things you can do to prevent malware infection:

- Use the latest version and patch level for your web browser.
- Install the latest patches for the operating system.
- Install antivirus, anti-spyware, anti-rootkit, and personal firewall software.
- Keep definition files up-to-date.
- Use a pop-up blocker to prevent adware.
- Use software to control cookies on the system.
- Perform regular scheduled scans to look for malware.
- Choose anti-malware software from a reputable company. Don't let scareware fool you into purchasing a product that may not work.

### Additional Preventive Measures

In addition, implement the following measures:

- Train users to not download files from unknown sources or open files in suspicious emails. Spyware, adware, crimeware, and Trojans all take advantage of downloads.
- Remove removable drives to prevent unauthorized software from being installed on a system.
- Show full file extensions on all files. Viruses, worms, and Trojans often make use of double file extensions to change files that are normally deemed harmless. For example, adding the extension .TXT.EXE to a file will make the file appear as a text file in an attachment when, in reality, it is an executable.
- Enable antivirus scanning for all email attachments.
- Enable antivirus scanning for all removable storage, such as USB flash drives and CD-ROMs.
- Block executable files that have been copied from another computer. Require that they be manually unblocked before execution.
- Enable privacy controls in Windows Internet Explorer.
  - Delete browsing history.
  - Configure Autocomplete settings to not store entries such as usernames, passwords, web addresses, and forms.
- Use third-party tools to scan for issues and cleanup problems.

### Malware Recovery

Malware can permanently damage your system. Recovery from malware can include the following steps:

- You may have to reinstall applications, features, or even the entire operating system from scratch.
- If your organization uses imaging solutions, you can quickly re-image a machine if it is infected with malware. Re-imaging or installing from scratch is often faster and more effective than malware removal and cleanup.
- *Remediation* is the process of correcting problems. Most antivirus software remediates problems automatically or semi-automatically by prompting you to identify the action to take. Possible actions in response to problems are:
  - Repair the infection. Repair is possible for true viruses that have attached themselves to valid files. During the repair, the virus is removed and the file is placed back in its original state, if possible.
  - Quarantine the file. Quarantine moves the infected file to a secure folder where it cannot open or run normally. You might quarantine an infected file that cannot be repaired to see if another tool or utility might be able to recover the file at another time.
  - Delete the file. You should delete malicious files such as worms, Trojan horse programs, spyware, or adware programs.
  - Periodically review the quarantine folder and delete any files you do not want to recover.

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