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Virtual Eyes

Beware: free spyware and adware programs come with some of your favorite downloads.

The Internet is a wonderful tool. It works like a virtual web, connecting everyone within its network from all parts of the globe. With many salient features, the Internet has become so popular that virtually everyone around the world has access to an Internet connection. This popularity has spawned more and more products, services, and information that anyone with Internet access can enjoy.

Unfortunately, it is precisely because of its popularity that some less than scrupulous groups have come up with free spyware and adware programs to take advantage of the connectivity that the Internet provides. Spyware is also known as adware and in some cases, it is labeled as malware. Simply put, spyware is a computer software that comes bundled with some programs that are downloadable from the Internet and it works as a virtual spy within your system. To the uninitiated, it may seem that the idea of espionage happening within one's own personal computer sounds either like a joke or a great exaggeration but the truth of the matter is that spyware is something that should give Internet users pause.

The purpose of spyware is to secretly track a variety of personal information from the user of the computer using some techniques like tracking internet browsing patterns, logging keystrokes and some spyware are even sophisticated enough to scan documents from the computer's hard drive. There are many reasons as to why spyware is proliferated in the Internet. One such reason is to enable unsolicited pop ups us a targeted marketing tactic but sometimes, spyware or malware is used to be able to commit criminal acts such as identity fraud by stealing passwords and vital credit information.

This spyware business is an extremely difficult and potentially dangerous program. It runs undetected within your system so that you are unaware that your computer activities are being tracked. It is obviously an infringement to one's right to privacy and its processes utilize your computer's system causing a slow down in your computer's performance. Like all types of espionage, the installation of spyware into your system is tricky.

Free spyware and adware programs often come bundled along with some freeware downloads that you may be enticed into installing. There are also some unsolicited pop-ups that you may encounter while browsing that look like regular Windows system generated pop-ups and clicking on these will cause you to

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unknowingly install unwanted spyware.

While the mere fact that you are on the Internet and browsing immediately makes you vulnerable to spyware, there are some measures that you can take to ensure safer web usage. For instance, you should install legitimate anti-spyware programs to detect, eradicate and prevent future installations of spyware on your system. Don't be so trusting of anti-spyware downloads on the Net because some of those are there to trick you into installing free spyware and adware programs into your computer.

Likewise, be very careful also of free programs that you download on the Internet. Some free versions of programs contain spyware so be sure to read the agreements before agreeing to install certain products. Also, it should be noted that older versions of Internet Explorer make one's system very vulnerable to spyware attacks because of its close link and integration to the Windows platform.