Spyware Know How: 5 Things You Ought to Know

If you use the Internet at all, you have come in contact with spyware. In the online world, it's a fact of life. Often infecting your machine unnoticed, spyware programs vary as to the amount of harm they can do to your PC; and like their organic counterparts, spyware, adware, malware, and trojans are everywhere--and virtually unavoidable. This article will give you some spyware know how, by giving you five things you ought to know about spyware, and how you can protect yourself against it. First of all, what exactly is spyware? Spyware is any kind of software that monitors your computing activity. In its least harmless form, spyware (also known as adware) monitors your computer usage for the purposes of advertising. It watches the sites you go to, the searches that you perform, the forms you fill out, etc., and then sends this information to some outside source. That information is then used to send you targeted ads. So, if you notice certain kinds of ads coming to you, or your network, through email or pop-ups, spyware is the likely culprit. In its more malicious form, spyware can raid things like your email address book and send virus-laden emails to your contacts; it can cripple your machine, or worse yet, it can access private information without your knowledge and send that information to less-than-savory individuals. Can anyone say, "Identity theft"? How does spyware get on your machine? Spyware is a lot like bacteria. All you have to do is be out on the Web and you're exposed. Some online activities will expose you to spyware more than others. For example, if you use traffic exchanges to advertise your online business ventures you will increase your potential exposure to spyware/adware. If you like downloading free screensavers, or those cute freeware games that you find online, you're increasing your exposure. If you do a lot of online shopping, or sign up for online offers, you are increasing your exposure to spyware and adware. Now before you go throwing out your computer, remember that there are ways to protect yourself even if you do any of the above online activities. Like anything else in life, you just have to be aware and be on guard. How can I tell if I have spyware on my machine? Whether or not you have spyware on your machine isn't always easy to tell. It's not like your machine will start running a fever, but there are some telltale signs.

About the Author

The Faculty offers a full range of health and biomedical science programme at graduate and undergraduate level. Has interprofessional learning.

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