

## How to Remove Spyware from Your Computer

### What is spyware?

“**Spyware** is computer software that is installed surreptitiously on a personal computer to intercept or take partial control over the user's interaction with the computer, without the user's informed consent.” This definition was found at Wikipedia, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spyware>. Please go to that website for a thorough description of spyware and how it works.

Spyware can compromise the operation of your computer and affect its performance. If you notice that your computer is running slower, or if it is unable to perform some functions, spyware might be the problem. Spyware can affect things such as how web pages are displayed. You may want to run a spyware removal program on a regular basis or when you notice that your computer is not performing properly.

### How can I protect my computer against spyware?

Programs are available to remove or block spyware. Some anti-virus programs also protect against spyware. If you have an anti-virus program installed, check to see if it also checks your computer for spyware.

You can also install programs that will remove and/or block installation of spyware. Some of the most well-known programs are:

- Patrick Kolla's *Spybot - Search & Destroy*: information is available at <https://www.safer-networking.org/download/> (click on one of the Download Here buttons)
- Lavasoft's *Ad-Aware SE Personal*: information is available at [http://www.lavasoftusa.com/download\\_and\\_buy/product\\_comparison\\_chart.php](http://www.lavasoftusa.com/download_and_buy/product_comparison_chart.php) (click on the Free Download button)
- Windows *Defender*: information is available at <http://windows.microsoft.com/en-us/windows7/products/features/windows-defender>

Be sure to stay away from fake anti-spyware programs. These are sometimes displayed in banner ads warning that your computer has been infected by spyware. These programs will not remove spyware and may actually install spyware onto your computer.

The Wikipedia article found at <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spyware> also contains additional information about other anti-spyware programs and fake anti-spyware programs.