

# How to Stop Spyware and Adware

by *Jack R.*

## 10 Tips on How to Stop Spyware and Adware

Spyware is computer software that collects personal information about users without their informed consent. The term, coined in 1995 but not widely used for another five years, is often used interchangeably with adware and malware (software designed to infiltrate and damage a computer respectively). Adware or advertising-supported software is any software package which automatically plays, displays, or downloads advertising material to a computer after the software is installed on it or while the application is being used.

1. Keep Windows and Internet Explorer patches up to date.
2. Keep desktop antivirus software signatures up to date.
3. Issue and enforce strict policies on user Web surfing and downloading activities.
4. Use a Web content filtering program to monitor user activity and block access to Web sites commonly used to disseminate spyware.
5. Install a desktop firewall on every laptop and desktop.
6. Configure an e-mail gateway to block all executable e-mail attachments.
7. Don't give Windows users local admin privileges.
8. Test Service Pack 2 for immediate deployment on all Windows XP machines.
9. Create a list of known good ActiveX controls and block all others. Lists are available from Symantec, PivX and other security vendors.
10. Use commercial antispymware software to detect and remove existing spyware programs. Look for improved tools that can identify all types of spyware, including commercial programs that include end-user licensing agreements. Expect to see antispymware programs with centralized management and control features by year's end.