

Illuminating PC Tips

Note: Illuminating PC Tips are posted on www.MyWFN.com by Joanne Osmond.

"Oh no!" another weekly e-mail!

The objective of Illuminating PC Tips is to help you take care of your personal computer. Let me know if you are not interested in receiving these tips or if you want to add a name to the distribution list.

It ain't easy being a PC these days and it's definitely a challenge to figure out how to care and feed the PCs in your home. So, send me your questions and concerns and I will include answers and suggestions on how to keep your personal computer up and running.

Who's looking at you? - This week's Illuminating PC Tips is about finding and deleting spies that are lurking in your PC.

Background


“While the Internet is a powerful resource and provides users with many useful and often entertaining things to see and do, it also has its dark side.

Most people are familiar with freeware, shareware, cookies, media players, interactive content, and file sharing. What they may not realize is that some of the aforementioned may contain code or components that allow the developers of these applications and tools to actually collect and disseminate information about those using them.

They can track your surfing habits, abuse your Internet connection by sending this data to a third party, profile your shopping preferences, hijack your browser start page or pages, alter important system files, and can do this without your knowledge or permission. The security and privacy implications of these exploits should be quite obvious and undesirable on any system or network!” From Lavasoft's web site.

Recommendation

Two FREE software Packages are available to help protect against spies.

-  Ad-aware
-  Spybot Search & Destroy

Both are downloaded FREE from www.download.com. Ad-ware has an enhanced version that you can purchase but the standard version does the job very well. This week Ad-ware and Spybot are the most popular downloads, ranking one and two. Last week Ad-aware was downloaded 1,582,769 times and Spybot was downloaded 942,027 times.

Caution: Always back up your data before downloading new software or deleting files from your PC!! Read the software disclaimer and see the warning below.

Ad-aware 6.0

Download the Software

1. Go to www.download.com
2. Scroll down and click on **Ad-aware**
3. Follow the directions for downloading Ad-aware 6.181

How to Use Ad-aware

1. Connect to the Internet
2. **Program > Ad-aware 6**
3. **Check for updates now** (always check first because new viruses and spies are identified daily and the data files that are used to check your PC should be updated every time you run your software.) > **Connect > Finish**
4. Perform Smart System Scan > **Start** > Spies are identified as blinking red spiders!
5. Click on the boxes next to the identified spies to select the items you want to delete (I always delete them all) > **Next**
6. **Remove > Yes**
7. The process will take at least five minutes but it may take longer depending on your PC, so be patient, it is worth the wait.

Spybot Search & Destroy

Download the Software

1. Go to www.download.com
2. Scroll down and click on **Spybot Search & Destroy**
3. Follow the directions for downloading Spybot Search & Destroy

How to Use Spybot Search & Destroy

1. Connect to the Internet
2. Click on **Spybot Search & Destroy** from Program or on the Desktop icon
3. **Check for Updates**
4. **Search & Destroy**
5. **Check for Problems**
6. **Fix Selected Problems**

Both Ad-aware and Spybot Search & Destroy are easy to use and they will usually come up with a couple spies that you can gleefully destroy.

Warning: Always back up your data before downloading new software or deleting files from your PC!! If you have critical information on your PC that you can't lose, call a PC technician to load the software and clean your PC. This warning is similar to the ones in diet books that indicate that you need to get your physician's permission before you start a diet. My recommendations work on every PC I have installed. But, I have supported users for twenty years and I can't guarantee that every user will follow the directions exactly as outlined or that every machine has the minimum requirements identified by the software developer. Read and follow the software company's directions and disclaimer. You can always e-mail me if you have any concerns or questions.