



Viruses:

What is a virus? How do you get them?

A virus is a program that can run on your computer and runs itself or some other piece of code. You can get a virus from any of the following or more:

- Downloading/opening an attachment from your E-mail.
- Going to a web page, which installs a component or script. (Even a trusted web page.)
- If you are on a network (including the Internet), a virus can be spread across the network to your computer.
- Opening/Running a floppy/CD/other media from another person who had a virus on their system.
- A hacker can get into your system if there are any security holes or vulnerabilities.

What can a virus do?

Viruses do different things depending on what the person intended them to do. Some of the things viruses can do are:

- Erase or modify system files causing your machine to stop working properly.
- Allow another user to take control of your computer.
- Use your CPU to perform computations.
- Use your machine for spamming, or sending out E-Mails for someone else.
- Slow down your system.
- Download and install Spyware or other Viruses.
- Steal personal information such as credit card numbers, social security numbers and family names.

How can you protect yourself from viruses?

- Install a Current Anti-Virus program. (Perfect Computer Solutions, Inc. currently recommends Norton Anti-Virus.)
- Make sure that your virus definitions and software are up to date. Make sure that all patches are applied to your Anti-Virus Program.
- Do a full weekly Virus Scan.
- Do not open any files/attachments that you are unsure of.
- Make sure your Operating System has all of the latest Security Patches and fixes installed.

Spyware

Causes:

Spyware is sort of like a Trojan horse. You see an offer for a free date program. Sounds great. You download it and the next thing you know you are getting tons of pop-ups. What you didn't know is the 'free' program that you downloaded has some strings attached. You are also getting some free software to keep track of what you do on your computer, including what web pages you go to, what you search for, and maybe even other personal information about yourself. Some big-name programs also install Spyware when you install them on your computer.

Effects:

Besides the biggest problem that you might think of, an invasion of privacy, there are also many other side effects that you will have. All of those pop-ups that you see are a result of that Spyware. They will try to cater the advertising to your interests. It can be very annoying and time consuming to keep closing lots of other windows. You also are slowing your computer down by having this tracking software running in the background all the time. People usually make things worse by buying unneeded "pop-up blockers" that are also always running in the background. Many times the Spyware will overwrite or modify important parts of your Operating System, causing your computer to malfunction.

Solutions:

Nothing is free in life. Be very cautious about what "Free" programs you download. Don't always click yes when you see click here to download this plug-in or program. Know what it is you are downloading. Download and run a trusted Spyware/Adware removal program. (Some have their own Spyware built in.)