

Spyware, Viruses, and Phishing

What are they and How to protect your computer and yourself against them?

Spyware

Spyware and other unwanted software refers to software that performs certain tasks on your computer, typically without your consent. This may include giving you advertising or collecting personal information about you.

Viruses

Computer viruses are software programs deliberately designed to interfere with computer operation, record, corrupt, or delete data, or spread themselves to other computers and throughout the Internet, often slowing things down and causing other problems in the process.

Phishing

Phishing is a type of deception designed to steal your identity. In phishing scams, scam artists try to get you to disclose valuable personal data—like credit card numbers, passwords, account data, or other information—by convincing you to provide it under false pretenses.

Steps for Protecting your Computer

1. Keep your Software Up-to-Date (Turn on Automatic updates)
2. Use a Firewall (XP w/SP2 has built-in Firewall)
3. Use Up-to-Date Anti-Spyware protection
4. Use Up-to-Date Antivirus Software
5. Never open an e-mail attachment from someone you don't know
6. Avoid opening an e-mail attachment from someone you know, unless you know exactly what the attachment is. The sender may be unaware that it contains a virus.

Tips for Protecting Yourself

1. Only download from sites you trust.
2. Read privacy statements and license agreements.
3. Only close windows with the red "x" in the corner.
4. Never reply to e-mails that request your personal information.
5. Don't click suspicious links.
6. When entering personal information, make sure the Web site uses encryption.

Resources for learning more on how to protect yourself and your computer.

Microsoft Security At Home

<http://www.microsoft.com/athome/security/default.mspx>

Security At Home Spyware

<http://www.microsoft.com/athome/security/spyware/default.mspx>

Security At Home Viruses & Worms

<http://www.microsoft.com/athome/security/viruses/default.mspx>

Security At Home Phishing

<http://www.microsoft.com/athome/security/email/phishing/video1.mspx>