

FIND AND REMOVE DATA MINERS AND MORE

By Tim Moline

When you visit websites, some of them may place a small piece of code on your computer that allows them to see where you have been and where you go. They are spying on you! They then sell this information to advertisers who start sending you spam email and pop-up ads.

You can fight back! Two applications recommended by *PC Magazine* and *PC World* are Ad-aware 6 and Spybot Search & Destroy. Used together, these utilities are quite effective in the war against spam and unsolicited advertising.

Ad-aware

PC World's 2002 Software Product of the Year, Ad-aware scans your computer to find and remove many different types of intrusive programs, including data mining, aggressive advertising, parasites, dialers, browser hijackers, and tracking components. Ad-aware is compatible with most Windows operating systems.

Ad-aware originator Lavasoft claims that the software makes it possible to surf the Internet knowing that your privacy will remain intact. You can download Ad-aware from www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_description/0,fid,7423,00.asp.

Spybot

If your browser crashes or if you notice changes in your browser settings that you did not intentionally make — for example, new toolbars or a changed home page — your computer may have spyware. This is a relatively recent type of intrusive program that can collect information about your computer activities and send it to Internet marketers.

Spybot Search & Destroy is designed to find and remove spyware. The program can also clean usage tracks for those who share a computer and don't want other users to see what they have worked on. Spybot Search & Destroy can be downloaded at www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_description/0,fid,22262,00.asp.

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Tech Tips provides information on the use and maintenance of computers. PREL offers no guarantee against any loss that may occur to your computer system as a result of using this advice. Professional assistance should be consulted as appropriate.