

Protect yourself from Viruses

What is a Virus?

A virus is a piece of malicious computer code designed to disrupt or damage computer systems by adding itself (or a variant of itself) to commonly used system or program files. Viruses are self replicating, spreading from one 'infected' system to another. There are over 100,000 computer viruses in existence, with around 400-500 new viruses being discovered every month.

What is a Trojan?

Unlike a virus, a Trojan is not a self replicating program. A Trojan hides its malicious actions by masquerading as something useful or desirable. You may think you have found and installed a fun new screensaver or cool free tool but you have in reality installed a harmful program onto your system designed to cause damage, disruption or that may steal personal data.

What is a Worm?

A worm is a sophisticated piece of replicating code that requires no user interaction (such as opening an email or running a program) to spread. Worms are designed to exploit vulnerabilities or 'holes' in software applications or operating systems. The SQL Slammer worm, which exploited vulnerabilities in a Microsoft operating system, raced around the world within 10 minutes of release, making it the fastest spreading computer virus ever!

What are Adware or Spyware programs?

Adware or Spyware programs are designed to snoop on your internet surfing activity. They were originally designed to allow targeted advertising on selected web pages but they are now being misused to spread malicious software. Adware or Spyware programs can force pop-up adverts or reconfigure your internet browser home page or add additional toolbars to your browser. You may even experience computer crashes or poor performance as a result of infection.

Good practice

- **Keep your Anti-Virus program up to date and scan your pc regularly to help keep it virus free**
- **Don't open files that you are not sure about - even if they come from someone you know**
- **Virus scan downloaded files or applications BEFORE opening or installing them**
- **Use a firewall on your pc to help protect your computer whilst on-line (Windows XP, Vista & 7 all have them turned on by default)**
- **Avoid file sharing websites like Limewire, Kazaa and BitTorrents as they are prime targets for the bad guys**
- **Always BACKUP your valuable files in case your pc is affected by virus activity that may damage or delete your files**

