

Re: How to stop Pop-ups & Spyware

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From: Bruce Chambers (bruce_a_chambers_at_h0tmail.com)

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Abhishek wrote:

> *Dear All*

>

> *I have a Dell Latitude D505 with a Windows XP Professional installation, off late i have been facing problem of pop-ups specially when i connect to internet through dial-up connection. I have reinstalled windows xp but the problem has reoccurred. I have tried adware as well as anti-spyware of microsoft but with no effect. The browser settings keep changing when i had installed these two softwares and it gave warning messages very frequently. The spywares which have been reported include miracle serch bar, trojan and other advertisements for different products.*

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> *When i connect to internet through dial-up connection the speed of connection reduces drastically and the computer keeps sending data as a result the connection speed is very slow and i am unable to access any web sites. Please advise as to how i can remove the spyware*

>

> *Regards*

>

> *Abhishek*

What specific kind of pop-ups are you seeing? There are at least three varieties of pop-ups, and the solutions vary accordingly.

1) Does the title bar of these pop-ups read "Messenger Service?"

This type of spam has become quite common over the couple of years, and unintentionally serves as a valid security "alert." It demonstrates that you haven't been taking sufficient precautions while connected to the Internet. Your data probably hasn't been compromised by these specific advertisements, but if you're open to this exploit, you may well be open to other threats, such as the Blaster Worm that swept across the Internet last year and the currently active Sasser Worm. Install and use a decent, properly configured firewall. (Merely disabling the messenger service, as some people recommend, only hides the symptom, and does little or nothing to truly secure your machine.) And ignoring or just "putting up with" the security

gap represented by these messages is particularly foolish.

Messenger Service of Windows

<http://support.microsoft.com/default.aspx?scid=KB;en-us;168893>

Messenger Service Window That Contains an Internet Advertisement
Appears

<http://support.microsoft.com/?id=330904>

Stopping Advertisements with Messenger Service Titles

<http://www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/pro/using/howto/communicate/stopspam.asp>

Blocking Ads, Parasites, and Hijackers with a Hosts File

<http://www.mvps.org/winhelp2002/hosts.htm>

Oh, and be especially wary of people who advise you to do nothing more than disable the messenger service. Disabling the messenger service, by itself, is a "head in the sand" approach to computer security. The real problem is not the messenger service pop-ups; they're actually providing a useful, if annoying, service by acting as a security alert. The true problem is the unsecured computer, and you've been advised to merely turn off the warnings. How is this helpful?

2) For regular Internet pop-ups, you might try the free 12Ghosts Popup-killer from <http://12ghosts.com/ghosts/popup.htm>, Pop-Up Stopper from <http://www.panicware.com/>, or the Google Toolbar from <http://toolbar.google.com/>. Alternatively, you can upgrade your WinXP to SP2, to install IE's pop-up blocker. Another alternative would be to use another browser, such as Mozilla or Firefox, which has pop-up blocking capabilities. (But I'd avoid Netscape; it carries too much extraneous AOL garbage.)

3) To deal with pop-ups caused by any sort of "adware" and/or "spyware," such as Gator, Comet Cursors, Xupiter, Bonzai Buddy, or KaZaA, and their remnants, that you've deliberately (but without understanding the consequences) installed, two products that are quite effective (at finding and removing this type of scumware) are Ad-Aware from www.lavasoft.de and SpyBot Search & Destroy from www.safer-networking.org/. Both have free versions. It's even possible to use SpyBot Search & Destroy to "immunize" your system against most future intrusions. I use both and generally perform manual scans every week or so to clean out cookies, etc.

Additionally, manual removal instructions for the most common varieties of scumware are available here:

PC Hell Spyware and Adware Removal Help

<http://www.pchell.com/support/spyware.shtml>

More information and assistance is available at these sites:

microsoft.public.windowsxp.general: Re: How to stop Pop-ups & Spyware

Blocking Ads, Parasites, and Hijackers with a Hosts File

<http://www.mvps.org/winhelp2002/hosts.htm>

The Parasite Fight

<http://www.aumha.org/a/parasite.htm>

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Bruce Chambers

Help us help you:

<http://dts-l.org/goodpost.htm>

<http://www.catb.org/~esr/fags/smart-questions.html>

You can have peace. Or you can have freedom. Don't ever count on having both at once. - RAH