

# Internet Security - Malicious and Irritating

By Pat Struthers

You've updated Windows; you've installed a firewall. You're using safer browsing and e-mail software. You re-check for updates on all these things regularly. Nothing evil can get in, right? Why should I do more? Am I not safe now?

Yes and no. If you've taken care of all the things above, it is very unlikely a malicious person or software program will be able to find your computer on the Internet, much less attack it. That's at least half the battle. But even the most heavily secured computer or network still gets infected occasionally. Why does this happen?

In order for the Internet to be usable at all, your security software has to make some assumptions: it has to trust the Internet 'client' programs that you use. These include your browser, your e-mail program, your instant messaging program, Napster/iTunes clients, etc. etc. Using safer clients helps, but that can only go so far; even they have to trust another link in the system: yourself. The vast majority of successful 'malware' infections happen because you, the user, are tricked into opening an attachment to an e-mail or clicking on an enticing ad in a web page. Everyone has probably done this at least once. Let's not dwell on blame <smirk> at this point, and deal with the mess. What could happen, and how will we fix it?

First, the damage. There's a lot of overlap between the various categories of malicious software; and also a lot of range of intent, so to speak.

Viruses are small programs that attach themselves to software you already have, using those programs to propagate themselves. Trojans are stand-alone programs that trick the user into running them; they are often attached to an e-mail message. The damage is done when the e-mail user opens the attachment. Both viruses and trojans may exhibit other bad behavior beyond reproducing themselves, such as installing spyware or bots, or even actually damaging your computer in some way. The creation of viruses and trojans is an obviously malicious act.

Spyware and adware are a little different. Internet Explorer and other browsers are explicitly designed to be as flexible as possible, giving web-designers and their clients more ways of presenting information as new techniques are invented. Browsers can allow web pages to install plug-in software, change menus, add controls and features, etc. All of these things were originally intended to be beneficial rather than annoying, and reasonable management these features do make the Internet more useful. But this flexibility is easily exploited to serve the purposes of the web-designer, not always for the user's benefit. The first spyware was designed simply to gather information about a web site's customers, for marketing purposes or to trade to other companies. Adware had the similarly benign purpose of leveraging advertising, either through pop-up ads or by customizing your browser or e-mail program.

But this type of software can quickly get out of hand. The 'enhancement' may simply be badly written, so that it clogs or even breaks your browser. It may be shareware that annoys you with obnoxious ads and messages after the trial period is up. It may open holes in your system that makes it vulnerable to other attacks. Your browser may become so riddled that it monopolizes all your connect time juggling a hurricane of pop-ups, search bars, and animation. All of these may have originally been written for innocent purposes. And inevitably some are not; at this point spyware and adware behavior is pretty much indistinguishable from that of a virus.

If these annoying or malicious programs are allowed to run unchecked on your computer for long period of time, they can badly damage the system software. You may have to install the system again from scratch. You may or may not be able to save your valuable data, depending on how

bad the damage is. So you must have a way to detect and remove them, and repair the damage before it becomes too extensive to fix.

Most new computers come with pretty good security software already installed, but there's often a catch: it's a commercial product (like Norton Internet Security or McAfee Security Suite) that is bundled with the machine. In a year or 15 months or 2 years you will get nasty messages on your computer asking you to pay the company more money. If you don't do this, the program may simply turn off. At best, it will no longer update itself regularly and, sooner or later, some new threat will come along that it can't handle. Many users experience NO virus/spyware infections during the registration period and derive a false sense of security; they figure they can do without it for 'a little while'. This 'little while' may stretch into months or years, with obvious consequences.

No single product can cover all the vulnerabilities which now exist, and whether it is active or not, very popular Windows-based software tends to suffer from the same disease as Windows itself. As a product gets older and the market share gets larger, the software company gets complacent. New features are added; bugs are ignored with the hope that the next version will cure them; the program gets larger and larger and harder and harder to maintain; bugs proliferate. The very popularity of these programs can make them a specific target for viruses and spyware. Bugs and 'features' can be exploited to sneak by, turn off, or even cripple your security software.

Are there alternatives? When the license on your commercial product runs out, you could use one of the many \*free\* security programs that are available on the Internet:

Antivirus-  
avast! Home (www.atwil.com) - 60-day trial, 1-year web registration. Updates over the web, a run fast and includes background scanning of the activity of many web clients, including browsers and e-mail.

AVG Free Edition (www.grisoft.com) - Updates via web. Background scanning. Probably the most popular free anti-virus program. Commercial version includes network scanning and firewall.

Spyware-  
Spybot Search & Destroy (www.safer-networking.org) - Web updateable. Background scanning. Regular backups of Windows registry and immunization of common web clients and system software.

SpywareBlaster - (www.javacoolsoftware.com) - More comprehensive detection and repair, specifically for Internet Explorer and Mozilla Firefox.

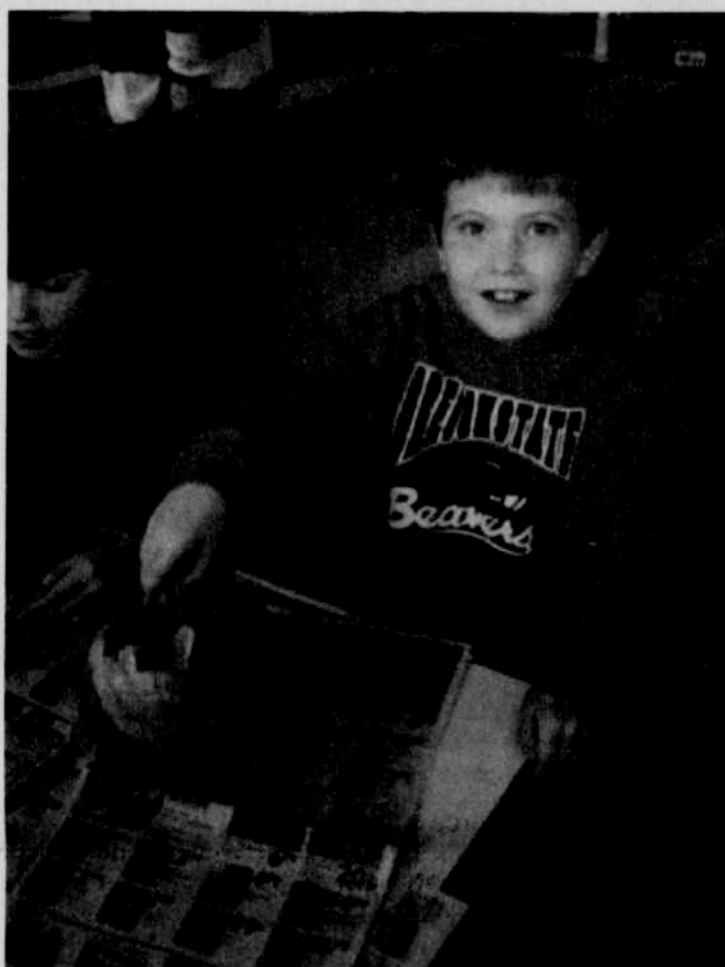
Adware-  
Ad-Aware SE (www.lavasoft.com) - Web updateable. To remove adware and other unwanted browser plugins, Ad-Aware is essential. It has a lower threshold of tolerance for browser modifications than most anti-spyware packages.

Spybot, SpywareBlaster, and Ad-Aware should all be used; their responsibilities DO overlap somewhat but between them they cover all the bases. The free versions of these products all enjoy excellent reviews from a wide array of experts, including non-profit web sites specializing in security. All of them are upgradeable to more comprehensive commercial packages, and they generally refrain from bothering you with ads and upgrade notices. Excellent software speaks for itself, and needs no advertisement.

# Rockin' Cardinal Readers paint pumpkins at Ione Community School



Pictured left to right: TJ Patton, Lauren Garrett, Jazmyn DuBry, and Joe Doherty with their pumpkins.



For the entire month of October, students in grades K-5 read like crazy to meet their individual reading goals for Accelerated Reader, a program purchased with a grant from the Ione Education Foundation. On Thursday, every K-5 student was able to paint a pumpkin as their reward for meeting their individual reading goals. At the end of this week each classroom will have a popcorn and movie party to celebrate meeting classroom goals.

"We simply use Accelerated Reader as an enhancement to our literacy program to motivate students to read. There is no competition amongst students for points, only a challenge for each student to reach their individual goal which they set together with their teacher," explains Bryn Browning, administrator for Ione School District. "This program is successful due to the enthusiasm from our teachers and this is the first year the entire elementary is using the program." Students in the middle school also use the program to motivate students to read.

What is Accelerated reader? Students pre-test to find their

personal reading level, check out and read books from the library or classroom collections and then take a short test to earn points. To track individual and classroom goals, a tree was set up in the elementary hallway with branches for each class. As the days of the month progress, the classroom cardinal and individual student cardinals move across the branch toward the 100% mark. Every Monday morning begins with a quick K-5 assembly in the hallway where students chant reading cheers and sing songs.

Special thanks to Stacie Miller who donated the pumpkins from her family farm in Springfield, Oregon.

## Heppner Jr./Sr. High Booster Club to meet

The Heppner High Booster Club will be meeting on Nov. 8 at the High School Home Economics room at 7 p.m.

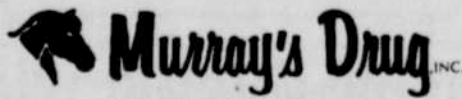
## Wedding Tables

Jacqueline Foos and Allan Gribskov, II  
Wedding - Saturday, November 19th

Jodi Johnston and Mike Hand  
Wedding - Saturday, November 20th

Diane McFetridge and Kelly Morgan  
Shower - Saturday, November 5th  
Wedding - Saturday, November 20th

Christine Watt and Trent Hughes  
Shower - Friday, November 18th  
Wedding - January, 2006



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In the past, trade-up buyers tended to roll over all the equity from their previous home into the new home. Then they took out loans to furnish the house or buy a new car. That no longer makes good fiscal sense, since consumer interest is no longer tax deductible. Yet, many trade-up buyers find it hard to change buying habits.

Buyers moving up to a new home today have a unique opportunity to save money and improve their financial picture. The formula? Borrow more on the new house and use the cash for furnishings, landscaping, or a car or to save for future financial needs, such as college expenses. By making a low down payment, buyers can maximize their mortgage interest deduction and lower their after-tax payments.

This low down payment strategy isn't for everyone. The ideal candidate is a move-up buyer who has a strong income, substantial cash reserves and good credit.

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