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What's the Difference Between Malware, Virus and Spyware?

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There's no shortage of confusing terminology in the computer biz. With the advent of malicious software, more terminology has been created that only make things less clear.

The good news is that it's not really that difficult; in fact, you needn't understand most of the details (besides, not everyone agrees on the *exact* meaning of each definition).

Malware

The most important term to know is malware, which is short for malicious soft*ware.*

The name says it all: malware is any software that has malicious intent — destroy data, send spam, hold your data for ransom, steal your information — it doesn't matter. It's all malicious, it's all software; thus, it's all malware.

You'll find *malware* used as a catch-all term for all flavors and varieties of software that intend some kind of harm.

Virus

In the human body, a *virus* is an organism that replicates, or makes copies of, itself and overwhelms the body's defenses, making it sick.

When applied to computers, the term "virus" is very similar.

- A computer virus replicates itself in some way so as to spread within the computer, usually injecting itself into other programs within the computer.
- A computer virus makes the infected computer "sick". In the computer sense, "sick" can mean poor performance, crashes, lost files and data, or more.

Very technically, the term *virus* does not necessarily imply that a piece of malicious software will replicate itself to other systems. In general use, it's assumed.

Spyware

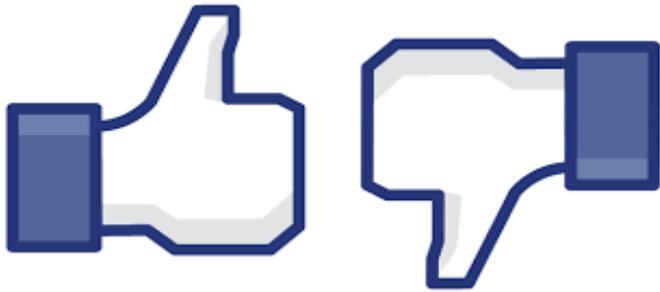*Spyware* is a type of malicious software intended not to do damage, but to collect information, or "spy", on you. Spyware might monitor and report back on your browsing habits and the programs you run, or access and send other information stored on your machine. One canonical form of spyware is the keystroke logger, which, as its name implies, records your keystrokes (and often more) and uploads this information to a third party.

If you suspect your PC may have any of these, contact Park Place Computers.

Is too much social media bad for you?

You might be surprised to find out that the answer is yes. According to a recent study, high amounts of social media usage (SMU) could lead to increased feelings of isolation. Social isolation is when someone lacks a sense of belonging, real engagement with others and fulfilling relationships.

The study looked at young adults between ages 19 and 32 who use social media in varying amounts. Researchers found that those with higher amounts of SMU were more likely to have perceived social isolation (PSI). This can lead to health problems such as depression.

Even though social media strengthens human connections online, it could lessen in-person interaction. Also, seeing other people posting pictures and stories of their wonderful vacations or shiny new vehicles could have a negative effect. It can make some users feel socially isolated because others are leading happier lives.

One of the study's researchers said, "We do not yet know which came first - social media use, or the perceived social isolation. It's possible that young adults who initially felt socially isolated turned to social media. Or, it could be that their increased use of social media somehow led to feeling isolated from the real world.

"It could also be a combination of both. But even if the social isolation came first, it did not seem to be alleviated by spending time online, even in purportedly social situations."

Gas Buddy

If you are doing any travelling in your car, you need gas and you probably want the cheapest gas. Gas Buddy is the app you should load on your Smart Phone. You can also go to their website www.gasbuddy.com on your computer and research the best prices for gas. You can put in a zip code for the city to which you are driving and find out the gas prices for that location.

Computer Humor

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"I can't grant your wishes until you answer these security questions. What was the name of your first pet..."

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