

## Spyware/Internet Pop-Ups

A lot of internet pop-ups are built into web sites, this means that when they are related to the site that you are currently visiting. Although there are ways to prevent these pop-ups, they are, for the most part, not annoying or offensive. There are other kinds of pop-ups that occur regardless of what site you are visiting, and can pop-up even when you are not even surfing the internet! These kinds of pop-ups are a result of your computer being "infected" with a type of program know as spyware. Spyware is a category of program that tracks your activities on your computer, and then responds to your activities by opening up internet browsers to pages that may sell products that your surfing activities indicate you may be interested in. They call this a service.

Many kinds of spyware are delivered to your computer with freeware (software that you download for free), but other types may be installed, downloaded to your computer, from a web site that you, or your friend visited. Since you would not continually execute this software, it must get executed on startup to be so annoying. Some of these programs can be simply removed by looking in the Add/Remove Programs control panel; see the Control Panel section of this site for further instructions. Often you will not know what the program that is causing your problems is called, so only remove those programs that you know are unnecessary (anything with the words "Buddy", or "Ad" are good bets).

Other spyware programs cannot be removed by simply looking in the Add/Remove Control Panel. Since we know that these programs must be run on startup, you can take care of this problem by looking through the startup tab of the msconfig utility. Anything that is being run out of your profile directory, or temporary internet directory should be immediately unchecked. Remember, very little actually needs to be run on startup -- look at the MS Config section of this site for more information on this.

## DLL Error

In computers, a dynamic link library (DLL) is a collection of small programs, any of which can be called when needed by a larger program that is running in the computer. The small program that lets the larger program communicate with a specific device such as a printer or scanner is often packaged as a DLL program (usually referred to as a DLL file). DLL files that support specific device operation are known as device drivers.

The advantage of DLL files is that, because they don't get loaded into random access memory (RAM) together with the main program, space is saved in RAM. When and if a DLL file is needed, then it is loaded and run. For example, as long as a user of Microsoft Word is editing a document, the printer DLL file does not need to be loaded into RAM. If the user decides to print the document, then the Word application causes the printer DLL file to be loaded and run.

Whenever you install a program it will, without doubt, install DLL files; programs will also update DLL files which are currently being used by other programs with their own custom version. These custom versions may not be compatible with other programs that use this file; because of this it is incredible that Windows machines run nearly as well as they do.

You can almost always resolve a DLL issue by searching google with the name of the DLL that appears in the error message you receive.

## Programs Crash Repeatedly

There are a few steps that you can take when you encounter one of your favorite programs repeatedly crashed while you are using it:

### Reboot

Your program could keep crashing because your machine is in a bad state. Restarting the computer will ensure that the next time you start your program your machine will be in a proper state.

### Download Updates/Latest Version

You could be encountering a problem that the spyware manufacturer is aware of, and has released a fix for. Visit your software company's web site and browse until you reach the product update section. Download and follow the page's installation instructions in order to correctly patch your software. Even if the company does not have a fix for the problem, they may have a documented work-around in order to resolve the problem.

### Reinstall Program

It's possible that some of your program's resource files (dll's, binary, xml, etc.) are corrupted/alterd. The next step would be to try and reinstall the software that is causing the problems. For the best results, you will want to uninstall the current version you are running, and then reinstall the software from scratch. make sure to back up any saved files/data that you use with the program before you uninstall the program.

### Search Internet

The problem has reached the stage where you need to get some other people's opinions on what is going wrong. You are encountering a specific problem with a specific piece of software, chances are someone else has had the exact same problem, and it is documented somewhere on the internet. Remember, google is your friend!

## Hardware Stops Working

Often, software or OS issues can cause hardware malfunctions. In order to fix these kinds of problems we will need to uninstall the device from the operating system, and then allow it to scan and reinstall the hardware for you. Here are the exact steps for Windows XP:

1. Click on the Start Button, and then click on the Control Panel. If you are using the classic Start Menu you will need to go through settings in order to get to the control panel.
2. After the Control Panel has opened, double-click on the item labeled "Performance And Maintenance", and then open the System Control Panel. If you are using the Classic Control Panel you can go directly to opening the System Control Panel.
3. Click on the Hardware tab, and click the Device Manager button.
4. Find the specific hardware device that you are having problems with, and then right-click on it and uninstall the device. (You may not be able to uninstall some devices)
5. Now, you can either simply restart you computer, which allows Windows to reinstall the hardware when it restarts, or click on "Scan for hardware changes" under the Action menu.