

Nothing In Life Is Free

If you're like most people, you bought a new computer, you loved it for a few months, but then it got REALLY, REALLY slow and now you hate it. If this has happened to you, chances are your computer is suffering from too much *freeware*, also known as *SpyWare* because of its ability to "spy" on you. Free software usually comes at a price: you pay for it through loss of speed on your computer and your privacy. Most of the "free" applications available on the internet are designed to run in the background and collect information about your surfing habits and send it to advertisers so that they can send you pop-up ads. Applications such as Weatherbug, Kazaa, WebShots and others can slow your computer down tremendously and severely deplete your system resources which may cause your computer to crash frequently or freeze unexpectedly. These applets also clog up your internet connection and can pose severe security risks. A lot of these applets are installed without your knowledge and hide themselves to avoid being detected.

It is a good idea to frequently go to the Add/Remove Programs in the Control Panel and remove any applications you suspect as being *SpyWare*. For a comprehensive list of suspected and/or known spyware/freeware applications go to www.csdimmitt.com/spyware. The more of these you remove, the better your computer should run. If after removing these application, your computer is still running really slow or crashing, you might want to consider re-installing your windows. Most name-brand computers come with a "restore CD" that will put the PC back to the way it came from the factory. Please make sure you back up any important data before running this operation since some of these will completely wipe your hard drive.

In conclusion, don't allow anything to be installed to your computer via the internet unless you have a specific need for it. Avoid as much freeware as possible and your surfing experience will be much more enjoyable.