

What to do if something attacks your computer

You go to a website or click on a link or you get something in an email that you click on and suddenly something pops up and starts running. What do you do first? How do you stop it? This is assuming that Avast or whatever anti-virus program you are running does not catch and stop the virus.

First let me mention that one of our members, Jerry, had something attack his computer. He went to Microsoft's website and did a search for "Virus Removal". It came up with a program that will scan your computer and clear out anything that is infecting it. It sounds like it works, so try that first. If you use a Microsoft Operating System, always try Microsoft's solution for your problem first.

- The first thing you DO NOT DO is to click on anything on the pop up to try to stop it. Sometimes, even clicking on the X may be all it needs to start the scan or installation.
- The one thing you SHOULD try to do is Ctrl, Alt, Delete to bring up task manager and stop whatever program is running. DO NOT RESTART the computer. If you try to restart the computer, whatever program was trying to install may be activated once you restart that computer or worse case scenario the program did something to your boot record that it won't restart at all. If this happens you will need to start the computer in safe mode by holding down F5 or F8 and choosing safe mode.
- Next thing is to unplug your computer from the internet/network and try to start your Anti-virus program, hopefully you have always made sure it was updated, and if you can get it started run a full scan on your C: drive.
- If it tells you that you need to restart the computer to run your virus scan on a reboot then do it.
- When your computer starts up again, or after the scan, if it doesn't tell you to restart, bring up MSCONFIG by clicking Start, Run, and type msconfig and hit enter-for Win XP. For Win 7 click on Start, type msconfig in the search field and hit Enter when the exe file is highlighted. Click on the Start tab and go through all the programs that are starting up in the beginning. Pay close attention to all the locations where they are starting from. If there is something that you absolutely don't know what it is, uncheck the little box to stop it from loading when you restart your computer. Then restart the computer.

- After it goes back into your computer, restart msconfig and the start tab, then look through it again and see if anything has changed. Cancel out of there if everything still looks good. If not, uncheck that box and close msconfig without restarting PC.
- Start up IE and clear out your cache and cookies and close IE. Restart PC only if you had to uncheck a box in previous step.
- Start up Spybot- search and destroy, make sure it is up to date, To update, don't forget network cable is unplugged. Do a Full scan on your computer. If it wants you to restart your computer and to do a scan after restarting, say YES.
- Now shut down your computer, plug network cable back in, restart computer and run Spybot again.
- If it comes up with everything ok, startup IE and try going to a website. If it goes to the right website and everything is ok it should be over. But, If it goes to a website you didn't request, you have a highjacker. Open up Tools, in the top menu, then Internet options. This time, first, check what is under the HOME PAGE. If it's something you don't recognize click on USE BLANK. Then again, check the little box for the history and delete your cache and cookies. DO NOT just delete history, it's not the same.
- Run Spybot again. Also make sure you are deleting those files, not just move them. Also make sure something isn't loading in the msconfig. Stop anything that you don't know what it is or where it is loading from.
- If you do all this and it is still loading from somewhere you will need to get further in-depth. Further into the registry but before you do anything in the registry, ALWAYS BACK IT UP BY EXPORTING IT TO A DIFFERENT LOCATION BEFORE DOING ANYTHING IN THE REGISTRY. Better yet, leave the registry to the guru's.
- I could get further into this but this will be continued in August by Nan McDonald.