Safety on the Internet - To Click or not to Click

PART 1

First of all, I would like to give you some short definitions of malware;

- Malware – This is a general term which can be any type of virus or malicious software. Any program whose purpose is harmful in any way is a malware program.
- Virus – A virus is malicious code that can spread to new disks or programs
- Spyware – Spyware can monitor your computer tasks and steal your passwords and other information.
- Adware – Adware pops up unwanted advertisements sometimes targeting your interests by using information stolen by a spyware program
- Dropper – Some malicious programs can be tiny programs specifically designed to funnel a stream of other malware into your computer.
- Bots – A bot doesn't usually harm your computer, but makes your computer a robot to harm others by sending malicious programs or spam to your email address list.
- Ransomeware – Holds your computer or data ransom and demands payment before they will release it. Of course, there is no guarantee that paying the money will get your data back since they are unscrupulous to begin with.
- Rootkit – This technology attaches to the operating system to hide the malicious program. Sometimes your anti-virus program may remove parts of it, but as you reboot your computer the virus comes back.
- Scareware – Some free so-called Anti-Virus programs you may download from the internet may actually be a rogue virus that will look and act like a real program and show a myriad of problems on your computer, but in the end will try to scare you into buying their "full version".   Some of these will run when your computer starts and don't offer a way to close them.
- Junkware – Last but not least we have what we call at LCW, Junkware. These are programs that we see over and over again in the shop. They may not actually be malicious, but they are programed to start every time you turn on your computer and usually are not anything you want running. A lot of Anti-Virus programs will not catch these because they are not considered a virus. The majority of these programs can come packaged with other useful free programs from the internet.

At Lake County Websites and Computer Repair, we see quite a few computers with varying degrees of Malware. Some computers have actual Trojan and other troublesome viruses whereas some have what we call junkware. Most people inadvertently download these add-on programs. These programs can be very annoying, popping up and preventing us from doing our work. They can also slow down a computer considerably by using up the computer's resources. We have seen some computers that come in the shop with over 20 junkware programs that were downloaded. Most of these, the customer was unaware that they were on their computer.

Now that you have some idea of the kinds of viruses that are out there, look for my next article that will take the first step in explaining how to keep your computer free from viruses and junkware.

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