

Spyware Protection Business Briefing

Protect your business from unwanted and malicious tracking and spying software

Spyware is a growing threat to privacy, security, and productivity. One recent study¹ found 80% of surveyed computers infected, with an average of 93 spyware and adware components on each infected system.

Spyware is software that gathers information about a computer user and his or her Web surfing habits without the user's explicit knowledge or consent and reports this information over the Internet. This is harmful to the user for many reasons. It decreases productivity, as PC users are constantly interrupted and spend time closing pop-ups and other ads. It increases demands on help desks, as users and help desk staffs spend hours trying to remove spyware from infected systems.

The most serious threats however, arise from information leakage and violations of privacy. A worst-case scenario would be a tool recording every key stroke, eventually culminating in password cracking.

Approaches to Spyware Protection

Today the most common way to guard against spyware is a client-based tool that detects and disables spyware on infected personal computers using software similar to anti-virus packages. These desktop anti-spyware products help to address the problem, but they are difficult to manage, because every client needs to be kept up to date separately. Even with their help, it may take hours to disinfect a single PC. Furthermore this approach doesn't prevent new types of spyware from infecting PCs in the first place.

Spyware Protection in Astaro Security Linux

Astaro's security technology, as incorporated in the *Astaro Security Linux* software and in the *Astaro Security Gateway* appliances, employs a server-side or gateway approach. Placed at the point where the Internet connects to your organization's network, it minimizes maintenance and provides full protection from user tracking threats.

Astaro provides Spyware Protection by blocking web pages and software downloads from web sites that relate to spyware. These web sites are identified and classified by automated web crawlers, and put into a Web content filtering database that tracks more than 2.6 billion Web pages and images. More than 120 million web pages are added to this database each month.

This solution not only protects against infection of computers within the enterprise network but also intercepts and blocks spyware communication from already infected computers to spyware web sites on the Internet.

In addition to blocking spyware related URLs Astaro's solution provides an option to filter embedded objects that might be included within so called drive-by-downloads. This prevents users from accidentally installing any active spyware code on their PCs. In addition, Astaro's Virus Protection application recognizes and filters out known Spyware patterns.

The *Astaro Security Gateway* appliances and *Astaro Security Linux* software provide an easy-to-use, affordable and effective means of deploying the software tools needed to establish and enforce effective spyware protection. *Astaro Security Linux* can help you improve productivity and protect your privacy.

¹ AOL/NCSA Online Safety Study, Conducted by America Online and the National Cyber Security Alliance, October 2004