

Common Security Threats

Viruses



A virus is a software program which attaches itself to another piece of software. The virus inserts its code into a file which when executed, runs the virus. A boot virus is a program which runs when the computer starts.

Spyware



Spyware is software which works in the background to gather a user's information and behavior. This information is then transmitted to another party. Spyware works in the background without a user's knowledge. Some of the information can include the operating system of the computer, the type of browser, the computer IP address and where a user browses to.

Trojan



A Trojan is a software program which runs in a computer as a secret agent of the attacker. Trojans do not replicate themselves like worms or viruses.

Worm



A worm is a program which replaces files. They can be as destructive as viruses, and like a virus can replicate itself.

Browser Hijacking



A browser hijacking occurs when a browser get set to a website which is not the user's choosing. Sometimes information gets rerouted to another site without the user's knowledge and makes the Internet connection run slower. Hijacks can change a user's home page.

Spoofing



Spoofing is when an identity gets forged. The attackers forge their IP address with the person they want to attack, overloading the victim's Internet connection.

Phishing



Phishing happens when a person sends out email masquerading as a trusted company or person. Typically the email states the user's account information needs to be updated and provides a link to do so. The link redirects the person to a webpage which looks legitimate, but is not, and actually captures confidential information such as credit card numbers, bank accounts and social security numbers.

Adware

Adware is software which directs specific ads to your computer. This typically happens after you consent to loading some free software program or browser helper. Some Adware can hijack other company's ads. Adware also tracks your Internet browsing and reports this information back to a central server.

Popup

A popup happens when a new browser window opens up on it's own. Sometimes so many popup windows can open, it renders the computer useless.

Hoax

A hoax is an email stating something untrue. Common hoaxes include virus hoaxes which have the user delete an important file located on their computer.

Spam

Junk email which is usually unsolicited, typically sent to hundreds or thousands of people. Usually attempting to sell items such as drugs or containing pornographic material.