Spyware, Malware, Viruses and other Troubles

PLEASE NOTE: This document contains recommendations for students' use on their own Personal Computers – *updates and maintenance of all campus PCs are provided by the SSCT technical support staff.* While not required, we recommend that you scan your computer regularly for viruses, spyware, and malware.

What is a virus?

A **computer virus** is piece of computer code, usually hidden within a useful program, which replicates itself and inserts those copies into other programs or files. Viruses usually perform one or more malicious actions on the infected system (such as destroying data). Computer viruses never occur "naturally"; they are always man-made. Once created and released, however, their spread is not usually under direct human control.

Spyware refers to a broad category of malicious software designed to intercept or take partial control of a computer's operation without the informed consent of that machine's owner or legitimate user. While the term taken literally suggests software that surreptitiously monitors the user, it has come to refer more broadly to software that subverts the computer's operation for the benefit of a third party.

Malware is software designed to infiltrate or damage a computer system, without the owner's consent.

Adware or advertising-supported software is any software package which automatically plays, displays, or downloads advertising material to a computer after the software is installed on it or while the application is being used.

Ad-Aware (http://www.lavasoft.de/software/adaware/)

This software will scan your computer and delete spyware, malware, and adware.
Follow the link above, it will take to you the Ad-Aware home page. Ad-Aware typically offers a free personal version that you might consider using if you do not already have software to remove spyware and malware.

AVG Antivirus Free Edition (http://free.grisoft.com)

AVG Antivirus is a Free Anti Virus program. If you do not already scan for viruses, you could consider using AVG Antivirus.

If You Cannot Remove Spyware, Malware, or Viruses:

It is your responsibility to have a working computer if you are enrolled in a web-based course. The Help Desk (helpdesk@starkstate.net or 330-494-6170 xHELP - 4357) may be able to give you advice. However, their ability to assist you with your home PC is limited. You may need to have your computer serviced. In the interim, you would need to use another PC such as one of the PC's available at Stark State College in the CAL lab (C105), the Open Computer Lab (B214), or the atrium. PC availability is not guaranteed, it is possible that all PC's could be in use at any particular time.