**Spyware**

**Spyware** is software that aims to gather information about a person or organization without their knowledge that may send such information to another entity without the consumer's consent, or that asserts control over a device without the consumer's knowledge.

Spyware is mostly used for the purposes of tracking and storing Internet users' movements on the Web and serving up pop-up ads to Internet users. Whenever spyware is used for malicious purposes, its presence is typically hidden from the user and can be difficult to detect. Some spyware, such as keyloggers, may be installed by the owner of a shared, corporate, or public computer intentionally in order to monitor users.

While the term *spyware* suggests software that monitors a user's computing, the functions of spyware can extend beyond simple monitoring. Spyware can collect almost any type of data, including personal information like internet surfing habits, user logins, and bank or credit account information. Spyware can also interfere with a user's control of a computer by installing additional software or redirecting web browsers. Some spyware can change computer settings, which can result in slow Internet connection speeds, un-authorized changes in browser settings, or changes to software settings.

Sometimes, spyware is included along with genuine software, and may come from a malicious website or may have been added to the intentional functionality of genuine software.

Most spyware is installed without knowledge, or by using deceptive tactics. Spyware may try to deceive users by bundling itself with desirable software. Other common tactics are using a Trojan horse, spy gadgets that look like normal devices but turn out to be something else, such as a USB Keylogger. These devices actually are connected to the device as memory units but are capable of recording each stroke made on the keyboard. Some spyware authors infect a system through security holes in the Web browser or in other software. When the user navigates to a Web page controlled by the spyware author, the page contains code which attacks the browser and forces the download and installation of spyware.

*Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spyware*