

Spyware programs are any software which employs a user's Internet connection in the background (the so-called "backchannel") without their knowledge or explicit permission. Silent background use of an Internet "backchannel" connection must be preceded by a complete and truthful disclosure of proposed backchannel usage, followed by the receipt of explicit, informed, consent for such use. Any software communicating across the Internet absent these elements is guilty of information theft and is properly and rightfully termed: Spyware.

Today, the word has broadened and shifted in meaning. "Spyware" is an emotionally charged word, and often means different things to different people. Sometimes the term is used to mean Adware, or Browser Helper Object or Hijacker or Trojan, but in all cases, the user of the word is referring to software that they did not intend to introduce to their machine, do not want, and are having trouble removing.