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Hotbar - Spyware Manual for SiteCM™ Managers

Spyware -- HotBar

This document is intended as a general primer for ideaLEVER clients on Spyware. The software discussed is not supported by ideaLEVER and is recommended in an effort to help our clients who are having a problem seeing their websites or are having problems with page content created in our SiteCM and CommerceCM products.

Definition

The definition of spyware, as its name implies, is software that spys on a user, or more specifically where that person goes on the Internet and what sites they visit.

Spyware comes in 4 flavors...

Data Collection - software that spys on what a user does on the Internet and sends the information collected to servers.

Pop ups – software that pops up browser windows to display advertisements. These pop-ups can happen even when a user is not browsing the Internet.

Browser hijacking – this form of spyware can change settings within an Internet browser such that the homepage set within the browser is changed. The changed homepage then limits where the user goes, even to the point that if a different web address is entered into the address bar, the user is still directed to the hijack site.

Malware – malicious software that, after installed, limits what a user can do and in some cases asks for money so that the user can uninstall the software.

How does spyware get onto a Computer?

Most spyware is installed when a user visits a site with the user unaware that anything has been installed. While other times a popup window is displayed and the user is told they need to install a piece of software that is actually spyware. A common form of this is a pop up window that says, “If your CD tray just opened

you may have spyware installed on your computer and need to install “this” software to fix the problem.” The CD tray is opened by the Pop up window and to many users it looks like something they should deal with right away. Many people just click Yes or OK to these pop ups, they should be ignored or the window closed. The most important thing that any Internet user needs to understand is that the only way for any spyware to get on their computer is for the user to actually visit a site that has this type of software.

Whether it is because an excessive number of pop-up windows, a number of pieces of spyware that are all trying to collect data or Hijackers that are trying to control where a user goes on the Internet, the common thread to all of these forms of spyware is that they will slow down a PC and can over time accumulate to the point that browsing the Internet is nearly impossible.

Other sources of information

www.microsoft.com/spyware - Microsoft site dealing with spyware.

www.doxdesk.com/parasite - an informative site that covers the basics of Spyware.

<http://vancouver.cbc.ca/nerd/spyware.htm> – Tod Maffin’s CBC site that deals with Spyware.

www.lavasoft.de - Home of Ad-aware the original spyware removal tool.

www.safer-networking.org - Home of Spybot Search and Destroy, one of the newer and more popular spyware removal tools.

Known Issues between spyware and SiteCM

The application Hotbar causes 2 known issues with SiteCM.

1. When a user opens a page for editing in the Page editor... a large blank space is added to the top of the page as soon as it is opened. This “Space” is code that is written by Hotbar to the page.
2. When a user attempts to insert an image into a page the Insert/Edit Image window opens then when the user selects a category, the choices of images comes up for a moment and then disappears. This problem as well appears to be symptomatic of Hotbar and what it attempts to add to the page.

To remedy these problems, users must either remove the HotBar application from their PC, using SpyBot search and Destroy, a Spyware removal tool available on the Internet, or install a firewall on their PC or network.

Note

Users must be aware that Spybot can and does make changes to the registry of the computer to correct spyware problems and as such there is the risk of damaging the Operating System. As a safe guard IdeaLEVER Solutions does not recommend removal of any other spyware that may be found on the PC. If a user chooses to remove any other instances of spyware found on the PC, they do so at their own risk.

Following is the documentation for installing and running Spybot to remove the HotBar from the PC.

Install and Run Spybot

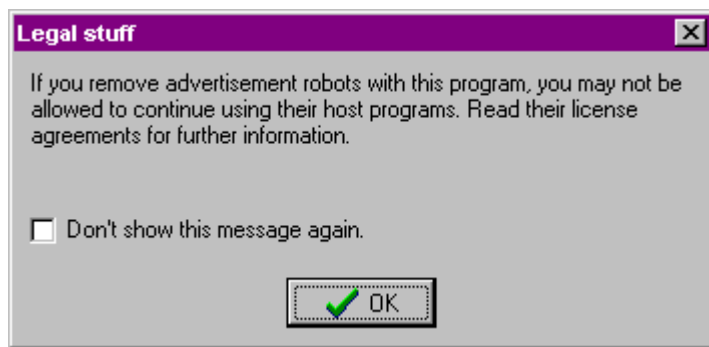
Download the software from <http://download.com.com/3000-8022-10289035.html?tag=lst-0-2>

Once downloaded Double Click the installer –

Select your Language → then click “OK”

Use all the defaults of the Install.

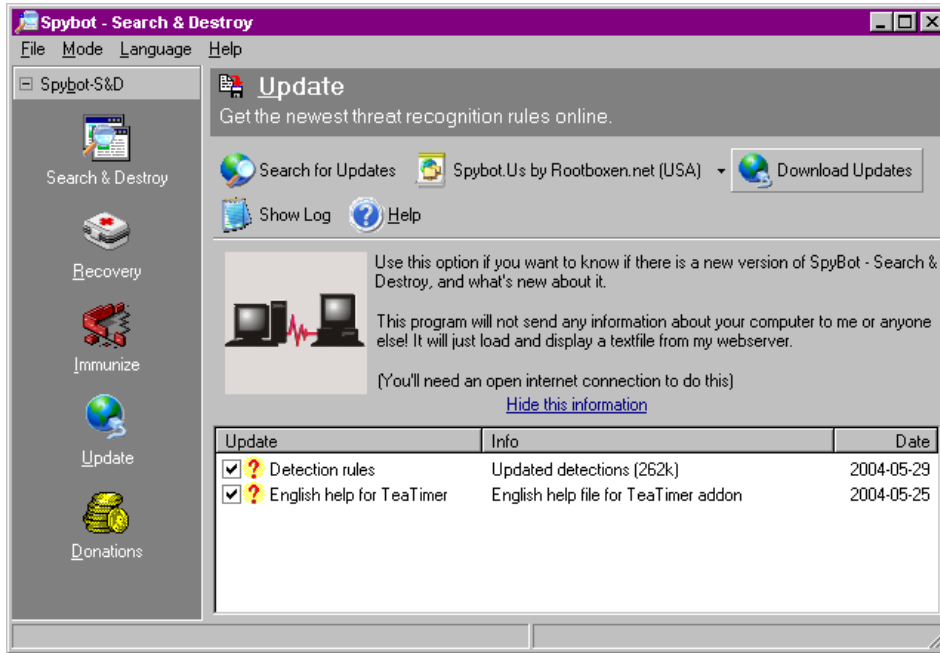
Once installed, run Spybot – Search & Destroy – the shortcut should be on your desktop. When the following window comes up, read it then → click OK.



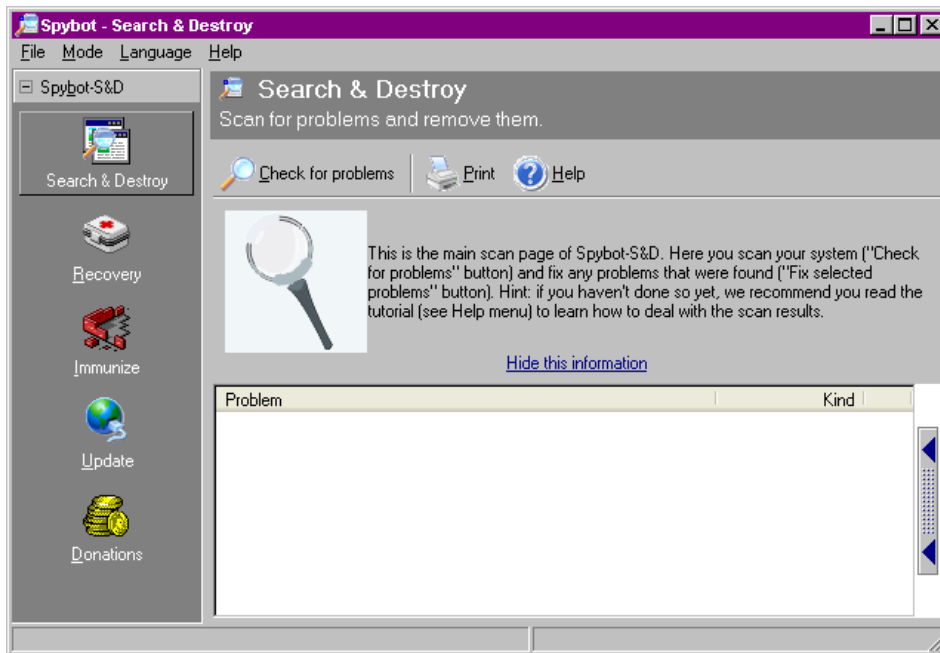
Now you will want to check to make sure you have all of the latest Spyware definitions. Click the “Search for Updates” Button. This will look for updates on the Internet.



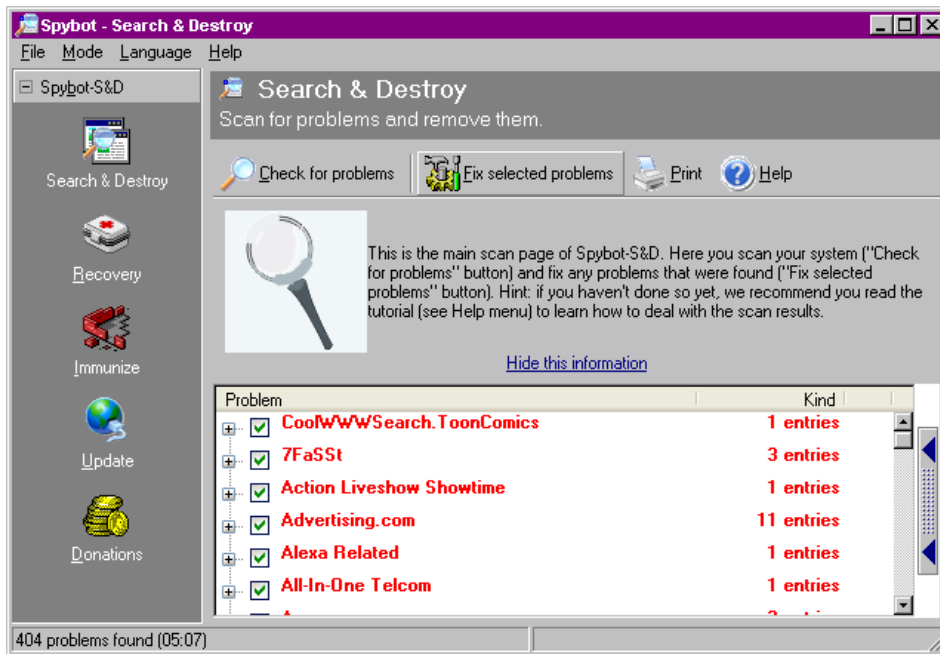
If there any updates available, you will be presented with the following window. Put Check marks next to all of the updates, then click on the “Download Updates” button in the upper right hand corner to start the downloads.



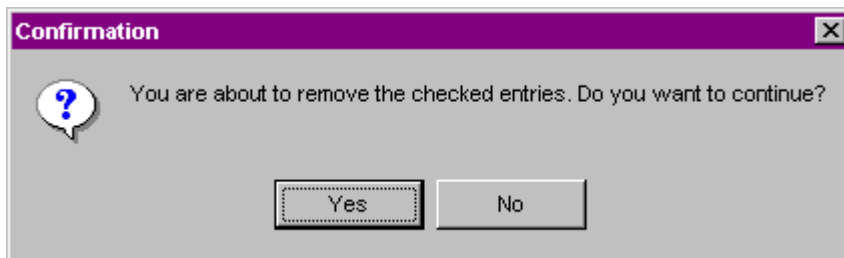
Once they are successfully downloaded, select the Search & Destroy button on the left and then click on the “Check for Problems” button. This will start the scanning process; it can take as long as 20 minutes to complete the scan...



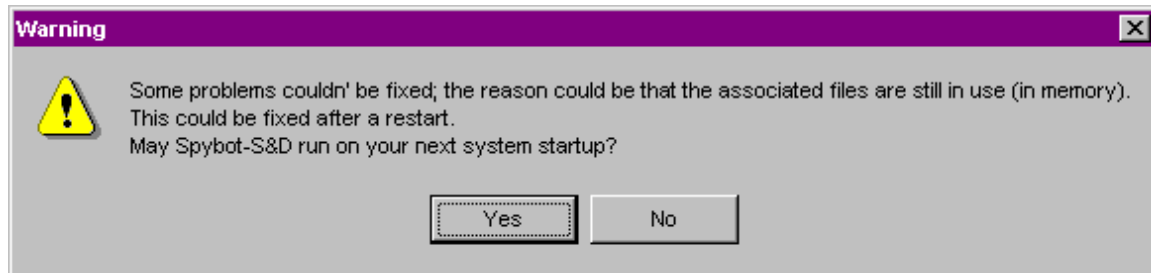
Once the scan is complete, the user will be presented with all instances of spyware that have been found on the computer. To remove HotBar, put a check beside “Hotbar” in the list. Make sure that is the only option checked, then click on the “Fix selected problems” button.



You will be presented with this confirmation box Click “Yes”.



Because Hotbar is running on the PC all the time it is loaded into memory and cannot be completely deleted by Spybot at this time. In this case you will be presented with the following option asking if Spybot can run on the next restart of the PC. Click “Yes” and the next time your PC is restarted Spybot will start before your desktop icons are loaded and remove the remaining instances of HotBar.



It would be wise to do the restart as soon as possible. When the PC is restarted Spybot Search and Destroy will run in it's entirety. Meaning that the scan will run again finding all instances of Spyware on the PC. When the scan is complete and the list of spyware on the PC is presented, put a check beside the HotBar selection, again making sure that it is the only option selected, and then clicking on the “Fix selected problems” button.

At the Confirmation box click “Yes” and the remainder of the Hotbar application will be removed from your computer.

You should be able open one of your web pages in the SiteCM page editor and there should be no blank space added to the top of the page. And the insert image option should be fully functional as well.

If the problem persists, please contact ideaLEVER Solutions.