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Spyware vs Viruses - Understand the Difference

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Spyware and viruses are both forms of unwanted or malicious software, sometimes called "malware." You need to protect yourself from both.

What's the difference?

- [Spyware](#) (sometimes called adware) collects information about you without appropriate notice and consent.
- A computer [virus](#) spreads software, usually malicious in nature, from computer to computer.

Spyware can get installed on your computer in a number of ways. One way is through a virus. Another way is for it to be secretly downloaded and installed with other software you've chosen to install.

In short, spyware is a specific type of unwanted software that secretly collects your information.

A virus is a specific way software can be secretly distributed, often by e-mail or instant messaging.

Both spyware and viruses can cause damage to your computer or cause you to lose important data.