

By ~~March 2008~~ March 2008, Editor, Software Reviews

## Noose That Malware

### *Tighten the noose against the loose spyware*

Spyware, adware, dialers, keyloggers, web bugs, tracking cookies. They can all nest inside your computer without you even knowing about them. It is a tricky thing trying to root them out because many praised anti malware softwares cannot even detect them. Experience shows us that no matter the security level imposed on anti virus or firewall protection, malware will still slip the protection rules right into our computers. The only thing we can do is periodically scan the PC, detect and root out all the nasties. The myriad of protection applications on the Internet are the proof that making a choice for the protection software is not a problem. And good anti spyware and anti virus softwares can be found with a little help. However, you must realize that there is no such thing as a clean computer (except if you do not have Internet connection or you are working on a MAC) and there is no ultimate protection, so you will always run the risk of getting infected, the only issue is how to minimize this risk. Spy Noose is a simple solution for the malware nagging you. The \$29.95 on the price tag competes with its capabilities of handling a bunch of nasties like trojans, spyware, adware, dialers, keyloggers, worms, loggers etc. By the sounds of the description, it would seem as a super software that can take away the malware pain off your computer. The shareware version analyzed today contains only one restriction: ridding your computer of the malicious elements detected is impossible and in order to achieve this purchasing it is required. The interface is dynamic and quite easy to handle. Even the most inexperienced computer user could work with it. The options made available to the user are displayed on the right hand of the application's main window or can be accessed from the menu bar. The main application window displays a short summary of system resources (CPU and RAM) as well as the installed operating system, disk space, profile and version of Internet Explorer. Lower in the windows there is the number of spyware signatures available in Spy Noose database, last time of the definition update and the date of the last scan. The options running down in the right hand part of the window include scanning option, activation of protection shields and Spy Noose customizing settings. The active protection shields are designed for protecting the bookmarks in Internet Explorer, your cookies and home page. Protection for Windows is also available and Spy Noose will secure your hosts file as well as the startup programs. Once activated, the shields will protect the user defined areas and every time there is an attempt to change something in the settings the user will be warned and asked for permission. During our tests the shield function acted promptly and alerted when a change of the startup folder was performed. The Settings area of the software allows the user to configure the application to scan the computer at system startup and automatically check for updates as well as to save the removal logs and create a backup of the removed items. This way, you can always undo the last action and restore the eliminated items. Scheduling Spy Noose to perform scans at a certain time and date provided by the user is possible due to the Schedule function incorporated in the Options menu. The scans can be programmed to take place on a certain day of the week and at a certain time as well as periodically (daily or weekly). The time of the scan cannot be set to the minute and only hourly scans can be set to take place. The scan will be performed in four steps. First, the application will scan the Registry, then will check your computer for known items, passes with searching the variable items and ends with scanning the commonly infected locations. The downfall of the software is that it does not allow the user to select the locations to be scanned and it'll start checking the entire computer. At the end of the verification, the detected issues are listed and you will also be supplied the path to the nasty. Additionally, you will be informed of the malware type you have on your computer: it is enough to click an item and a brief description is displayed at the bottom of the page. **The Good** Spy Noose is very easy to handle and the scan takes little time to complete. Scan scheduling is a very important feature as it allows you to program the software for checking on your computer. Shields are prompt and accurate. You will be announced the moment a change in the settings is about to take place. **The Bad** The issues detected by the application cannot be eliminated in the shareware version. The user cannot scan the computer folder by folder and only full scan is available. **The Truth** I was quite impressed with Spy Noose's performance. It detected a few bugs on my computer that the other protection softwares installed missed. Providing the user with a description of the nasties detected on the

computer is a good idea as s/he can look them up the Internet and see their behavior. *Here are some snapshots of the application in action:*