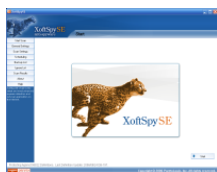


29 August 2006

By: Ionut Ilascu, Editor, Software Reviews



[Throw 007 Out of Your Computer](#)

Spyware, malware, get it all out of there

World Wide Web is crawling with all sorts of malware. Spyware is in my opinion the worst kind as it is designed to intercept or take partial control of your machine, without your consent and it practically invades your privacy. Spyware software falls into three categories: the so called "benign", malicious and the popup ads launchers. The "benign" spyware simply tracks the websites the user is visiting and then sends the information to an advertising agency (it is an easy way for advertisers to make their marketing research). The popup ads launchers simply annoy you with activating all types of banners on your screen. Malicious spyware is the worst because it can monitor the activity on your computer and send to a third party whatever you type on your keyboard (passwords, credit card numbers, emails, etc.). XoftSpySE is a software that thwarts the spyware on your computer and eliminates it. Developed by ParetoLogic Inc, the application costs \$29.95 and besides scanning your computer for spyware it will also detect and remove adware, browser hijackers and trojans. Using XoftSpySE is a piece of cake as the interface is simple and every type of user can handle it. From beginners to more advanced computer aficionados, the software will provide easy access to the functions and options. The options are arranged vertically in the left side of the application window. The first button is the Start Scan. Pressing it will launch the scan of your computer. I advise using it after you have made the settings of the software. In General Settings you have the chance to set up the software to launch the software at Windows startup with or without scanning your computer. Here you can also check for new versions of the software and you can customize the updating options: Check for Updates Automatically, Prompt before Downloading Database/Program Updates. In Scan Settings you will have a nice surprise as you will find out that the software can be customized to scan for whatever you want of the following: browser hijackers, registry, active processes, host files, system folders, and folders. The user can select the folders that s/he wants the application to scan (entire drive or just the folders). If you are as forgetful as I am, you will be glad to learn that the software includes the scheduling feature. Thus you do not have to remember (or be reminded) all the time to scan your machine for malware. Schedule the task (weekly, monthly, once, at system startup, at logon or when the system is idle) and the start time. If you have scheduled the task weekly or monthly, you have to select the day of the week or month you want the scheduling to be performed. Next in line are the Backup and Ignore List buttons. Do I really have to go in here? The names of the options say it all. The Scan results will display the files that the software has detected as being some sort of malware. Right-clicking them will open a context menu that allows the user to send files considered as non-threat to the ignore list. At the time of the review the software provided protection against 95822 definitions. After the application has finished the scan, the user can access a usage report in order to see the time and date of the last scan, the number of items removed or the total number of scans and items in the ignore list. **The Good** The number of definitions is impressive and the software is easy to use and poses no problem. The user can find out information about the scanned objects. Clicking this option will take you to the software's website and you will learn about the object's threat level and what it does. **The Bad** The buttons in the left side of the application window are too sandwiched in between, although the interface allows for a more airy arrangement. The application does not include archive scanning or at least it does not display them when browsing for folders. You cannot remove the items in the trial version. **The Truth** I know that the software was pretty controversial at the beginning, but the software is legit now. It found a total number of 108 malware on my computer from only two vendors and a number of cookies. It seemed to

me to have done a pretty good job with scanning, but I am a little suspicious about removing the objects found on my computer. Unfortunately, the trial version only scans the comp and it does not remove the malware. *Here are some snapshots of the application in action:*