

Feature



Spyware

*Everything you need
to know about
spyware*

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**Educational
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Buffalo State
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EDC NEWSLETTER

Advancing Education through Technology

Volume 2, Issue 4

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FROM THE EDITOR...



Welcome to the April issue of the EDC Newsletter. In this issue, our featured story explores spyware. Many users are unaware that they may have spyware installed on their computers. This installed spyware could be slowing down your computer, causing crashes, creating pop-up windows or tracking your movements on the Internet. Unfortunately, it seems that many more Web sites and software programs are employing the use of spyware and not properly clarifying their privacy policies. This featured article will define spyware, where it comes from and how to remove it from your computer.

This issue will also explore tablet PCs. Tablet PCs are innovative devices which may someday replace pen and paper. The student spotlight section will feature Dawn Riggie, an exceptional EDC student and the principal at Mount St. Mary Academy. I was very impressed by Dawn's accomplishments and think they will serve as an inspiration to all our readers. Finally, we will wrap up this issue with a quick introduction to basic HTML. While many of you may know how to use HTML software, such as Microsoft FrontPage®, this article will show you how to create a Web page from scratch. I believe by knowing the basics behind HTML, it will help you to learn how to use HTML software more efficiently.

As many of you know, publishing the EDC Newsletter counts as an elective in the EDC program. Unfortunately, next month will be the last issue of the newsletter for me. If you are interested in being the newsletter editor for the summer semester, contact Dr. Thompson at THOMPSJT@BuffaloState.edu. From my experience, I have learned so much by researching all of these technology topics for the newsletter. I feel it is a great elective and would not hesitate to participate again, if given the opportunity.

As with the last issue of the newsletter, I will leave you with an inspirational quote.

"Even if you're on the right track, you'll get run over if you just sit there."

-Will Rogers



Joseph Lund

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Student Spotlight: Dawn Riggie



Meet an exceptional EDC student, Dawn Riggie.

My name is Dawn Riggie and I am a woman, wife, mother, daughter, sister, aunt and a variety of in-law relationships. I am a non-traditional student, having graduated back in the 70's from the high school where I now work. I attended ECC and was a lack-luster student at best; my only real interest being marrying my boyfriend (who, by the way, I have been happily married to for 30 years) and raising a family (currently one son and three daughters all grown up and two beautiful granddaughters). My "professional" career began with a position as Teacher Aide at the Tonawanda Junior High School in the Math Department. I took a break from the work world to raise my four children, and then returned to work as the Director of Religious Education at St. Paul's in Kenmore. I returned to college at this time, attending Canisius College where I became a "born again" student! I subsequently transferred to Buffalo State and completed my bachelor's degree in General Studies. In 1993 I joined Mount St. Mary Academy's faculty as the Dean of Students and a religion teacher. I worked at the Mount in the area of computers as well, helping to install the first network and integrate technology into the curriculum. In 2001, I was named Interim Principal and was named permanently to that position in March 2002.

At the Mount our first computer network was 16 PCs in a lab with a modem for Internet access. We've come a long way. Today at the Mount every teacher has their own PC at their desk with administrative software as well as course specific software. Every classroom has 2 or 3 PCs for student use. The lab has 16, the

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library 10, the study hall 4. A T1 line connects us to the outside world. We have digital cameras, scanners, LCD projectors and Palm™ Pilots. Administrative tasks like report cards, progress reports, attendance and scheduling are all done by computer. Each department has an interactive smart board. We have video conferencing equipment for distance learning and this year our students are taking a Sign Language class at Daemon College for 3 college credits without ever leaving MSM!

I began work in my Master's program about a year after I finished my bachelor's degree. I have grown to understand and embrace life-long learning. I take my studies seriously and use all I learn. Originally I was in the Multidisciplinary Master's Program, but after taking EDC 606, Internet for Educators, I was hooked. I changed my major to Educational Computing and will finish up next fall.

My favorite course in the EDC program is 707 Computer Applications in Education Administration. I first took the course online, and then the next semester acted as a TA for the course. This semester I have worked on aligning 707 to the ISTE Standards for Administrators. I think I enjoy it so much because it speaks to my everyday work world. I have gained many new skills and resources through this class, as well as other EDC classes, that I have been able to apply at the Mount. I value the practical, useable knowledge and tools this program provides. At the end of the day I want to feel that the dollars I spend on my masters program provide more than simply another diploma. I want to be better informed, better prepared and better able to contribute to the education of the young women at the Mount. I am certain that the Educational Computing program provides me this opportunity.

Thank you Dawn for taking the time to contribute to the EDC newsletter. We wish you success in all your future endeavors!

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Tablet PCs

What do you get when pen and paper meets a laptop? You get a versatile, portable computer called a tablet personal computer. While various renditions of these computers have been around for about twelve years now, they still have not hit the mainstream public. However, with new technology, the introduction of Microsoft Windows XP Tablet Edition software there may be hope for these devices. In fact, Bill Gates predicts by 2005, tablet PC sales will overtake laptop sales (USA Today, 2001). This article will take an in-depth look at the tablet PC and if they are ready for the mainstream.

There are two main types of tablet PCs on the market today. The first is a traditional tablet PC, which has a touch screen LCD panel, wireless network card and handwriting or voice recognition capability for user input. The other type is the convertible tablet PC, which can operate like a standard laptop with the keyboard or be converted to a tablet PC with a simple rotation of the screen. This article will focus on the convertible tablet PCs, since they offer the most versatility and are currently the most popular tablet PCs in the market.

At first glance, a convertible tablet PC resembles a laptop

computer. In fact, a tablet PC can operate exactly like a laptop computer. There is a keyboard and mouse to input information and an LCD screen to display information to the user. However, unlike a normal laptop, the screen of a tablet PC can swivel 180 degrees and fold over the keyboard to create a tablet. Users can

write on the tablet with a stylus, just like they would a notepad. Software, such as Microsoft Windows® XP Tablet Edition, can then recognize your handwriting and change it into text. You could then go into a word processing application, such as

"Tablet PCs are not so much a replacement for laptop computers, but a replacement for pen and paper."

[Toshiba tablet PCs](#)

[Tablet PCs in Education](#)

[Jury is Out on tablet PCs](#)

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Microsoft Word®, and edit your notes. Tablet PCs also have speech recognition capability, so if you speak into a connected microphone, your voice would be transferred as digital text. In addition to the handwriting and voice recognition capabilities, the tablet PCs have a wireless network card built in. Therefore, if your company has wireless networking capability, you can access your network without wires.

With all these features, people may be wondering why the tablet PC has not caught on with the mainstream public. The first reason may be the cost, tablet PCs currently cost about \$800 more than a standard laptop and usually have less processing power and a smaller screen. A second reason may be that users who have laptops are running applications on them and not using them for handwriting or voice recognition. Companies are not willing to pay the extra money to purchase a tablet PC when they will not utilize the features. A third reason is that the handwriting software is sensitive. Users who have horrible handwriting may have trouble with the recognition software, until the software is trained correctly. This added time may cause frustration with those users who expect this technology to work off the shelf, without training. Fourth, the durability of the tablet PCs may be a factor in purchasing. The screens are still fragile and can be damaged by pressing too hard or dropping it. Finally, tablet PCs are not being built by all the major computer manufacturers. For instance both Dell and Gateway do not have tablet PCs available at this time.



However, the tablet PC offers many features that will appeal to different occupational fields. Those companies who wish to digitize their notes, such as hospitals, pharmacies and other medical fields, are interested in this technology. Tablet PCs are not so much a replacement for laptop computers, but a replacement for pen and paper. Users that are mobile and need to transcribe their notes into a computer will find that a tablet PC is a life saver.

So will tablet PCs be the laptop of the future. Maybe, but for now it appears that Bill Gates prediction for 2005 tablet PC sales will not come to pass. Tablet PC sales are currently off to a very slow start. However, as prices come down and the technology gets better, I feel tablet PCs will be adopted by many businesses as a replacement for pen and paper applications.



Maney, Kevin (2001, November 21). Tablet PCs: Something to write home about?. USA Today. Retrieved April 15, 2004, from <http://www.usatoday.com/tech/columnist/2001/11/21/maney.htm>

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Spyware

It is like a script out of a Hollywood horror movie, where a naive person is being stalked. They are unaware that everything they are doing is being watched closely by a stranger. However, this is not a horror movie, it's reality for most Internet users. Right now your computer is probably infected with spyware, sometimes also called adware. While all spyware differs in its exact functionality, most spyware tracks your computer usage in order to provide marketing information to companies. Now before you panic and take scissors to your Internet connection, you should be aware that most of your information being sent to these companies is anonymous. The scary part however, is that most users do not even know that any information is being sent from their computer, let alone to what companies. This article will clarify what spyware is, where it comes from and how to get rid of it.

"Companies have to disguise the software to sneak it onto a user's computer"

Spyware has many different meanings on the Internet. The most widely used definition of spyware is software that tracks your Internet usage and sends that information to companies for marketing purposes. However, you should be aware that there is far more sinister spyware out there which can capture and send your keystrokes and screen output over the Internet. These spyware programs are either commercially available packages used to spy on spouses, kids and possibly employees, or sometimes packaged in viruses to retrieve information like credit card numbers. If the spyware is packaged in a virus your antivirus program will normally catch it. This article will focus on the spyware installed by companies or individuals to obtain marketing information.

How does this spyware get installed on your computer? Most users would not knowingly agree to install software that tracks

[Lavasoft's Ad-aware](#)

[Spybot-Search and Destroy](#)

[Hijack This](#)

[LIUtilities Process Library](#)

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their usage on the Internet, would they? No, they definitely would not, which is why companies have to disguise the software to sneak it onto a user's computer. This spyware can be hidden in software such as peer to peer file sharing software (such as Kazaa®), software that adds icons and images into your E-mail (like Hotbar®) or software which changes your desktop background (for example Webshots®). While this software collects anonymous information and sends it to companies, this software also provides a service to the user. In these cases the user chooses to install this software and has the opportunity to read the privacy statements which clearly states the intentions of the company.

Recently however there is a disturbing trend with spyware. Spyware is being installed without the user's knowledge. This spyware normally doesn't have a privacy policy or specifically state what information it may be gathering. In the simplest form the spyware can be installed as a browser cookie. A cookie is a file that is generated by a Web server and stored on a user's machine. Cookies were originally created to help identify a user to a Web server, so they could access their profile or saved preferences on a Web site. Cookies were also used as a quick way to save shopping cart items or information for that session, until the user left the site and then the cookie was removed. However, some shady sites are now using browser cookies to track your Internet movement across sites or share personal information with other sites. More complex spyware actually installs files into your computer without your knowledge. This software then may trigger pop-up browser windows, install toolbars, redirect your browser start page or just sits silently in the background tracking your usage and information to send over the Internet. Worse yet, sometimes this software is not stable or does not install correctly. Thus, it can start causing your computer or browser to crash or operate much slower.

How do you rid yourself of this spyware? Thankfully, there are companies that have come up with software to combat spyware.


While most of the major antivirus software companies, such as MacAfee® and Symantec® have products for spyware, I will focus on free products. Currently, the two most popular free spyware detection programs are LavaSoft's Ad-aware and Spybot - Search and Destroy. There are several version of Ad-aware, the paid version will clean and provide constant



protection from spyware, while the free version only removes any installed spyware. Spybot - Search and Destroy is free and also removes any installed spyware. Both programs are easy to install and use to remove spyware. You simply first download the software, install it, search for any new updates, then scan your computer and decide which spyware files you want to remove. To download the software, use the links to the left of this article. It is important to note that sometimes removing spyware software will cause some software to stop functioning. For example, if you remove the Gain spyware from your machine, the Kazaa® sharing software will no longer function. You will then have to decide if you rather have the spyware on your machine or the affected software package.

While these automatic spyware removal packages work great, sometimes they do not recognize all the spyware. In these cases, you will need to manually remove the software. The first method you should use to remove spyware, is to use the add/remove programs applet under the control panel. If you look at the list of installed programs, you may see titles such as Bargain Buddy, Internet Optimizer or IE Searchbar which should be removed. It is normally safe to remove software using this method, but you should be cautious to only uninstall software that you no longer use.

Unfortunately, many times spyware will not be listed under the add/remove programs. In this case, you will have to analyze all the software that starts up with Microsoft Windows® and Microsoft Internet Explorer®. The best free software to use is called Hijack This, which scans your computer and shows you the software that starts with your computer and browser. However all the applications that are shown in Hijack This are not necessarily spyware and some of these files are necessary for your computer to function correctly. So you need to be very careful which files you select to fix. To determine which files you need to remove, you should use the Internet to research the files. A great site to determine whether a file is spyware is LIUtilities (<http://www.liutilities.com/products/wintaskspro/processlibrary>) which has a large library of applications that spyware and Microsoft Windows uses. The LIUtilities site will let you know if the application is spyware or a normal component of Microsoft Windows®. For applications not listed on this site, you can use Google® or another Internet search engine to research the application in question. If you find that the application should not be running on your computer, simply check the box in Hijack This and click the Fix button.



Many times after cleaning up spyware, user's find that their computer runs faster and their Internet connection speed improves. Removing spyware will also get rid of most of the annoying pop-up windows that seemed to pop-up no matter what site you went to and make your computer more stable. Most importantly, cleaning up the spyware will let you take control of the information that is being transferred from your computer to the Internet.

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Hypertext Markup Language (HTML) is the coding that makes up Web pages. While there are many fancy programs available that can create a Web page, a simple notepad application and an Internet browser is all you need. You may wonder why you should go through all that trouble of programming a Web page, when you can easily use a software package? First, by knowing the basic HTML language it will help you use the software more efficiently. Second, you may not always have access to the HTML software that you use. For instance, you may want to edit your Web page at work, but Microsoft FrontPage® is not installed on the computer. However, every computer has a basic notepad application available that you can use. Finally, when you manually create Web pages, you create clean HTML code that is standard and recognized by most HTML software. Microsoft products on the other hand, create very complexed Web pages that are non-standard and can only be modified by using a Microsoft product. While this wouldn't matter with your own pages, it may be a problem if you are editing your company's or school's Web page that was created in another software package.

Basic HTML is very easy to learn. Web pages are created with a combination of tags. Tags are simply commands that are enclosed in angle brackets. For example a bold tag would look similar to the following: `` Some tags need to be closed, for instance you would not want to bold your whole document. To close a tag, you would use the angle brackets and then a forward slash (/). Therefore, to create a bold type word, you would surround the word with the bold tag and the closing bold tag, like this:

` WOW `

HTML Intro Links

[Web Monkey HTML tutorial](#)

[W3 Schools HTML tutorial](#)

[Barebones Guide to HTML](#)

Now the word "WOW" will appear in bold type like this: **WOW**

When tags have a closing tag, the first tag (the tag in this case) is called the opening tag. Therefore, you are opening the bold command (), and then when you are done bolding the text you close the command ().

In addition to closing tags, some tags also have attributes. Attributes appear inside a tag and further describe that tag. For instance, take the tag. Just using the tag will not produce a change in the font, you need to use an attribute. We can use the size and color attribute, which will change the size and color of the text. Here is the font tag with its attributes:

 So any text surrounded by this tag will be red and be a size 6. For example:

```
<font color="red" size="6"> Hi There! </font>  
will produce
```

Hi There!

Now you'll notice we had to end the font tag with , if we didn't do this, all the text after the tag would be red and in size 6 font (how annoying would that be?).

Now that we know the terminology, we can begin to create our own HTML document. The first thing you should do is open up a notepad program on your computer. Microsoft Windows® users can find notepad by going to the start menu, accessories and clicking on notepad. The first tag that every HTML document begins with is the <html> tag. The <html> tag has a closing tag, so you start your document with <html> and end the document with </html> The <html> tag basically states that you are going to be creating an HTML document. The next tag you need is the <head> tag. The <head> tag starts the head of the HTML document. The head of the HTML document includes everything above the actual Web page. Now you may thinking, there is nothing above the Web page, but there is one important thing which is the title that appears in the title bar at the very top of your browser. Therefore, to add a title to the page, we use a <title> tag. After you enter the title, you must close the title tag, and then close the head tag. Right now your notepad document should look like this:

```
<html>
```

```
<head>
<title> My title for the page </title>
</head>
```

The next part of the page is the body. The body section includes everything that is below the head, which is mostly everything. So now we use the <body> tag to start the body section. Now before we leave the body tag, we should discuss the body attributes. The body tag has several attributes, the most important ones can control the background color of the page, the text color, link color, active link color (the color of the link when you click on it) and the visited link color (the color that the link changes after you click on it). For example:

```
<body bgcolor="blue" text="red" link="yellow"
alink="white" vlink="black">
```

This would create a page with a blue background, red text, the hyperlinks would be yellow, when someone clicked the hyperlinks they would turn white, and after clicking on the hyperlinks they would turn black.

Now we are free to do whatever we want in the body section. So let's do the following:

```
<center>
<font size="6" color="red">Welcome to my Web
page</font>
</center>
<br>
<hr>
<br>Thank you for visiting my Web site!
```

The center tags will center anything between them. Obviously, if you forget to close the center tag, your whole document will be centered. The "Welcome to my Web page" will cause "Welcome to my Web page" to be in red with a size of 6. The "
" is simply a break that will skip to the next line, and the "<hr>" tag is a horizontal rule, which will create a line across the page.

The last tag we will be learning is the <a> or anchor tag. Using the anchor tag, we can create hyperlinks or clickable text that will take us to another page. So if we type this:

```
<a href="http://www.buffalostate.edu"> Go here
```

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```
</a>
```

The "Go here" will become a link that will take us to Buffalo State College's Web site. The href stands for hyperlink reference, and it's the uniform resource location (url) of where you want to send the user. Instead of sending the user to a page, you can also use a mailto link. A mailto: link will let a user E-mail you from your Web page. For example:

```
<a href="mailto:lundin@somewhere.com">Mail  
Me</a>
```

This will cause "Mail Me" to become clickable text. When a user clicks on "Mail Me" there E-mail software will open and create a message addressed to lundin@somewhere.com

Now, if we go back to our notepad document and type in the following:

```
<br>  
Why not visit <a  
href="http://www.disney.com">Mickey  
Mouse</a> or you could  
<a href="mailto:user@domain.com">mail me</a>  
</body>  
</html>
```

In the mailto: link, you should replace user@domain.com with your E-mail address. After that the above will create "Mickey Mouse" as clickable text that will take you to disney.com and also create "mail me" as clickable text that will let a user E-mail you. Noticed we had to close the body tag and the html tag at the end.

So now your document should look like the following:

```
<html>  
<head>  
<title> My title for the page </title>  
</head>  
<body bgcolor="blue" text="red" link="yellow"  
alink="white" vlink="black">  
<center>  
<font size="6" color="red">Welcome to my Web  
page</font>  
</center>  
<br>
```

```
<hr>
<br>
Thank you for visiting my Web site!
<br>
Why not visit <a
href="http://www.disney.com">Mickey
Mouse</a> or you could
<a href="mailto:user@domain.com">mail me</a>
</body>
</html>
```

The last part is to save the document as a Web page. This can sometimes be tricky in notepad, since by default notepad wants to save it as a text file. First we go to save, then choose your desktop as the location. For the filename, use quotes and type in "mypage.html" (with quotes). After that, you should have a mypage.html on your desktop. If you click this file, your Web page will open up in the browser.

In the next issue, we will cover images and hexadecimal colors (sounds fun right?). Until then, you might want to practice with the following HTML tags:

```
<b> </b> (bold text)
<i> </i> (italic text)
<u> </u> (underline text)
<p>      (creates a new paragraph)
```

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