

Computer Safety Tips

SLOCOE uses several systems to help mitigate viruses, malware and spam. However, since no system is 100% infallible, viruses, malware and spam can and will get through. Please review the following information to help protect your email and computer.

If you suspect that you have been infected by a virus or malware please contact Tech Services immediately.

Symptoms of Spyware/Adware

Your computer may be infected with malware if you experience some or all of the following symptoms:

- Unexpected installation of new browser objects such as toolbars or icons
- New unknown desktop icons or program menu objects
- Change of and/or inability to change browser homepage
- Pop-ups continue to appear after Internet browser is closed
- Surfing/navigating with browser is chronically slow
- Computer is unusually slow/unresponsive even with no programs open
- Internet browser crashes often
- Internet browser ceases to function or “locks” up

Causes/Prevention Tips

Malware is usually installed on your computer without your knowledge. These programs are often embedded in Web sites and are installed when your browser loads the page. They are also bundled and installed with many freeware programs. The cheapest and most effective way of preventing malware is to follow these safe “surfing” guidelines:

- **Never click pop-ups** (even clicking “No” or “Cancel” is bad) - Many Web sites disguise their pop-ups to look like normal Windows dialog boxes. For example, clicking on a pop-up that states “Your computer is not running at optimal speed, click Yes to enhance its performance,” will direct you to another Web site, and it is likely that malware will be installed on your computer. To close a suspect window, click the “X” in the upper right corner of the window. The pop-up can also be closed by right-clicking on its icon in the taskbar at the bottom of your screen and selecting “Close.”
- **Never download files unless you fully understand what is included and know and trust the sender** – Some Web sites will insist that you download necessary files before you can view them. Use extreme caution when downloading these files, especially if the publisher is unknown. Also, be wary of e-mails from unknown senders, and never click on a link or download an attachment from someone you don’t know.