

# tools of the trade



HP Scanjet 4600

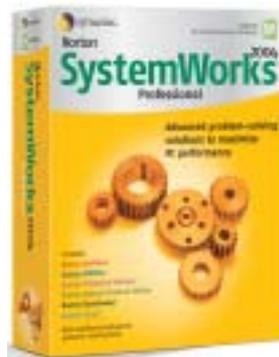
Hewlett-Packard has introduced two new scanners that have redesigned the flatbed scanner. Both the **HP Scanjet 4600** and **4670** have a see-through window, and it's through this window that you make your scans. The light-bar is sandwiched between double panes, and, as it travels, you never lose sight of what you're scanning. The window is made of a tough polycarbonate and a tempered scanning glass that resists scratching. Because the scanner isn't a box, you use it either clipped onto a hinged easel, or you pick it up and set it on or over the paper, book, or object, easily aligning what you can see. Bulky objects can be placed on the glass that's turned over and resting on a surface. The window is 8.5" x 11", and if what you're scanning is

larger, you can pick the scanner up and place it over the image several times to cover it all. Stitching software is included to reassemble the scan into a single image. The 4670 has a stand that positions it like a standing photo frame, allowing vertical scanning and a much smaller footprint on your desk. A transparent scanner accessory for film comes with the 4670 and can be an add-on for the 4600. One-touch buttons on the edge of the frame are accessible face up or down, and the connection is USB 2.0 for fast operation. Resolution of the scans is 2400-dots-per-inch in 48-bit color.

[www.hp.com](http://www.hp.com)

**Norton SystemWorks 2004 Professional™** from Symantec™ is a complete toolbox that includes Norton AntiVirus, Utilities, Password Manager, GoBack Personal Edition, Cleansweep, and Ghost. The new version offers

protection from viruses, spyware, adware, and keystroke-logging programs. The Password Manager stores multiple passwords and other confidential information like credit-card and account numbers in a separate encrypted area. The Utilities and Cleansweep programs get rid of temporary cache files, history items, and cookies and provide single-button checks of the system. GoBack Restores your PC to a previous working state after system crashes, failed installations, and other serious problems. For small businesses, Ghost creates backup disk



Norton SystemWorks 2004 Professional™

images for emergencies and will let you clone one hard drive to another. The updates for new viruses happen automatically in the background. PerformanceTest diagnoses and scores your computer, and Process Viewer gives you a view of every process running on the system to detect conflicts and avoid performance issues.

[www.symantec.com](http://www.symantec.com)

**VirusScan Professional 8.0** from McAfee offers advanced virus protection for two computers, quick cleanup of your PC, and shredding for privacy functions. QuickClean Lite reclaims disk space by freeing your system of unwanted files like the Recycle Bin, temporary files, and others that should be removed on a regular basis. The removal is complete for removed files, so they can't be recovered by any program—analogueous to shredding paper documents. E-mail scanning

## Spyware! Who Put That on My Machine?

◆ Michael Castelluccio, Editor

■ AS IF WORMS, VIRUSES, TROJAN HORSES, COOKIES, and spam weren't enough, now we have to deal with spyware slinking around in our computers' circuitry, taking notes on where we browse and buy and collecting information for people who don't have our permission to be in there. In one form, it's the latest example of guerrilla marketing, and if it bothers you that strangers can root around inside your computer, it's probably something you might consider blocking or maybe even mentioning to your legislators since it so closely resembles the other kind of wiretapping, which is actually illegal.

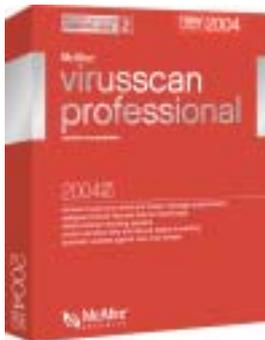
The Webopedia defines spyware this way: "Also called adware, spyware is any software that covertly gathers user information through the user's Internet connection without

his or her knowledge, usually for advertising purposes. Spyware applications are typically bundled as a hidden component of freeware or shareware programs that can be downloaded from the Internet. Once installed, the spyware monitors user activity on the Internet and transmits that information in the background to someone else. Spyware can also gather information about e-mail addresses and even passwords and credit card numbers."

([www.webopedia.com/TERM/S/spyware.html](http://www.webopedia.com/TERM/S/spyware.html))

Cookies also collect and share information about your browsing habits, but they don't qualify as spyware because they don't do this unannounced. You should know that when Amazon welcomes you back at the top of the page and offers selections you might like, it didn't come from

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**McAfee VirusScan Professional 8.0**

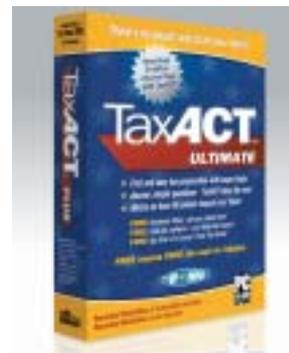
for inbound (POP3) and outbound (SMTP) e-mail and attachments protects Microsoft Outlook, Outlook Express, Netscape Mail, Eudora, Pegasus, and others. Instant message scanning checks AOL Instant Messenger, Yahoo Messenger, and Windows Messenger. WormStopper stops the new mass-mailing worms by detecting the sending of e-mail to more than 40 recipients

and sending more than five e-mails in less than 30 seconds, and it also checks repetitive e-mail content. VirusScan detects spyware, adware, and Web dialers and keeps them off your machine to protect your privacy. AutoClean attempts to clean virus-infected files when a threat is detected. VirusScan and McAfee Security Center offer silent updating of virus definitions (DATs) when you're online to keep you safe from the latest viruses.

[www.mcafee.com](http://www.mcafee.com)

**2nd Story Software** once again is offering **TaxACT Standard** tax preparation software free to consumers who want to try the program without any hassle or obligation. The program is available in a

Federal Standard online form as well as the TaxACT Standard desktop software program. The Standard package does automatic calculations and audits returns, prints the return on paper, supports Federal Electronic Filing, and has a depreciation calculator and prior year's comparison report. There are more than 110 forms, schedules, and worksheets, with 43 state packages available. The TaxACT Deluxe product



**2nd Story TaxACT Software**

(online and desktop also) is available as a low-cost, high-end personal tax preparation solution with many additional features. There are an unlimited number of returns, one free electronic filing, accuracy guarantee, custom print options, loan/savings calculator, depreciation summary reports, national average comparisons, tax calculator, tax watch, tax dollar usage report, all the Standard features, and more. Separate Business Editions are available for 1065 Federal, 1120S Federal, Home and Business 1065 Bundle, Home and Business 1120S Bundle, Business 1065 State, and Business 1120S State. Information about the various packages and the costs for each is available at [www.taxact.com](http://www.taxact.com).

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good data guessing. Trojan horses, on the other hand, also resemble spyware in that the horse sneaks in the soldiers as executable programs, but usually their purpose is more malevolent. There is crossover though, so keep in mind the definitions can be amorphous.

### **Adware**

One of the first places adware showed up was in shareware that wasn't making very much money for its creators. An ad or two and/or access to information valuable to marketing departments became part of the cost of some of these inexpensive programs.

Take the program WeatherBug®. It's described by its creators as "an advertising supported desktop application that streams localized, up-to-the-second weather information to consumers." You can download the program at [www.weatherbug.com](http://www.weatherbug.com). There is a free version—it comes with ads. There's the version that will let you choose a single sponsor to be the ad for 30 days at a time, or you can pay for the ad-free version.

Advertising now shows up almost everywhere online, and some of it is more than annoying—it's intrusive. Pop-ups and pop-unders consume memory without your permission, and some sites actually plant Web bugs when they send information. So you type in an address, your machine downloads the information from the site, you click off the two or three pop-ups, and you think that's the end of it. Underneath, a Web bug sends the IP address, time and date, and type of browser you are using back to the advertiser for future reference. Some will even look over the cookies stored on your machine and send back information

about your browsing habits.

To block adware on your machine, go to [www.lavasoftusa.com](http://www.lavasoftusa.com) and download their Ad-aware program. It's free, and it will detect and remove adware from your computer. If pop-ups or pop-unders are starting to drive you crazy, you can find a number of freeware and shareware blockers at the [www.tucows.com](http://www.tucows.com) or [www.webattack.com](http://www.webattack.com) sites. Search for pop-up blocker. Or, better yet, replace your Explorer or Navigator browser with the free Mozilla Web browser. It has built-in controls to block pop-ups. You might even find that it runs faster than your old browser. ([www.mozilla.org](http://www.mozilla.org))

You can get an inside view of the way contextual and behavioral marketing works online at the Claria site ([www.claria.com](http://www.claria.com)). Claria used to be The Gator Corporation, a magnet for much of the opposition to this kind of marketing. There's an interesting interview with Scott Eagle, Claria's chief marketing officer, at <http://imediaconnection.com/content/2168.asp>.

### **Spyware**

If adware makes you a little uneasy about what's going on in your computer, consider the following scenario. A guy comes up to you and promises the following for the single price of 50 bucks. He'll install software on any computer for you, anywhere in the world, that will give you complete remote control over that computer via a Web interface. Even if it's got a firewall, you can read e-mails, check Windows and application activity, check printed documents, access or monitor files and folders, read website activity logging, track keystrokes, look at screen shots of what the user sees, create new files and folders on the computer, open/execute, download, delete,

rename files and folders—even uninstall the spy program without their knowing in case they get suspicious.

Who is this guy? A freelance hacker who has gone commercial? Well, actually he's a legitimate software solution provider who sells his program on the Internet—to anyone. Go to [www.sppyy.com](http://www.sppyy.com) or [www.softactivity.com/spy-software.asp](http://www.softactivity.com/spy-software.asp) to read about or test the Activity Logger or SPPYY Software. SPPYY calls itself "the most powerful remote install spy software [that can] monitor any computer from anywhere."

The companies that sell this kind of software usually mention that it's great for parents who want to monitor their children's activity online, for employers to keep tabs on employees, or even spouses who want to spy on cheating partners. But when you can install this kind of software remotely, on virtually any machine connected online, the gray areas become very dark.

Before you yank the plug on your machine at home, there are ways to detect spies on your computer. Go to [www.spyguard.com](http://www.spyguard.com) for an anti-spyware solution. Anti-spyware software can find spyware on your machine and remove it, and it can also monitor the ports for any unusual activity that might indicate spyware communications. For a quick check, go to [www.spywarebegone.com](http://www.spywarebegone.com) for a free scan of your machine for spyware. Spyware Begone also sells a spyware remover program.

Where all this intrusion is heading isn't clear, but I would guess that we are just one high-profile case away from a general public outcry. What that will result in is even less clear. But for now, you can protect yourself by knowing who is trying to make their way into your machine and how you can kick them out. ■