

File Sharing Software, Spyware, & your Computer

The Technology Support Services department wants to make you aware of certain avoidable things that may be impairing the performance of your computer. Is your computer really slow? Does it freeze up or crash a lot? Does your Internet connection seem slow? Spyware, adware, and your file/music sharing software may be to blame!

Did you know...?

File sharing software can be hazardous to your computer!

Why should you care?

Many peer-to-peer (P2P) file/music/movie sharing programs can make your computer slow and unstable.

What should you do?

The solution is to uninstall the file sharing software (instructions below).

Did you know...?

When you install file/music sharing programs like Limewire, Bearshare, Frostwire, etc., as well as some other free software & games, they often install additional programs – called “spyware” or “adware” – on your computer. They may or may not tell you that they are doing this; if they do tell you, they will do so in the license agreement. Read the license agreement carefully instead of just clicking “I agree.”

Why should you care?

Spyware and adware monitor your web surfing habits, gather data about you and your computer, and send this information back to their creators or to other third party companies. That information may then be used to invade your privacy in various ways, including sending you spam (junk e-mail) and pestering you with ads. The more malicious of these programs may also record your passwords, credit card numbers, or other personal data, and use it to steal your identity (steal from you). Some spyware also allows hackers to use your computer to send spam.

What should you do?

The best way to avoid spyware and adware is to simply not install file/music sharing programs and other free software. To see if any spyware has been installed on your computer, you should install and run one or more of the free programs that will detect and remove spyware and adware for you. Links to download these programs are on our downloads page at <http://www.snc.edu/techsupport/downloads.html>. For more information about spyware and how to remove it, see the handout *Spyware, Scams, & Other Online Hazards* at <http://www.snc.edu/techsupport/docs/spyware.html>.

Did you know...?

Many file/music sharing programs and spyware automatically configure themselves to run every time your computer starts up, so that they're running in the background *all the time*, and you probably don't even know it.

Why should you care?

These programs can consume huge amounts of your computer's system resources, causing your computer to run slowly. In fact, they can make your computer so slow that you'll think there's something wrong with it.

What should you do?

Uninstall the programs, or configure them not to start up every time the computer starts.

Did you know...?

Using file/music sharing software violates the *Student Computer Networking Terms and Conditions* (available at <http://www.snc.edu/go/resnetterms>), which you agreed to adhere to when you registered your computer for the campus network.

Why should you care?

The Student Computer Networking Terms and Conditions says that you will not set up your computer to share such resources as files, programs, games, music, movies, etc., or to be a server of any type. File/music sharing programs set up your computer to be a server, sharing files with other people. Therefore, **programs of this type are in violation of the Student Computer Networking Terms and Conditions.**

What should you do?

Uninstall the file sharing programs.

Did you know...?

Obtaining and distributing copyrighted material is a violation of federal copyright laws.

Why should you care?

The Student Computer Networking Terms and Conditions says that you agree to adhere to all applicable laws, including copyright laws. The Computing and Networking Appropriate Use Policy in the student handbook details how you may and may not use the College's network and computing facilities. The possible sanctions for these policy violations include temporary or permanent revocation of access to some or all computing and networking resources and facilities, disciplinary action according to applicable College policies, and legal action according to applicable laws.

If a music publisher discovers that you are distributing their works without permission, you are legally liable and may be sued by that company. Think it can't happen? The Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA) sues thousands of people for trading music files online, as part of an enormous campaign to stop file sharing. St. Norbert College is regularly contacted by music publishers about students who illegally distribute copyrighted materials. Each individual is liable for copyright violations. The College is not responsible for the acts of those using its network and cannot protect copyright infringers from legal action.

What should you do?

Uninstall all file sharing programs.

Removing spyware & adware

We strongly recommend using one or more anti-spyware program to scan your computer for spyware and remove it. Several free programs are listed on our downloads page at <http://www.snc.edu/techsupport/downloads.html>. If you've used these programs but still have problems, you may need to get an expert to help you. For College-owned computers, Tech Support will remove the infection. Contact the Help Desk at xHELP (4357), helpdesk@snc.edu, or <http://www.snc.edu/service> to request this service. For employee-owned personal computers, contact the Help Desk at xHELP (4357) and ask to speak to the professional on duty for referrals. For student-owned personal computers, Tech Support can usually repair your computer for you for a fee. For details, see the Computer Setup and Repair Policy at http://www.snc.edu/techsupport/handouts/Policies/Computer_Setup_and_Repair_Policy.pdf.

Assistance and questions

If you have any questions or need more information, contact the Help Desk at (920) 403-HELP (4357) or helpdesk@snc.edu. The Help Desk is for St. Norbert College students and employees only.