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# Crystal Bytes

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## What is spyware?

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Spyware can be defined as any sort of software or hardware installed on a computer without the user's consent. It may gather information about the user for later retrieval by whoever controls the spyware.

There are basically two types of spyware; surveillance and advertising. Surveillance spyware includes devices like screen captures, key loggers, and Trojans. Usually, they are used by such people as private detectives, law enforcements, and suspicious spouses.

Advertising spyware is one that is installed along with other software or through Active X controls on the internet. It is used for gathering personal information and/or show ads. The logs keep track of such things as passwords, email addresses, web browsing history, the computer's hardware and software configuration and even personal

Please see *What is spyware?* on page 2

## Keeping it cool

An overheated computer (motherboards and processors in particular are susceptible to excess heat) can lead to malfunction and eventually failure to operate. To avoid such a situation, we recommend that you regularly check the performance of your computer's fans; is there an adequate air flow around and through the computer? The main computer tower should never be in an enclosed space like a cabinet, for example. Also, there should be at least 6" or 15cm between the wall and the case. Next, be sure to check that there isn't a build-up of dust and/or dirt inside the case. Computers located on carpets or in homes where pets are present tend to have large amounts of dust inside the tower. Smoking around the computer can also be harmful as the smoke's tar can lead to a coating on the interior components of the computer attracting dust and dirt to stick, disallowing proper cooling to take place.

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*"Computers located on carpets or in homes where pets are present tend to have large amounts of dust..."*

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Please see *Keeping it cool* on page 3

## Microsoft's new security gadget

Microsoft has released a new device for those security conscious users such as those in large families or in an office environment. The Microsoft Fingerprint Reader can be used as an alternate way to log in to Windows or any other source which requires a password such as your email program or instant messenger. Plus, if fast user switching is turned on in Windows XP, you could switch between users literally with just the touch of a finger. How cool is that?

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*"The Microsoft Fingerprint Reader can be used as an alternate way to log in..."*

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There is no more the need to worry about others discovering your password or you staring at the screen trying to figure out what password you set for your favourite games website. How can you ever forget your fingerprint?

The only requirements are a 233 MHz or better processor, 127MB of RAM, Windows XP and an available USB port.

The device sells for \$74.95 at Crystal Technologies or buy the Microsoft Wireless IntelliMouse Explorer with the fingerprint reader for \$84.95 or the Microsoft Optical Desktop with fingerprint reader and wireless IntelliMouse Explorer for \$135.95.



*Microsoft's latest, a fingerprint reader featured for \$74.95 at Crystal Technologies.*

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information of the user (name, age, sex).

As with spam, the spyware uses the CPU, memory, and other resources of the computer reducing its durability. Unusual behaviors will then be experienced by the computer such as slower than normal operation speed, internet disconnection, and repetitive freezes.

These spywares usually come bundled with free programs that are downloaded through the internet such as the peer-to-peer programs; for example, Kazaa and iMesh.

How do we fight it? We would recommend you install an anti-spyware program suitable for your computer. For more information, speak to one of our technicians.

## Simplified disc labeling

HP has announced a new technology dubbed LightScribe. When you buy a CD or DVD burner that supports LightScribe technology, you can use the same laser that burns that data to burn a label right onto the disc! All you need is the correct CD or DVD disc that is pre-coated on the non-data side to work with such drives. Right after the drive finishes burning, it will prompt you to flip the disc over for the labeling to take place. Although, it currently only has the ability to print a gray-scale image, not colour. "There are no consumables like ink or ink jet cartridges; the only consumable is the disc itself," says Daryl Anderson, project manager and HP engineer responsible for inventing the technology. So how long does it take to burn a label? It ranges from just 2 minutes for a simple text to 36 minutes for label full of graphics. Apparently, HP claims the process will not affect your computer usage meaning you can still use it in the background. How much does such a drive cost? For a limited time only, you can get a LightScribe CD/DVD burner for \$165 at Crystal Technologies. The CD-Rs come in a 10 pack for \$16.50 and the DVD+Rs come in 10 pack for \$24.



*The HP 640i DVD write is priced at \$165. Get it installed for an additional \$25!*

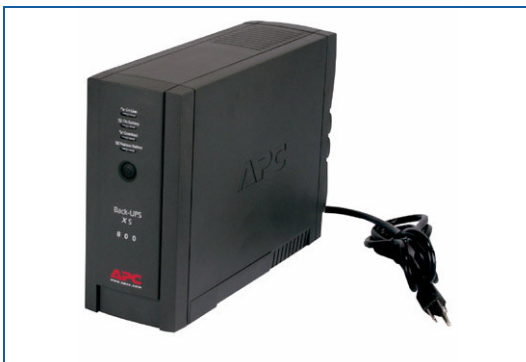
### *Keeping it cool* from page 1

For a small fee of \$24, a Crystal technician can check the fans, clean the computer's interior, make sure the cables are arranged in a way that there is a sufficient amount of air flow, and advise of any potential concerns.

Thunderstorms are just around the corner - which means more power outages and power surges.

The most reliable form of protection is an uninterruptible power supply (UPS). In other words, it is simply a battery that keeps on getting charged just by being plugged into the wall outlet. Your computer would still receive a constant electric flow but when the unfortunate arrives, help is still there. It has the ability to provide hours of power when there's a power failure. This provides enough time for you to save all your important work and shut down the computer down as normally.

Power surges usually result with physical damage to a computer system but may also lead to lost data, corrupted drivers or even corrupted operating systems.



*A UPS ranges from \$60 to over \$100 depending on the battery power.*



*The APC 11-outlet surge protector is only \$44.95 at Crystal Technologies.*

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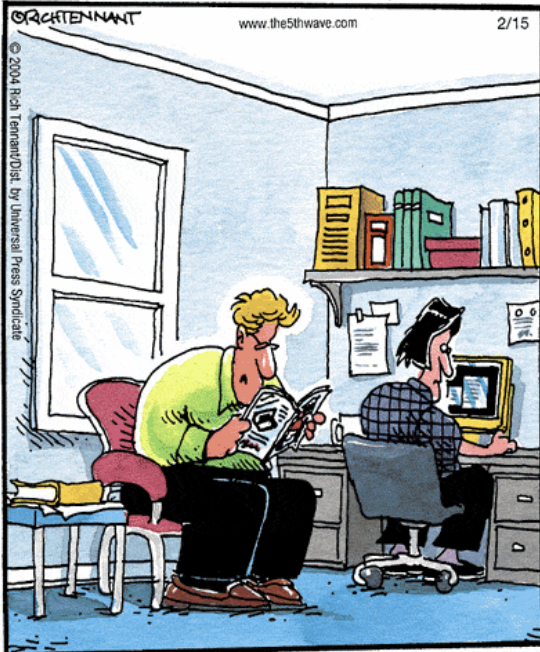
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# Cartoons

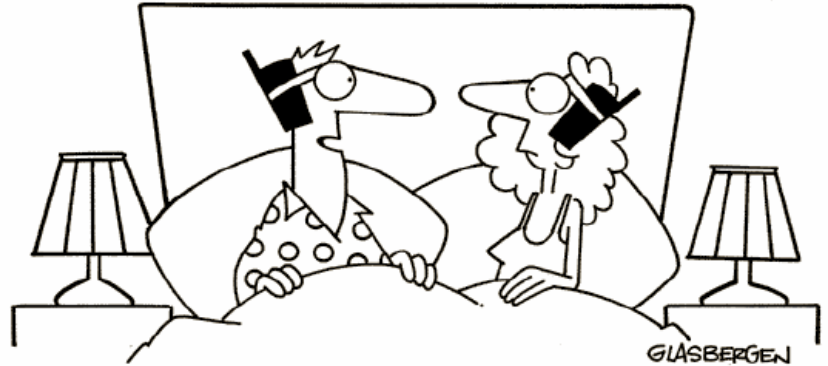
## The 5th Wave

By Rich Tennant



"Hey — here's a company that develops short, memorable domain names for new businesses. It's listed at [www.CompanyThatDevelopsShortMemorableDomainNamesForNewBusinesses.com](http://www.CompanyThatDevelopsShortMemorableDomainNamesForNewBusinesses.com)."

© 2000 Randy Glasbergen. www.glasbergen.com



"With wireless sleep technology, the people in my dreams can send e-mail and faxes to the people in your dreams!"



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