

# Spy Sweeper 4.5

**W**ebroot's Spy Sweeper 4.5 is the most powerful antispyware tool we've seen yet. Its Comprehensive Removal Technology attempts to remove spyware completely in a single pass, and its behavior-based Active Shields prevent the installation of new threats on the cleaned system. Fancy names aside, our testing shows that the utility really works.

When we had Spy Sweeper attempt to clean systems infested with eleven known spyware programs and four commercial key loggers, it detected every single item, although it couldn't completely remove three items—one key

logger and two spyware threats. Installed on a clean system, the utility prevented installation of all the test spyware, identifying most by name. It kept out two key loggers and partially disabled another, though it missed the fourth. Some antivirus products, notably McAfee VirusScan, have come close to this level of protection, but Spy Sweeper cleans up the traces more thoroughly.

Rootkit techniques can hide malware from the file system; Spy Sweeper disables rootkit exploits even when they're not associated with known threats. It also cuts off communication to known spyware sites, preventing installation of malware updates. It also blocks attempts to change

Internet Explorer security settings and to install ActiveX controls or Browser Helper Objects. Additionally, it prevents a wide variety of hijack attacks such as those that try to change IE's home page and other essential URLs. You can choose whether the program

**COMPANY**  
Webroot Software Inc.  
<http://www.webroot.com>

**BOTTOM LINE**  
Spy Sweeper is the best anti-spyware we've seen. It offers clear information about found threats and blocked attacks, and its new Home tab displays a convenient summary of program status.

**PROS**  
Detected all spyware and key loggers in testing and removed almost all. Blocked all spyware installations in testing. Works under Safe Mode and Limited account. Offers detailed information about found threats.

**CONS**  
Didn't remove every spyware threat detected. Spyware removal can be rather slow.

**PRICE**  
\$28.00

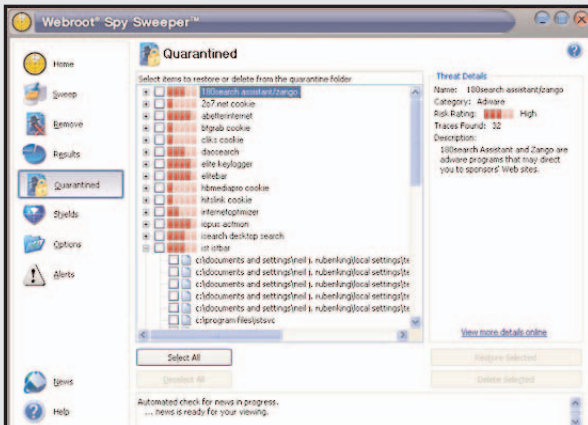
**SPEC DATA**  
Type: Personal

alerts you by opening its large main window or by displaying a small system-tray pop-up.

After a scan, Spy Sweeper presents a clear list of found threats, with a threat-level indicator and the specific file and Registry traces of each malicious program. The utility displays a description of the selected item with an option



**The new Home tab in Spy Sweeper 4.5 offers an overview of the program's status, with buttons to sweep the system or view any alerts.**

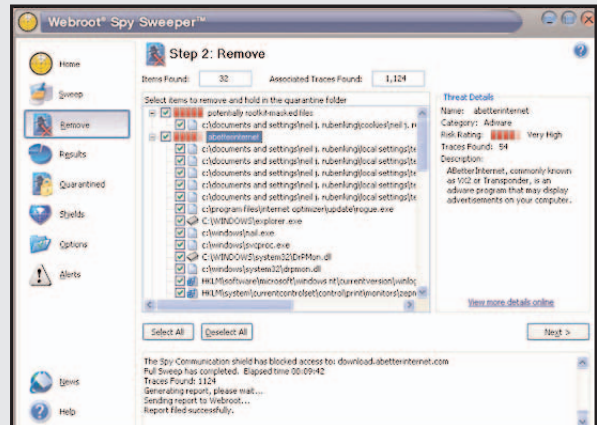


**Quarantined items can be restored (and optionally protected from future scans) or deleted permanently.**

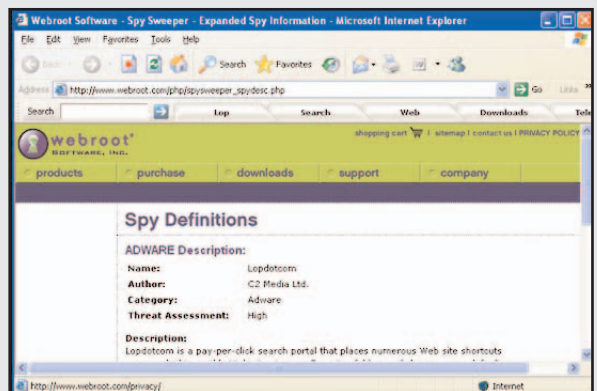
letting you get more details online. All of this information remains available after threats are quarantined. You can restore quarantined items, protect them from future scans, or completely delete them.

Because rootkits co-opt the file system to hide themselves, Spy Sweeper scans directly from the disk. If necessary, it can run in Windows's Safe Mode using a subset of its features. A different subset is available when running under a Limited user account. The product's Early File Remover runs before Microsoft Windows boots, to delete stubborn files. It can examine and repair infestations in all user accounts, not just the logged-in user. Yet even with all features enabled, a scan of our standard test system took just over 6 minutes. Although Spyware Doctor scanned the same system in 4 minutes, it didn't score quite as well at removing spyware.

While not perfect, Spy Sweeper is the best anti-spyware tool we've tested. It effectively



**The list of found threats assigns a threat level to each and optionally displays its file and Registry traces; a panel at right offers a description of the selected item.**



**For each found threat you can click a link to get more information online; in this case, the tabs within IE were put there by the spyware in question.**

removes and blocks spyware, digging deep into the system to root out traces. It offers clear information about found threats and blocked attacks, and the revised user interface with its new Home tab is easy to manage. Spy Sweeper is our new Editors' Choice for antispyware.

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