Frequently Asked Questions on

Malware

Q. What is *malware*?

A. Malware is **mal**icious soft**ware** such as:

- **Adware** that pushes unwelcome advertising, annoying popups *etc.*;
- **Bank Trojans** secretly hijack and syphon funds from personal and corporate online bank accounts;
- **Mobile malware** infects mobile devices such as smartphones, tablets and *things*;
- **Multifunction malware** is like a hydra with many heads, constantly changing;
- **Ransomware** locks up your data or system and demands a ransom to give it back;
- **Remote Access Trojans (RATs)** let hackers and criminals meddle with your computer and data from afar through the Internet;
- **Scareware** scares you into paying a 'fine' or downloading a fake antivirus product;
- **Spyware** snoops on you as you use the system, watching your every move;
- **Trojans** have nasty hidden functions *e.g.* secretly recording your usernames and password;
- **Viruses** are quite rare these days;
- **Worms** spread themselves through networks such as the Internet, exploiting network and system security weaknesses.

Q. How do I reduce my risk?

A. Run **antivirus software** and keep it updated. Apply **security patches** promptly. **Take care** when browsing the web, loading apps, or opening attachments and links in emails. Make **backups** onto drives or media that are *not* normally connected to the machine (ransomware scrambles cloud backups too!). Most of all, **keep a look out for suspicious activities and requests**.

Q. What's the best antivirus software?

A. That depends on your requirements. Do you just need antivirus for one system, or maybe anti-spam, web and mobile device protection? Choose a suitable commercial product from a well-known antivirus company. Surprisingly, it is not terribly important *which* company or product you go for: they are about the same in terms of cost-effectiveness but avoid the more obscure ones that may not be legitimate. Even the free ones are better than nothing - just.

Further information

Browse the intranet *Security Zone* or contact the Help Desk. **Call Help Desk urgently** if you suspect a virus infection or outbreak – a computer virus that is, not the flu or rats!