

Advice from Middle Aged Female Tech
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I have been in the industry and with my own company since 1994. In the entire time I have worked in this field it has been very few times any two techs ever agree completely. What advice I give here is based on my experiences, testing and what I know that works.

Foistware

Unwanted Software Being Pushed Onto PCs

What is it

Foistware – Any unwanted software, installed without your knowledge with your target software. Usually comes in the form of toolbars, browser add/ons, and search bars. Often includes worthless and sometimes very dangerous (spyware type) registry cleaners.

FOIST Transitive Verb.

1. to introduce or insert surreptitiously or without warrant.
2. to force another to accept especially by stealth or deceit * (like politicians do)*

You've seen it, but you may not have known what it really was. Most of the time it is served up as a small check box that is already checked, and the purveyors of this crap are hoping you click so fast that you don't notice their presumptuous ✓. Sure it's legal, but it's irritating, it's a pain, it's annoying. It's just one more example of someone trying to force things on us that we don't want

What does it look like

For the most part it looks like the normal installer you are accustomed to seeing while installing software. It's been a while now that clicking install on a wanted piece of software was a relatively benign thing. Choosing the "Default" installation can be easier and BUT IS NEVER the correct option, ALWAYS choose custom, to choose NOT to install these unwanted junk.

There are many examples I could use, but some of the best known software is using this tactic of pushing for a buck. They are just like drug pushers, aren't they, just standing on every corner, trying to blend in. All freeware and a lot of PAID software have caved to the pressure of pushing for a buck. Obviously Ask is a successful pusher. You'll find it smoozing with all the big names, like Infranview, Adobe, Skype, even AVG, the list goes on.

They are pushing tool bars with toolbars. Not even looking for an Ask Toolbar, I'm being shown another Custom tool bar, and offered 24/7 HELP with a toolbar added on If it weren't such a pain it would be laughable. Just imagine walking down the street and being rushed by a virtual bevy of street corner pushers. That is what surfing the Internet has become.

What does it do

It wastes your time and wastes your money, by preventing you from using the computer resources you paid for. I can't tell you how many computers I've seen with 2, 3, 4 and **more toolbars** installed. One computer had so many toolbars on it that it only had ¼ of an inch of a view of the website! (Sorry, I digress)

People are using their computers and suddenly everything takes forever and they can't get where they want to go. The foistware definition relates to HOW the junk is installed, but what it does once it's there can vary from being a somewhat useful but unwanted application to **being a virus laden quicksand**. Trying to ignore it is a bit like trying to ignore leprosy, it can be done but soon the problem grows out of proportion. One day you get up and your fingers fall off. Opening your Facebook account takes minutes rather than seconds, etc.....

Clicking on the wrong thing can install real infections. ← This is fact.

Be aware that someone is being paid to push this stuff on you. Foistware is the starter drug. The concept is to get you seeing and using it and then push the hard stuff, the paid versions. Don't do it, **just say NO**.

How to avoid

Stop clicking without reading. Sounds easy but after years of click, click, click, I still get caught every now and then. If you get that sinking feeling that you've just clicked something you shouldn't have, **STOP**. Close the program or the browser. If that doesn't work, use the old Ctl/Alt/Del keystroke to bring up the TaskManager and end the browser or task. It is much better to perform a simple reboot than to go through stopping the application later and then working to find and uninstall the program. Above all, realize that just because a company is well known or even in the business of protecting you, they aren't above grabbing a quick buck now and then. Check out this [Hall of Shame link \(http://hollyecho.com/questionable_installers.pdf\)](http://hollyecho.com/questionable_installers.pdf) for a list of known Foistware installers.

7 Dos and Don'ts

1. Don't trust a download just because you've heard of it.
2. Don't install ToolBars – **EVER**
3. Don't believe you are going to get Free 24/7 phone help.
4. Do read every bit of installation information for every FREE program you install.
5. DO know that **paid versions also** push foistware.
6. **Do use** CTL/ALT/DELETE as soon as you notice you're on a dark road.
7. Don't click, click, click.

That being said, this is just food for thought. I **DO not** represent any of the companies I have mentioned.

Send me your questions: Montgomery@Hollyecho.com and I will answer, include if I could post your questions in my next article.