

# Malware research group spins off from Harvard

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(AP) -- A research organization that tries to warn computer users about programs that do sneaky things on their computers has spun off from Harvard University.

StopBadware says it will operate as a standalone nonprofit with funding from [Google](#) Inc., [eBay](#) Inc.'s [PayPal](#) and [Mozilla](#), which makes the Firefox [Web browser](#). It was initially set up as part of Harvard's Berkman Center for Internet & Society.

StopBadware issues what it calls "badware alerts" about corporations whose applications do what the organization deems unwanted and harmful things to users' computers. For instance, it once put AOL on its badware list because downloads of the AOL program automatically came with other software the group said consumers don't necessarily need or want. The organization also targets purveyors of spyware and other forms of malicious software.

The idea is to warn users before they access a site with such a program. The Firefox browser, for instance, has used the StopBadware list to power some of its built-in security tools. The list also is meant to pressure companies to change their tactics.

The group, based Cambridge, Mass., said it decided to break off from Harvard because it had grown beyond its roots as a research project.

"There is still much to do," executive director Maxim Weinstein said.

"Badware remains a growing problem, but in the past few years, there's also been a growing sense that this is a problem we - the Internet community - can and should work together to address."

**More information:** <http://stopbadware.org>

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