

COMPUTER GURU

By Don Benjamin

I Didn't Download That!

When we explore people's ailing laptops in the Tech Lab, we usually look at the list of installed applications and ask about those that we're not familiar with.¹ Sometimes, the owners don't know where the software came from, and they're certain they didn't download it themselves.

But chances are they probably did, though not intentionally.

It's easy to accidentally download a program you didn't want or need. For example, the screenshot on the right is from a website that features printer "drivers," which are programs your computer needs to make your printer—well—print. So, which **DOWNLOAD** button do I click?

Download 1 installs the Firefox browser. Nice, but I didn't want it. Download 2 installs a "cleaning" program called MacKeeper. Nope. Download 3 installs a MacBook virus scanner. Nope.

The drivers I want are listed in the blue dotted oval thingy. Not obvious.

Another "gotcha" is the Adobe Flash Player update notice. Some web pages use Flash to create special effects, such as animations, and when Adobe issues an update to Flash, a dialog will pop up like the one on the left. But when you click **UPDATE NOW**, you'll also download the Google Chrome browser and Google toolbar unless you *uncheck* the little box that I kindly magnified for you. Chrome is a nice browser but downloading it (again) extends the interruption from the Flash update.² The Google Toolbar just junks up your browser toolbar, which is already confusing enough. So, if you wonder how the Google Toolbar³ started showing up in your browser, I just told you. You downloaded it.

If you need help finding third-party software on the internet, or removing software you don't want, just stop by the PSRC Technology Lab on Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. or Fridays from 10:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m.



Adobe Flash Player



¹ Yes, I ended this sentence with a preposition.

² Many websites are moving away from Flash, which can carry malware exploits.

³ Unless you like it, in which case it's simply wonderful.