

Security: Ad Blocking

By Richard Lowe

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I don't know about you, but I find banner ads pretty darn obnoxious. Now, I do understand that the foundation upon which the internet is built is, pure and simple: advertising. That's what makes the internet work, and that's why it was growing so fast. It's interesting to see companies fold as advertising falls short of expectations.

I hate those ugly banner ads (especially that "punch the monkey" thing). They steal my bandwidth and they take room from content. Think about it, you have a 10k banner, you lose a couple of seconds of bandwidth and about an inch off the top of your screen.

Even worse are those idiotic pop-up banner ads which free web sites seem to love (at least now most of them offer the option of using inline ads). There is very little worse than visiting a web site and having that stupid panty hose ad pop up over and over and over. It just won't stay closed.

There is now a product on the market which does a superb job of eliminating not only advertisements, but also pop-up banners, cookies, sounds, Java and JavaScripts.

Just to give you an idea of how well this product works, I cleared the statistics, then surfed for 5 minutes to 8 web sites. A total of 5 ads were removed! Wow.

On top of that, AdSubtract saved me from 4 annoying pop-up windows.
I purchased the Pro version, which is about \$29 - worth every penny. You can get your own copy from the AdSubtract web site. There is also a free version available which is find for most uses.

Another product which does just about the same thing is Norton Internet Security 2001. In addition to performing all of the ad blocking and cookie management, Norton Internet Security 2000 contains a firewall. The ad blocking and cookie manager of this product is reasonably good, but the firewall has some flaws. I would recommend AdSubtract over Norton Internet Security 2001.

Regardless of the product, you now have the power to remove those annoying ads from your surfing experience.

As an added benefit, this has tremendous effects on safeguarding your privacy. These products both remove web bugs, which are nasty little things created to track your movements across the internet. Now you can stop telling companies like DoubleClick from following your surfing habits. By blocking the ad, you are also blocking the report back to them of what you are viewing.

How do these programs work? It's very simple really. These intercept web pages before they get to your browser and examine the HTML code. If they find something that matches one of their patterns for an advertisement, they simply remove the code.

This means you pay a small price in CPU performance (I personally didn't notice any delay), but gain it back in bandwidth performance as you do not have to load the banners.

Additional Resources:

You can find Adsubtract at:

<http://www.internet-tips.net/cgi-bin/lnkinlte.cgi?l=.adsubtract>

Learn more about firewalls:

<http://www.internet-tips.net/Security/Firewalls.htm>

Learn about web bugs:

<http://www.internet-tips.net/Security/webbugs.htm>

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