

Adblock - Ethical or not?

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# Yes, using adblock is ethical

## Main points:

- Adblocks simply filter how data gets displayed on a user's personal device (the same as not looking at billboards, or leaving the room when an ad plays while you watch TV)
- Ads can be disruptive to a user's experience on a website (pop-ups, ads that make it difficult to click links, slow downs, have loud sounds, etc.)
- Increases safety, can prevent viruses and scams

# Adblocks are simply a filter

- Nobody forces you to watch TV commercials, nobody forces you to look at billboard ads while driving, and nobody forces you to check all the emails you receive that go straight to your junk/spam folder. So why should you be forced to look at ads on a website?
- When accessing a website your computer still receives the data that will contain the ad, but the adblock is simply choosing not to display it for the end user.
- In some cases, adblocks make it so that the ad does not come to you at all (such as YouTube ads, for example) and thus the owners of the website will not get a tiny bit of revenue from your viewing of it, but even then, they cannot force you to look at the ad.

# Ads can be disruptive to a user's experience

In the old days, ads were usually just an image or a banner on website. Marketers soon figured out that they could do all kinds of things for their ads, such as:

- Make pop-ups on your browser
- Make navigating a website more difficult (blocking links from being clicked, for example – also an accessibility issue!)
- Play loud/annoying sounds
- Mimic your operating system
- Promote fake news
- Show inappropriate content
- Be completely irrelevant

Intrusive ads can also cost more bandwidth/use up more of your battery, as well as make pages load slower.

Imagine a worse-case scenario – you are in the middle of an emergency and every second counts, but the YouTube video you found that may help you in a pinch has an unskippable ad!



**Your PC is infected!**

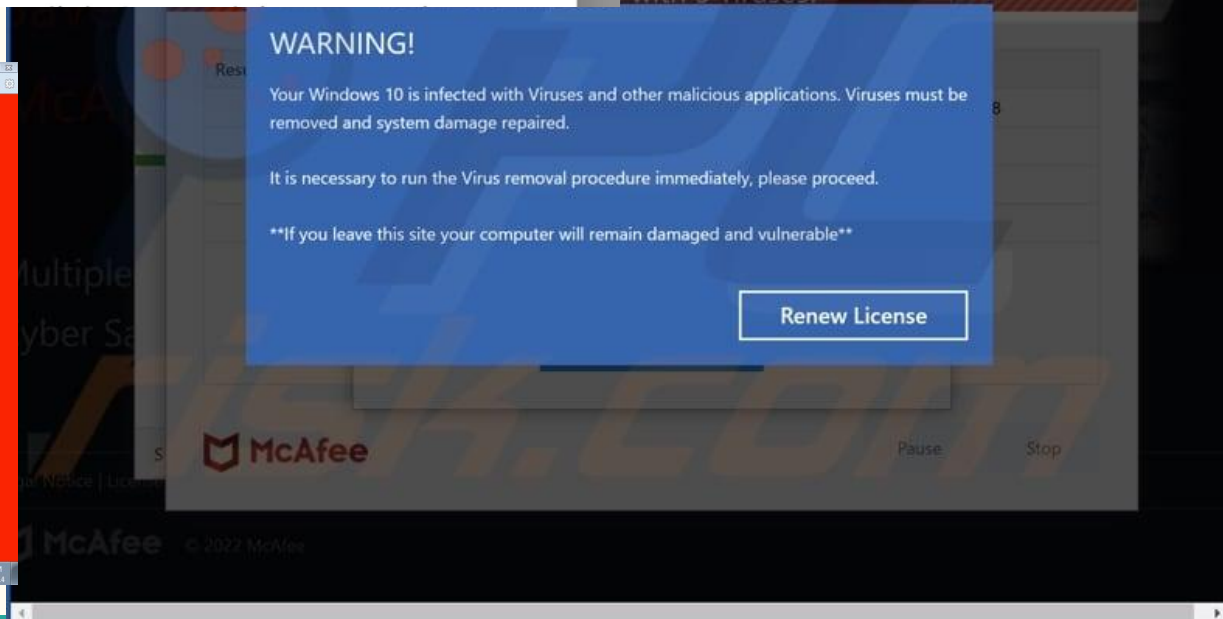
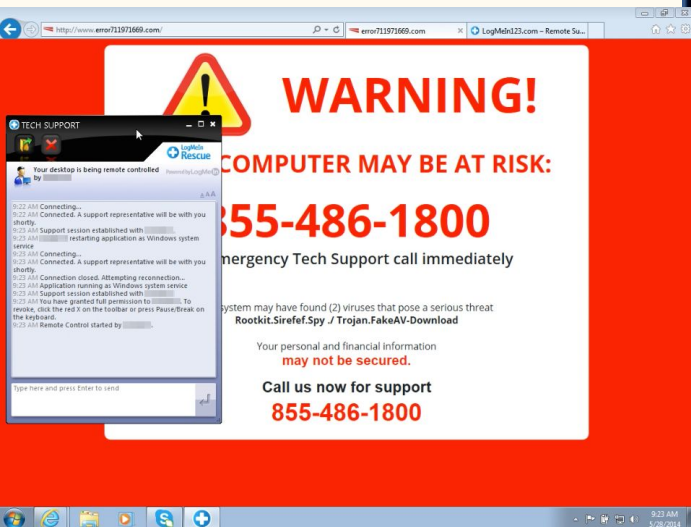
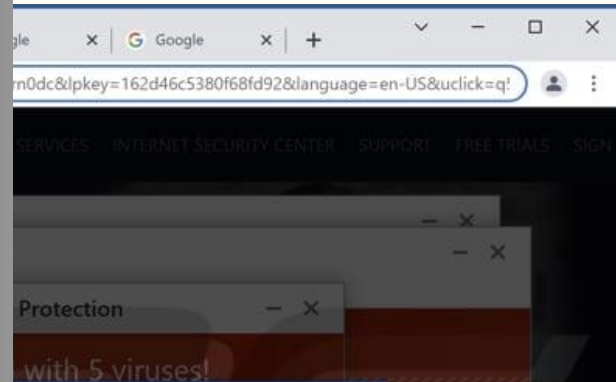
Scan now

Update your antivirus (free)

Congratulations!

Google User!

You've been selected as a winner for the free \$1000 Walmart Giftcard, iPhone X 256G or Samsung Galaxy S8!



# Adblocks increase safety by preventing scams and viruses

- Malware infected, and also Malvertising
  - redirects to malicious websites
  - “drive-by download”
- In some cases, ads are advanced enough that they mimic the look of an operating system, or are simply convincing enough to fool someone that they legitimately have a computer virus/issue.
  - they will likely have a phone number/link for someone to remote desktop into the computer, and they will proceed to convince the user to give them money, making it easy for older people and less tech savvy people to be scammed.
- Adblocks can also prevent tracking and allow you to browse the internet more anonymously, maintaining your privacy

# Concerns about using it

For sites that have “good” ads (non intrusive and relevant), you can always enable ads on specific websites.

Perhaps you are willing to view ads on in order to continue being a revenue source for those developers – most adblocks will allow you to whitelist these websites on their add-ons.

Adblocks are legal to use (at the very least, there are no laws that explicitly prohibit their use). In the end, it should be up to the user’s discretion if they want to use an adblocker and/or if they want to make exceptions for certain websites.

# References

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