

# USER MANUAL

## ADFILTER PLUGIN

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## About AdFilter

AdFilter is a browser plugin which blocks embarrassing image ads belonging to the following categories- dating ads, matrimony ads, nightwear ads, adult site ads. The plugin is a modified version of the widely popular Adblock Plus tool<sup>1</sup>.

The main motivation behind Adfilter tool was to address the concerns of web users towards being shown embarrassing online ads as well as provide a better alternative to advertisers, publishers and the users which current ad-blocking tools fail to provide. Online advertisements allow the advertisers to advertise their products to millions of users at a relatively cheaper costs. Also they are a good source of revenue for many website publishers and help in keeping the users updated with the new products in the market. Current ad-blocking tools block all ads and do not give an option to the users for selective ad-blocking. Hence there is a need for a browser plugin which blocks embarrassing ads only in contrast to blocking all ads.

## About Adblock Plus (ABP)

Ad-block Plus is the most popular tool on the internet and is currently being used by around 5% web-users across the world<sup>2</sup>. It is an open-source, content filtering tool available for Firefox, Chrome and Opera browsers which allows users to prevent page elements, such as advertisements, from being downloaded and displayed.

One of the disadvantage with ABP is that it doesn't give users an option to block selective ads. The users are left with no option but to either view all ads or block all of them. In one of the recent studies conducted by Bell Labs, India in February, 2013 in which 53 web-users in India were asked questions regarding their overall perception of online ads. Majority of the participants (62%) expressed an interest in using a tool like Ad-block Plus which also allows selective blocking of ads. 2 participants were explicit in stating that their main motivation to use the tool was to eliminate embarrassing ads [1].

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<sup>1</sup> <http://adblockplus.org>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.getadzap.com/blog/how-many-people-use-adblockers/>

## Features of the tool

- **Selective Ad blocking**

The tool blocks embarrassing image ads only and thus provides a better alternative to users who would want to see ads except certain ads which embarrass them.

- **Pre-defined Filter List**

AdFilter plugin allow users to block embarrassing ads only in contrast to blocking all online ads. The tool comes with a predefined list of ads belonging to the following categories- dating ads, matrimony ads, nightwear ads and adult site ads. The filter list contains around 1000 such filter which have been compiled after browsing through famous websites such as alexa.com, ranker.com etc. The list currently being used can be accessed from the following URL-

[https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/11874439/Ad-block/Embarrassing\\_ads\\_List.txt](https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/11874439/Ad-block/Embarrassing_ads_List.txt)

- **Customizable Filter List**

The tool can be customized and allow users to delete/add the filters from the list. Also any specific image ad can also be blocked by right-clicking on it and adding it directly to the filter list.

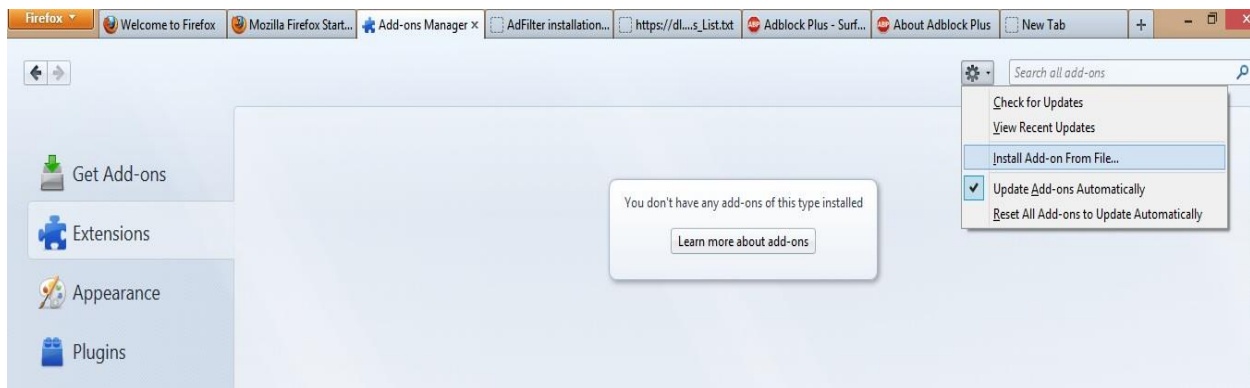
## Installing the Plugin

Currently, the AdFilter plugin is available for Firefox browser only. Please make sure you have Firefox browser (preferably the latest version) installed in your system in order to use the plugin. Also uninstall any already installed version of ad-block plus tool from your browser.

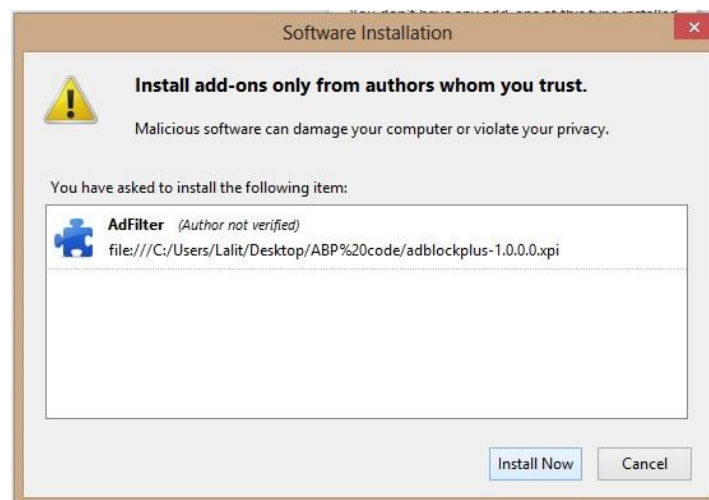
1) Download the xpi file to your computer from the following link-

<https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/11874439/Adblock/adblockplus-1.0.0.0.xpi>

2) In your Firefox browser, open the Add-ons Manger by pressing Ctrl+Shift+A and click on the gear icon (Tools for all add-ons). From the drop-down menu, select “Install Add-on from File”, browse to locate the add-on on your computer and select it.



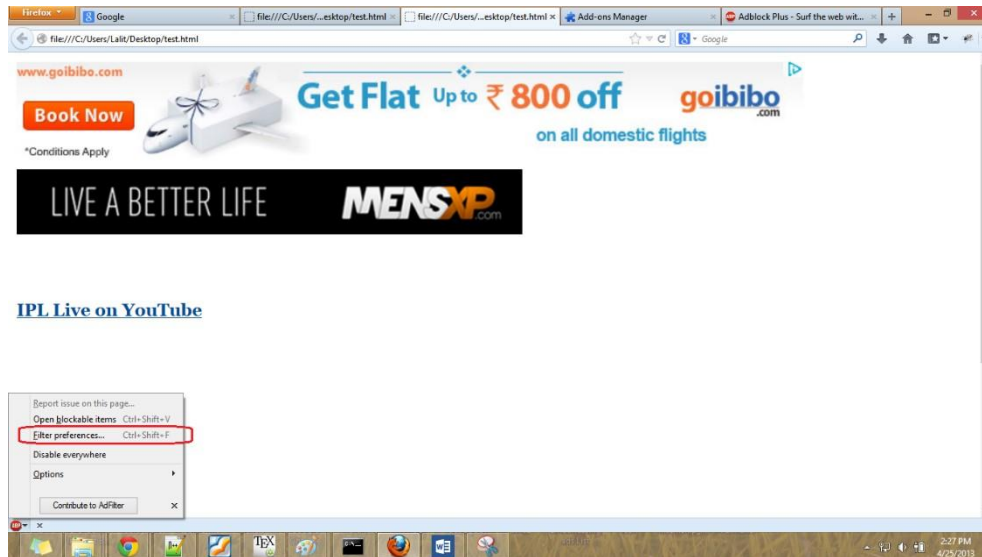
3) From the newly opened dialog box, click on “Install Now” button.



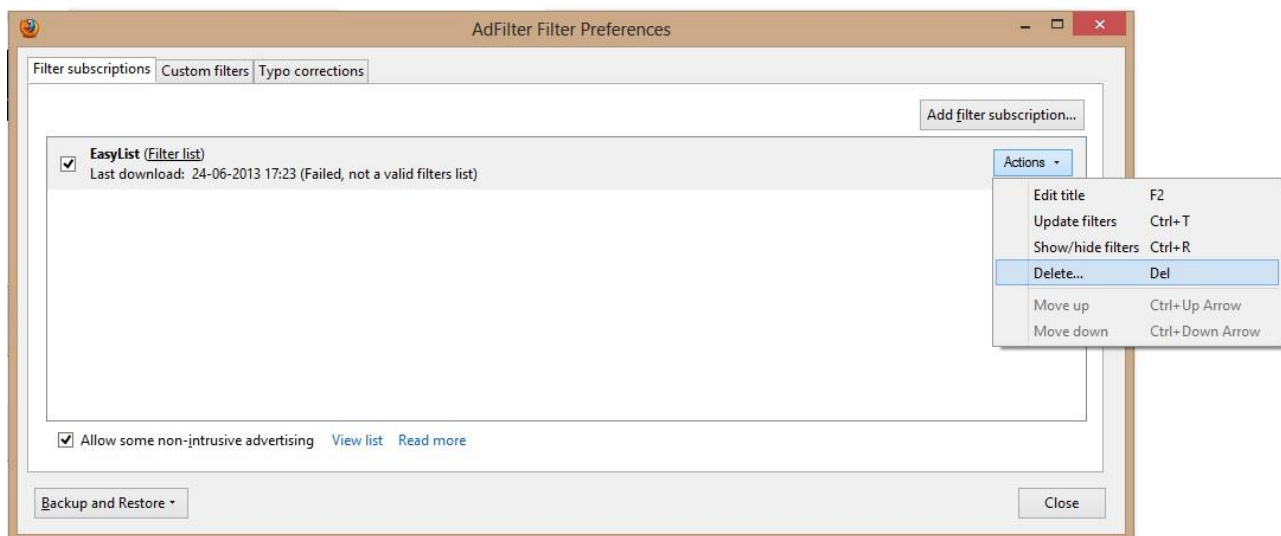
## Using the Plugin

### Adding the embarrassing filter list to the tool

1) Click on the ABP icon on the add-on bar. If add-on bar is hidden, press Ctrl + / to display the add-on bar. From the pop-up menu, select “Filter Preferences”

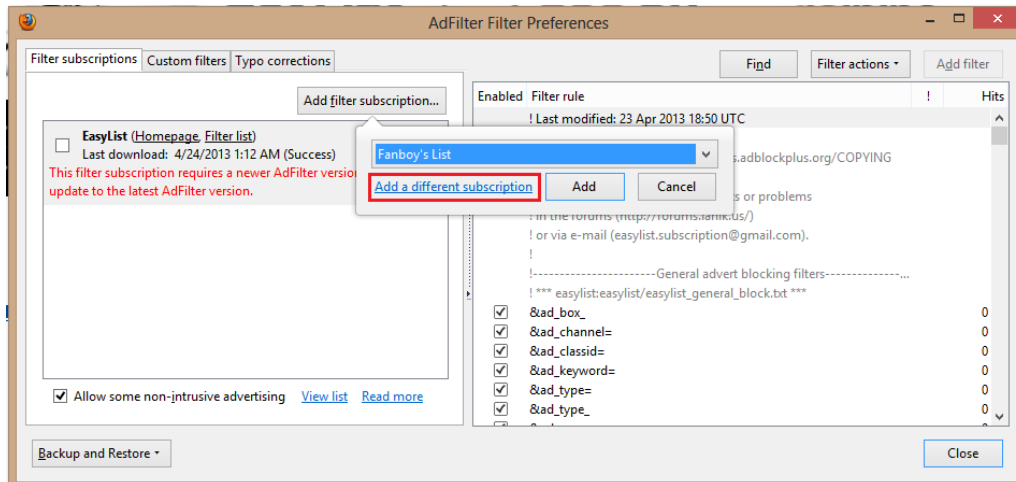


2) If there are subscriptions already present in the “AdFilter Filter Preferences” dialog box, uncheck it to disable or delete the subscription by clicking on “Actions” and selecting “Delete” from the drop down menu.

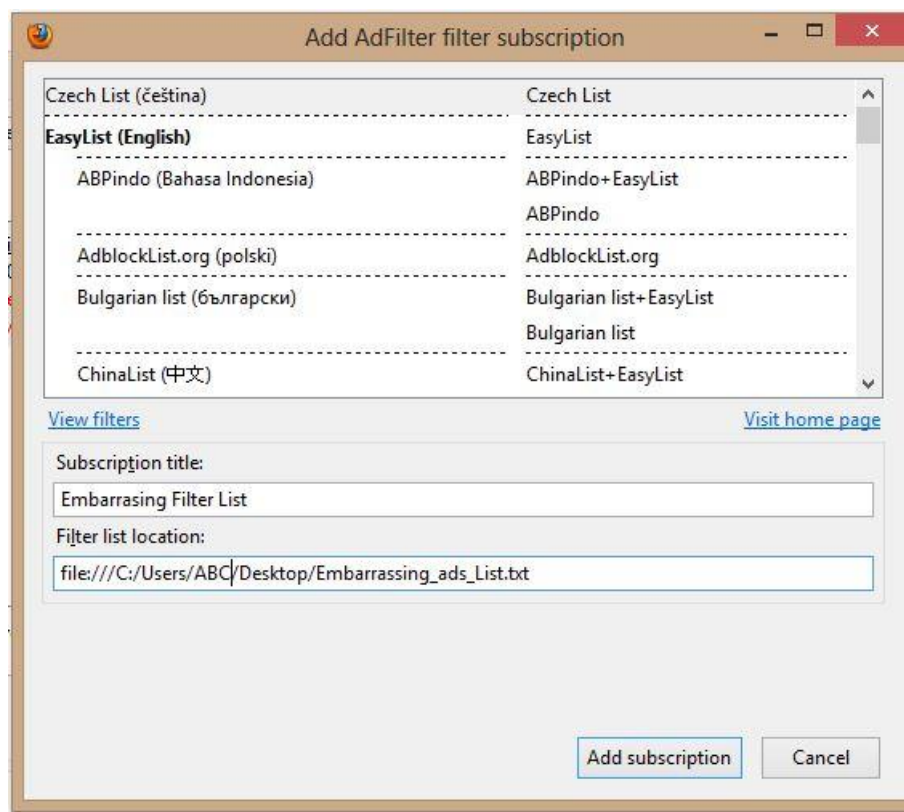


3) To add the embarrassing filter list (in case it is not already added by default), click on “Add Filter subscription” and then click on “Add different subscription”. Give a suitable title for the list to be added in the “Subscription Title” text box. Give the following URL path in the “Filter List Location” box-

[https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/11874439/Adblock/Embarrassing\\_ads\\_List.txt](https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/11874439/Adblock/Embarrassing_ads_List.txt) OR you can save a copy of the list from the above link on your computer and give the path to the file in the “Filter List Location” box.



4) Click on “Add Subscription” button. The list will be added and the status will be displayed indicating if the list was compiled properly or not. Check the path of the file or check the filters in the file in case there is a compilation error.

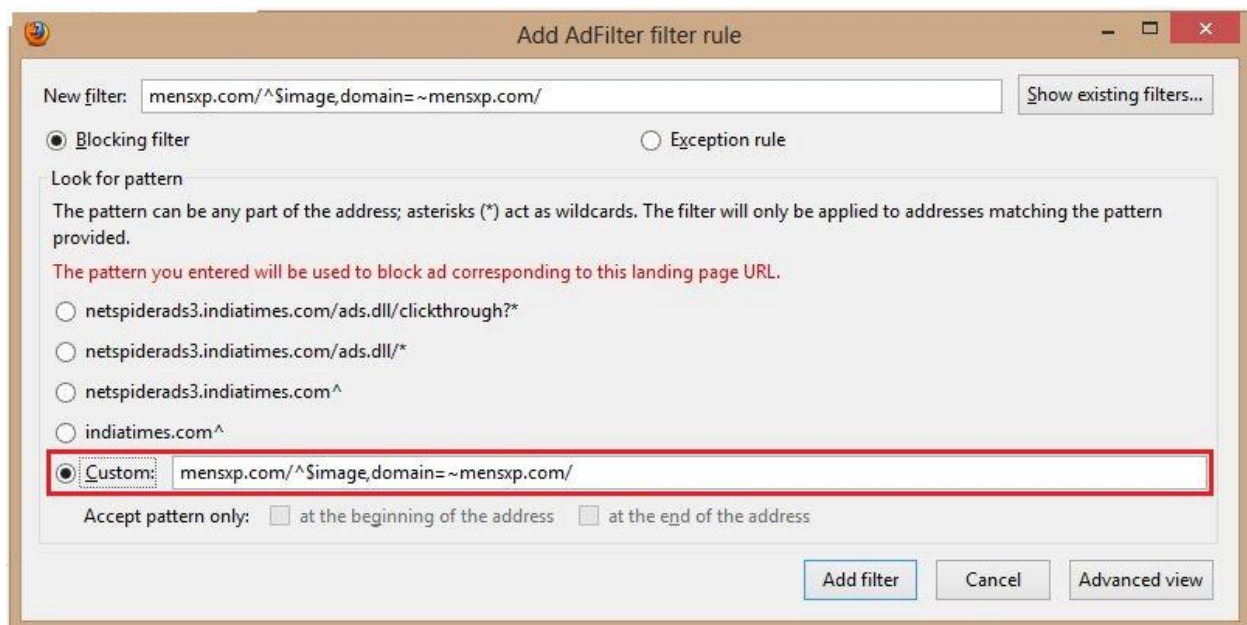


## Adding a new filter to an existing filter list

1) Right-click on the image ad which you want to block. From the menu, select “AdFilter: Block image” option.



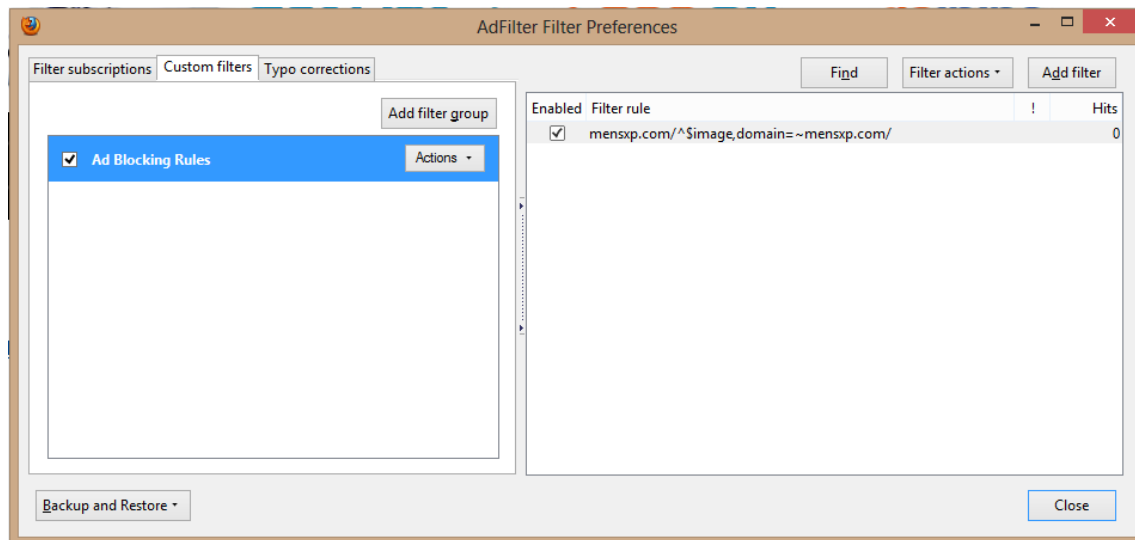
2) The “Add AdFilter Filter Preferences” dialog-box will appear and will contain a list of suggestion of filters you can add to block that image. Select the “Custom” option which contains the landing page URL along with the filter options.





3) Clicking on Add Filter will add the filter to the list of filters and AdFilter will block images directing to this URL in the future.

Note- The new filter will not be added to the file containing the list of embarrassing ads. Instead a new filter group will be created under the “Custom Filter” tab and the filter will be added there from where you can enable/disable it.



## Frequently Asked Questions

- **How does Ad-Filter differ from Ad-block Plus tool? In what ways is it similar?**

Ad-Filter does provides the same functionality as Ad-block plus by blocking online ads and allowing the users to customize the tool according to their preference. The only difference is that Ad-Filter blocks embarrassing/inappropriate ads in contrast to blocking all ads which ad-block plus does.

The ad-block plus comes along with a predefined list of filters (like easylist etc.) which contains links of all online ads. Whenever an ad is present on a webpage, ABP blocks the ad and prevents it from loading on the page irrespective of the type, category of ad. Ad-Filter on the other hand comes along with a predefined list of filters containing only embarrassing ad links. The tool simply looks at the content of the ad and blocks the ad depending on whether it is an inappropriate ad or not.

- **Can I use both Ad-block Plus and Ad-filter in parallel in my browser?**

No, Ad-Filter itself is a modified version of Ad-block Plus and hence you can use only one of them at a time. Also some of the features of Ad-block Plus tool such as blocking text and flash ads have been disabled in the current version of the Ad-Filter tool.

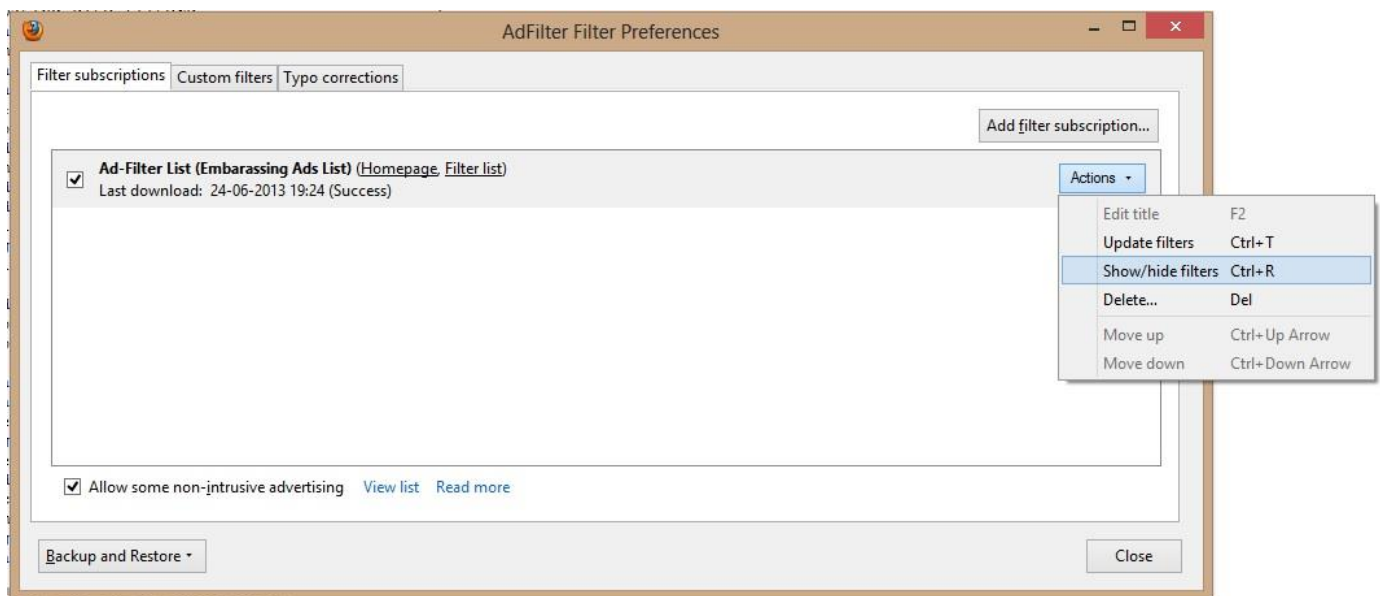
- **Why doesn't the tool block text and flash ads?**

Currently the tool has been designed to block image ads only. Due to the implementation of flash and text ads in a webpage, it is not possible to identify the topic of the ad and hence not possible to determine whether these ads are embarrassing or not. Hence, the tool doesn't work for text and flash ads. Even if you add a filter to block flash or text ads, it won't work.

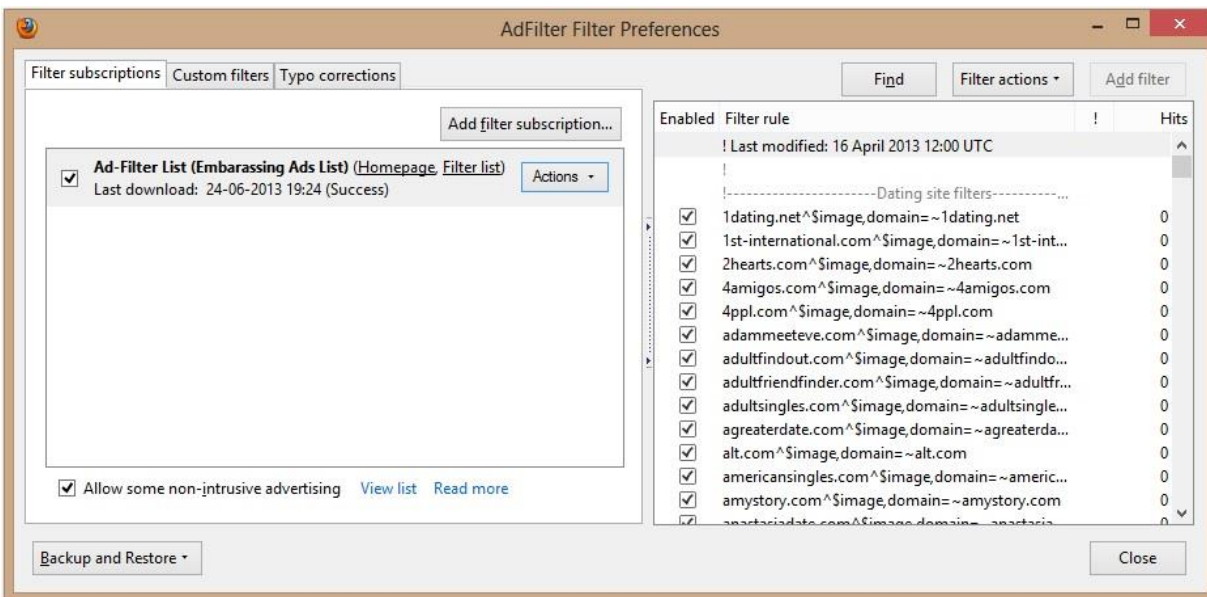
For flash ads, Adblock Plus provides a "block" option on the top right of any flash ad using which the users can directly add a filter to block that flash ad. In AdFilter, though you will get this feature but it will not block flash ads. Also, it may happen that sometimes you do not get a "block" button on the top of a flash ad.



- I would like to deselect a filter from the predefined list. How can I do it?**  
 Select the filter list you want to edit from the “AdFilter Filter Preferences” dialog box.  
 Click on the Actions menu and from the drop-down menu select “Show/Hide Filters” in case you don’t see the filters of that list.

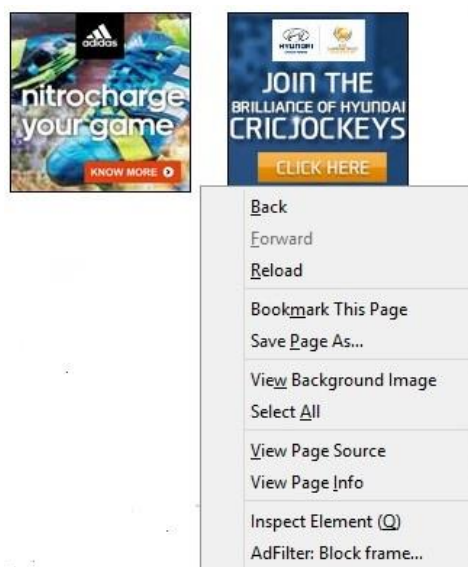


The filters of the current list will be displayed on the right side of the dialog box. Uncheck the filter which you want to be removed and click on Ok button.



- **I don't get the "Block Image" option when I click inside an iframe.**

An iframe may contain more than one image ad. In such a case, if you click anywhere else inside the iframe except on the image, you will get only "Block Frame" option. You will have to right-click specifically on the image so that you can block that image. For example, in the image below there is an iframe containing 2 images. If you right click between the two images, you do not get "Block image" option.



- **I found a bug in the tool and would like to report it so that it can be fixed.**  
Send an email with the details along with a screenshot to [agarwal.lalit91@gmail.com](mailto:agarwal.lalit91@gmail.com) and we would try to fix the bug asap.
- **I am interested in developing the tool further and require help regarding the same.**  
Send an email with your query at [agarwal.lalit91@gmail.com](mailto:agarwal.lalit91@gmail.com) and we would try to respond to your mail within 72 hours.

## References

- I. “Do not Embarrass: Re-Examining User Concerns for Online Tracking and Advertising”, SOUPS 2013, July 24–26, 2013, Newcastle, UK.  
Lalit Agarwal, Nisheeth Shrivastava, Sharad Jaiswal, Saurabh Panjwani, Bell Labs Research, Bangalore, India  
[http://cups.cs.cmu.edu/soups/2013/proceedings/a8\\_Agarwal.pdf](http://cups.cs.cmu.edu/soups/2013/proceedings/a8_Agarwal.pdf)