Concordia Institute for Information Systems Engineering (CIISE)

Concordia University

INSE 6150: Security Evaluation Methodologies

Assignment 2

Submitted to:

Professor Jeremy Clark

Submitted By:

Devina Shah

Student ID - 40238009

Question 1: Seven Core Task for Users while using Ghostery Ad Blocker

- **Core Task 1: Install Ghostery**
  Installing and setting up Ghostery is the first step to using the Ad Blocker extension, hence it is a core task that user needs to do with utmost accuracy.

- **Core Tast 2: Block Advertisements**
  While the default setting automatically blocks the advertisements on a website. A user can re-evaluate and change settings for ads for every website that they visit. Ghostery can also be paused for some time which will allow the user to navigate a webpage without any changes by Ghostery.

- **Core Task 3: Uninstall Ghostery**
  Uninstall Ghostery is a core task because a user needs to know how to get back to previous settings if they don't want this extension and the user should be able to verify the same.

- **Core Task 4: View and Understand Statistics**
  View and understand statistics is a core task because this enables a user to make informed decisions about their website navigation. They can understand how safe or unsafe a website is and if it needs to be restricted or whitelisted.

- **Core Task 5: Block Trackers**
  While the default setting automatically blocks the trackers on a website. A user can re-evaluate and change settings for trackers for every website that they visit. A user should also know how to whitelist websites that are trusted to them so that ghostery doesn't hamper their browsing experience by modifying requests coming from that website.

- **Core Task 6: Read Blog and FAQs**
  While using any extension that has the ability to alter the browsing experience it is a best practice to stay up to date with their guides and features. It also lets user know of the common problems that other users may be facing and different features that has been recently launched. This is why I believe this is a core task.

- **Core Task 7: Customise Ghostery Settings as per requirement**
  Ghostery provides a lot of settings that can be customised to optimise user experience. A user can easily navigate between different settings tabs to block or unblock ads/trackers and whitelist or restrict websites.

Question 2: Three Core Task Evaluation

Guidelines

G1	Users should be aware of the steps they have to perform to complete a core task.
G2	Users should be able to determine how to perform these steps.
G3	Users should know when they have successfully completed a core task.
G4	Users should be able to recognize, diagnose, and recover from non-critical errors.
G5	Users should not make dangerous errors from which they cannot recover.
G6	Users should be comfortable with the terminology used in any interface dialogues or documentation.
G7	Users should be sufficiently comfortable with the interface to continue using it.
G8	Users should be aware of the application's status at all times.

Core Tasks:

1. **Install Ghostery**
   Install Ghostery is one of the critical steps of using the tool itself. As it is one of the first steps, the user will form an opinion about the tool based on the ease of usability.

Guidelines	Status	Evaluation
G1	Match	To install Ghostery the user can simply install the extension through the official ghostery website or search for the extension in browser tools. The process is pretty straightforward and can be performed by users easily. On a typical google search there are no other websites with similar names that could misguide user into downloading something else.
G2	Match	All the steps to be performed show up on the screen in a sequential manner and so there is no confusion. All steps come with description of what and why it needs to be done.
G3	Match	The user can see the ghostery logo on the top right corner of the screen which implies that ghostery has been installed. On clicking that, it says if it's enabled or not, and what all settings needs to be enabled.
G4	Match	There is no scope for critical errors during installation as there are no complex steps to be performed and the steps that the user has to perform come in sequential manner.
G5	Match	There is no scope for dangerous errors during installation as all these steps are not complex, and the user can simply uninstall at any point to prevent anything that has gone wrong and restart the installation process carefully.
G6	Match	The terminology used is not very technical and during installation there are pop-ups to explain to user the permissions being granted to ghostery.
G7	Match	The interface of ghostery is extremely easy to understand and use. There is a simple view with everything critical and then there is a detailed view which the user can use to understand everything in detail. There are also multiple guides and blogs available on the ghostery website to help users navigate the extension better
G8	Match	The user is aware of the application status at all times as the ghostery logo comes on the top right corner of the browser. The user can click on the logo to further see what all services are enabled for that page.

2. Block Trackers:

This task is important as it involves user privacy while browsing a website. This task if not completed properly can expose the user and its information to unwanted places.

Guidelines	Status	Evaluation
G1	Match	The interface seems pretty straightforward with all the buttons marked properly which makes the user believe that the task can be performed easily. There is an anti-tracking button, as well as settings tab which lets you specifically add sites to trust/restrict.
G2	Not a Match	While the interface is not that difficult to understand it still leaves room for doubt. There is an anti-tracking button on the simple view, and a user might believe that enabling that gets the job done but when compared with statistics - the 'trackers blocked' stats remained 0, which implies that no trackers were blocked. For the same site when 'restrict site' feature is enabled it shows a number for trackers blocked. It also gives a pop-up that 'trackers will be blocked and anti-tracking enabled'. This ambiguity leaves the user in doubt about the right steps to follow.
G3	Match	The user can confirm that the task has been completed by looking at the trackers blocked stats. Adding the site in restricted site list also ensures that personal details will be anonymised and trackers will be restricted.
G4	Match	The user can conveniently add or remove websites from restricted list and change settings at any time so user can easily recognise and recover from a mistake.
G5	Not a Match	There isn't much scope for dangerous errors but if the user believes that they have enabled anti-tracking and they haven't done it properly or added a typo in website name while restricting then there is a chance that their data may not be anonymised, which can be a privacy issue and their data could be leaked in places they don't want it to.
G6	Match	The terminology used is easy to understand.
G7	Match	The interface has a simple view as well as detailed view and user can choose to explore the website as per their convenience and understanding.
G8	Match	User can navigate to settings and view the restricted site or trusted sites to know the status of anti-tracking at all times.

3. **Block Advertisements:**
   This is one of the core tasks of Ghostery Ad Blocker as the name suggests, so an evaluation on this task will determine how well the application performs. This task is one of the key features which will determine future user base.

Guidelines	Status	Evaluation
G1	Match	The users have to simply enable Ad-Blocking by clicking on the ad-blocking button. When it says 'ON' that implies that ad-blocking is enabled
G2	Match	The users have to simply enable Ad-Blocking by clicking on the ad-blocking button. When it says 'ON' that implies that ad-blocking is enabled. They can also review the Ads being blocked in the detailed view page.
G3	Match	The users can simply browse on a website and see if any ads are being shown to verify that the core task has been completed successfully
G4	Match	There is no scope for critical errors in this case. A user can review the Ads that are blocked in the settings page and customise the settings according to their requirements.
G5	Match	There is no scope for dangerous error whether we see or don't see any advertisements.
G6	Match	The terminology is pretty straightforward and can be understood by anybody.
G7	Match	The interface is easy to understand and use.
G8	Match	The user can check the application status by clicking on the application logo at any time on the top right corner and checking the ad-blocking status.

References:

[1] https://www.ghostery.com/ - Ghostery Ad Blocker (free version)
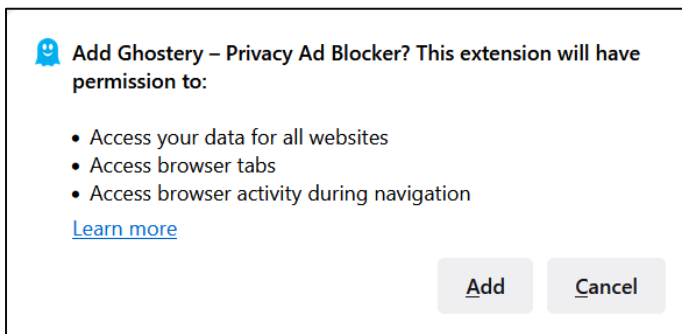
Appendix: Screenshots
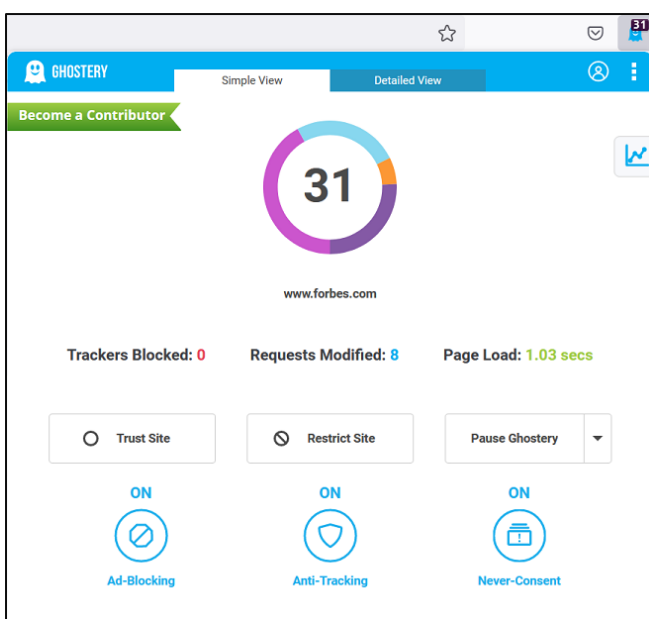

Fig 1: Pop-up during installation

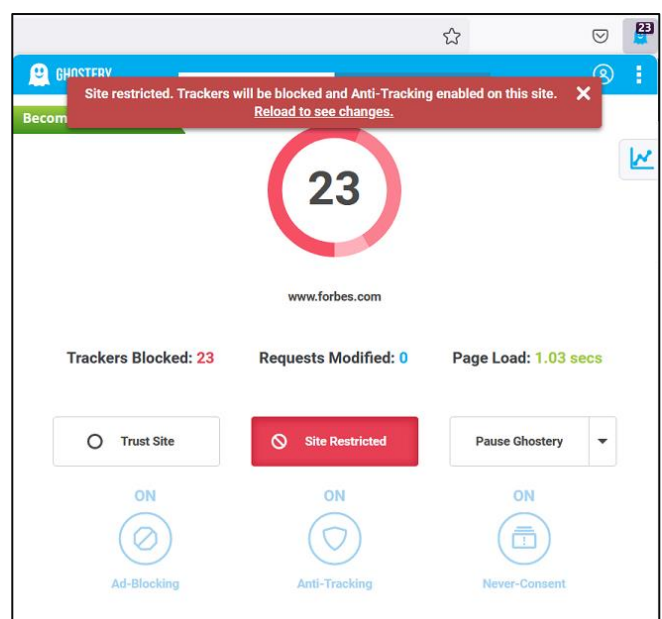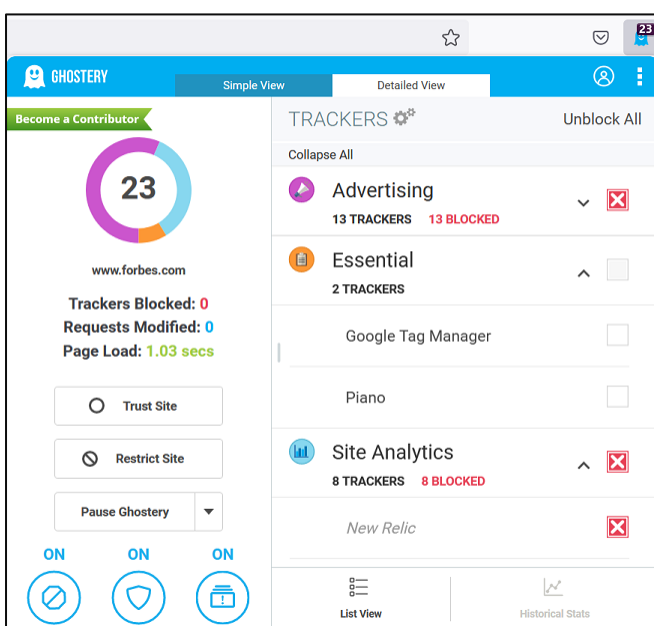Fig 2: Anti-Tracking is ON but Trackers Blocked is 0

Fig 3: Site Restricted and Trackers Blocked is 23

Fig 4: Detailed View with Analytics