# AdwareMedic

# About AdwareMedic

AdwareMedic is an application for Mac OS X designed to remove all known adware from your computer. It is very simple to use, and should clean up your system in less than a minute, from start to finish. Just open the app, click the Scan for Adware button, and remove anything that is detected. That's it!

If AdwareMedic doesn't solve your problem, it includes the ability to take a system snapshot that can help me find possible sources for the problem. This both helps you get rid of the adware and helps others by improving the app!

AdwareMedic will not install anything on your system. When it is opened, it will connect to [www.adwaremedic.com](www.adwaremedic.com) to check for and/or download the latest adware "signatures" (a small text file that tells AdwareMedic how to identify adware components).

AdwareMedic is "donationware." This means that you are free to use it without payment of any kind, but may opt to provide a payment to contribute to the development efforts. These contributions are vital to maintaining this app! To provide a payment, go to:

[http://www.adwaremedic.com/buynow.php](http://www.adwaremedic.com/buynow.php)

## System Requirements

AdwareMedic requires Mac OS X 10.7 or later. If you are running an older version of Mac OS X, you will need to follow the manual removal instructions in my [Adware Removal Guide](Adware Removal Guide).

## Limitations

Although AdwareMedic functions somewhat like anti-virus software, it's important to understand that it is *not* anti-virus software! It does not remove any real malware - only adware. If you think you may be infected with actual malware, be aware that there is nothing that can reliably remove all malware. For more information, see The Safe Mac's [Mac Malware Guide](Mac Malware Guide) and article [How to remove infected files](How to remove infected files).

It is also important to understand that AdwareMedic does not protect you against adware. AdwareMedic simply removes adware. Using AdwareMedic will not prevent you from being "infected" with adware again in the future. For that matter, neither will using anti-virus software; only a change in your online habits can keep you safe.

The first time you run AdwareMedic, it will need a network connection in order to download the adware signatures file. Without this file, AdwareMedic cannot remove anything. Be sure you are

online the first time you run AdwareMedic, and for best results, each time you use it in the future.

Finally, AdwareMedic should not affect any user data in any way. However, as with any software designed to remove files, it would be wise to have a good set of backups of your entire system, just to be on the safe side.

# How to use AdwareMedic

When you open AdwareMedic, you will see that it has a very simple interface:

There are only three buttons (not counting the links to my websites): Scan for Adware, Next Steps and Get Help.

AdwareMedic does not collect any personal information, nor does it transmit any information back to the AdwareMedic site or The Safe Mac. It will connect to the AdwareMedic website twice when it starts up: once to check for updates to the app, and once to check for and download updated signatures. It will also send an e-mail message to me (thomas@thesafemac.com) if you request that it do so as part of the System Snapshot process. This is something that you must initiate; AdwareMedic will not do this unless you ask it to.

## Scan for Adware

Click the Scan for Adware button to immediately scan your Mac for components of any known adware. The scan should be very quick, and is completely safe, as nothing will be deleted yet. After the scan finishes, if your system is clean, you will be told that nothing was found. Otherwise, a window will open showing the adware that was detected:
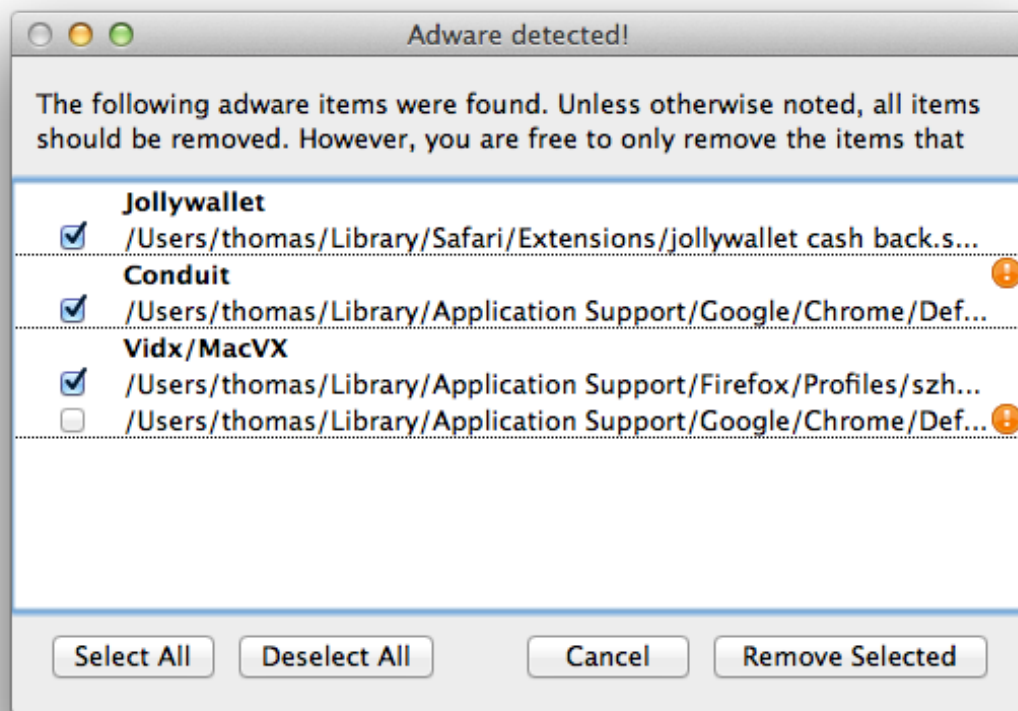


The screenshot above shows that components of Jollywallet, Conduit and Vidx (aka MacVX) were found, and reveals where the problem files can be found. If the full path to the file cannot

be seen, you can hover the mouse over a detected item to get a "tooltip" window showing the full path.

The checkboxes allow you to specify which items are to be removed. (By default, only files that are definitively bad will be checked.) Clicking the Remove Selected button will remove any items that are checked, and will leave any that are not checked in place.

Removal of some items will require entry of your admin password. Rest assured, the password request is provided by Mac OS X, and AdwareMedic will never actually see your password. If you choose not to enter your password, all items that do not require admin permissions will be removed, but those that do need higher permissions will be left in place. They will need to be removed manually, or by a subsequent AdwareMedic scan in which you provide the password.

If you installed adware on a non-admin user account, you will need to provide both an admin username and password when asked. As long as you do this, the adware can be removed just as well from a non-admin account as from an admin account. There is no need to log in to a different account to remove the adware.

If the adware was installed on a different user account, you will probably need to log in to that account to fully remove all components of that adware.

Files that are removed are not deleted outright. Instead, they are moved to a folder named "AdwareMedic Removals" in the trash can. This allows you to examine them and delete them at your leisure, or replace items that may have been removed by mistake. (If a legitimate file is removed by AdwareMedic, please report this to me at [thomas@thesafemac.com](mailto:thomas@thesafemac.com) so that I can fix it!)

There are a couple special cases to be aware of, denoted in the adware detection list by a symbol on the right edge of the list. If you hover the mouse over that symbol, you will get a short explanation in a pop-up tooltip.

## Optional items

These are legitimate files - such as web browser preference files - that may have been modified. For example, some adware has been seen to insert custom JavaScript code into Firefox's preference file. These items can be removed, but since that may result in loss of things like browser settings, they are not checked by default.

## Firefox modifications

Some adware is known to make modifications to the Firefox application itself. This is *extremely* unethical - what I would call "malware" behavior, although many security companies seem to

disagree with me - and, unfortunately, is not something that can be reliably fixed. The best solution in such a case is to delete the Firefox application, then download a new copy from www.mozilla.org. AdwareMedic will not do this for you, but it will alert you whenever it detects components of adware that is known to modify Firefox.

## Next Steps

If you have scanned your computer with AdwareMedic, removed all adware that was detected and restarted the computer (if instructed to do so), and you are still having a problem with ads, click this button. It will open a window that loads the following page from the AdwareMedic website that contains up-to-date information about what to try next.

http://www.adwaremedic.com/kb/unsolved.php

Because there are many causes for ads, not all of them the result of adware, it is entirely possible that AdwareMedic may not solve all problems. This page will help you try to find and solve other issues that may cause inappropriate ads.

It's also possible that you have adware that I have never seen before. If all else fails, that page includes instructions for how to report the problem to me for additional assistance.

## Get Help

Clicking this button will open this document in Preview.

# Frequently Asked Questions

## I'm still having the problem after scanning for adware!

If you have already removed all adware detected by AdwareMedic, and restarted your computer if AdwareMedic prompted you to do so, and you're still having problems, see:

http://www.adwaremedic.com/kb/unsolved.php

## How can I avoid adware in the future?

Contrary to popular belief, adware does not install itself. It must be installed by you, typically by tricking you into downloading and installing something from an unsavory site. Typically, there will be a license agreement that must be agreed to containing fine print as to what will be installed. Thus, it's important to think carefully about everything you download and open on your computer!

For more information, see:

http://www.thesafemac.com/mmg-defense/

## There was a problem checking for updates!

First, make sure you have a working network connection. (See if you can load www.adwaremedic.com in your web browser.) If it's working fine, you may have something installed that is blocking the outgoing connection attempt, like Little Snitch. Check any firewall or network filtering software that you have installed and make sure that AdwareMedic is allowed to communicate with www.adwaremedic.com.

## I got an error message about a permissions problem!

This may be due to a problem with the permissions settings on something in your home folder, such as the trash folder. To reset those permissions to their defaults, see the information on resetting home folder permissions and ACLs here:

http://pondini.org/OSX/Password.html

# Do I have to donate to use your software?

Absolutely not! This software is completely free for anyone to use. If you cannot donate, or simply don't want to, that's fine. However, if you are able, donations are very helpful for the costs of maintaining and distributing this software.

# No offense, but I'd really rather not trust your app. Can I do this manually?

Sure! You got in this mess because you trusted something that you shouldn't have, so it's a *good* thing if you are more suspicious of unfamiliar apps now.

For manual removal instructions, see The Safe Mac's Adware Removal Guide:

http://www.thesafemac.com/arg

The instructions there are as simple as I can make them, but you must read them carefully and follow the directions to the letter. There's a lot of potential for missing items or even damaging your system if you do not follow those instructions precisely!

# Is AdwareMedic available in the App Store?

No. Due to restrictions imposed on App Store apps (ie, sandboxing), AdwareMedic would not be able to do some of the things it needs to if it were modified for App Store distribution. Thus, it is extremely unlikely that AdwareMedic will ever be available through the App Store, unless Apple makes changes to the App Store sandboxing restrictions, which I don't think would be a good idea.

# I'd like to redistribute AdwareMedic.

If you would like to include this app on a CD for a Mac User Group, or something else along those lines, please e-mail me at thomas@thesafemac.com. This kind of use will probably be allowed, but you must check with me first!

When it comes to redistribution from an online source other than The Safe Mac, or modification of or addition to the distribution files, such uses are strictly forbidden. You are free to link to the copy of AdwareMedic on The Safe Mac on your own site, but not to host a mirrored download of the file itself.

# Version History

**2.2.1** (1/22/2014)

- Improved error handling for a couple rare conditions that caused AdwareMedic to exit with a cryptic error message when starting a scan

**2.2** (12/19/2014)

- Added more sophisticated file detection
- Improved message received when adware signatures file is invalid

**2.1** (11/11/2014)

- Added verification of the adware signatures file, to ensure it has not been tampered with
- Fixed minor error with reporting name of certain Chrome extensions, in situations that are unlikely to ever happen in the real world

**2.0** (11/5/2014)

- Added Sparkle framework for updates
- Removed license agreement window, put license agreement in docs
- Added **Contact AdwareMedic Support** item to **Help** menu

**1.1.2** (10/27/2014)

- Made information about what to do if the problem isn't solved more accessible
- "Hid" the Take System Snapshot feature slightly, to reduce frequent unnecessary submissions
- Fixed a bug that could cause failure finding the names of some Firefox extensions
- Added better messages for failure to find Chrome extension names

**1.1.1** (10/18/2014)

- Added capability to detect adware browser extensions by content alone, ignoring the extension name
- Fixed a bug that causes scans to fail if certain kinds of new items are added to the adware signatures file (like the changes needed for detecting extensions by content)

**1.1** (10/10/2014)

- Fixed some problems with correctly reporting names of some browser extensions
- Added the ability to match browser extensions by both name and contents

**1.0.8** (10/6/2014)

- Added better explanatory message after removal to explain what to do next
- Removed Buy Now buttons and replaced them with a "nag window" at startup
  - Those who have donated can simply check the "I already donated" box
- Improved logging

**1.0.7** (10/3/2014)

- Added a User-Agent string to the HTTP request when downloading the signature and app version files from adwaremedic.com. This should prevent some firewalls from blocking the connection.

**1.0.6** (10/2/2014)

- Fixed problems that occur when AdwareMedic's attempts to check for updates over the network are blocked by an outgoing firewall, like Little Snitch.

**1.0.5** (10/2/2014)

- Added backup reminder to adware removal window
- Improvements to logging and error handling

**1.0.4**

- Improved documentation for how to handle problems that aren't solved by AdwareMedic
- Fixed a bug that caused delays in writing to the log file
- Improved value shown in system snapshot for the scan log if there was an error
- Added logging of user's choice whether or not to restart, if asked
- Added system uptime info to system snapshots

**1.0.3**

- Fixed a bug with removing adware login items
- Removed the "multiple networks" and "specific sites" options from Send Report window
  - (People weren't filling them out correctly, so the information they provided was unreliable.)
- Enabled close box on main window to allow quitting the app
- Improved error handling and logging of errors to the Console

**1.0.2**

- Added the ability to check the content of files, and only detect files that have certain content

- Improved detection of a maliciously-modified launchd.conf file as part of Genieo
- Improved messages displayed when trying to remove a file that is loaded by launchd.conf

**1.0.1**

- Added scan logs to the system snapshot
- Changed the Donate button to a Buy Now button
  - The "donationware" payment model is still in place, but has been changed to avoid limitations PayPal places on payments that are called "donations."
- Changed the default size of some windows
- Fixed a bug with file removal that happened if the same file was identified by two different signatures

**1.0**

- Added better error checking for failures to write support files in the user Application Support folder
- Added About window with information about adware signatures
- Added warning if trash folder permissions are abnormal
- Added message to let the user know adware was removed successfully
- Fixed bug with removing items that have identical names
- Changed name to AdwareMedic, due to a name conflict

**1.0b8**

- Added menu items in the Scanner menu to open and reveal the scan log file.
- Further modifications to the process of sending system snapshots to The Safe Mac, to ensure that the information is as useful as possible.

**1.0b7**

- Made some changes to the system snapshot submission process to improve the information and prevent submission of snapshots if an AdwareMedic scan has never been run.

**1.0b6**

- Fixed a bug with the web browser check that prevented removal of adware if no browsers were open.

**1.0b5**

- Signature file is now included in the app, so network connection is not necessarily needed on first run (though the file may still need updating).

- Added progress bar to the scanning process (though it usually completes so fast you can't see the bar move anyway).
- Asks to quit any web browsers that need to have extensions removed.

**1.0b4**

- Added Retina display support
- Cleaned up and improved the signature downloading code
    - A corrupt signature file on the hard drive now gets removed and replaced, rather than causing immediate failure
- Added splash screen for first open
- Minor icon change (old one looked too much like a purse at smaller sizes!)

**1.0b3**

- Fixed a few bugs

**1.0b2**

- Changed name from AdNuke to AdMedic, and got a new icon
- Added logging of detections
- Tidied up a few things

**1.0b1**

- First private beta

# License Agreement

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