



5 Ways to Block Pop Ups

Many of you have been asking for advice on all kinds of technical topics, so we've created ComputerGeeks.com's "Tech Tips" to keep you on the cutting edge. Our goal is to deliver useful information to Computer Geeks of all types-whether you're a techno-rookie or a Geek veteran, Tech Tips is our way of saying "Thank you" for being a loyal GeekMail Subscriber!

5 Ways to Block Pop Ups...

Advertisers are constantly looking for any way to draw attention to their products. Although typical banner ads are still used heavily, they now seem to be almost invisible to the average web surfer. Pop ups and other intrusive types of advertising are now used to thrust an ad in your face that you have no choice but to at least acknowledge. Regardless of the nature of the ad, pop ups are a nuisance, and there are now many options available for keeping them off of your computer screen all together.

1. Internet Explorer on Windows XP with Service Pack 2

This summer's release of [Service Pack 2 for Windows XP](#) brought about a few significant changes to the operating system. One of the most noticeable was the addition of a pop up blocker to Internet Explorer.

The pop up blocker is integrated into the browser and can be customized by browsing to the "Tools" tab at the top of the program. Like many pop up blocker applications, personal preferences can be set to allow/block pop ups from certain sites, as well as providing customization for how the user is alerted to the fact that a pop up has been blocked.

For those using Windows XP, upgrading to Service Pack 2 is an excellent idea for your system's security as a whole, but specifically for the additional convenience of an integrated pop up blocker. For those with a Microsoft operating system other than XP, sorry, this is not available for you.

2. Alternative Web Browsers

There are other choices for web browsers available, and many have included a pop up blocker long before Microsoft decided to include one with Internet Explorer.

The [Mozilla](#) Firefox browser version 1.0 was officially released on November 9th. This browser has already received a great deal of acclaim and has become quite popular as an alternative to Internet Explorer.

Firefox is a highly customizable web browsing application that includes an effective pop up blocker, tabbed browsing, and many other features not found in Internet Explorer.

[Crazy Browser](#) is another option that was released in 2002, which is not as much an alternative browser, as it is a skin for Internet Explorer. In order for Crazy Browser to run, a system must have Internet Explorer 5 (or greater) installed, as well as Windows 95 (or greater) installed as the operating system. The Crazy Browser application then takes the base functionality of Internet Explorer and adds features similar to Firefox, such as the pop up blocker and tabbed browsing.

3. Browser Tool Bars

A growing trend is for websites to offer a downloadable toolbar for use with Internet Explorer. Many of these toolbars offer unique features intended to enhance the user's web browsing experience in different ways, but they generally also include a pop up blocker. Although there are toolbars available from dozens of websites, [Google](#), [MSN](#), and [Yahoo](#) are some of the more reputable names with one available.

The installation of these toolbars is quick and easy, and the most difficult part may be reading the fine print in the license agreements.

Although these toolbars may do an excellent job blocking pop ups, they may also be retrieving data on your web surfing / search habits. If you feel a toolbar may be the right solution for you, stick with one from a trusted name, and just be sure to read the fine print.

4. Pop Up Blocker Software

Stand alone pop up blocking software is available from dozens, if not hundreds, of different sources. With various interfaces, and prices ranging from free to \$30 (and higher), choosing one can be a difficult task. Many of the programs that are not available for free do come with a free trial download, so you can at least get a sense of whether the program is right for you before committing. Some of the options in this category include [STOPzilla](#), [Secure IE](#), [Zero Popup](#) and [Pop Swatter](#), to name a few.

The main drawback to this type of pop up blocking solution is that you now have another independent application running on your computer. Although they are generally not resource intensive, why run a program to do something that can be handled by one that is already running anyway? Additionally, with so many reliable solutions available to eliminate pop ups for free, spending money on one is hard to justify.

Along with a dedicated pop up blocker, another recommended tact for eliminating pop-ups is eliminating spyware on your computer system. Some pop-up programs use accompanying spyware to target pop ups specifically to you and your web surfing habits. An excellent, free program for eliminating spyware of all type is [Spybot Search & Destroy](#).

5. Internet Access Software from Select ISPs

Some ISPs (Internet Service Providers) now incorporate a pop up blocker with the software they provide to subscribers for accessing the internet. [Earthlink](#), [Optimum Online](#), and [AOL](#) are just a few of the larger providers that add value to their packages by adding a pop up blocker. Bundling this functionality with the ISPs base software definitely makes things easy for the subscriber, as there may be no need to find one elsewhere.

In general, these blockers are effective, but are not the most feature rich and may have limited options for customization by the end user. One draw back with ISP provided pop up blockers is that some only work with their service. So, if you ever switch to a new provider, you'll need to be prepared to switch to a new pop up blocker as well.

Final Words

Pop ups are a fact of life on the internet, but that does not mean you need to put up with them. Among the five general solutions presented above, there are literally hundreds of options available for eliminating the clutter of pop up ads, allowing you to enjoy only the content you intended to see.