

<http://www.pocket-lint.com/review/3440/ad-aware-2008-pro-review>

Ad-Aware 2008 Pro - PC

A worthy upgrade from the freeware version?

by Paul Lester published on 9 September 2008

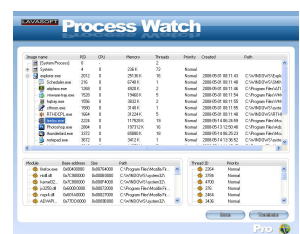
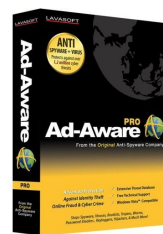
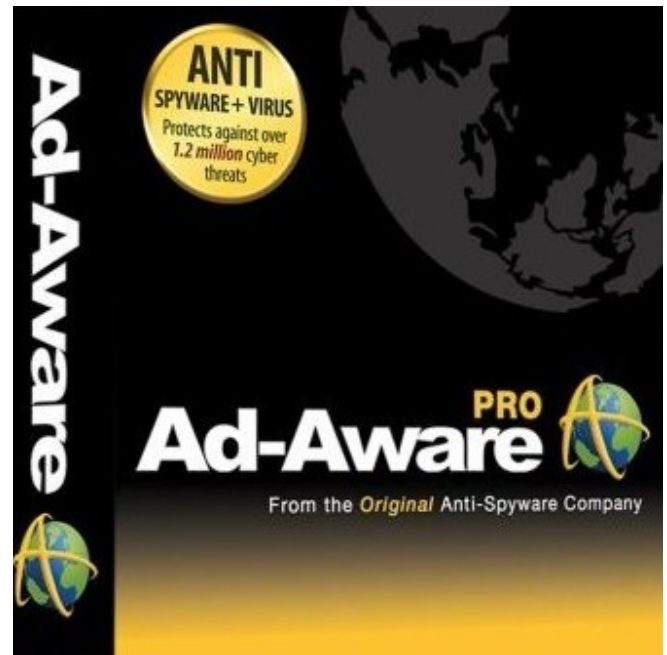
Ad-Aware has been around for quite some time and due to the appeal of its free protection and scanning tools was the weapon of choice for many in the fight against malware. Over the years many other suites have begun to offer similar built-in protection, but Lavasoft has kept up to speed by refining its software to offer more efficient and comprehensive security along with a range of optional components.

The "Pro" version on test adds anti-virus protection and real-time detection to the more straightforward scans of the free version and the Ad-Watch, Process-Watch and network drive scanning tools to the entry-level protection of the "Plus" alternative.

Despite rivals becoming more efficient at developing straight-forward support for a wide range of threats under a single interface, the Ad-Aware software persists with separating its protection into a scanning application that includes the ability to monitor processes and host files and the "Ad-Watch" utility that safeguards the registry, network traffic, cookies and processes.

These combined security tools do offer an impressive level of protection but they don't feel particularly well integrated and are often sluggish to load. While there's a decent degree of control over how they operate its also not immediately obvious what each of the "on/off" settings actually do, and feels like an attempt to simplify complex operations that has really resulted in the opposite effect.

Regardless you'll find the bulk of control through the main interface, which allows you to choose from a Smart Scan to check critical areas, Full Scan or Custom Scan; the latter lets you choose specific hard drives and specific scans to run.



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There's a scheduler here for automating scans and generally we were very impressed by how effective the software is at detecting threats, with the diagnosis and removal process being very straight-forward.

However it does take a little longer than we'd like to check a system: even the Smart Scan takes quite a while to complete and there's often very little information available as to while a file has been flagged as potentially malicious.

Ad-Aware is extremely effective at detecting and eliminating threats through scans, but less so at preventing new threats from infecting your machine through the Ad-Watch component.

Some users, particularly beginners, may find it a little awkward to juggle the various components and it would have been nice to see them all integrated better into a single interface, perhaps with a wizard approach to simplify the various configurations available.

While improvements have been made to the latest version to add extra security and improve the efficiency of the software, it's hard not to think that Lavasoft is still a few steps behind the competition, even despite its comprehensive support.

VERDICT

Ad-Aware is still one of the most effective solutions for diagnosing and removing threats and in the new "Pro" version this includes viruses as well. It seems to have lagged behind much of the competition in terms of usability through, and the questionable "live" protection against future intrusions means that while impressive enough in the areas that count, it's no longer at the top of the pile as an overall solution in the light of some very capable competitors.

At a glance

What is it?

Malware and virus protection for your PC

Good

Extremely effective malware and virus scans, good degree of security, reasonably priced

Bad

Application and component loading can be sluggish, slow scans, Ad-Watch live protection could be better

Verdict

Despite offering some clear advantages over many rival products, Ad-Aware still lags behind as an overall package due to usability issues and the live protection components

Price £20

Our score

7/10

Your score

?/10