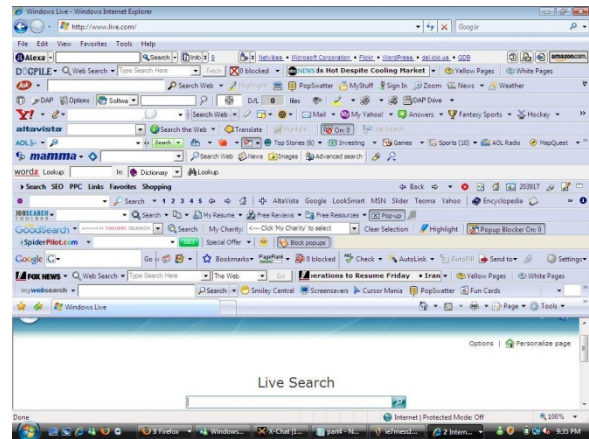


How to Get Rid of Toolbars

By Adam Bjerk

(<http://www.getridofthings.com/computers/get-rid-of-toolbars.htm>)

Internet toolbars are supposed to add increased functionality and generally make your web surfing easier, but they rarely do. In my opinion, you should get rid of toolbars - they aren't worth their trouble, and some lesser-known toolbars are downright dangerous. Consider the safe and somewhat popular "Yahoo! Toolbar." This toolbar's download page proudly boasts its advantages: bookmarks, email alerts, and spyware protection. These are things that my browser already does, and browsers and operating systems will continue to incorporate the more useful aspects of developing toolbars.



Of course, there are two types of toolbars. There are the pointless/annoying toolbars (Google Toolbar, Ask.com Toolbar, Windows Live Toolbar, Blogger Toolbar) that are easily uninstalled, and then there are the toolbars that are actually malware. Detecting malware isn't always easy, but there are a few indicators. With a malicious toolbar, you may experience system slowdowns, slower and/or erratic searches, random shutdowns, [popups](#), an unchanging desktop background, or sundry messages – not from your AV program - saying you are "infected". These toolbars - or the malware that comes with them – can mine for personal data, redirect your searches, drop viruses and trojans, hog your system's resources, and/or open backdoors for seedy individuals. It is usually easy to remove toolbars made by legitimate vendors, but getting rid of malicious toolbars is much more involved. Below you'll learn first how to get rid of toolbars that are merely unneeded or annoying, and then how to get rid of toolbars that are actually [malware](#).

Ways to Get Rid of Toolbars

Uninstall toolbar. This method will get rid of toolbars that come from legitimate vendors, and it may get rid of a small portion of the malicious kind. To uninstall the toolbar with Windows:

- (1) Click on "Start" in the left, lower corner and then click on "Settings" and then "Control Panel", or just Control Panel if available
- (2) Click on "Add or Remove Programs"
- (3) Remove the toolbar that ails you. If this doesn't get rid of your toolbar, proceed to the next step.

Disable or uninstall the toolbar through the browser. As with the previous method, this will get rid of toolbars of the less nefarious variety.

To get rid of toolbars using Firefox:

- (1) Open Firefox and click "Tools" in the uppermost menu
- (2) Click on "Add-ons". You will see a list of add-ons used in Firefox
- (3) Highlight and uninstall the toolbar.

To get rid of a toolbar using Internet Explorer:

- (1) Open your IE browser and click on "Tools" in the uppermost menu
- (2) Click on Manage Add-ons
- (3) "Toolbars and Extensions" should be highlighted. Click on the toolbar you want to get rid of, or hold control and click if you want to get rid of a few toolbars
- (4) In that window, click "Disable."

Get rid of toolbars using free, anti-malware software. If the above methods didn't work, you'll need to get rid of malware to get rid of the toolbar. There are a few great programs that we recommend at How to Get Rid of Things. Lavasoft's Ad-Aware is free and effective, as is Spybot Search and Destroy. Windows Defender is also a viable option. If you've contracted some nasty malware, they may prevent you from getting rid of toolbars by going to these pages or installing any anti-virus programs. If this is the case, proceed to the next step.

Search message boards for ways to get rid of the toolbar and its accompanying malware. There are many variables involved in manually getting rid of toolbars. To find exact directions to get rid of your toolbar, first open up your browser and go to Google. Type in the name of your toolbar in quotations, press spacebar and type "remove" without quotation. It should look like this: "toolbar name" + remove. You can replace "remove" with "uninstall". Chances are you'll find people who have learned how to get rid of your toolbar. You may even find software programs specifically designed to get rid of your toolbar and its variants.

Have an expert get rid of the toolbar. Rather than endlessly battle a recalcitrant, malicious toolbar that is harming your machine and exposing personal information, have a geek get rid of it. Yes, it could cost you some money and your machine may be gone for a few days, but don't feel bad. Computer technology is going to keep progressing, and you'll have to keep progressing with it. This means making mistakes from time to time, and learning from them. Look to the right sidebar to find out how to avoid having to get rid of toolbars in the future.

Reformatting and Reinstalling Your Operating System

As I stated earlier, when you can't get rid of a toolbar by uninstalling or removing it through conventional means, your computer is probably infected with malware. When your machine is infected with malware, the safest thing you can do is reformat (erase) your hard drive(s) and reinstall your operating system, thus wiping everything clean. It is hard to tell when malware is completely gone. A malicious program may appear to be vanquished, only to resurface after a certain program is opened or a certain amount of time has elapsed. Many accomplished network administrators, geeks, and techies

prefer the hassle of reformatting and reinstalling to the uncertainty of not doing so. There are a few things you can do to make this process easier. First, always back up your important files on a regular basis. This can be done with jump drives, external hard drives, or discs. Second, keep your software discs and codes organized, including your operating system discs and any that came with your computer. Lastly, take your computer to a place that won't mind if you sit in on the operation. Heavy computer users will have to reformat from time to time...save some money by learning how to do it on your own.

You can hide the toolbar, but why?

Many "get rid of toolbar" guides demonstrate how to hide toolbars using Firefox, Internet Explorer, and the other popular search engines.

If you're using IE, hide the toolbar like this:

- (1) Open IE.
- (2) Right click on an empty part of the toolbar.
- (3) Uncheck unwanted toolbars.

If you are using Firefox:

- (1) Open Firefox
- (2) In the uppermost menu, left click "View" and hover over the toolbars option, and uncheck any unwanted toolbars.

You see, it's not hard; however, hiding instead of getting rid of toolbars via deleting or uninstalling is a perfect example of "out of sight, out of mind."

If you have a toolbar that is really a form of malware, hiding it won't do anything. Far from being dealt with, your virus-like toolbar will go on stealing your personal information, slowing down your system, and opening back doors. Hiding toolbars will allow you to see more of your screen, and that's it. It is best to just get rid of toolbars that you aren't going to use.

How to Avoid Getting Toolbars

When installing software or updates, slow down and read the fine print. It is much harder to get rid of toolbars than to avoid them in the first place. Most unwanted toolbars are installed by the user along with other programs. A free program may require you to install the toolbar as the price of use, or, a piece of software may sneak a toolbar into the installation process via already-checked boxes. This is why it is important to slow down and avoid clicking "next" at break-neck speed when you're installing new programs.

Research programs before installing them. Unless the software you're installing is well known, do some research before letting it loose on your computer. Many file-sharing programs are notorious for installing [spyware](#) toolbars and other intrusive programs as the price of use. Some programs floating around the Internet are specifically designed to turn your computer into a cesspool of malware. Simply

"Google" the name of the program you want to install. With a little patience, you're bound to find out if it comes with a toolbar or other problems.

Every computer needs an AV program. These programs probably won't get rid of malicious toolbars once they're installed, but they may prevent installation in the first place. I use the free AV program Avast, which updates daily and generally warns me if I am on a page that is high risk. AV programs do give your computer an added layer of protection, but nothing can protect your computer from a careless user.