

Before I get started explaining this program, have a look at the definition of caching from Wikipedia, so you'll have a better understanding of what's in it for you in terms of using this program:

**"Web Caching: proxy servers employ web caches to store previous responses from web servers, such as web pages. Web caches reduce the amount of information that needs to be transmitted across the network, as information previously stored in the cache can often be re-used. This reduces bandwidth and processing requirements of the web server, and helps to improve responsiveness for users of the web."**

So what exactly is this program then?

This is my attempt at blocking and removing all of the advertisements and other things on the net that generally slow things down while at the same time employing a localized version of a web caching server in order to improve Internet performance. Additionally, the filter incorporates AntiVirus and Malware, and uses a blocklist to protect the client computer against thousands of known malicious URLs.

What this program does:

If you look in the root of your C: drive after installing this program, you should see a directory called "Squid". This is a SquidNT proxy server service compiled specifically for windows, and it should occupy only about 4 MB of drive space after being initially installed. Keep in mind, however, that this directory can potentially get up to 512 MB of space if you surf the net a lot. What does SquidNT do? It makes requests for web pages on your behalf, and accordingly, it saves much of the static data from a specific site on your hard drive, which is will use in the future to construct a requested web site instead of downloading the information again. In layman's terms, this makes your browsing experience faster. Sometimes by quite a bit, other times, not so much. Additionally, there are over 10,000 lines of blocked advertisement sites whose silly little ads get replaced by a transparent 4x4 gif (meaning, you won't ever see the advertisement) located in a denied ads file. Known virus and malware hosting sites get blocked as well, with a large and customizable warning page being displayed in your browser.

Besides the C:\Squid directory, the installation program also installs Squid as a service set to auto start when your computer boots up. This service generally uses about 5-10 MB of RAM, which, in my opinion, is a worthy sacrifice in order to be rid of almost all of the garbage on the web these days. You can control this service in the usual manner.

Not lastly, the installation routine inserts a configuration setting into your registry, telling Internet Explorer to use 127.0.0.1:8080 for its proxy server. If you use Firefox, you'll have to make this change manually. Reghacking and scripting for Firefox are complicated processes, and are buggy and downright difficult. If you know how to do this, I would love to. VB script is my preferred solution.

The uninstallation program basically reverses all of the above mentioned items, effectively leaving your computer exactly the way it was before you installed this program.

If everything goes as planned, you should really not notice much afterwards, except that the Internet will probably seem a little "cleaner", and possibly after time, you will also notice that certain sites spring into your browser a little faster. That's the only goal of this program. Like everything else for free, your mileage may vary. Of course, some will have problems. There's a little FAQ I've written just for those who stumble along the way.

## FAQ

**Q:** What's the deal with Firefox? Why can't your program configure it?

**A:** Firefox provides no easy way to accomplish this. Take it up with Mozilla.

**Q:** Will you be updating your program?

**A:** Absolutely. Work on SquidNT 3.0 has pretty much stopped, but if 2.7 gets updates, so will you ;)

**Q:** What exactly is SquidNT?

**A:** If you would like to learn more about SquidNT, check out [www.acmeconsulting.it/SquidNT.htm](http://www.acmeconsulting.it/SquidNT.htm)

**Q:** Why should I use your program?

**A:** You might be as sick of ad-ridden, popup-infested webpages as I am, and you might want your surfing to be faster.

**Q:** I know a little about SquidNT. Can I get at the advanced configuration options?

**A:** If you know a little about SquidNT, you know that squid.conf lives in C:\Squid\etc\

**Q:** SquidNT isn't blocking a certain ad. How can I make it?

**A:** Add the URL of the ad to C:\SquidNT\etc\denied\_ads.acl. You can open that file in notepad, or any other editor. Note that as web adverts get sneakier every day, you may need to get creative and view the source code for a site to find the URL.

**Q:** Does SquidNT cache SSL sites, like when I log in to my bank?

**A:** No. SquidNT may initiate the connection, but it does so with a HTTP CONNECT method, which causes your browser to handle the details on a different port (443). For all the gory details of HTTP CONNECT, see <http://www.ietf.org/rfc/rfc2817.txt>

**Q:** Can other programs use the local SquidNT proxy?

**A:** Sure. Most will gather the configuration data from IE (like Yahoo Messenger and Windows Live Messenger, but others will need to be manually configured. Simply use 127.0.0.1:8080 as the proxy.

**Q:** I can't browse at all after installing the program.

**A:** Lots of things can go wrong. Make sure the service is started. Reboot. Make sure IE is using 127.0.0.1:8080 as its primary proxy. Read the cache log file in C:\SquidNT\var\logs. Uninstall the program and try again. Make sure you install it locally, and not from a server (save as, not run or open).

**TODO:**

Scheduled automatic downloads of blocklists

Program group with options to start and stop the SquidNT service, as well as change squid.conf

Take another shot at configuring Firefox. Any Perl / Java programmers out there? Anyone?

**CHANGELOG:**

1.5 Changed squid.conf to run with only 8MB of RAM and occupy only 512MB of space.

1.4 Added a command to stop SquidNT in the event it is already installed. ~~Read: transparent update!~~

1.3 Modified ERR\_ACCESS\_DENIED with custom error message, incorporated AV and malware blocklist.

1.2 Changed ReadMe to PDF format, made various edits. Removed rant about Firefox ;)

1.1 works great. There will probably never be a version 2.