Testing & Evaluation Sheet

AdGuard

1. Tool Overview

Name:	AdGuard
Category:	Ad/Tracker Blocking, Privacy Protection
Purpose:	Adblock extension blocking ads, online tracking, and enhancing privacy.
Date Tested	3/30
Status:	**Deployed** ☑ Operational - Actively running/maintained ☐ In Testing - Currently being evaluated or piloted ☐ Inactive/Deprecated - No longer maintained or functional
Deployment Architecture:	☐ A standalone software - Runs entirely locally (e.g., runs on computer and doesn't depend on external server) ☑ A locally hosted service with separate server and client component - Run both backend/frontend yourself (e.g., backend could be on a local network, or self-hosted on cloud) ☐ A service with a local client that's hosted by a third party - You install a client on your device, but it connects to and depends on a remote server (e.g., Signal: install app (client), but Signal's servers handle message relaying, etc.) ☐ A service that is hosted by a third party but can also be self-hosted
Version:	v5.1

2. Installation & Setup

OS Compatibility	**Desktop**: Windows, macOS, Linux (via browsers: Chrome, Firefox, Edge, Opera, Brave, Tor) **Mobile**: Android via browsers like Firefox that allow extensions
Installation Manual:	Yes
Installation Steps:	1. Visit the browser's extension store (Chrome Web Store, Firefox Add-ons, Microsoft Edge Add-ons, etc.)

	2. Search for "AdGuard " 3. Click "Add to browser" or "Install"
Common Installation Issues & Fixes:	1. Extension disabled by default after installation a. Fix: Enable via the browser settings
User Documentation:	Yes
Required Technical Knowledge	None
Special Configurations	No command lines or special configuration is needed

3. Testing & Evaluation

Category	Details	Score
Operational Functionality:	**Functionality** ☐ The tool is mostly non-functional with many broken features and bugs. ☐ Several broken features or bugs ☐ Minor bugs or issues ☐ Mostly functional with few bugs or no bugs ☑ Fully functional with no bugs **Internet Dependence:** ● Extension does not work offline as it requires internet access ● Presumably operates on a 2G and 3G network, but efficiently could be effected as filtering happens locally after initial rules are created and updated **Localization & Language Support** ● 47 languages are supported ○ Chinese (Traditional & Simplified), Japanese, Korean ● Yes, they have an active community to work on translations **Mobile Accessibility** ● Mobile app is functional and has in app guidance when first opening the software ● No login is required to start using the software	4.7
Usability for Non-Technical Users	**Ease of Installation & Deployment** ● Installation takes 3 steps and is very quick. ● To install the application is is a one-click installations	4.0

	● AdGuard provided installation guide [1] ● AdGuard provided FAQ page [2] ● It has plenty of manuals for their wide range of software ● Installation is under 10 minutes depending on connection and download speed **User Onboarding Experience** ● Yes, there is in app guidance in both the mobile app and the desktop browser extension **Technical Experience Level Required** ● Users who don't have any previous coding knowledge can use this software, as this is mainly a software that can sit in the background ● The interface is menu driven with no command lines needed	

Security & Privacy Strength	**Encryption Standards**
	● HTTPS used for secure communication with AdGuard servers
	● Optional HTTPS filtering
	Known Strength resilience
	● Software is not being blocked by China Firewall Test
	● Software does not have built in circumvention restrictions
	● No none weaknesses
	Comparison with Known Standards
	● According to cybernews it has been criticized for having ties to Russia[3]. Official response from AdGuard regarding the allegations [4]
	● HTTPS can have some issues
	    ○ Users can't view the original certificate as easily
	        ■ *Note: There are work around listed on their website [5]*
	    ○ Struggles to detect malicious sites with mistakenly issued or rogue CA certificate
	Data Minimization
		4.8

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[1] https://adguard.com/kb/adguard-browser-extension/installation/
[2] https://adguard.com/en/support/faq.html
[3] https://cybernews.com/best-ad-blockers/adguard-review/
[4] https://adguard.com/en/blog/official-response-to-setapp.html
[5] https://adguard.com/kb/general/https-filtering/known-issues/
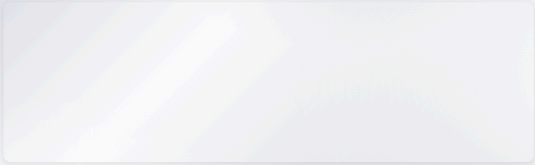
	● Yes it only collects necessary data. No logs of browsing activity, data is not sent to adGuard without user consent. Minimal technical diagnostics are sent [6] **Privacy Policy Accessibility and Clarity** ● Yes, it breaks down which data is being collected and distinguishes between personal data and technical data. Written in plain english and not convoluted language making it easy to understand for the average user.	
Maintenance/Sustainability	**Community support** ● Development team is active with issues on the github getting resolved ● Last issue: 3 hours ago **Development active status** ● Last release date was 4/1/2025 ● Last commit: 1 week ago ● Development team is responsive to issues on Github **Funding and Sponsorship** ● Privately owned & funded meaning it operates as a commercial company ● They advertise on their website on how to become a partner, however they don't list their current partners ● Estimated funding 1.2 M in revenue [7]	4.3
Performance / Effectiveness & Reliability	**Testing Environment Setup:** ● **Device:** HP 11th Gen Intel(R) Core(TM) i7-11800H @ 2.30GHz ● **OS:** Windows 64 ● **Network:** Wifi **User Experience Observations** ● During normal usage the tool feels smooth and has no lags of jumps **Speed & Responsiveness:** ● *Using New York Times Webpage with AdGuard active* ● DOMContentLoaded: 1.38s ms ● Load: 2.31 s ● Blocked 12 ads **Resource Usage:** ● *Using the built in Chrome Task Manager Feature*	5.0

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[6] https://adguard.com/en/privacy.html
[7] https://compworth.com/company/adguard

	- When in idle, "not actively switching pages" it ranged between 0.1- 0.7 - When switching to a new page could spike to 65 for <1 sec before returning - The resource usage is relatively efficient and doesn't cause significant delays, even during page load or switching. **Network Performance:** *Using New York Times Webpage with AdGuard active* 120 requests & 295kB transferred - Waiting for server response 264.38 ms *Using New York Times Webpage with AdGuard off* 127 requests & 469kB transferred - Waiting for server response 265.33 ms - AdGuard reduces the number of requests and the amount of transferred data, improving page load efficiency and saving bandwidth, with almost no negative impact on server response times (TTFB). This is good for speed and efficiency. **Reliability** 4.7/5 stars on Chrome Web Store - According to *The Tech Reviewer* AdGuard is a free, safe and reliable ad blocker. It does state that sometimes AdGuard won't be able to block the ads because "the website uses JavaScript to place advertisements and prevent ad blocker extensions from blocking them". [8]	
Deployment Considerations:	**Open Source & Transparency:** - Yes, there is a Github repository so the code it entirely open source **Cloud vs. Local Deployment:** - The tool can be run locally **Dependencies:** - Does not require any dependencies as it can be installed from the browser's extension store - If you are building from the source code you might need to have dependencies

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[8] https://thetechreviewer.com/adguard-review/

	○ Provides instructions on how to install local dependencies **Post-Deployment Maintenance** ● Can be forked from GitHub ● Code is readable and well documented ● Automatic updates from the browser store **Merge/Sustainability:** ● They are open to contributions both with testing & translating ● Easy to submit changes back to the main repository. Process is straightforward and outlined to help users follow best practices.

4. Testing Scenarios

● **Manually Blocking**	● Chose an element to manually block and was able to successfully remove item ● ●
● **Working with another ad blocker (AdBlock)**	● Works successfully without breaking either software

5. Insights & Recommendations

Key Findings	**Strengths:** ● Easy to use ● Strong ad and tracker blocking ● Transparent data handling ● Free core features **Weaknesses:** ● Cannot bypass censorship ● Not all of their features are free ● Requires manual setup for advanced features
Suggested Improvements	N/A
Alternative Tools:	● uBlock Origin Lite ● Privacy Badger
License	GPL-3.0
Cost/Resource Implications	**Total Cost of Ownership:** **Free Version**: Core features are free to use **Paid Plans**: ● **Annual Personal Subscription**: $2.49/month with privacy protection tools and premium support. ● **Lifetime Personal Subscription**: $79.99. ● **Family Subscriptions**: Higher-tier plans for multiple devices, starting at $5.49/month.
Why is this useful to civil societies in authoritarian environments?	The free version offers significant protection for CSOs in authoritarian environments as it helps block tracker and advertisements reducing exposure to surveillance when browsing the web.