

This download is based on a [photo gallery](#) by Ryan Naraine.

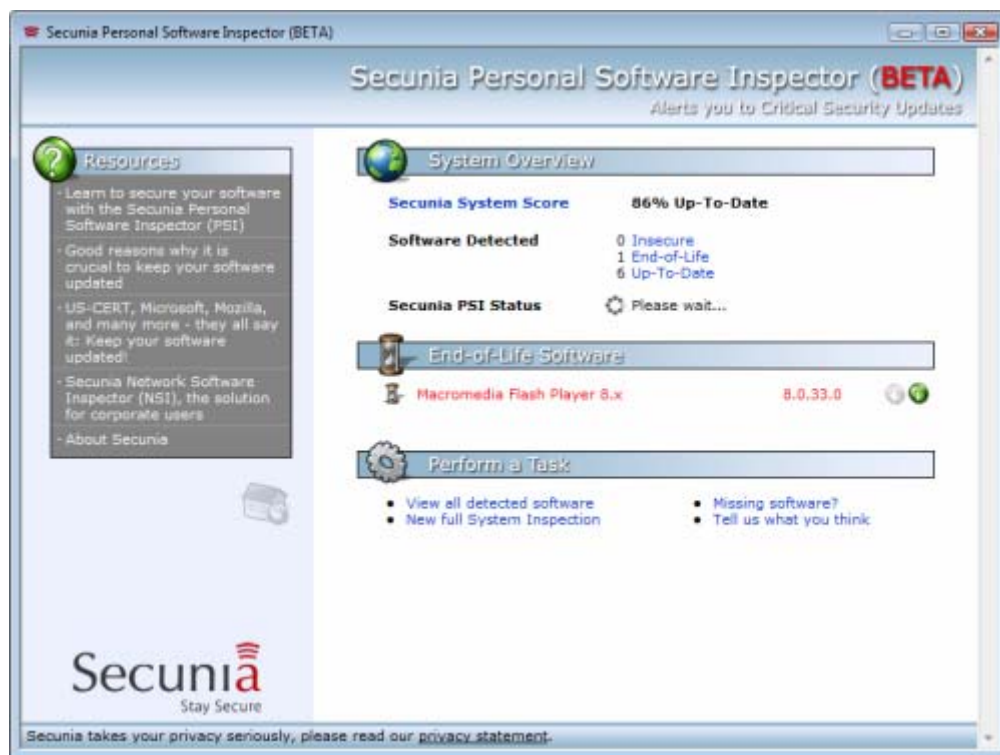
Here are some top free security tools you can and should be using to help protect, disinfect, and manage your Windows computer.

## #1: [Secunia Personal Software Inspector](#)

This is quite possibly the most useful and important free application you can have running on your Windows machine. You can use it to scan all the installed applications on a PC to determine which programs are missing security patches/updates.

The tool works by examining files on your computer (primarily .exe, .dll, and .ocx files) for meta information on specific software builds installed. After examining all the files on the machine, the collected data is sent to Secunia's servers and matched against the Secunia File Signatures engine to determine the exact applications installed on your system.

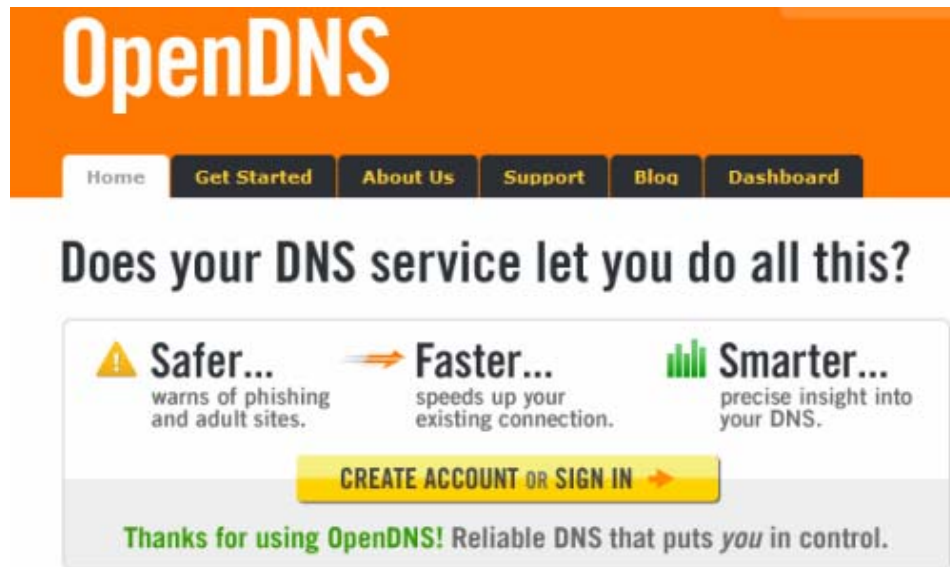
It can be used to flag insecure/end-of-life software and to find direct download links to missing security updates. It monitors more than 4,200 desktop applications. See "[Free utility looks for missing security patches](#)" for more information.



## #2: [OpenDNS](#)

OpenDNS is a must-have free service (there's no software to install) that speeds up Web surfing, corrects domain typos on the fly, and protects you from phishing scams. All you do is change your DNS settings ([instructions here](#)) to the OpenDNS servers: 208.67.222.222 and 208.67.220.220

OpenDNS also offers parental controls, shortcuts, and other nifty features to help provide a safe and reliable browsing experience.



## #3: [Haute Secure](#)

Haute Secure is a browser plug-in currently available for Microsoft Internet Explorer that does real-time blocking of drive-by malware downloads. The tool, the [brainchild of for ex-Microsoft staffers](#), fits behavior-based profiling algorithms into the browser to identify and intercept malicious files in real-time. Firefox support is coming soon. See [this gallery](#) for the Haute Secure experience.



#### #4: [LinkScanner Lite](#)

Exploit Prevention Labs LinkScanner Lite supports both IE and Firefox. This tool integrates with search engines to warn you of potential threats in search results, including exploits, phishing scams, and hacked pages.

#### #5: [GMER anti-rootkit](#)

GMER, a free rootkit-scanning tool built by a Polish Windows internals guru, is widely hailed as the best at ferreting out stealth rootkits from PCs. GMER does an excellent job of finding hidden processes, hidden services, hidden files, hidden registry keys, hidden drivers, and all kinds of driver hooking.

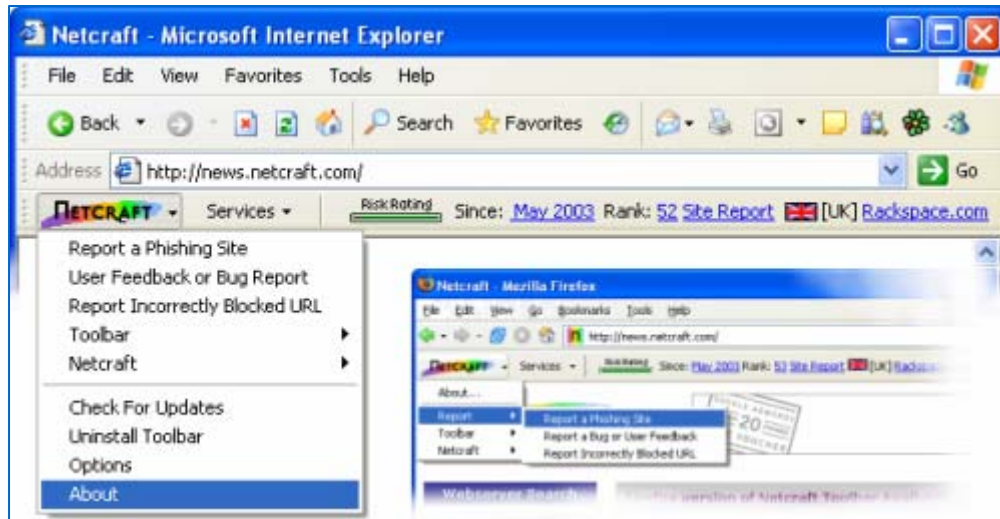
It can also serve as a process explorer to monitor the creating of processes, the loading of drivers and libraries, and file function and registry entries.

In addition to GMER, several other free anti-rootkit scanners are available: [DarkSpy AntiRootkit](#), Trend Micro [Rootkit Buster](#), and McAfee [Rootkit Detective](#).

## #6: [Netcraft Toolbar](#)

Powered by an active online community, the free Netcraft Toolbar is billed as a "giant neighborhood watch" that helps you spot phishing and other identity theft schemes. It provides a direct glimpse at the hosting location and Risk Rating of every site you visit.

The Netcraft Toolbar can also trap suspicious URLs and force the display of browser navigational controls when a pop-up window tries to hide them.



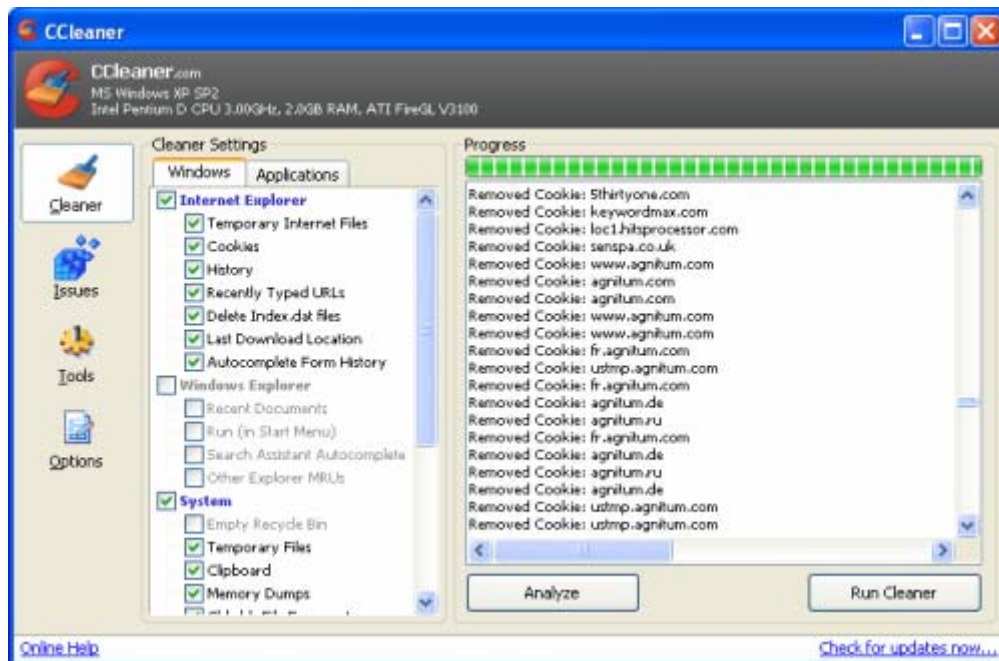
## #7: [File Shredder](#)

File Shredder is a must-have privacy tool that wipes/destroys documents beyond recovery. With File Shredder, you can choose between from shredding algorithms, each one gradually stronger than the previous one to get rid of files forever.



## #8: [CCleaner](#)

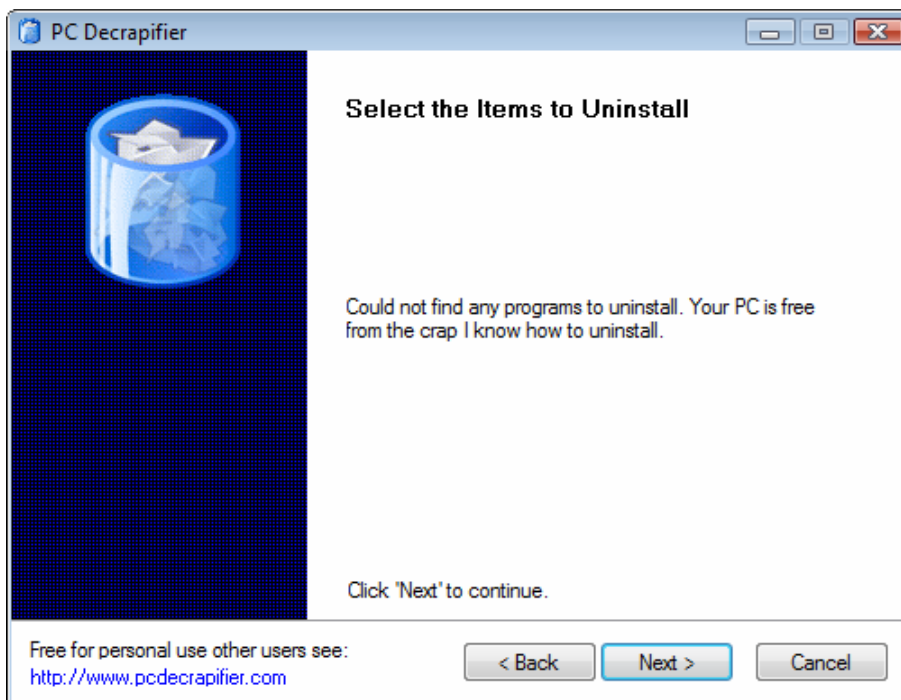
This free system optimization and privacy tool removes unused files from your system, speeding up Windows and freeing up space on your hard disk. In addition, CCleaner cleans temporary files, URL history, and cookies from IE, Firefox, and Opera. You can also use it to delete temp files and recent file lists for all those third-party applications sitting on your PC.



## #9: [PC Decrapifier](#)

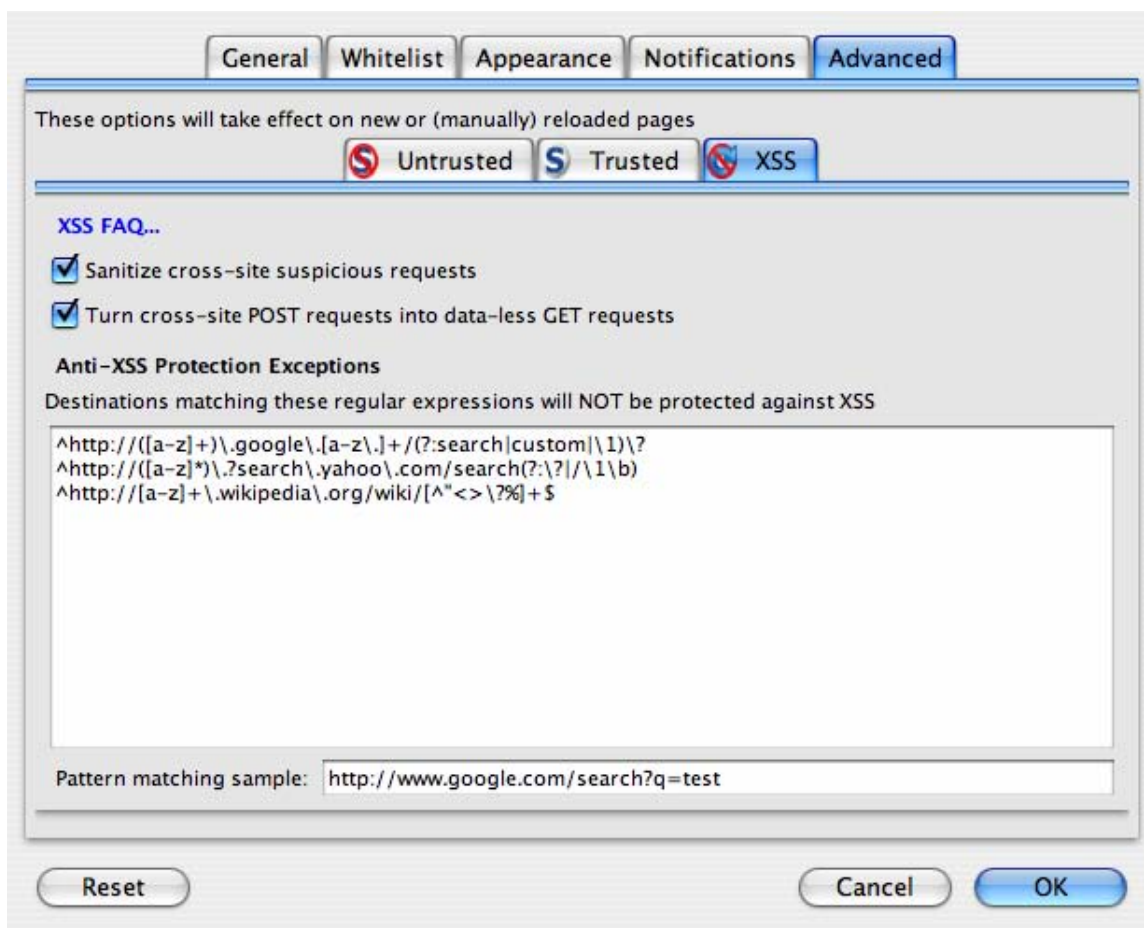
The PC Decrapifier removes crapware that comes preinstalled on Windows computers. This program will not remove crapware from older computers, but it's perfect for new machines that ship with trialware.

There is a [long list](#) of products it will find and remove, including QuickBooks Trial, NetZero Installers, Earthlink Setup Files, Google Desktop, and myriad antivirus trialware apps.



## #10: [NoScript for Firefox](#)

This Firefox extension preemptively blocks malicious scripts, allowing JavaScript, Java, and other possibly dangerous content only from sites you trust. NoScript for Firefox also lets you block Flash and other plug-ins, and it protects against cross-site scripting vulnerabilities.



## Additional resources

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- [Master the principles of computer security](#) (TechRepublic download)
- [Secure your network for free with Snort](#) (TechRepublic download)
- [10 things to look for in an anti-spyware application](#) (TechRepublic download)

## Version history

**Version:** 1.0

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