



SITEADVISOR REVIEW

A. Overview of SiteAdvisor:

SiteAdvisor (now acquired by McAfee) evaluates websites for security threats and provides a public web service detailing its findings for internet users. In addition to visiting the sites, SiteAdvisor also downloads files offered by the websites and scans them for trojans and spyware, and submits a unique email address to determine whether the website is a vector for spam.

B. Product Capabilities:

Free version

Data Collection and Analysis

1. Implement bots/web-crawlers to visit website and conduct the following tests:
 - Pop-ups that appear upon visiting the website
 - Analyze affiliate relationships and identify affiliations tainted with safety or annoyance issues.
 - Fill-up user forms on the website with real data and disposable email addresses, and determine if it leads to email spam
 - Download software from the website and detect malware.
 - Identify threat/vulnerabilities in the website (browser exploits) and flag to intercept access, providing an option to the user to visit the website regardless.
2. Record results of tests above and build a database.
3. Implement an online reviewer community to comment and rate a website, including shopping experience from the site.
4. Analyze web crawler test results and reviewer ratings to assign a safety rating to the website.

User Experience

5. Implement a plug-in to automatically display the safety rating next to search results in Google, Yahoo!, Ask, AOL.com, and MSN (Firefox and IE only). Mouseover on safety rating pops up a balloon with more information and link to detailed results.
6. Display a small button on browser toolbar to indicate safety rating of current web-site using clear visual guidance with color change.
7. Ability to provide a detailed report on the website displaying the test results used to assign the safety rating.
8. As mentioned in #1, intercept access to a website flagged with threat/vulnerabilities and provide an option to consumer to back-out or continue visit to the website.

Premium version (SiteAdvisor Plus: 3 user Household pack for \$49.99, 1-user \$24.99)

9. Provide consumer an option to turn on "Protected Search" or "Protected Browse" mode to block access to "red" sites,
10. Safety checking of links in e-mails and instant messages.
11. Advanced, real-time Phishing/Scam Detection to provide early warnings against scam sites that can compromise consumers' identities and ruin their computers.



C. Competitive Landscape

(Symantec Wholesecurity and Microsoft to be added)

Feature	SiteAdvisor	Lijit	ScanDo	www.stopbadware.org
Formation	Public	Private	Private	Non profit (Promoted by Harvard Law and Oxford)
Philosophy	Commercial	Social Site (online community)		
Theme	Conduct objective tests and assign a safety rating to website stored in database (One rating per website)	Trust sites trusted by network of consumer's family and friends stored in database (One rating per website per Lijit user)	Objective, real time scan with Consumer defined preferences.	List bad sites and take action to stop malpractice.
Methodology for Safety rating	Formula determined by McAfee	Rating assigned by people in your network of trusted Lijit users	Consumer defines Security preferences	Published in Manifesto on their website.
Response time	Fast	Fast	Slow	N/A
Flagship product	McAfee	-	ScanSafe	-
Product Features				
Safe search ratings in browser	Yes	Yes – also names the person you trust who provided the rating	Yes	No – bad sites are listed on their homepage. Bad sites cooperating with the team are called out.
Safe browse ratings	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Exploit Protection	Yes	No	No	
Phishing Protection	Yes	No	No	
Safety check in Email/IM	Yes	No	No	No
Protected Mode	Yes	No	No	No
Real-time	No	No	Yes	No
Support to flag adult content	No	No (however, safety rating is assigned by people in network who	Yes, if selected by consumer as Security preference.	No

		share consumer's interest)		
Support to flag offensive content (hate, weapons, gambling etc)	No	No (however, safety rating is assigned by people in network who share consumer's interest)	Yes, if selected by consumer as Security preference.	No

D. Potential Releases from SiteAdvisor


- Link checking support for AIM and other instant messaging tools.
- Support for other search engines and browsers.
- Management team and board of advisors have background in AI – could help.
- More coverage (recently they added coverage to blog sites), roughly covering 1M websites/month
- McAfee did not release disposable e-mail addresses' capability that consumers can use to track the source of the e-mail they receive, and have a guaranteed unsubscribe mechanism from a given source at any time. This was announced by SiteAdvisor in March release – other items in the release have been included in SiteAdvisor Plus.
- Integration with flagship product.
- Bundling with distribution channels for Microsoft Vista release.
- Something targeted to SOHO and SMB, perhaps also enterprise users via flagship.

E. Shortfalls





Certain capabilities, such as popups can be turned off by popup blockers, etc. Shortfalls from SiteAdvisor:




- No personalization of ratings to suite consumer preference – must accept McAfee verdict.
- No learning capability in product.
- No real-time analysis of consumer requested sites that haven't been tested before.
- No ability to develop network of trust with family and friends to rate safety of websites.
- No socialization with other teams such as awareness seminars with StopBadWare.org etc.
- No OLAP or Drill down from User review Summary – could be useful when overall result is green but individual results are red, for example:

REVIEWER AND WEB SITE OWNER COMMENTS



USER REVIEW SUMMARY FOR SITEADVISOR.COM ?

-  This site is good (365)
-  This site spams (7)
-  Adware, spyware, or viruses (15)
-  Browser exploit (3)

-  Excessive popups (6)
-  Phishing or other scams (10)
-  Bad shopping experience (10)

Overall: A great product.