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Little Snitch for Mac

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CNET Editors' review

by: [CNET staff](#) on March 09, 2013

- **CNET Editors' Rating:**

Good

- **Average User Rating:**

out of 140 votes

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Quick Specs

- Version:
3.1.1
- File size:
13.26MB
- Date added:
June 18, 2013
- Price:
Free to try; \$34.95 to buy
- Operating system:
Mac OS X 10.6/10.7/10.8
- Total downloads:
124,473
- Downloads last week:
730

Despite fewer malware threats to Mac systems, there is still a need for data protection. With Little Snitch for Mac, users can prevent personal information from being sent out, although its limited features may not be worth the program's price.

Little Snitch for Mac can be tried out for free for 30 days. After that, \$29.95 buys the full version with no restrictions. While it does include a native installer, loading the program proved tricky and required a restart in order for it to work. An extensive and complicated end-user agreement also needed to be accepted. Technical support and updates exist, but the program contained no visible instructions on how to use it. While advanced users would not likely have a problem with this, the potentially complicated permissions needed to tailor the program would be too much for beginners. In terms of function, the program requires little interaction and runs in the background. After setting up defaults, it monitors the user's system for programs that attempt to send data out. This could not be evaluated since we didn't have any applications that tried to do this, although the program indicated it was up and running. While this sounds similar to a firewall, the program claims only to be a privacy application rather than a full security program.

While functional and easy to use for those with security knowledge, Little Snitch for Mac's price may not be worth the limited functioning, and those looking for security may be better off looking elsewhere.

Editors' note: This is a review of the trial version of Little Snitch for Mac 3.0.3.

- Product ranking:
#3 in [Privacy Software](#)
- Additional Requirements
Not available
- [See full specifications](#)
- Add to my list
- Report a problem

Publisher's Description

From [Objective Development](#):

A firewall protects your computer against unwanted guests from the Internet. But who protects your private data from being sent out? Little Snitch does!

Little Snitch informs you whenever a program attempts to establish an outgoing Internet connection. You can then choose to allow or deny this connection, or define a rule how to handle similar, future connection attempts. This reliably prevents private data from being sent out without your knowledge. Little Snitch runs inconspicuously in the background and it can also detect network related activity of viruses, trojans and other malware.

What's new in this version:

- Improved default selection of hostname in connection alerts.
- Fixed an issue which caused the connection alert to display IP addresses instead of hostnames with certain VPN configurations.
- Minor other bugfixes and improvements.



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"I use this to catch software trying to 'call home' "

June 10, 2013 | By [pagewise](#)

Version: Little Snitch 3.1

Pros

Little Snitch does what I bought it for: Alert me to programs attempting to 'call home'. I wouldn't be without it.

Cons

No cons for me personally, given how I use it and what I get out of it. My bro tried it, but didn't know which requests to allow. Noobies need to do some homework.

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"Rock Solid Protection"

March 27, 2013 | By [Smaug4](#)

Version: Little Snitch 3.0.4

Pros

Rock Solid Protection keeping your applications from connecting to the internet and staging you in the back.... et to Brutus?

Cons

A bit of a learning curve for novice users to utilize all the features

Summary

I've been using Little Snitch for over 3 years and I'll keep on using it.

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"Don't install Little Snitch"

February 21, 2013 | By [ppsm](#)

Version: Little Snitch 3.0.2

Pros

None zero zip nada nothing at all

Cons

Annoying obnoxious viral program that no one outside an expert should use. Shame on CNET for promoting this piece of garbage.

Summary

Leave the area. Do not download.

Reply to this review

Was this review helpful? (0) (0)

"A must-have-tool"

October 28, 2012 | By [Jessifranko](#)

Version: Little Snitch 3.0

Pros

Controlling the outgoing data
Auto notification
network monitor

Cons

noting to report so far.

Summary

This is a must-have-tool.

Specially for Mountain Lion which has permanently network-traffic.

The outgoing data can be easily controlled. The tool notify you if an application wants to send something out of your Mac.

Beginner may read the manuals.

Better than Apple's crap-tool gatekeeper(confusing poeple, what is good and what is not good).

Reply to this review

Was this review helpful? (0) (0)

"The Best 'Reverse Firewall' Available. Now 64-bit."

September 25, 2012 | By [zunipus](#)

Version: Little Snitch 3.0

Pros

Little Snitch continues to be the best 'reverse firewall' available. This major upgrade also adds further refinement and control to all out-going Internet calls. It is well worth the \$16.95 upgrade price.

Cons

NOT for newbies.

The complexity of understanding and controlling out-going Internet calls by browsers and apps these days has reached the point of being often incomprehensible. It requires research to know exactly what is going on. Power users may well find themselves devoting more time than they like keeping up with WHOIS-ing the obscure addresses and ports being called these days. This is no fault of Little Snitch.

I wish Little Snitch had a quick and easy WHOIS service built into each message box. Little Snitch looks up the names of sites being called via reverse DNS. But that's no longer good enough when there is no name associated with an IP address. I want the details quickly at hand.

Summary

Little Snitch is now 64-bit, like nearly all of OS X at this point. This version refines control of out-going calls over the Internet. The \$16.95 upgrade price is nice. It is well worth buying for any geek level Mac user. I appreciate all the new details that have been added in this version. The developer has put a lot of time into pushing Little Snitch even further in functionality.

The interface of Little Snitch Configuration has become much more complex. Getting used to it will take patience, but provides fairly swift comprehension if you're already used to Little Snitch. Newbies will be overwhelmed, not question about it. Dive in, learn one thing at a time, gradually get the hang of it. Do NOT give up and turn on automatic approval! Keep working on it as this is a valuable tool for many reasons.

I want a full WHOIS service built into every Little Snitch popup box. The app will use reverse-DNS to look up the names of IP services, but frequently there is no server name available. So give me MORE information about the IP address! I want to know who owns

the IP address. That can tell me all I need to know. If there really is no data on an IP address, I want to know that as well. I do NOT want to have to keep running a 3rd party WHOIS all the time on obscure IP addresses! It would be entirely easy to add a WHOIS button into the Little Snitch boxes that trigger the WHOIS service built into OS X already. If we've already got a highly complex reverse firewall, which we do in Little Snitch v3.0, then lets get the essential bells and whistles up front and available as well. It is entirely pointless trying to make Little Snitch into an easy basic user application. So let's geek it out to the max if the further details are critical. For me, WHOIS for obscure IP addresses is critical.

One nice feature that appeared immediately when I first ran the upgrade was a notice about redundant settings. You get little Caution symbols listed for the stuff that can be potentially removed, and little diamond symbols for the more general rules that encompass the detailed redundant rules. I don't know where the redundancy came from, but expect it was due to Little Snitch itself adding the basic rules. That's fine. I went through the long list, made sure all the basic rules made sense of each app (which often requires looking up the service and understanding what it does) and tossed out all the redundant rules that were not needed. The result is a nice cleaning.

The big whopping danger with all the complexity of controlling out-going calls is missing that one service you don't recognize, or may be using a copy-cat name, and approving it to call out. There is no doubt that we are going to be 'social engineered' at some point, after an infection has already occurred, to approve a bad service. Therefore, vigilance is required.

This is the sort of stuff that goes right over Granny's head. She'll end up auto-approving everything just to shut up Little Snitch. Therefore, this is Geek software, and very nice Geek software. I suspect that with time and need there will be more easily accessible white and black lists on the net to assist reverse firewalls know what to do without consulting the user every little time. But until then, Little Snitch remains a confusing hassle to anyone who doesn't know what they're doing with it and who doesn't actually WANT its full functionality.

I continue to enjoy having Little Snitch and appreciate the developer's work on it. I look forward to other people's reviews and insights.

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Was this review helpful? (1) (0)

"Little Snitch 2.5.2 does NOT run in 64 bit"

June 26, 2012 | By [sleepytiger](#)

Version: Little Snitch 2.5

Pros

There are claims circulating that Little Snitch 2.5.2 supports 64 bit mode. Simply Google, "Little Snitch 64 bit" & you'll see for yourself. As Marshall McLuhan noted, "I wouldn't have seen it if I hadn't believed it."

Cons

It may reportedly "support" 64 bit mode but it doesn't actually run in 64 bit mode according to my Snow Leopard's (v.10.6.8) proprietary Activity Monitor application. What's up with that? Am I missing something?

Summary

I would gladly purchase Little Snitch Version 2.5.2, however, until the folks @objectivedevelopment come up with a fix or check with the powers that be at Apple about the issue, I think I'll hold on to my \$29.95.

Reply to this review

Was this review helpful? (0) (1)

"A product you must have"

April 24, 2012 | By [adrie2009](#)

Version: Little Snitch 2.5.1

Pros

you can see what ports an app wants to use to go on internet. when you don't know the app just block the entrance to internet

Cons

i don't know Cons or it must be that you choose to accept the entrance through so many different ports to internet.

Reply to this review

Was this review helpful? (0) (0)

"Not at all helpful to me"

March 31, 2012 | By [sal55555](#)

Version: Little Snitch 2.5

Pros

Let's you know what your apps are up to

Cons

Doesn't indicate whether it's anything to be concerned about.

Summary

Thought it was a nuisance and uninstalled it. The things it notified me of were, best I could tell, routine, and even if there had been cause for alarm, I wouldn't have known it without researching each alert. Other users love it - they probably know a great deal more than I do!

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Was this review helpful? (2) (0)

"I don't understand how to use this...."

February 11, 2012 | By [Ensatina](#)

Version: Little Snitch 2.4.4

Pros

don't know yet, can't figure it out.

Cons

I don't know how to tell if I need to deny something. I denied one item and then I couldn't do a google search... so went back and allowed it to go through - then I was fine. I got this because I inadvertently clicked on a facebook link from someone whose account was hijacked and later got a message from google that said "We're sorry... but your computer or network may be sending automated queries." I thought that might have had something to do with the Facebook issue and thought littlesnitch might help me with that, but I tried the same search after installing little snitch and still got the same message from google. oh well.

Summary

I'm only giving it one star and only because I have to in order to post this. Littlesnitch could be great, I have no idea because I don't know how to use it. They shouldn't assume

everyone understands how to use the product.

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Was this review helpful? (3) (3)

"A must have App."

October 20, 2011 | By [retiretofl](#)

Version: Little Snitch 2.4.4

Pros

It just works right

Cons

I guess only Con is, it is not free

Summary

Updated on Feb 4, 2012

Best Mac Program out there. I wish it had a PC ver. too. Takes control, in a good way.

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