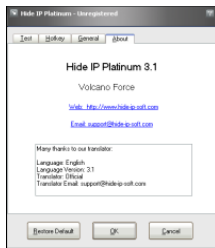


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By: Ionut Ilascu, Editor, Software Reviews



Switch to Private

Change your computer's IP faster than you can say IP

How far do you want to go in what concerns your Internet browsing? You are probably aware of the fact that your Internet surfing habits and your Internet activity on the World Wide Web can and - in most cases - is tracked by websites or ISPs (Internet Service Providers). The intentions of some of them are not necessarily subversive, but they can then send you all kinds of popups when you connect to the Web, that are in most cases as nagging as an ant crawling on your neck. But developers like Privacy-pro.com, Sky Tray, Co. or Volcano Force have solutions for this. They developed softwares that will hide and even change your computer's IP address. The software analyzed today is called Hide IP Platinum. It is produced by Volcano Force and the installation file will eat up only 790KB of your hard disk space. My Task Manager registered that it will use 10,520MB of the computer memory, so it is not too greedy. The price for having the full version of the software may seem a little high (\$35), but this Platinum edition is worth every cent. The system requirements are not too pretentious and you can run the application on Windows 98/2000/XP/2003 and ME. Apart from the operating system, you will need some 64MB of RAM and a CPU of at least 300MHz. The program is designed to work with Internet Explorer, Firefox, Netscape and Opera. But I tried it on some other web browsers and it worked just fine. The software installs very quietly and, after the installation is complete, it will find its place in the system tray and perform an update check. Immediately after that, the Help file will popup telling you what exactly the program is doing. All the update checking being done, the application will sit silent and wait for your commands. Let's see how it works. The application will search for a high anonymous proxy server/Elite proxy and it will transform you into the Invisible Man. This way you will no longer represent a target for the attacks of hackers and your personal information will be safe. It will no longer be used to receive spam or junk emails. Personal information tracking is a constant in marketing and advertising agencies. You probably thought that - if you have a popup blocker - there is nothing that can affect your activity. And yet, how do you think you receive those spam emails or the messages advertising for who knows what product you do not need? There is no interface for this software and all you will see after installing it is a small Earth-like icon in the system tray. Right-click it and choose the Options and software configuration menu. There is not too much to say about this. And if you are a beginner, you'd better leave the default settings untouched. The Options menu has three tabs that comprise all the settings of the program. The first one is called Test and it has some choices for you, all of them proxy related: proxy testing (either smart test engine - for novices, or manual - for advanced users only). The Anti fake string option is to be used in case some proxy servers try to cheat you and take you to some advertising sites. The Time Out setting is for proxy testing and the shorter it is, the faster the testing will be. The Hotkey window will display the software's keyboard shortcuts for hiding/stopping the IP, changing the proxy and displaying your IP. They can be changed by the user at any time. All you have to do is click on the box and press the desired key combination. In General tab, the user can change the language for the application and you have a choice of 18 languages. The translation is pretty good (not that it would be much to translate), but the original in English is the most adequate for the application. Some other settings you can make in here are the starting with the operating system, the IP to be displayed with a MSN style balloon and the delay. When the software is searching for a proxy server and is changing your IP, you will see the earth icon spin. **The Good** The software is easy to install, and kept the things simple enough so that every user, no matter his / her the skills, should be able to manage it. **The Bad** wish it had an option to

schedule the IP change every user-defined time. But I am sure that we will have this feature in one of the future versions. **The Truth** The application is simple, easy to use and extremely effective. If you want to check the software, ask for an IP check and see if it will recognize your real IP. I guarantee it will tell you the real address of your computer, country and city. With technology continuously evolving and at such an alert pace, I am sure that soon enough Hide IP will tell you even on what part of your bed you are sitting with your laptop on your lap. *Here are some snapshots of the application in action:*