

If you're one of those people who don't believe in using antivirus software, then it's likely you have a strong reason for your position.

Perhaps you can't afford antivirus software and think the cost is too high. Or you take extra precaution in your PC use and don't engage in activity that could expose it to malware infection. Maybe it could be you've taken the other route and gone for free antivirus software. Or maybe you have a Macintosh system and have heard that they're virus free.

All the above points sound like plausible reasons not to buy an antivirus program. And for some situations we believe it may be unnecessary to buy one.

But before you completely abandon the idea of buying antivirus software, consider the following threats that your PC is liable to face, both online and offline.

### **Malware Threats**

Today, a computer without an antivirus program isn't just vulnerable, it's probably already infected. New malware threats emerge each day and your PC faces virus, spyware, Trojan and worm threats. These threats are designed to bypass your PC security measures and steal your personal data or corrupt your files.

Your PC is also vulnerable to hackers, rootkits, keyloggers and many other programs that cybercriminals use to attack it. And there are lethal threats like the infamous Stuxnet that appeared not too long ago.

The list is endless and it's not only online that they spread. If you use removal media like hard drives and flash drives, then you'll need a security program that prevents threats that move through these devices.

So let's look at what you get from installing antivirus software:

## 1. Firewall

Many top antivirus programs now include firewall software. Before, you would have to purchase internet security software to get this feature and it would cost you more.

A firewall will block any malicious programs from accessing your PC and at the same time allow you to easily download programs that you need. So it will stop intruders and hackers with little effort on your part.

Without a firewall, any website that you visit that hosts malware could easily cripple your PC and cost a fortune to repair.

## 2. Anti-phishing

Phishing threats are common online. They are attempts to acquire your passwords, usernames and credit card details by appearing as a trustworthy entity. These threats are found in email communications and one example is the lottery scam that you may have seen in your spam folder.

Then there are more sophisticated ones like forged bank websites where you're duped into entering your login details and therefore losing your money.

You will have limited success trying to study each website you visit or by trying delete all spam messages both in the inbox and spam folder. Or you can take the simpler route of having antivirus software that includes an anti-phishing tool. BitDefender includes this tool and it blocks all scam email communications and also sits on your browser and blocks all phishing websites.

### 3. Anti-Spyware

Webroot Antivirus & Spy Sweeper is one of the few antivirus programs that include an antispware tool. It's also the most effective at blocking spyware and adware threats. Without this feature, your PC will be infected by software that spies on all your online activity. And you'll begin to receive pop-up adverts and your PC will be sluggish and unresponsive due to excessive resource-usage.

A bigger threat will be keyloggers on your PC that stealthily monitor all your activities and keystrokes. And this info will be sent to cybercriminals who unscrupulously design these malicious programs.

### Summary

There's an endless stream of threats you're vulnerable to without security software. Even Macintosh systems aren't free from virus threats. They may have an in-built system to fight malware threats that you won't get with Windows, but criminals have now designed malware that attack these systems specifically.

And free antivirus software is good and provides basic protection that's suitable for many users; however it doesn't include all features and tools. And you may have to purchase firewall and antispware software separately for added protection.

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