

Devices such as personal computers, laptops, smart phones, tablets and net books are big investments for some people. Therefore, the need for them to last for a long time without encountering any problems is a necessity. Because these devices are of personal usages, users' store a lot of personal information such as contact numbers, addresses, passwords and bank accounts in them. These devices, when invaded by virus attacks, can crash, can have their memory disks damaged and the data stored in them can be intentionally hacked and used for the wrong purposes such as identity theft and fraud. Installing the best antivirus software would be of great help in protecting and safeguarding personal information.

What a Good Antivirus Should Do

There is no need to underestimate the capabilities of the different free antivirus software available online. Free antivirus software work just as efficiently as their equivalent paid versions. The only difference is that the range of the services and usability of the free software are limited, unlike the paid software. A good antivirus protection is able to detect virus attacks and potential infectors in a short time. Users could opt to choose their own settings based on their preferences. They may want to initiate the scanning feature themselves, set the virus scanning on a schedule or select the automatic scanning feature which scans the computer on start-up and whenever the device is on idle mode. The antivirus program should be able to detect and defend even the most vulnerable sites of the device. Choosing among the different antivirus program is not a problem. One could always opt to download the free antivirus software version first before finally deciding. The anti-virus software should run fast and should be compatible with the device.

Performance of the Device: Important Factor in Choosing a Good Antivirus

There are a lot of users who say that some antivirus software make their devices run slower. It takes the device a lot of time to open new applications and some devices cannot even run more than one application. Some antivirus can actually do these to some devices. However, just because certain antivirus software run slowly on a certain device, it does not mean that they will run slow as well on other devices. Users should opt to download the free antivirus version first, so that they could check its compatibility to their devices. When they see that everything runs smoothly on their device, with the antivirus software installed, then they may finally decide on buying the full version.

Aside from effectively supporting the devices' security feature, the antivirus software should also be able to regularly update the devices' software. Also, users should remove non-functional programs and delete unimportant files on a regular basis since keeping these files can hinder and slow down the performance of the antivirus software.

The debate goes back and forth as to whether antivirus or firewall software are more important. In terms of what you need to add to your system many computer users will find that in a real world situation their choice of antivirus software is the most important. The reason for this is that many systems are already protected to some degree from outside intrusions by routers that have powerful firewall capabilities and also Windows XP and Vista have limited firewall capabilities built in. For those systems that are not behind a firewall router or are without the firewall feature of Vista or XP then adding a software firewall is just as important as adding a good antivirus application.

There are a number of very good free antivirus programs available from a variety of sources. When considering free antivirus software be sure it is as good as a paid program or look elsewhere, because free does not have to mean low quality or limited features as you will see from the following selections.

Comodo AntiVirus (Comodo)

This great free antivirus application can eliminates viruses, trojans and even worms from both desktops and networks. It offers constant protection with on-access scanning working in real-time. A powerful feature is the proactive heuristic analysis that can even intercept unknown threats. Updates of virus definitions are provided automatically on a daily basis. Any suspicious files it identifies are isolated in quarantine thereby preventing infection. This antivirus software is very easy to install and use. We have used this on all of our test systems and currently use it on a number of our computers!

PC Tools AntiVirus *Free Edition* (PC Tools)

This is a new free antivirus application from PC Tools. It can detect, quarantine, disinfect and destroy viruses, worms and trojans. This free edition even includes real-time protection and comprehensive system screening to keep your system running safe and virus free.

McAfee Security Center (AOL/McAfee)

This free product is offered free by AOL. You need to complete a free registration to get this product but the few minutes spent are well worth it. This is a multi purpose suite that includes antivirus, firewall and antispyware components.

AVG Anti Virus Version *Free Edition* (Grisoft)

Download the new version 7.5 of this top free antivirus product. This new version has an improved virus detection engine based on more accurate heuristics and NTFS data stream scanning. It also has a smaller installation 'footprint' and an improved user interface.

avast! 4 Antivirus *Free Home Edition* (Alwil)

This antivirus program is available free for home users. It is a complete antivirus solution and will do a great job protecting your computer from viruses. This newest version features better detection levels, together with higher performance. You can expect 100% detection of 'In-the-Wild' viruses (viruses already spreading between users) and even excellent detection of trojan horses.

AntiVir *PersonalEdition* (Avira)

Use this antivirus download free! It can reliably protects your private computer against dangerous viruses, worms, Trojans and costly dialers. This program uses very few computer resources so is especially good for older computers. AntiVir can run in Windows Safe Mode so can be helpful if you are unable to get Windows to boot!

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