

Firstly, a few words on viruses, a computer virus is a program or programming code that replicates by being copied or initiating its copying to another program, computer boot sector or document. So a virus is nothing but a small program made up of binary code i.e ones and zeroes just like the other programs that run the PC and the precise order of that code is called the virus' signature. Each virus has a different signature.

In contrast to viruses, computer worms are malicious programs that replica themselves from system to system, rather than infiltrating legitimate files.

Let me tell you even a small virus can do several bad things to your computer. This may quickly use your entire computer's available memory and slow down the system or bring it to a halt. It can delete files, format hard drives or mix up the data on them. Totally a virus program makes it impossible for you to access the computer. They can attack virtually all operating systems; however, they are most common on Windows 9x machines.

### **Methods of transmitting viruses:**

The most common methods of transmitting viruses include downloads from the internet, files saved from floppy disks, and e-mail attachments. Despite being popular, Floppies are highly sensitive to their environment (dust, moisture, humidity, magnetic fields etc) which can lead to damage and corruption of files and they transfer viruses across the computers.

While the diskette has declined in recent years, it still accounts for almost 20% of viruses transferred, while e-mail's share has increased to almost 60%. In fact, Virus writers use the names of well-known people in order to entice users into clicking on Web links or open up files that then infect their computers. Examples include well known viruses such as the "ILoveYou" or "Love Letter" and the "Anna Kournikova," "Michael Jackson has attempted suicide" mail, etc. According to a survey, the top 10 list of celebrity virus rankings is: Britney Spears, Bill Gates, Jennifer Lopez, Shakira, Osama Bin Laden, Michael Jackson, Bill Clinton, Anna Kournikova, Paris Hilton, and Pamela Anderson.

### **Tips on avoiding Viruses and Worms:**

- Install antivirus software, update regularly, and use it regularly.
- Install security patches
- Use a firewall and secure your browser.
- Never open unsolicited e-mail attachments with the file extensions VBS, SHS, or PIF.
- Disconnect your network or modem cable when you're not using your computer-or just power it down.
- Avoid P2P and distributed filesharing.
- Avoid attachments with sexual file names.

### **What is AntiVirus Software?**

Antivirus software consists of computer programs that attempt to identify, thwart and eliminate computer viruses and other malicious software (malware). Antivirus software programs can contain between 40,000 - 100,000 "virus definitions" that are updated on a daily or as needed basis. When you purchase antivirus software you receive the software but the definitions that you receive are the real value in your purchase. Once those have expired, then you need to extend the service or purchase new software.

### **The benefits of AntiVirus Software:**

- High quality virus protection provided by antivirus research team.
- Automatic updates take care of everything.
- A comprehensive scan of CD/DVD-ROMs, diskettes, USB sticks, Internet surfing and Internet downloads.
- Once a virus has been detected, the antivirus software will quarantine it, so it cannot spread. It will then attempt to erase it and repair any file damage caused.

There are competing claims for the innovator of the first antivirus product. Perhaps the first publicly known neutralization of a wild PC virus was performed by European Bernt Fix (also Bernd) in early 1987. Later on many antivirus softwares has been developed by notable research teams. Some of them are as follows:

**Avast, Anti vir, AVG Anti-Virus, Bitdefender, F-Secure, Kaspersky AntiVirus, MaAfee Virus Scan, NOD32, Norman, Norton AntiVirus, Panda AntiVirus, PC-cillin, PC Tools AntiVirus, Windows Live OneCare, ZoneAlarm AntiVirus.**

Out of all these antivirus softwares, AVG, AntiVir Guard and Avast do provide the free subscription. There are differences between free and paid antivirus software programs. The paid antivirus program detects and disarm the dangerous attachment even before you open it, whereas the free product may not discover the virus until you click the attachment. However, the free product still stops the virus from opening and doing its dirty work. Overall, the protection offered by the free anti-virus packages is solid, if not as feature-rich as the paid alternatives.

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