

There're a number of important features that are standard in all antivirus programs.

And then there're features that you'll find in a few antivirus programs and these tend to be the better software programs.

However, the features you'll need will probably be different from the next user.

For example, if you're an avid gamer, the game mode feature will be what you need. And the same holds true if you watch videos and movies on your PC. This is because interruptions like popups, scans and updates will affect your gaming. So the game mode will block these interruptions and only run them when your PC is idle.

Here are some features that you should look out for when purchasing antivirus software:

Heuristic scanning - This scanning is designed to catch the newest threats. When they have been identified, your software should automatically scan your PC to check if it has been infected.

Email Scans - Many threats like phishing scams are now spread through emails. Your antivirus software should automatically scan emails in your POP3 accounts and webmail accounts such as Hotmail, MSN, Gmail etc.

Instant Messaging Protection - Like email, you want to beware of phishing attacks in your IM communications. So make sure your antivirus software includes protection that blocks intrusions from latching onto your PC files.

On-Demand Scanning - This feature you'll find in just about any antivirus software worth its salt. So why have we included it here? Because you need to make sure that the software you

pick has the best on-demand scanning feature and removes threats as soon as you click that button.

Scheduled Scanning - This feature is great for running a scan when your PC is idle, so it doesn't interrupt your activities. So you can avoid PC slow down during scans and updates too.

Auto-Clean -The auto-clean feature rids your PC of viruses automatically as it finds them. This is a reassuring feature that keeps your computer completely clean. And it eliminates manual cleanups by deleting threats and not quarantining them.

So these are some of the main features you should check before downloading antivirus software. They are standard in all antivirus programs, but more importantly you should check how effective they are in comparison with the competition.

Other Features

There are new features that have emerged in the last few years, and some antivirus programs will have them and some won't.

Look out for:

Antiphishing - This feature is designed to stop criminal attempts from stealing your personal information like your bank details, passwords, usernames etc. This feature is present in Kaspersky and BitDefender but you won't get it in Webroot or Norton Antivirus unfortunately.

Laptop battery saving mode - BitDefender and Kaspersky both have this features and Norton antivirus too. It is used to delay scans and intensive processes for later in order to increase your laptop's battery life.

Link Scanner - Surprisingly, Webroot is one of the only antivirus programs that don't include this essential feature. It is an integral web tool that monitors web links and prevents you from clicking on dangerous sites.

Summary

This is not an exhaustive list and there're many other features you should look for when searching for antivirus software.

And all antivirus programs release new features each year, so look out for what's new and good in the industry.

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