Computer Virus Protection

Nowadays there are as many people generating harmful computer programs as there are building helpful or merely innocent software. At least that's the way it seems. "Malware" is the generic name that covers this plethora of sins — viruses, trojans, rootkits, spyware, adware, ransomware, and more. Viruses are less common than they used to be—malware today is about making money, and it's more profitable to steal your computer's information than to destroy it.

If you have a computer today, you need a good anti-malware program. If you are trusting Windows Defender, which is included with Windows 10, then you need something better, according to PC Magazine's Neil Rubenking. There are several free programs that are very good, though the ones you pay for can be better.

To help you pick the right antivirus program for you, I suggest you read both of Rubenking's articles. The evaluation results for 2016 are located here:

> The Best Free Antivirus Utilities for 2016
>
> The Best Antivirus Utilities for 2016

If those links no longer work, or if you want to see if there is something more current, you can search Google for later information using the following links. They may just lead you to the two articles above.

> Google Advanced Search for PC Magazine free virus protection
>
> Google Advanced Search for PC Magazine virus protection

The articles are worth reading. They describe how the utilities are tested, and explain why some programs are rated higher than others. They also tell you what each program costs, and in what ways it is a good program.

For those who want something easy, fast, and inexpensive, I'll tell you what I use: the free edition of Avast, which is available for download here. This is what the PC Magazine article says about Avast (the underlining is mine):

> With Avast Pro Antivirus 2016 you get the same effective protection found in Avast's free edition along with a hardened browser, DNS protection, and sandboxing. Experts will love these advanced features, but for the average user the free edition is just fine.

One final thing: if you have an antivirus program and want to switch to a different one, you should read this short article for guidance: Changing Antivirus Protection. Though it is a bit dated, its advice still applies.

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