Advice from Middle Aged Female Tech
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I have been in the industry with my own company since 1994.   The entire time I have worked in this field there have been very few times any two techs ever agree completely.   The advice I give here is based on my experiences, testing, and what I know works.

Today's Subject: **Best Antivirus Software**

Antivirus software provides an essential layer of protection from a multitude of virus, Trojan, worm, spyware, adware, dialer, key logger and rootkit infections. Traditionally antivirus programs just detected viruses and spyware remover's just detected spyware but nowadays the boundary between antivirus and spyware removers is unclear. Most current antiviruses have at least reasonably good detection rates of all forms of malware.

Malware includes viruses, Trojans, worms, spyware, adware, dialers, key loggers and rootkit threats that perform malicious activities on a computer. With the huge increase in malware, antivirus software cannot keep up with detecting all of it. But using more than one real-time antivirus uses much more system resources, can cause conflicts and even reduce protection. So I recommend you only choose one antivirus for real-time protection. Instead, you can increase your protection using other security software.

While looking at several antivirus programs which are vital in protecting your computer from virus threats and other types of malware both free and the paid versions.

1st We are going to look at the Best that are Free:
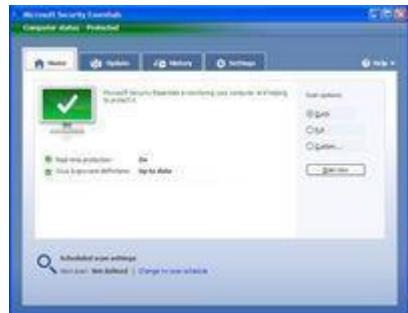
Microsoft Security Essentials is a favorite of mine with great detection rates, particularly for rootkits. Even more impressive is the fact that Microsoft Security Essentials has very few false positives, is light on resources and is good at removal of existing malware. MSE is a great choice for average users because of the minimal user interaction required. It automatically updates and removes threats. No registration is needed, apart from a quick validating of Windows, and there are no nag screens or advertisements.

The main downsides are the slow scan speeds and the lengthy amount of time it takes to quarantine malware, though in my opinion these are rather trivial concerns, as for example a scan just be run overnight. MSE also is not available in certain countries so users there will have to look elsewhere. Note that Microsoft Security Essentials requires a genuine copy of Windows to install.

Avast! Free Antivirus is my new pick for the best free antivirus software in light of recent developments. Avast has steadily been improving its detection rates over the past few years and now ranks with the some of the best. Avast has the most features of all the free antivirus with full real-time capabilities including web, e-mail, IM, P2P and network shields, boot-time scanning, and a behavioural blocker. The new version 6 brings even more features including an internet site ratings plugin, script malware protection and a limited (non-configurable) sandboxing feature. Although the sandbox is a very useful semi-automated security feature, the default settings involves a pop up to ask whether a software should be sandboxed for not - for the typical average user this can be slightly confusing though it can set to sandbox the software automatically. Lastly Avast is relatively light on resources.

Panda Cloud Antivirus is Panda's successful attempt to jump on the free antivirus bandwagon. Along with MSE, it is an excellent choice for average users with a simple interface and completely automated features with automatic updating and removal of malware. The detection level is generally very high, but according to the latest test data, detection of zero day threats is slightly lower. PCA uses 'cloud' technology to provide for a much quicker release of updates as all definitions are stored in the cloud and thus the moment Panda updates their blacklist all users of PCA with an internet connection are protected from it.

Panda Cloud Antivirus has a behavioural blocker and web protection, which will certainly increase your security. However as you can simply use one of the other free AV's with a separate behavioural blocker (for further details see our Security Wizard) to achieve possibly even better protection, this is not necessarily an advantage.

One minor reservation I have is that PCA seems to erroneously detect certain browser/system-related applications, for example VideoCacheView, and because of the automatic quarantine this made it a fraction bothersome.

AVG Anti-Virus **Free Edition** is also a decent choice for a free antivirus. Although this venerable antivirus has had some shaky results in detection in the recent past, it now offers a high level of protection. This is probably due to the inclusion of a fully-fledged

behavioural blocker that is the "Identity Protection" protection. This provides a very important additional layer of protection, on the other hand though a similar protection level can be achieved by using one of the free antivirus above alongside a separate behavioural blocker. Unfortunately AVG free has grown considerably in size, has very slow scan speeds and also advertisements (but they can be disabled).

These free antivirus programs are excellent software that provide a real alternative to the major commercial antivirus products.

I'll just give a quick mention of several excellent **on-demand** antivirus scanners:

- Emsisoft Anti-Malware
- Hitman Pro.

2nd Were Going to look at the Best that are Fee Based:

#1 Rated

PC Tools Spyware Doctor with Antivirus

The PC Tools Spyware Doctor with Antivirus was our classiest performer, and at the top of our list of top drawer antivirus programs. The best part of testing this product was the ease of installation, and we did not experience any problems getting the program running. This is not typical of many antivirus programs and really made this one stand out. Our customer service experience was very positive, as well.

- Easy-To-Use
- Voted #1 for 2012
- Free Customer Support
- Blocks Spyware & Viruses
- **3 Licenses for the Price of 1**

ESET NOD Antivirus 5

ESET NOD Antivirus 5 has an extensive track record of only putting their best foot forward and this year does not appear to be any different. For 2012 ESET NOD Antivirus 5 gives us massive protection with zero slowdown and a ridiculously advanced diagnostic tool. They appear to have a big advantage for this years Best Antivirus 2012 crown.

- Great Protection
- Simple Interface
- Automatic Updates

screenshot

Avira Antivir Premium 2012 Antivirus

Avira Antivir Premium 2012 Antivirus makes our list of best antivirus 2012. Avira has been a world leader for antivirus software over many years and nothing looks to change for 2012. When people ask us who has the best antivirus software for 2012, Avira AntiVir Premium is always on our list. Once again, its all about the exclusive features that rank Avira near the top of our list of best antivirus programs for 2012.

- Low Price
- Many Features
- Easy Installation

screenshot

Panda Antivirus Pro 2012

It did not take our team a lot of time to rank Panda Antivirus Pro 2012 as a Top Antivirus Program for 2012. We were quick to learn that the good people at Panda were hard at work making big upgrades to this already superb antivirus software. 2012 could be a huge year for Panda and their Panda Antivirus Pro 2012 program. Their super fast and easy-to-use antivirus program will impress even the harshest critics. Panda Antivirus Pro 2012 comes standard with plenty of new features and its signature cloud based protection helps make it fast and super light on your PC.

- ✦ Cloud Bases
- ✦ Fast and Reliable
- ✦ Extreme Protection

screenshot

Trend Micro Titanium Antivirus 2012

G Data TotalSecurity 2013 is a new complete solution for your all-round protection. It offers the best possible protection against viruses, hackers, spam and all Internet threats by using modern cutting-edge technology. Additionally, Backup and Data safe protect your personal data against loss or theft. Features we have come to expect from this powerful product.

- ✦ Low Price
- ✦ Many Features
- ✦ Easy Installation
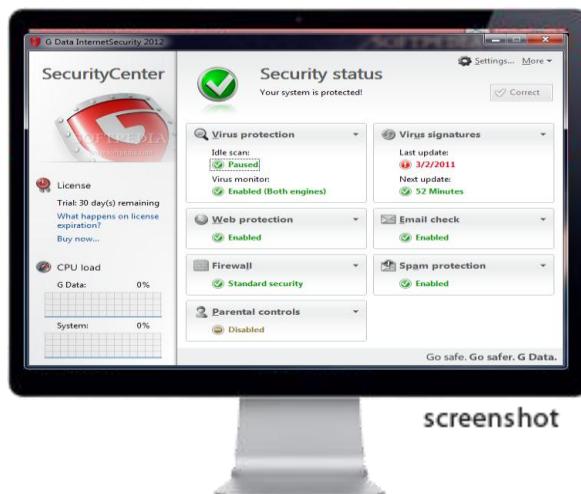
screenshot

I am always about saving money and not spending it on things you don't need to

Remember ANY questions, email me at: **Montgomery@Hollyecho.com**. If possible, I will include the answer to your questions in my next article.