

Staying Safe Doesn't Get Any Easier

Anti Virus Programs. Do you need one? The yin and the yang.



Recently, the author was asked to evaluate and clean up a friend's PC that had a few issues. Obviously, there was a concern (rightfully so) about security but the cure seemed worse than the disease. Three third party anti virus programs were installed, each with a subscription fee, each demanding resources that slowed the machine to a crawl. Performing a program-ectomy, removing all three programs let the machine operate as designed and saved a few bucks in the process. Since the PC was running Windows 11, it was reasonably secure, equipped as it is with *Windows Security* as standard.

Which Devices and Operating Systems need third party protection?

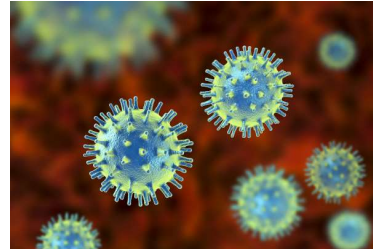
If you're a "typical" user and you have a "typical" device, you may not need extra protection. Let's expand on that.

- **Windows 10 and 11 come equipped with Windows Security, formerly called Windows Defender.**
- **MacOS (Apple) comes with Gatekeeper, Xprotect and System Integrity Protection (SIP).**
- **Android's (Google) protection includes Google Play Protect.**
- **IOS (Iphone) includes Sandboxing, Code Signing and App Review.**

I know, I know. A lot of techie stuff that no one other than geeks understand. What it really means is that safety is relative and everyone in the industry is doing what they can but it is a battle. Geeks argue over which provides the best protection but the wild card is *you*, the user. If you visit "risky" sites or don't take reasonable precautions, then you become hard to protect. And, if we bring up the pluses and minuses of having a VPN (Virtual Private Network), this

article will be rejected due to its length. Again, if you're not a "typical" user, you may want to research VPNs which are growing in popularity.

And now to the part about Anti Virus Scams.



- Pop ups appear on your screen with something like "You're infected, must act *now!*" or "Your antivirus protection has expired, act *now!*" **Acting now** pretty much guarantees that your life just became more complicated.
- And, to the great embarrassment of Google, some anti virus programs on their app store were in fact malware agents. They say it's been fixed. (**Malware**, what a great word, scary but descriptive.)

Chances are that if you download one of the many available anti virus "free trials" on the web, you'll end up with malware on your device. There are many reputable third party anti virus providers out there but they don't act this way. If you feel that you're not a "typical" user or just feel that you need extra protection, there are the obvious ways to scope out protection at a price that's fair. Norton, McAfee, Avast and AVG are some of the safer offerings to look at.

Tip: Powering down your smartphone weekly will greatly reduce your risk of attacks. Simple but effective. Why? Kinda like a digital enema. You can research this or ask the author for more information.

And, Remember, don't talk to strangers!