

Antivirus & Your Computer (Including Effects on Dragon Medical & Dragon Professional)

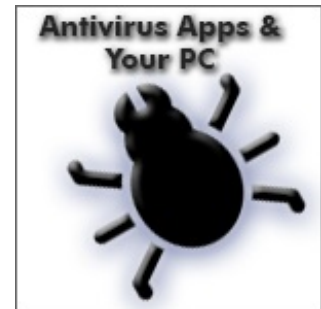
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Antivirus software is as necessary on your computer as the operating system itself. There are also numerous choices available, some which do not react very well with resident applications; thusly, the question becomes: which one is the best?

Once upon a time it was imperative to use an antivirus that provided timely protection against newly unleashed viruses. Today, most antivirus can boast this claim, but they are not all created equal and quite often, what was once "the best" antivirus may not be so today.



How Viruses Work

Viruses generally enter your computer via three avenues:

1. an email attachment,
2. landing on a web page designed to infect your computer via virus transfer, and
3. downloading a virus unknowingly, often under the guise of file sharing applications (movies, music etc.).

The First Level of Protection is You

Most infectious scenarios can be avoided with a little care and patience.

For one, there is something to be said for not opening email attachments from people you do not know or when the content of the email is suspicious. Email may also contain an innocent looking web site URL link, but if you hover over said link with your mouse, the hover text will provide you with the actual address (often a nefarious web site).

Consider the following:

- People's email accounts DO get hijacked. If the email is uncharacteristic from the sender, it's likely not them and is best avoided.
- No bank will ever advise you to change your password via email.

- If Amazon, Paypal etc. claim that your account has been compromised, do NOT follow the links in the email informing you of such. Go directly to the Amazon or Paypal website from your browser and check your account for messages — if you still have concerns, contact these company in question directly by telephone.
- If you bought something over the Internet, it is highly unlikely that an invoice or confirmation will be sent to you as a .zip attachment. Keep track of what you do buy over the Internet, and promptly delete order confirmations from unknown sources.

Website misdirection happens to us all, and a good antivirus will be imperative when we slip up.

Take Your Time:

- It's easy to mistype a web URL in the browser address bar, and chances are you will find yourself on a pornographic web site or a page designed to infect your computer. If you are lucky, you will find yourself on a domain for sale.
- Even Google search results are not immune from displaying malicious web sites — carefully read the excerpt provided as well as the link to ensure it's a valid result.
- Close unwanted pop-ups carefully. Close the actual pop-up window (the X in the upper right-hand corner or by pressing < **Alt + F4** > on your keyboard), and not by clicking any dialog box buttons that appear on the pop-up (those buttons could be linked to anything).

File sharing applications do not belong on a computer used for business or crucial work. If you have children who insist on using such applications, outfit them with a bare bones basic computer that can be wiped periodically, and do not have this computer set up on your home network.

Telephone Scams

Recent scam will involve you receiving a telephone call from someone claiming to be a Microsoft representative, who wishes to walk you through a series of security measures. This telephone call will be placed to your residence, in the hopes that they will catch you unawares.

This is NOT Microsoft. Trust me, they do not care that much. Beware telephone calls from anyone claiming that they wish to assist you with your computer.

How Resident Applications Are Affected by Antivirus

Antivirus applications, by nature, are designed to detect changes in resident files. As such, when a file is saved, or otherwise "touched", the antivirus will quickly scan for any malicious content. This can potentially slow the computer down.

Depending on the antivirus in question, some are more invasive than others, and others will have options available which allow you to control its performance.

Antivirus Conflicts with Dragon® Medical Practice Edition & Dragon Professional

AVAST is not recommended for PCs where Dragon® Medical Practice Edition and Dragon professional have been installed. If Dragon seems to function appropriately, then AVAST need not be removed. However, most users have reported issues with Dragon that have been alleviated by removing AVAST from their systems.

Avoid free antivirus applications, as they often lack the configurability required to keep your system streamlined. The saying “you get what you pay for” is appropriate here. Again, if your system seems unhindered by a free antivirus, then you are fortunate. Otherwise, if your system is not running effectively, your choice in antivirus could be an issue and its removal recommended.

Antivirus Conflicts with Entire PC System and Resident Applications

The following issue is not exclusive to Dragon applications, but affect most PC systems. Running more than one security and antivirus programs concurrently often result in conflicts that reduce the efficiency of both computer and resident applications.

Most problems have been reported with running any combination of the following products in parallel:

- Lumension Endpoint Security Device Control
- Symantec Endpoint Encryption
- McAfee EndPoint Encryption

The following types of programs can potentially cause conflicts and should not be run concurrently:

- Antivirus and antispyware real-time scanning programs such as Norton AntiVirus, Symantec Endpoint Protection (SEP), McAfee VirusScan, or Kaspersky AntiVirus.
- On-demand scanning programs, such as the Windows Malware Removal Tool.
- Single-use malware removal tools that are designed to remove files from individual threats.

It is advisable to select an effective antivirus solution, and utilize that one solution only.

A Quality Antivirus

Once upon a time Norton antivirus was both extremely effective, and the least invasive with respect to a computer's performance. However, that has changed considerably over the last number of years, and Norton has become one of the most bloated antivirus applications available.

McAfee, likewise, has been known to curtail the resources available on the computer, adversely affecting its performance.

Most "free" antivirus (such as AVG) do not have options that allow you to set its performance levels and interaction with your computer.

Speakeasy Solutions Inc. has spent considerable time researching the leading antivirus applications available. We have found ESET's (Smart Security) to be the most effective, the most configurable, and with the smallest affecting footprint on a computer system. It provides protection in email, while web surfing and of course general computer operation.

Most certainly, there are other antivirus applications that are equally as effective, but this is the one that we have settled upon for ourselves, and the one that we advise our clients to use if possible.

Speakeasy Solutions Inc. Services

Based in Vancouver BC, we provide products and services across Canada. If you have an antivirus application that utilizes a password, please ensure that this password is known to you when we first perform work on your computer (i.e. installing Dragon, digital dictation, support services etc.). Please feel free to have your IT department or support staff contact us with this information if need be.

We look forward to working with you.