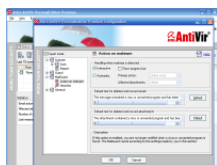


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By: Codrut Nistor, Editor, Software Reviews



It's Raining Viruses!

Protect yourself with an AntiVir umbrella!

Viruses, adware, spyware...you all should know more or less about that, there's over a decade since these threats have become dangerous enough and wide spread to be taken seriously. The Internet and Windows environments are two of the catalysts that made this evil get stronger and try to take over every vulnerable computer. If we're talking about a disease, because computer viruses can be considered one, we have to talk about a cure or at least to try to find one. The computer viruses plague wasn't eradicated yet and won't go away like the dust in the wind anytime soon; fortunately, there are ways to keep you safe. Today we are going to check out an antivirus program that can keep you safe and take away most of your worries. Its name is Avira AntiVir Personal Edition and comes in two flavors - a free edition - called Classic - and a commercial Premium edition with some additional features. Thanks to the producer, I have the Premium Edition at my disposal, and this is what I am going to review, but before I start you have to find out the differences between my Premium Edition and the Classic Edition that you can get for free. The Classic Edition is for personal use only, and performs common viruses scan, but - on a daily basis, it opens a window that suggests purchasing the Premium Edition. Why would one do that? The most important improvements over the free versions are its abilities to detect adware and spyware (besides viruses), fully automatic updates using an exclusive download server and POP3 scan, and checking for viruses before messages are received. The installation kit of the Classic Edition has a little over 11MB and the setup process ends quickly. After the required system restart, you can use the program for the first time. My advice is to update your virus database and then perform a full system scan before anything else, to ensure your computer is clean. Once this is finished, you can take a break to explore the program's interface and available features, side by side. Just remember that I'll explore the Premium edition here, so if something is missing in your Classic Edition, you can have it for a small price. Enough talk, let's get to work! The program's interface is nicely done and easy to use, containing a menu bar, a "safety zone" with a banner, and the tabbed work area. There are seven tabs, each leading to a page that handles a specific task; I'll start checking them out from left to right. The page that comes up when you open the main interface is the first one, called Status. Here, you can check the state of the AntiVir Guard and MailGuard and change it if needed; you can also find how old the current database is, update it if needed, and see when your license expires; all these if you have the Premium Edition, of course. Using this page, you can also renew your license when it's about to expire. Moving on, we find the Scanner. The most common scan tasks are already defined, such as Local Drives, Removable Drives, Windows System Directory, but you can also manually select the items you want to scan or create new custom tasks. The Guard is the module that takes care of your computer all the time, scanning items that can pose a threat to your security. Inside its page you can check the statistics and also open the online Virus Information page. The Mail Guard is the one that takes care of viruses that can arrive attached to emails straight into your Inbox; unfortunately, you won't find it inside the Classic Edition. The Quarantine page allows you to isolate suspicious files for further investigation, and there's one thing that I don't like about this feature. When adding files, you can only add them one by one, multiple file or folder selection is not possible. If I have a folder with 2000 files that I suspect of being infected with a hot virus that can't be detected yet, what can I do to add them to the Quarantine area? Scheduling is an excellent addition to any antivirus, and Avira's product has this topic covered. New jobs can be easily created, using the wizard that's at your disposal for this task. At last, the Reports area lets you check all passed actions performed

by the program. Everything is intuitive and I am sure you won't have any problems handling this program. The Configuration screen has two work modes, the basic default one and the Expert mode that gives you more options. There are a lot of goodies to be found here, and I'll leave them all to you, since I am sure you will appreciate them as much as I do. Don't wait any longer, get the Classic Edition now! **The Good** Avira AntiVir has almost two decades of experience in fighting viruses and today's product shows it. With this program you get speed, use of excellent features and an increased protection level. **The Bad** Since the free Classic Edition has its small limitations compared to the Premium one, I guess that the nag screen could go away. The interface could suffer a small redesign, since the File menu is useless, having only the Exit option, and the extra options available into the menu bar could be well organized into the tabbed area. **The Truth** No matter if the sun is shining, having an umbrella is always a good precaution, and my recommendation today is to get Avira AntiVir Personal Edition. You can start with the Classic flavor, and if rain still troubles you, get the Premium one, you won't be disappointed! *Here are some snapshots of the application in action:*