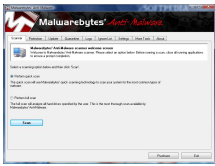


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Malwarebytes' Anti-Malware main application window

By: Ionut Ilascu, Editor, Software Reviews

[Malwarebytes' Anti-Malware Scanner](#)

Free malware detector and remover

It's been a while since we've taken a good look at Malwarebytes' Anti-Malware. After the [version firstly reviewed by us](#) the application has grown some new features and consolidated its signature database to pull out the latest types of malware from your system. As usual, its purpose is to root out nasties that are generally overlooked by the protection suite habitually residing on your system. So it should be used as a second layer of backup for the computer.

The application has not changed too much since our [analysis of version 0.68 of Malwarebytes' Anti-Malware](#). In fact, as far as the interface is concerned, a new tab has been added to give you access to the scan logs and see exactly the infected areas (memory processes, memory modules, registry keys/values/data, folders), the number of objects checked and the amount of malware detected. Everything is reported clearly in a simple text document any user can read.

Besides the freeware version we're going to test, there is also a paid version of the product, which comes packed with more functionality. The \$24.95 full version of Malwarebytes' Anti-Malware offers real-time protection against nasties and boasts scheduling options for system scans. Other than this there is absolutely no difference between the two.

Installation of the program is done in a jiffy and there is absolutely nothing peculiar about it, so we're not going to hang around this at all. Once launched, Malwarebytes' Anti-Malware presents a simple-looking interface that does nothing but plainness to stand out with. All its options are aligned in eight easy-to-follow tabs. Simplicity and comfort in use are the words to characterize the interface by.

Under the Scanner section the app features two types of scans you can appeal to in case of suspicion: a quick one, which checks the system for the most common types of malware, and a full scan, which is designed to run a thorough verification of every drive specified by you (removable ones are accepted, as well as network locations).

The Protection area is reserved for the full version of the software. Its purpose is to protect you and your system from intrusions "by blocking them before they can do significant damage." In other words, this is the real-time protection center.

If you want to check for new updates and load the latest signatures, Update is where you should be. Here you can view info on the database currently protecting you, the release date of the last update, or the amount of fingerprints loaded and ready to protect you against malware.

Each nasty, once caught, gets to be sent to quarantine, an isolated place from where it can't do any harm to your system. If the program erroneously picks up a perfectly healthy file, the Quarantine tab is where you can yank it back from among the nasties and restore it to its original place. You can restore them one by one or all of them at once. The same goes for deletion, only in this case the process is not reversible. As for statistics, Malwarebytes' Anti-Malware shows the number of elements enclosed in the isolated "chamber."

Logging is the new tab on the block since our last review of the application. The developer did nothing fancy and simply awarded you the possibility to have a civilized view over the results of the scans you do. None of the logs are thrown away unless you want that and each can be launched directly from the software as they are simple text files, formatted in a readable manner.

Malwarebytes' Anti-Malware also lets you set some limits to the scan session by creating a list of malware that should be ignored. One of the reasons to do this is that the app could tag a perfectly healthy file as malware; another one is that you simply want that file on the computer.

Configuring the software does not require too much effort on your part, as there is little to set up. The options let you terminate Internet Explorer during the malware removal, automatically save and display the log file, send anonymous report statistics to Malwarebytes center in order to improve detection and elimination of threats or include the scan option in Explorer's context menu. Additionally, you have the possibility to enable the verification of memory and registry objects, the filesystem or the scan of extra and heuristic objects.

Further possibilities in the application are the set of tools included. This is nothing complicated and in fact comprises one tool and three services that can better help the software by sending bug reports and reporting false positives, complete with collecting details. These include the name of the user, Malwarebytes database location, desktop location, start menu location, user root, favorite, application data and temporary folder location.

The built-in tool available in the software is [FileASSASSIN](#), an instrument that can delete the files locked on your computer. I wish I could say that it's top notch, but the application is nothing like [Unlocker](#), as in case of failure to delete the data it does not unlock it but instead offers a restart in order to unhook everything and perform the erasure.

Testing Malwarebytes' Anti-Malware was no easy job considering that it targets threats that are usually ignored by established security software on the market. But with a little effort we did it. Compared to other paid and freeware products on the market, the application recorded a pretty good score, although not the highest or among the highest.

However, when it came to resources, it had the smallest footprint, with CPU usage peaking at 82%, with an average of 63% and RAM usage average of 51MB. If we add that it completed a 480MB scan (4312 files) in 2'34", we can say that it was the fastest and that it was gentle with the resources. Malwarebytes' Anti-Malware nailed 434 threats.

Using the same malware sample database [SuperAntiSpyware](#) did a slightly poorer job, eating more resources (72% CPU and 73MB of RAM average) in more time (5'58") and detecting less threats (394). Putting [Spyware Doctor](#) to the same test, detection ratio raised to 559 threats, but resources averaged to about 120 MB of RAM (peaking at 148MB) and around 66% CPU usage (peaking at 82%). The time necessary for the latter was 23'23", a whole lot more than what Malwarebytes' Anti-Malware and SuperAntiSpyware needed together to complete the job.

The system employed for the test was low-end, with a 1.8GHz processor helped by 1.5GB of RAM and the detection tests were conducted in the exact same environment for all three pieces of software. Even if the malware sample database seems quite large (4312 samples), it is extremely diversified containing everything from trojans, backdoors, spyware, adware to viruses, rogue installers and even worms. Facing Malwarebytes' Anti-Malware against a small army of rootkits (60) and rootkit sources (7), the application failed drastically to detect even one threat. However, the other two candidates did not do too well either, as SuperAntiSpyware rallied with Malwarebytes' Anti-Malware while Spyware Doctor came up with 4 results, out of which two were sources not yet compiled.

Although Malwarebytes' Anti-Malware's results are not outstanding, we noticed that it managed to detect some active threats on our test systems other protection software failed to recognize. This, combined with the speedy scan, the pretty good detection and the fact that it is a freebie, turns it into a good support for your system's security.

The application cannot yet be used as the only security product deflecting malware off your system, but it makes for a reliable additional scanner that can detect what others overlook. Plus, it can be used together with other anti-malware products on the market for increased system protection.

The Good

Easy installation, fast scans, daily updates, detects what other security software misses, ease of use, light footprint on system resources and it can be used free of charge; these are the very attributes of Malwarebytes' Anti-Malware.

The application can cohabit with other anti-malware products, thus adding another layer of defense against threats. Although there is a paid version that includes real-time protection, the free one does not prevent the user from removing the nasties.

The Bad

Its database contains signatures mostly for threats that evade most of the security products on the market, so it cannot yet be used as the only protection for the system.

The [FileASSASSIN](#) tool has not quite reached full maturity and has yet to learn to unlock files before removing them. In our testing [Unlocker](#) did a better job.

The interface should be improved aesthetically given the trends soon to be set by the upcoming Windows 7 and even the current Vista.

The Truth

One seldom meets an application that can do what others can't. In our case Malwarebytes' Anti-Malware proved that it could discover what others missed. It does not provide the most complete signature database and it may not protect against the largest pool of malware, but it works great as a "wingman" for the security app you decide to use. Thus it enforces better protection and keeps you safe from some of the less known threats on the market.

You can try it for free and scan the system from time to time using the quick option to scan for the most common types of malware. It won't take long and system resources will be used responsibly.