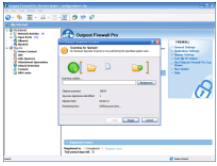


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By: Codrut Nistor, Editor, Software Reviews



Defend Yourself

Get Outpost Firewall Pro now!

My quest for a worthy firewall for my computer continues, and this week, I will stop at Outpost Firewall Pro. The latest version of the program is 4.0, its fourth Release Candidate, to be more accurate. What I have here is a 30 days trial of the full program that is priced at 39.95\$. Its installation kit has 13.7MB in size and while you set up the program, all you have to do is pay some attention to the on screen information and choose the protection level and the other settings here. You don't have to worry, these settings can be changed later, so no problem here. Now, let's find out more! After I reboot and the program starts loading for the first time, surprise! Antispyware scanner? What is this? After the first moments of surprise, I get the idea: Outpost Firewall Pro includes a spyware scanner. Sweet, but what next? Oh, yeah, the "messages assault". There isn't such a thing with this program, because rules for most known programs are automatically created, and when you are asked to set the permissions of a certain program, you can do it once and forget about it. Good, good, but what about the main application window? I may not be a very experienced person when it comes to firewalls and their interfaces, but I can tell when a program looks great and when it doesn't. This time, the good times roll while you're using Outpost Firewall! The main window has a menu bar, a toolbar, and a work area divided into two panels - first one containing a tree view with options, and the second one, details about the selected items. Prepare your gear and let's dig in! There are a lot of things to discover inside this program, and my choice is to tell you more about the two areas of the tree view - My Internet and Plug-Ins. The branch of the treeview called My Internet has four items - Network Activity, Open Ports, Allowed and Blocked. The first two allow you to view and change settings for processes connected to the network, while the second lets you check the open ports and the applications that opened them. The last two items present here are showing an overview of allowed and blocked operations for the current work session. If you want to know more about what's happening, you can choose the Show Detailed Log option in one of the last two items above or just hit F7. The log viewer of this program is one of the best I have seen so far, allowing you to set favorites, export log entries, filter them and customize it as you wish. The Plug-Ins branch is filled with useful tools - active content and ads blockers, antispyware, attachment quarantine, attack detection, content blocker and DNS cache monitor. Each of this plug-ins has a wide range of options easy to set, but I strongly recommend you to check the documentation first, if you're not 110% sure about what you're doing. The documentation of the program is excellent, and I found it very easy to discover some of its hidden secrets. The Options area is easy to navigate and all the settings here are easy enough to understand and use. Let's see the conclusions now, shall we? **The Good** Outpost Firewall Pro is one of the best firewalls that I have seen so far, being highly customizable and powerful, yet easy enough to be used by beginners. You have an entire month at your disposal to try it without limitations, and the documentation that comes with it is excellent. **The Bad** if this is your first firewall, then you may have some difficulties during your first steps, but other than that, everything's just fine. **The Truth** it seems I have a wish on the Christmas list already, and that is to receive a license for this program, and this should say it all. If it doesn't, then check the trial version for yourselves and share with us your opinions! *Here are some snapshots of the application in action:*