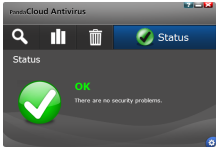


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New Panda Cloud Antivirus, behavioral detection included

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[Panda Cloud Antivirus Pro](#)

Behavioral detection also included in the free edition

A little over a year ago, Panda Security launched a public beta of what would go down in IT history as the first free cloud-based antivirus: [Panda Cloud Antivirus](#). With Collective Intelligence carrying out all the hard tasks, the scan speed improved drastically while the impact on system resources dropped well under the regular standards.

[admark=1]Another beta has just ended and another stable release is ready to spread on the web, protecting computers all over the world at no cost whatsoever. Two additional layers of offline protection have been introduced (automatic deactivation of Windows autorun and behavioral blocking of unknown threats), while, for the computer savvy, the developer included a set of advanced settings.

However, this time around, there is also a professional version of the application available, boasting extended protection compared to the one available in the free edition of the program. Automatic vaccination of USB drives and behavioral analysis of running processes are the components that differentiate between the two versions. The \$29.95 price for Panda Cloud Antivirus Pro makes for another distinction.

For version 1.1 of the application, the developers did not make important design modifications to the interface. The same simple wrap has been preserved, but more options have been added. You can still flip it, but not for a view of just the Recycle Bin; this time, an entire assortment of settings unfolds, with a special section reserved for advanced configuration, ground which should be treaded lightly on by non experts as the functionality of Panda Cloud Antivirus depends on the status of these options; and by functionality, one should understand disabling behavioral detection altogether or less critical options, such as defining the maximum amount of days action history should be preserved.

Scanning options have become more elaborate than before, allowing for initialization of full computer checks besides the regular verification of the locations viewed as most likely malware residences. Thus, you have the possibility to run an optimized scan, which is pretty brief, opt for an entire computer check, which verifies all there is on the system, or go with specific folder check choice, which can also be started from Windows Explorer context menu.

For an overview of the malware detected on your computer, Panda Cloud Antivirus provides statistics that can be broken down into periods of time, such as the past month, week or day. A chart will give you the visual representation of the most detected type of malware. Reports of the events that occurred serve as an additional statistics component designed to shed some light on the actions taken by the application.

Recycle Bin makes for the last important tab in the main application window. Although its name says it all, it is worth mentioning that besides the fact that you can restore the items detected as threats (wrongfully or not), Recycle Bin is also the place where Cloud Antivirus lists potentially unwanted programs (PUPs). These benefit from a special treatment as they are not deleted, but merely blocked and sent for analysis to the Panda labs. Deleting them

is your choice alone.

Flip the interface for the set of new features that have been introduced with this new version of the application. It is not much, but the components added award the program increased protection power. By default, Panda Cloud Antivirus disables Windows autorun, thus shutting off the gateway for threats propagating this way inside the system.

However, the majority of USB devices come with autorun instructions and these could very easily be exploited by malicious code in order to infect computers. The Pro version of Panda Cloud Antivirus ensures that autorun.inf instructions are no longer executed. Vaccination of the drive actually blocks autorun.inf and does not allow it to be read, deleted or modified in any way. In order to prevent any mishaps, keep in mind that the vaccination procedure is irreversible and may cause certain applications to stop working.

Under Advanced Settings panel, you will find options that contribute to increased detection, but also that alert you of the findings. Of the four tabs present in this screen, the first one is the most important as it lets you enable or disable behavioral blocking and behavioral analysis (available only in Pro version). The difference between the two consists of the fact that the first analyzes the actions performed by applications, while the second monitors the activity of the processes.

In case a suspicious executable is encountered, Panda Cloud Antivirus can block running it until it receives an answer from [Collective Intelligence](#) servers. You can define the maximum amount of time the application should wait before releasing the execution of the file. It should be somewhere between 10 and 60 seconds (default is 30). During our tests, we have not found one application that required an answer from the cloud.

Moving onward with the advanced settings, we find that the app can be configured to delete history of actions older than a user-defined number of days. Also, advanced sets of reports on the activity of the antivirus can be enabled from Warnings and Reports section by typing in the path yourself. Moreover, in order to skip the analysis of certain data, you can create exclusions lists with folders to be avoided during scans and thus speed up the procedure.

Putting Panda Cloud Antivirus against a horde of 456 malware samples, which included some of the worst window threats, it managed to eliminate 412 of them, leaving 44 threats behind (90% rate of success). We also experimented on a different, larger database that contained 1,370 unclassified malware samples. Of these, 317 evaded Cloud Antivirus' detection, setting its rate of success to 77%, which is not a shabby score at all. Based on these two results, the average rate of success is of 83%.

After a few rounds of scanning and observing system resource usage, we ran into a bit of trouble with Panda Cloud Antivirus console because it refused to open. To fix things, a computer restart was in order.

As far as resources are concerned, Panda Cloud Antivirus requires a little more power than its previous version. In our tests, CPU usage peaked at 98% but the average was at around 67%. RAM was also more heavily employed in contrast to version 1.0 of the product. In this case, it went up to around 45MB. Bottom line is that although resource usage went up in this edition, it does not put heavy stress on the computer and allows other activities as well.

The new Panda Cloud Antivirus Pro comes with strengthened offline protection layer through the behavioral detection component and USB vaccination. However, with these as added value, the \$29.95 price marks as wide a gap between the Pro and the Free edition as that separating a power user and a beginner.

The Good

Despite the advanced settings section of the application and the addition of behavioral detection, ease of use has not suffered one bit. Panda Cloud provides great malware management by allowing you to recover neutralized files from the Recycle Bin or deleting / unblocking blocked applications labeled as potentially unwanted.

Autorun and USB vaccination fulfill a very simple but necessary measure for increasing the protection of the PC.

The Bad

Faced with large amounts of malware, the application console may refuse to open, turning off system protection.

The price may be considered an issue by users expecting more tinkering and a more complex set of options for the money.

The Truth

It preserves ease of use and minimalist interface, while also time enforcing protection with behavioral detection. Shutting off possible malware entry points, such as Windows Autorun and USB drive's autorun.inf, makes for valid proactive measures against threats.

Still, Panda Cloud Antivirus Pro may not be the choice of many a user given that they have the free edition, which offers slightly less protection than the \$29.95 one. As for the freeware, even if it falls short of behavioral analysis and USB vaccination, is not less impressive than the paid edition.

This article is also available in Spanish: [Panda Cloud Antivirus Pro](#)