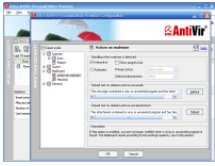


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By: Codrut Nistor, Editor, Software Reviews



[Stop Viruses for Free!](#)

Three free guardians for your computer

Yesterday was a Friday 13th indeed, because I was just about to have some electrical cables inside my house melted, and I don't want to think about what could have happened if this problem hadn't been detected in time... but let's move to the computer world.

Fortunately, no viruses here, and apart from one over voltage problem that gave a little work to my UPS, everything's just fine. Having these in mind, I thought about giving you a hint on some excellent antiviruses that are also completely free, and which are pretty easy to find. I have three subjects today, and each of them is a winner in its way. The interesting fact about them is that all three start with the first letter of the alphabet, their names being Avira PersonalEdition Classic, AVG Free Edition and Avast! Home Edition. We already know the most important thing about these programs: with each one of them, you can get free and reliable protection from computer viruses, but the time has come to check things a little deeper... **Avira AntiVir PersonalEdition Classic 7** I am not going to hide myself from the truth, but plainly admit it: Avira AntiVir is my favorite, but that doesn't mean it's the best one here. After all, everything is a matter of personal taste...and despite the large number of computer magazines and sites, there's no 100% fair test; basically, that's the reason I won't have a winner today. Before getting to know Avira AntiVir, I used to close my antivirus each time I needed my computer to work as fast as it could, but now things have changed.

There's not much to say about this program, but there are three things that should be mentioned for each one here today - interface, features and limitations, because each of these antiviruses has a commercial version too. AntiVir has a nice tabbed interface that contains six tabs, each one being dedicated to a certain task. These areas are Status, Scanner, Guard, Quarantine, Scheduler and Reports. The Configuration screen has two possible layouts, the basic default one and an Expert mode that allows you to play with the advanced program options. This antivirus is very easy to use and it won't tie a cannonball to your computer's foot when real time monitoring is enabled. The PersonalEdition Classic doesn't have the MailGuard module that can protect you from malicious emails and each day a window that suggests purchasing the Premium edition opens. Even more, the Premium edition gives you access to an exclusive updates server, being also able to detect adware and spyware, besides viruses. Anyway, the free version is a good choice, and I advise you to give it a try! **AVG Free Edition 7** Grisoft is one of the important players on the antivirus market, and AVG Free Edition is their gift for home users, but without technical support, multiple languages and detailed settings. Of course that you won't be allowed to use this for commercial purposes, and your download priority when downloading updates will be low, but let's see what goodies can we get for free...AVG Free Edition's interface looks identical to the commercial version, and I must say that they are both a little outdated. I know that fighting viruses is not an art in most cases, but a question of raw power and speed, but I like to see nice interfaces in most programs that I use. AVG Free Edition comes with the standard set of features for an average antivirus, such as custom scanning or scheduling, but I was impressed to notice the Rescue Disk Wizard, an excellent tool that can help you repair damage done by virtual intruders, if such a disaster happens because, let's face it, no antivirus is 100% safe. The good part about AVG Free Edition is that it comes with an Email Scanner that can help you get excellent protection together with the Resident Shield, while the Virus Vault enables you to enter the world of known viruses and find out more about them. At last, I must say that this program is also a pleasure to have on your computer, given the small amount of resources it needs to run on and protect your computer all day long. Are you ready for it? Watch it at work right here, right now! **Avast!**

Home Edition 4.7 My last client today is Avast! Home Edition, this one being slightly different from its companions. The differences can be found only using each one of them to face your computer's hardware, software and your personal preferences, but I can only hope that I am helpful enough to give you at least a first glance on these programs. Perhaps the greatest difference between Avast! and most antiviruses around is its interface. While most antiviruses look good or very good, in the best cases, this one is a true eye candy. Avast! Home Edition has a skinnable interface, but you'll probably wonder as much as I did what's the catch with the "Enhanced User Interface"...and unfortunately there's only one way to find out the answer: buy the commercial version. Anyway, what we have here is good enough to get us started, so let's dig in deeper, using the szc-kde interface. On the features side, this program also comes with useful and special tools that we didn't see here today, like the Network Shield that can protect you from worms attacks, and the Web Shield, designed to keep away any evil lurking in Web pages from your computer. At last, we have protection from threats hidden inside email messages, to offer complete protection. This is only the top of the Avast! pyramid, and I can guarantee you it's a pleasure to visit it. I don't know about you, but I won't get to Egypt anytime soon, so Avast! Home Edition can be an excellent way to entertain yourselves while staying safe. Enjoy it! **Conclusion** Today everybody is a winner, and the prize is only a few mouse clicks away. Don't be afraid, because to prevent is always easier than to cure. Choose the smart way, choose the A-way: Avira, Avast! or AVG, in the end, the choice is only yours. Good luck!