A Mid-year Update on Anti-Virus Software for Windows Computers

compiled by Gary Patrick
from Published Test Results

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Lexington Computer & Technology Group
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Recommended Anti-malware for Windows computers

Comparison of Top Rankings by multiple evaluators

Positives & Negatives pages about each brand product (including user comments if available)

References – website reports and articles

(Also, it is recommended you read (or re-read) my Anti-virus product report from February 2017).

Recommendation for Selecting an Anti-malware program for Windows:

1) Avira Free 2017 gets the top ranking of the free ones.

(despite some opinions in favor of AVG free,
and the fact there are fewer houses testing Avira)

- Avira full-scan time is very slow;
- Avast is also In the running for second place.
- AVG has a lengthy blog dialog on the AVG support site over annoying advertising Pop-ups.

2) Norton Security 2017 gets the top ranking of the paid programs.

(but fewer test results available on Norton)

All of these Antivirus or Internet Security programs seem to have some "warts;" it is suggested you read the user comment highlights on the next pages, that may sway your selection among the top-rated programs.

Example:

Avira was downrated by PCMag for long scanning time and that its Browser protection works only with Chome and Firefox.

These "warts" may or may not matter to you significantly.
• just leave the computer alone for a couple of hours to run a full scan every couple of months?
• don't use Internet Explorer or Edge browsers?

Should I change the anti-virus software I have?

No, if you are content with the product you have:

- haven't experienced any problems or annoyances
- current product still rates among the best
- you or the vendor has updated it to the latest version
- the virus definition files update automatically
- you have as many additional security features in it
  as you desire (anti-phishing, malicious website warnings,
  parental controls, etc. - that are provided in Internet Security
  Suites, rather than just Antivirus).

If otherwise, you may want to consider a change.

Special case: I still recommend you replace Microsoft Windows Defender or Security Essentials with a better product, although Simon Edwards Labs likes it. (and refer to my comments in my February 2017 report).

Other reasons to consider selecting your anti-malware protection yourself:

- If you're buying a new p.c. - probably has a 30-day trial of some paid product.
- You have a yearly subscription about to expire;
- Desire to change from paid to free, or vice-versa

Considerations for choosing paid vs. free:
Paid programs -

- don't pester you (as much) with pop-ups to upgrade
- have better product support options
- offer extra features in Internet Security Suites

Comparative Rankings of Anti-virus and Internet Security Software, by Different Test Labs.
    (presented in same order as per Consumer Reports' Ranking Summary, March 2017)
    (a score in parentheses means not quite the same product as tested by C.R.)

Name of Product (**free ones grouped first**)	Consumer Reports Score	PCMag Overall Score	Simon Edwards Labs Score	AV-Test, in Windows 10; Windows 7	
Avira Free Antivirus 2017	64	3.5			
AVG Antivirus Free	63 ("2016")	4.5 & EC ("2017')	AA (16.141.7998)		
Avast Free Antivirus	56 (no year)	4.5 & EC ("2017")	AA (17.2.2288)	6.0/4.5/5.5 6.0/4.5/ 6.0	
Sophos HOME (no year)	53				
Microsoft Windows Defender (Security Essentials)	53		(AA) S.E: 4.10.209.0	4.5/4.5/ 6.0 (5.5/ 5.0/ 6.0)	
Paid Internet Security Products:					
Symantec Norton Security Deluxe (5 device license)	73 (no year)	4.5 & EC	AAA 22.9.0.71	6/6/5.5 Top 6/6/6 Top	
Kaspersky Internet Security 2017	70	4.5 & EC	AAA 17.0.0.611 (c)	6/6/6 Top 6/6/6 Top	
G Data Internet Security 2017	68	-		6.0/5.0/5.5 6.0/4.5/6.0	
Eset Internet Security	67	(4.0)	(AAA) 10.0.390.0	5.5/4.0/6.0 5.0/4.5/6.0	
AVG Internet Security ("2016")	65	3.0 (2017)		6.0/5.0/5.5 5.0/5.5/6.0	
Avira Antivirus Pro 2017	64			6/6/6 Top 5.0/5.5/6.0	
F-Secure SAFE	64	4.0		6.0/5.5/5.0 6/6/5.5 top	
Bullguard Internet Security	63			4.5/6.0/5.5 5.0/5.5/5.5	
Bitdefender Internet Security 2017	63	4.5 & EC	AAA Engine 7.70071	6/6/5.5 Top 6/6/6 Top	

Trend Micro Internet Security	60	4.0	AAA 11.0.1186	6/6/5.5 Top 6/6/6 Top	
Avast Internet Security	59				
Panda Antivirus Pro 2017	55	(3.0)			
McAfee Antivirus Plus	52	4.0 & EC		4.5/5.5/6 4/5.5/5	
Webroot Secure Anywhere Antivirus	-	4.5 & EC			
AV-Test categories are Protection / Performance / Usability					

PCMag downrates Avira Free because its anti-virus scans are very slow (2 hours+).

PCMag downrates AVG Internet Security 2017 because of poor scores blocking fraudulent and malicious URLs. Can be disabled programmatically. Mac protection limited to antivirus. No iOS protection.

PCMag downrates ESET Internet Security because firewall control is awkward, anti-phishing score is mediocre, and parental control is limited to content filtering.

PCMag downrates F-Secure SAFE for uneven quality of Windows components, and expensive fee structure to add cross platform components (iMac and iOS).

PCMag's Table of Free Antivirus Products Tested (identified at the bottom of this table)
Editors' scores are the red dots in the next row, 0-5 dots; "EC" denotes "Editors' Choice"

	Avast Free Antivirus 2017 Review	AVG AntiVirus Free (2017) Review	Bitdefender Antivirus Free Edition (2017) Review	Check Point ZoneAlarm Free Antivirus+ 2017 Review	Sophos Home Review	Avira Antivirus (2017) Review	adaware antivirus free 12 Review	Comodo Antivirus 10 Review	Panda Free Antivirus (2017) Review	Qihoo 360 Total Security 8.6 Review
Editor Rating	●●●●◐ EC	●●●●◐ EC	●●●●○	●●●●○	●●●●○	●●●◐○	●●●○○	●●●○○	●●●○○	●●●○○
On-Demand Malware Scan	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
On-Access Malware Scan	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
Website Rating	✔	✔	✘	✘	✘	✔	✘	✘	✘	✘
Malicious URL Blocking	✔	✔	✔	✘	✔	✔	✘	✔	✔	✘
Phishing Protection	✔	✔	✔	✘	✔	✔	✘	✔	✔	✔
Behavior-Based Detection	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✘	✘	✔	✘	✔
Bonus: Vulnerability Scan	✔	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘
Read Review										

On the actual web page this row consists of links to take you to a full review writeup.

http://www.pcmag.com/article2/0,2817,2388652,00.asp

Protection Test Results Chart from Simon Edwards Labs
Home Anti-malware Protection Report, Jan-March 2017

4. PROTECTION DETAILS

These results break down how each product handled threats into some detail. You can see how many detected a threat and the levels of protection provided.

Products sometimes detect more threats than they protect against. This can happen when they recognise an element of the threat but are not equipped to stop it. Products can also provide protection even if they don't detect certain threats. Some threats abort on detecting specific endpoint protection software.

Protection Details

Legend: ■ Defended ■ Neutralised ■ Compromised

This data shows in detail how each product handled the threats used.
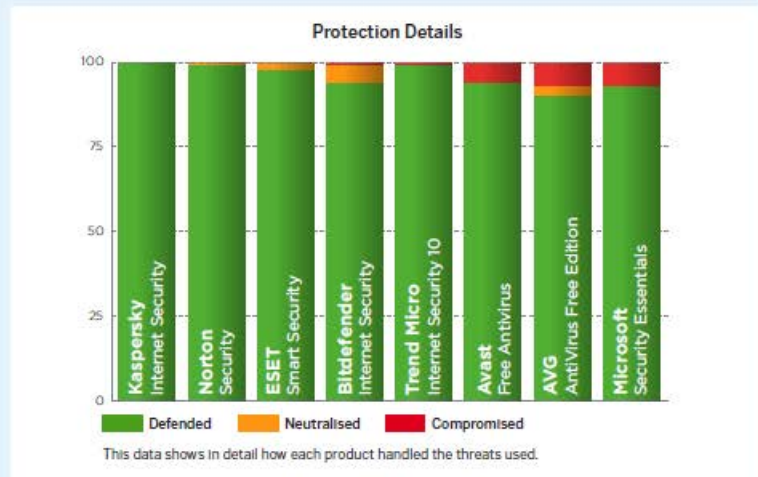
PROTECTION DETAILS					
Product	Detected	Blocked	Neutralised	Compromised	Protected
Kaspersky Internet Security	100	100	0	0	100
Norton Security	100	99	1	0	100
ESET Smart Security	100	98	2	0	100
Bitdefender Internet Security	99	94	5	1	99
Trend Micro Internet Security 10	85	99	0	1	99
Avast Free Antivirus	94	94	0	6	94
AVG AntiVirus Free Edition	92	90	3	7	93
Microsoft Security Essentials	92	93	0	7	93

Simon Edwards Lab Comments
from their Test Report for January-March 2017

6. CONCLUSIONS

Attacks in this test included infected websites available to the general public, including sites that automatically attack visitors and attempt to infect them without any social engineering or other interaction. Some sites relied on users being fooled into installing the malware. We also included targeted attacks, which were exploit-based attempts to gain remote control of the target systems.

Kaspersky Internet Security protected against all of the public web-based threats and targeted attacks. It blocked 100 per cent of the threats and was also entirely effective when handling legitimate objects, giving it the rare privilege of a 100 per cent overall rating.

ESET Smart Security came an extremely close second. It neutralised two threats, which fractionally reduced its overall score, which is rounded up to 100 per cent in our table (a figure that is rounded up from 99.7 per cent).

Norton Security was just as effective when protecting the endpoint from targeted attacks and protected against all of the public threats. It neutralised one threat but was not compromised at all. It blocked one legitimate application.

Bitdefender Internet Security was able to fend off all of the exploit-based targeted attacks fully. It blocked all but one of the public web attacks. It neutralised five attacks, was compromised once and blocked one legitimate application.

Microsoft Security Essentials was the strongest free product in the test. It was compromised five times by the targeted attacks but protected against all but two of the web-based attacks. It only blocked one legitimate application.

Avast Free Antivirus was the least effective product in this test, although its performance was still strong enough to earn an AA award. It stopped a fair few of the targeted attacks and all of the public web threats, but its slightly less accurate handling of legitimate software pushed it to the bottom of the table.

The products from **ESET, Kaspersky Lab, Symantec (Norton), Bitdefender and Trend Micro** all win AAA awards for their strong overall performance. Those from **Avast, AVG and Microsoft** achieved solid AA awards.

Consumer Reports' 2017 Results from Testing Anti-Virus Software
Part One - Rating the Free Programs:
(published in Consumer Reports Online, March 2017)

Overall score	Brand & Model / Price	Threat blocking	Ease of use	Malware scan	Use of resources	Firewall	USB drive threats	Anti-phishing	Response to threats
64 Overall score	**Avira** Free Antivirus 2017 — Recommended — Price: --- — Price & Shop — Add to Compare	⬆⬆ (green)	⬆ (green)	● (yellow)	⬆ (green)	⬇ (orange)	⬇ (orange)	⬇ (orange)	⬆⬆ (green)
63 Overall score	**AVG** Antivirus FREE — Recommended — Price: --- — Price & Shop — Add to Compare	⬆ (green)	● (yellow)	⬆ (green)	⬆ (green)	● (yellow)	⬆ (green)	⬇⬇ (red)	⬆⬆ (green)
56 Overall score	**Avast** Free Antivirus — Price: --- — Price & Shop — Add to Compare	⬆ (green)	● (yellow)	⬆ (green)	⬆ (green)	⬇⬇ (red)	⬇ (orange)	⬆ (green)	● (yellow)
53 Overall score	**Sophos** HOME — Price: --- — Price & Shop — Add to Compare	⬆ (green)	⬇ (orange)	● (yellow)	● (yellow)	⬇ (orange)	⬇ (orange)	⬇ (orange)	⬆⬆ (green)
53 Overall score	**Microsoft** Windows Defender — Price: --- — Price & Shop — Add to Compare	⬆ (green)	● (yellow)	⬇ (orange)	⬆ (green)	⬇ (orange)	⬇ (orange)	⬇⬇ (red)	⬆⬆ (green)

Consumer Reports' 2017 Results from Testing Anti-Virus Software
Part Two - Programs that Charge an Annual Fee:

Overall score	Brand & Model / Price	Threat blocking	Ease of use	Malware scan	Use of resources	Firewall	USB drive threats	Anti-phishing	Response to threats
73	**Symantec** Norton Security Deluxe — Best Buy — Price: $40.00	Excellent	Good	Very Good	Very Good	Excellent	Very Good	Excellent	Excellent
70	**Kaspersky** Internet Security 2017 — Best Buy — Price: $40.00	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Very Good	Poor	Very Good	Excellent	Excellent
68	**G Data** Internet Security 2017 — Recommended — Price: $50.00	Very Good	Very Good	Excellent	Good	Good	Very Good	Fair	Excellent
67	**Eset** Internet Security — Recommended — Price: $80.00	Excellent	Very Good	Very Good	Very Good	Poor	Good	Fair	Excellent
65	**AVG** Internet Security — Recommended — Price: $70.00	Very Good	Very Good	Very Good	Good	Good	Very Good	Poor	Excellent
64	**Avira** Antivirus Pro 2017 — Price: $65.00	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Good	Fair	Fair	Fair	Excellent
64	**F-Secure** SAFE — Price: $70.00	Excellent	Good	Very Good	Very Good	Fair	Good	Good	Excellent
63	**BullGuard** Internet Security — Price: $60.00	Very Good	Good	Very Good	Very Good	Very Good	Good	Very Good	Excellent
63	**Bitdefender** Internet Security 2017 — Price: $50.00	Very Good	Good	Very Good	Very Good	Poor	Very Good	Excellent	Excellent
60	**Trend Micro** Internet Security — Price: $40.00	Excellent	Good	Fair	Very Good	Fair	Good	Good	Excellent

Consumer Reports' 2017 Results from Testing Anti-virus Software Part Three - the Stragglers among the Fee-based Programs - (clearly not as capable as the entries in Part Two).

Overall score	Brand & Model / Price	Threat blocking	Ease of use	Malware scan	Use of resources	Firewall	USB drive threats	Anti-phishing	Response to threats
59 Overall score	**Avast** Internet Security Price: $70.00 [Price & Shop ▶] ⊕ Add to Compare	⌃ (green)	! (yellow)	⌃ (green)	⌃ (green)	! (yellow)	⌄ (orange)	⌃ (green)	! (yellow)
55 Overall score	**Panda** Antivirus Pro 2017 Price: $40.00 [Price & Shop ▶] ⊕ Add to Compare	⌃ (green)	! (yellow)	⌄ (orange)	⌃ (green)	⌄ (orange)	⌄ (orange)	⌃ (green)	⌃ (green)
52 Overall score	**McAfee** AntiVirus Plus Price: $55.00 [Price & Shop ▶] ⊕ Add to Compare	⌃ (green)	! (yellow)	⌄ (orange)	⌃ (green)	⌄⌄ (red)	⌄⌄ (red)	⌃ (green)	! (yellow)

Decoding the meaning of Consumer Reports' Scoring; (categories in order from left to right on CR Ratings page)

- Overall Score is based on performance detecting and blocking online and offline threats, ease of use, and effective response to newly-discovered malware.

- Threat Blocking score shows how well the product protected automatically against live exploits from websites and local drives.

- Ease of use score covers installation, changing settings, interacting with the software, and getting help.

- Malware Scan score rates the effectiveness scanning the p.c. on demand for malware, both online and offline.

- Use of Resources measures the software's use of memory, impact on boot-up time, and tendency to slow computer operation during a scan (for malware).

- Firewall rating: how well the software and its firewall stopped rogue connections to and from the internet. For products without a built-in firewall, the default Windows Firewall was enabled.

Consumer Reports' Scoring Categories, continued:

- USB Drive Threats score indicates how well the product detected, blocked and removed malware on external (storage) drives.

- Anti-phishing score rates the ability to block websites known to host malware or fraud.

- Response to Threats score indicates effectiveness of the suggested or default response to a detected threat.

Consumer Reports software evaluations are performed in conjunction with International Consumer Research and Testing, Inc. CR says the web browser used was Chrome, but doesn't identify the p.c. hardware or operating system on which the testing was done, but presumably was on Windows 10.

The next sequence of slides contains Consumer Reports editors' and others' comments on the individual Anti-virus or Internet Security Products (in the order in which they appear in the Consumer Reports Ranking Table (from CR Online, released March 2017 although CR readers' feedback online is dated as recently as July 2017)

Consumer Reports about Security Software: 6/13/2017

Avira: Score 64, highest score for a free AV program.

   (by comparison, 73 is the highest score for the paid security SW tested – see below).

"Avira is great at protecting against web-based malware through the use of browser extensions. But as with other free products, you'll see ads for the paid version. Excellent at at protecting against web threats."

[You can consider purchasing the Avira Pro version for $65; still received a score = 64.]

Consumer Reports comment on the difference - "The Pro version adds USB and network device monitoring, provides tech support and dispenses with ads, but otherwise performs like the Free version. It still lacks anti-spam and parental controls."

Advantages cited by Consumer Reports for Avira Free:

• Can control the Windows firewall from the interface;

• Allows starting an infected PC from a CD or USB drive;

Disadvantages:

• Detection performance degraded when offline;

• Incomplete malware blocking;

• Very slow scans (2+ hours);

• Price Comparison browser extension is adware.

Users' Feedback on Avira: [There are no user reviews in Consumer Reports.]

User comments on PC Mag. 5/9/2017:

• "slows down an older machine;"

• "installs a password manager you can't get rid of - 8000 comments on Avira
      webpage looking for help; poor tech support."   [I was not able to find these
      password manager complaints].

• Adware - pop ups annoying.

AVG Free: Consumer Reports score, 63; evaluation:

"AVG's free antivirus performs well, and can even delete detected malware from a network drive. But it's not good at detecting "phishing" websites. An interface called "Zen" tries to upsell you to additional capability for a fee. The help system is useful and contextual, but lacks a screen button to activate it."

Last year, AVAST acquired AVG, but their individual products will continue.

[The paid version **AVG Internet Security** was tested, evaluated below, and scores 65.]

Advantages cited by Consumer Reports:

• Informative, contextual help;

• Clear warnings;

• Interface easy to use;

• Can delete malware from a network drive;

• Allows starting an infected PC from a CD or USB drive;

Disadvantages:

• Web protection uses browser plug-in and changes home page;

• Poor at blocking phishing sites;

• Slows down file copying;

• Installs "Web Tune-Up" adware by default;

Explanation: The ZEN interface is a management and launching utility that offers an overview of AVG security on all of your devices. Four panels dominate Zen's main window, devoted to antivirus, PC tuneup, VPN, and Web Tuneup. Each panel contains a circle that can be fully or partially colored, depending on whether or not you've installed all possible protection in that area. If all is well, the circle glows green; if your attention is needed, it changes color.

Users' Feedback on AVG Free:
- One CR review from 1 year ago: Pop up advertisments that interfere with other programs (occuring randomly) make this at best an annoying choice. AVG is promoting exactly what the should be defending against! Their own site is a remarkable read on this topic: https://support.avg.com/answers?id=906b0000000DA01AAG; owned more than six months, Temple, NH. gave it 1*, would not recomm.
- 35 comments in PCMag from users, mostly negative, about frequent calls to restart, pesky pop-ups, and Zen pushing itself on you.

AVAST Free: Consumer Reports score, 56; evaluation:
"Though Avast's free antivirus won't bog down your PC, and has a few features you usually have to pay for, it can leave detected malware an external source drive. It also installs adware to promote shopping websites."

Advantages:
• Low demand on memory;
• Includes a network scanner;

Disadvantages:
• Leaves malware on external sources;
• Installs SafePrice shopping adware in browser;
• No default action to remove malware in on-demand scan;
• Detection warning pop-ups disappear quickly;
• Lacks an effective firewall.

Users' Feedback about Avast Free:
One CR review, 5 months ago. "This software brings in many problems I never had, then charges me to get rid of them. Windows installer said I don't have permission to remove it. I am the administrator. Their web site said to download their uninstaller. It said to reboot in safe mode. I was now locked out, corrupted password data base. $150 to remove this free junk and reimage my computer. gave it 1*;
would not recommend it to others."
reviewer cons: Crashes or Freezes
1 Hard To Install or Upgrade
1 Hard To Navigate
from PCMag 5/09/17, some help finding the Free Version: Search for "Avast Free" - it's not listed on their homepage. The URL ends in "/free-antivirus-download".
- User comments complain about some payment issues. Also,
- avoid the Cleanup accessory, its a dog, locks up incompleted sometimes.
- Avast runs slowly on older machines.

Sophos Home: Consumer Reports score, 53; [first year tested] evaluation:
"Sophos HOME has a sparse control panel, with a web-page interface for changing settings. It depends on being online for acceptable malware detection. You're better off with one of the free AV products."

Advantages cited by Consumer Reports:

• Allows starting an infected PC from a CD or USB drive

• Protection degraded when offline

Disadvantages:

• No means to temporarily pause protection

• No choice of actions offered when malware is detected

• No quarantine, malware is deleted

• Slows startup and file copying

• Lacks anti-spam and parental controls

Users' Feedback in Consumer Reports:
One review, one month ago, but it appears to have been written for the Apple MAC version – not applicable – the feature set is different for Apple version.

Microsoft Windows Defender: Consumer Reports score 53; evaluation:
"We tested Windows 10 with the built-in Defender active, and as with all the other products, used the Chrome browser for web tests. It offers good, basic protection for those who opt not to install anything else. But its protection against ransomware was weak."

Advantages cited by Consumer Reports:

• Built into Windows 10, activates if no other AV installed;

• Good basic protection;

• Simple interface;

• Can remove malware from network drives;

Disadvantages:

• Malware detection notifications delayed;

• No option to manually choose action;

• Settings split between three interfaces;

• Slows file copying;

• Lacks anti-spam.

Users' Feedback: No reviews in Consumer Reports.

Consumer Reports 2017 Section on Test Results for Paid Anti-virus Software:

Symantec Norton Security Deluxe; Consumer Reports score, 73; $40; evaluation:
"Norton was very good or excellent in all performance attributes, making it the best choice for protection from all sorts of threats. The help system, while informative, can be confusing to navigate. Pop-ups warning of detected malware can be too numerous, and required restarts and lengthy removal processes can tax older Pcs."
Advantages cited by CR:
• Very good all-around performance online and offline;
• Excellent protection agains web threats and phishing;
• Allows starting an infected PC from a CD or USB drive;
Disadvantages:
• Installs a "Safe Search" browser toolbar that is not very useful;
• Multiple pop-ups can be annoying;
• Lacks parental controls.
Users' Feedback about Norton Security Deluxe:
3 customer reviews in Consumer Reports; one 1* + two 4*. 67% would recommend it.
One had trouble with support for Cloud Retrieval Service -avoid it. 1*
One impressed by the bargain price for 5 pc's;
A third user is happy with reliability.
CR User comments in full:
"Disgusted with Norton Security," (submitted 4 months ago, Greensboro NC) -
"Norton security service works fine until you need restoration of files due to crash or hard drive replacement. I called on Jan 19, 2017, for "cloud retrieval service." After daily calls to them, I was told this was a Level 3 issue and I should just be patient. It is now 2.09.17 and still no files/doc restored. I have just filed a BBB complaint. Maybe this will get me the fast service one expects in computer services.   would not recommend. Cons: Lousy Cloud Service; Avoid A Rip-off."

Like "Reliability and Affordability," (submitted 6 months ago; Brampton, ON, Canada)
"I use the software to protect my personal emails and home-based business. For these reasons I must be confident that there is continuous checking of all incoming/outgoing data to maintain the highest level of security. I like the software when it advises "safe" or "unsafe" of other websites or software I may visit. I am unsure the software can catch and block "all" malware/viruses attach to emails of my usual contacts, even though its prevention reliability is good."

"Best Cost - $40 for 5 machines . . " (submitted 1 year ago; from Virginia) -
"Consumer Reports does a poor job of really looking at prices for this. Some brands of software target users of multiple devices/PCs...Norton usually has a multiple PC price for a family of home computers, which is pretty normal these days. At $40.00 for 5 PCs a year, for my home which has 3-4 PCs, this is the "Best Buy, $8 per PC. CR's "Best Buy" is $30, and performs up to 5 point better (G-Data), but is $30 per device per year. .."

Kaspersky Internet Security 2017: Consumer Reports score, 70, $40; evaluation: "Kaspersky improved for 2017, due to its excellent protection from web threats and phishing exploits, and its use of behavioral analysis. Its user interface is well-designed for basic users. It's one of the few products that will clean malware from a network (NAS) drive when discovered."

Advantages cited by Consumer Reports:
• Very good protection from malware on external drives, even offline;
• Control panel clear and easy to use;
• Can remove malware from network drives;
• Excellent at blocking phishing web pages;
• Includes anti-spam and parental controls;
• Allows starting an infected PC from a CD or USB drive;

Disadvantages:
• Malware may be left on the source drive when copied to a second internal drive;
• May display more pop-up warnings than needed when multiple malware files are detected.

Users' Feedback about Kaspersky:
Two CR user reviews; user scores of 1 and 2. neither would recommend it
1) June 2017, from Vienna, VA: Using a banner blocker caused Chrome, Firefox, and Edge browsers, and Facebook, to crash; removing Kaspersky extensions and turning off the banner blocker solved the problem. Kaspersky also interfered with making backups to Mycloudmirror RAID drive. Disabling Kaspersky fixed the problem.
2) "Too many issues with this program.. It froze my computer and [I] had very difficult time in getting it restarted. Unable to open any tabs on my browsers. Had to remove it to be able to use my computer again. Windows 7 desktop. would not recommend."
3) PCmag users complain about Kaspersky slowing the computer down with time.

G Data Internet Security 2017: Consumer Reports score, 68. $50; evaluation: "G Data didn't change much in the last year, still providing very good overall performance. Behavioral detection was effective, and on-demand detection was good even when scanning offline. The control panel is easy to use, and pop-up warnings were appropriate."

Advantages cited by Consumer Reports:
• Excellent malware detection on demand, even when offline
• Well-designed control panel
• Clear pop-up warnings
• Includes anti-spam and parental controls
• Allows starting an infected PC from a CD or USB drive.

Disadvantages:
• Confusing registration process
• Mediocre anti-phishing protection
• Slows PC startup and file copying
• Interfered with using Windows 10 Mail on an IMAP account in our tests

Users' Feedback: No customer reviews in Consumer Reports.

Eset Internet Security 2017: Consumer Reports score, 67; $80.
"Eset's full-featured suite was formerly called Smart Security. It performed well, especially at blocking web threats, but not phishing attempts. The control panel is good, and the help system is quite useful. Network security checking is included. On-access malware-detection notifications were too subtle, and disappeared after a short while."
Advantages cited by Consumer Reports:
• Includes anti-spam, parental controls and network security checking
• Allows starting an infected PC from a CD or USB drive
• Low memory usage
Disadvantages:
• Notifications disappear after a few seconds;
• Malware and ransomware detection declines when offline;
• Anti-phishing weak;
Users' Feedback: None in Consumer Reports.
Two of our own members have reported ESET slows a computer down; when replaced with Norton Security, the PC performance was much better.

AVG Internet Security 2016; Consumer Reports score, 65; evaluation:
"AVG's Internet Security performs well, and can even delete detected malware from a network drive. But it's not good at detecting "phishing" websites. The help system is useful and contextual, but lacks a screen button to activate it."
• Informative, contextual help
• Clear warnings
• Interface easy to use
• Can delete malware from a network drive
• Allows starting an infected PC from a CD or USB drive
• On-demand scan interface can be confusing
• Poor at blocking phishing sites
• Slows down file copying

Users' Feedback about AVG Internet Security
Three user reviews, all 1*. All three have owned it >6 months.
"AVG? NO WAY; Submitted 2 months ago; From Buzau
Pay attention! AVG take[s] money from your automatically (without you use your own card) for renewing licenses up to two weeks before the expiry of the old ones. So if you do not care to remember when your license expires and you do not announce them more than two weeks before, AVG COMPANY take your money from your own account for a new license, even if the new price is higher than what you originally paid.
AVG Scams it's returning customers;" Submitted 6 months ago, NJ

"Renewed my Internet security for 3 computers, Tried to install on one computer by entering key code on AVG website and was not recognized. Received an immediate phone call from a heavily accented support services person. She said this pc had several issues and after 'working' on it for an hour, she announced that it was infected and another technician would continue to resolve the issues, and it would cost me an additional $50. I told her this was a renewal so I have the AVG internet security currently on it. How does a company try to charge extra to fix problems that were suppose to be prevented thru a current paid subscription? I told her i wanted a refund and was given a phone number to call for the refund, well, guess what, it was a disconnected number. So much for customer loyalty! How ironic, we need protection from a company whose business it is to protect.

Good bye AVG."

"AVG's Unethical Business Model!" Submitted 9 months ago. New York, New York

"I have enjoyed paid AVG protection on my PC for at least 6 years. However, it was time for me to replace my laptop and switch my license to a newly purchased one. After restoring my files from back to the new computer, I retrieved the activation codes for my AVG products. Following online instructions, I deleted AVG software from my old computer and downloaded the software onto my new computer. However, I could not locate a screen to enter my activation code, only to purchase. I contacted tech support. They advised that I needed to purchase a $199 support package because my new computer was infected and required a higher level of protection before reinstalling AVG. Needless to say, either my old computer was not actually adequately protected by AVG if my computer was infected by restoring from the old computer, or else this upselling is an unethical sales practice, or both. Strongly recommend against relying on AVG antivirus protection and choosing a more ethical supplier."

Avira Antivirus Pro 2017. Consumer Reports score, 64; $65; evaluation:
"Avira is great at protecting against web-based malware through the use of browser extensions. It includes a software updater, but lacks anti-spam and parental control. The Pro version adds USB and network device monitoring, provides tech support and dispenses with ads, but otherwise performs like the Free version."
Advantages cited by Consumer Reports:
• Excellent at at protecting against web threats
• Can control the Windows firewall from the interface
• Allows starting an infected PC from a CD or USB drive
Disadvantages:
• Detection performance degraded when offline
• Lacks anti-spam and parental control
• Price Comparison briowser extension is adware
Users' Feedback: No reviews.

F-Secure SAFE. Consumer Reports score, 64; $70.
"F-Secure didn't have any major weaknesses, but performed on a par with free products. It was excellent at blocking web threats, but not good at detecting malware on external drives, especially when offline."
Advantages cited by CR:
• Excellent at blocking web threats;
• Simple control panel;
• Includes anti-spam and parental controls;
• Allows starting an infected PC from a CD or USB drive.
Disadvantages:
• Weak in detecting threats on external drives when offline
• Firewall only fair in performance
• Pop-up warning of deactivation disappears quickly
• Help system weak
• Uninstallation leaves remnants
Users' Feedback: None in Consumer Reports.

Bullguard Internet Security 2016; Consumer Reports score, 63; $60.
[note this is the 2016 version that was tested, not 2017]
"Bullguard's control panel appears complete, but doesn't have contextual help or a way to temporarily turn off protection. It also doesn't present a choice about how to treat detected malware on-the-fly, though you can change the automatic action. Ransomware blocking didn't work well."
Advantages cited by Consumer Reports:
• Control panel is organized;
• Includes anti-spam and parental controls;
Disadvantages:
• Behavioral detection weak;
• Doesn't offer a choice of actions when malware is detected;
• Doesn't pop up a warning if protection is turned off or out-of-date;
• Help system is only web-based;
• Ransomware blocking not very effective.
Users' Feedback: Two reviews in CR, both gave it 2*, would not recmmend.
"If you do the free trail, look out for all the nag-ware." Submitted 6 months ago, from Sacramento, CA; owned 1-2 months:
"I used the free trial so I could get a sense of how the software would impact my system, as I use resource-intensive programs and wanted to see if it would cause resource conflicts. It does affect performance when its tasks kick in, with my other programs slowing down for a second here and there, but not any worse than other security programs I have tried. The biggest issue I have, though, is all the nagging. The software touts how impressive it is at stopping spam, among other benefits, yet proceeds to spam the user every several hours to buy the software! This was done by several avenues: email, warnings that come up when you access the software, and blatant pop-ups that would suddenly appear randomly while the computer is on. Also some of the imagery they use as part of their pitch I found to be disturbing. This detracted heavily from the software. Don't get me wrong - the software seems good in general, but the heavy-handed fear-based marketing was just too much! It didn't give me much of a sense of security when my security software is doing all sorts of things that I want it to protect me from."
Cons: Resource Intensive; Trial Spams User
2nd review submitted one year ago, Memphis TN. owned 1-3 months:
"resource intensive; Switched from AVAST based on your review. Very disappointed in how much much it impacts performance during scans. Difficult to figure out how to change settings. Makes suggestions on vulnerabilities but no directions on how to fix them. Does have pretty good alerts."
CONS
Difficult To Manage
Impacts Computer Performa

Bitdefender Internet Security 2017. Consumer Reports score, 63; $50.
"Bitdefender's "autopilot" mode takes decision-making out of your hands, but also dispenses with warnings of malware discoveries. It's excellent at blocking "phishing" web pages, though it lacks an effective firewall. Ransomware protection must be manually enabled."
Advantages cited by Consumer Reports:
• Excellent at blocking "phishing" web pages;
• Includes anti-spam and parental controls;
• Allows starting an infected PC from a CD or USB drive.
Disadvantages:
• Autopilot (default) mode does not show warnings for malware detected on access, and deletes files by default;
• Help system is not very good.
Users' Feedback: One review gives it 1* over support issues
"Never again! Submitted April 2017; Danville, Illinois, owned it 3-6 months.
They offer a service which costs extra to help resolve problems over the phone. I was handed off from person to person who had to take time to read the previous reports. Once, a technician said she had to hand me off to someone else because she was getting off of work. After many days of trying I took my PC to a repair store. They denied a refund because I didn't respond in a timely manner. How could I respond if my computer didn't work?
CONS
• They offer no monetary refunds.
• Slows a computer down tremendously.
• They brag that they speak English

Trend Micro Internet Security: Consumer Reports score, 60; $40.
"Trend Micro has great ransomware protection – no files got encrypted during our tests. But it has some shortcomings. Detection of malware on an external USB drive was middling. Malware notifications were slow to appear. The "help" system opens the web browser in full-screen mode, obscuring the product's interface.
Advantages:
Clear warnings on malware discovery
Allows starting an infected PC from a CD or USB drivel
Disadvantages:
USB drive protection mediocre
Help system is not well designed
No choice of actions when malware is detected
Slows PC startup
Users' Feedback:
Two reviews in Consumer Reports, scoring a 1 and a 5, but both reviews are 2 years old.
"Fails to stop a pop-up that overrides websites. I had to install another program to stop pop-ups, radically slowing down my computer. It renewed without my permission or an email notice." from Tulsa OK.
2nd review is very positive, a lot of improvement over problems the user had with ESET.
"Comes on very fast at startup. Took a long time to install, but installed without a whimper and is functioning very smoothly." from Raleigh, NC

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McAfee scores only 52; rated poor on firewall and USB drive threats.

References for further detail:

Windows Anti-Malware products;

1) Neil J. Rubenking, editor, PCMag (online) May 9, 2017:
   "<u>The Best Free Antivirus Protection of 2017</u>" (ten reviewed).
   Each product has a very complete evaluation report: scroll
   down the (long) web page to "Featured Free Antivirus
   Protection Reviews," then click on red product name.

http://www.pcmag.com/article2/0,2817,2388652,00.asp

2) Neil J. Rubenking, editor, PCMag (online) – similar article:
   "The Best Antivirus Protection for 2017" (paid products)

http://www.pcmag.com/article2/0,2817,2372364,00.asp

about PC Magazine Online -

PCMag editor Neil Rubenking bases his ratings upon reviewing the test results of a number of independent test houses, including AV-test, AV-comparatives, Simon Edwards Labs (successor to Dennis Labs), and Virus Bulletin, plus his own malware-blocking test.

References, continued:

3) Simon Edwards Labs. Home Anti-Malware Protection Report,
   Jan-Mar 2017   Testing 3 free and 5 paid AV & IS products:
   https://selabs.uk/en/reports/consumers, and download
   .pdf reports for Jan-Mar 2017 and Apr-June 2017

4) AV-Comparatives Summary Report for 2016 (4 Feb. 2017)
   https://www.av-comparatives.org/summary-reports, or
   https://www.av-comparatives.org/comparatives-reviews/

   the latter for individual tests for Real Time Protection, File Detection,
   Malware Removal, Performance (use of system resources),
   and False Positives. These individual tests are in 2017.
   The product discussion has extensive samples of product operating
   windows.