



How to Use Antivirus Software

Written By: AUCSSCD Student Intern

Antivirus software, or “Antiviruses”, are extremely important for keeping your computer safe from various kinds of malware distributed by threat actors on the internet. The goal of an antivirus is to ensure that no vital information or functionalities are compromised on your computer. However, antiviruses cannot do this on their own - they do need proper setup and understanding in order to properly protect your computer. The following is a guide on how to most effectively use an antivirus to protect your computer from malicious software on the internet.

You must start by installing the antivirus. This is best done by reading any instructions or guides that have been given to you by the antivirus provider. The antivirus provider knows their software best, so follow the instructions given to you. Once the antivirus has been installed, it is most important to know how to make use of it.

Most antivirus typically have 2 major capabilities - getting rid of malicious software that has found its way into your system, and stopping malicious software from making its way into the system in the first place. Both are very valuable functions, but they must be used properly. Starting with the first capabilities - getting rid of already placed malicious software. Typically, you must directly ask the antivirus to conduct a full scan of your computer. The antivirus will conduct this scan, find malware, and then get rid of it, while preserving as much of your data as possible in the process. Understand that you must initiate the scan, or set up your antivirus software in such a way that it automatically scans on a regular basis.

Preventing malicious software from being installed is a separate matter. When conducting online activity - especially downloading files off the internet - you must have the antivirus active. The antivirus will monitor what files are being stored on your computer and will search through the code, specifically ensuring that nothing within the files is harmful. In the case that the file contains potentially malicious code, the antivirus will likely warn you about the file in question, and prompt you to delete it. However, as the user, you are able to override the antivirus. When an antivirus prompts you to be suspicious of a file, it is a good idea to delete it unless you have proof ensuring you that the file is trustworthy.

Antivirus are very powerful tools. However, to use them, it is important to understand that you, the user, have more power within the computer than your antivirus does. As the user, you must make proper use of your antivirus and listen to it when it warns you of potential malicious activity. Follow the antivirus provider instructions and make the best of an antivirus to keep yourself safe when doing anything on your computer.