



Lenny Bailes

- [SF Computer Virus Examiner](#)

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- **[Avira Antivir 9: Windows 7-compatible, reliable, and free](#)**
 - [Gadgets & Tech](#)
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As I've pointed out in previous posts, to keep a Windows computer safe and trouble-free for Internet browsing, you want to install a good antivirus application, as well as an anti-spyware app. Microsoft's newer Windows Vista and Windows 7 operating systems bundle a program called Windows Defender, but you should know that Windows Defender is a spyware detector not an antivirus application. It skips over traditional viruses and other types of Windows malware that can attack your computer through email attachments and infected websites. "C"

If you've recently purchased a computer that runs Windows Vista or Windows 7, chances are good that your dealer threw in a one-month demo version of an antivirus program from one of the Big Three vendors (Symantec McAfee, or Trend). Unless you specifically paid for a one or two-year subscription, this antivirus application will stop receiving updates after a short period of time. Furthermore, these packages from big vendors tend to provide the most protection against threats that are widely-recognized and widely-distributed. They are also typically loaded down with additional "security" bells and whistles that may slow your PC down and cause more problems than they resolve.

If you're looking for comprehensive antivirus protection that keeps a low profile on your PC, you could do a lot worse than to download and install Avira's free Antivir Personal Edition. The same single package installs quickly and easily on all modern Windows operating systems. Furthermore, the current version (v. 9) has added anti-spyware support that addresses one of the main criticisms of Windows Defender—that Microsoft's application is good at detecting spyware after it infects your computer, but not so good at removing it or preventing it from landing there in the first place. The screenshot attached to this post shows Antivir detecting all of my rogue's gallery of malware-- including "classic" MS Word

macro viruses, infected screen-savers, trojans, and contemporary Internet worms,

Antivir installs quickly, and some reviewers have found that it completes its scans faster <http://www.antivirusware.com/testing/scan-time/> than some of its competitors, with a lower memory footprint <http://www.antivirusware.com/testing/performance/>. Version 9 has a feature called AHeAD ((Advanced Heuristic Analysis and Detection) that's supposed to detect and quarantine some new forms of malware before the infections are officially catalogued by virus researchers. Antivirus vendors have been advertising this capability for years, but Antivir actually seems to demonstrate it.

A video review posted to You Tube by an IT professional, shows http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bum1_i2P574
>the program in action: you'll see Antivir automatically block 9 out of 10 infections posted to rogue websites when the reviewer connects to them in a web browser. The tenth infection, apparently uploaded to its website on the day of the test, manages to slip by Antivir's real-time protection Guard. A fake "Security Alert" appears in the Windows Taskbar, but Antivir catches and removes the source of the fake alert as soon as the computer is rebooted.

After watching the video, I immediately enabled the AHeAD "Early Load" feature in my copy. This option loads the real-time Antivirus Guard earlier in the Windows boot process to catch rogue processes that may have slipped past the Guard in the last Windows session. The "Early Load" feature is said to slow down the Windows boot process somewhat, but I didn't notice a significant difference in startup time after testing it under Windows XP or Windows 7.

Tip: By default, the Antivir "Early Load" feature can only be turned on or off when the program is initially installed; but I googled up a quick shortcut to do it without removing and reinstalling:

Turn on Antivir Early Load

Go to Start, Run, type cmd and click OK to open a command prompt window..
CD [d:]:\Program Files where d: is your Windows system drive
CD Avira\AntiVir Desktop
Enter avconfig.exe /WIZARD at the command prompt.

This will rerun the Antivir configuration wizard and allow you to reset all of the AHeAD options, including "Early Load."