

THE COMPUTER CORNER

No. 285: Which Anti-? App is Best, And Two Case Studies

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Majorgeeks.com, my absolute favorite site for safe, effective and free (mostly) software, recently did an informative article on anti-malware applications, including comparisons. They pointed out that anti-malware is the new term, and it covers viruses, malware, spyware, worms, Trojans, rootkits, rogues, adware, PUPs and even more, all gathered and now considered as *malware*. You really ought to read this one-pager by Tim Tibbetts of Majorgeeks. To quickly reach the article, copy these two lines and paste them in your browser, or else just control-click the lines below. Ignore the 2018 date shown below; it was written in April 2020 and so is less than a year old as of right now. It is safe, as is all of Majorgeeks.

[https://www.majorgeeks.com/content/page/
which_anti_malware_app_is_best_and_can_it_run_alongside_my_anti_virus_2018_edition.html](https://www.majorgeeks.com/content/page/which_anti_malware_app_is_best_and_can_it_run_alongside_my_anti_virus_2018_edition.html)

Read the article, and if so inclined, click the hyperlink in the article to lead you to AV-Comparatives for more in-depth and more updated analysis. The upshot seems to be that (pushing aside all the hype and confusion generated by companies that want to sell you safety) the Windows Security Center that comes with Win 10 does a good basic job. Personally, I really like Malwarebytes added as an above and beyond anti-malware application, mostly because it seems to sit right in the face of malware a bit better. But that is a personal preference. The Majorgeeks article seems to show that it is not really necessary to spend anything on additional protection other than what comes with a Windows 10 installation that is kept up to date. So put that in your pipe and smoke it!

Now, before I leave you, let me relate two personal experiences that prove beyond a shadow of a doubt that the person at the keyboard plays an even larger role in protection than does any anti-malware software you might obtain.

1. My wife, Nancy (KC9FZK) was surfing the web for a recipe for a beef roast. She chose a recipe to look at more closely when a message came up on the screen telling her that her computer was totally locked and she must click on a certain web site to unlock the machine. She yelled for me. The machine was unresponsive and locked – no keyboard entry was reflected. I did not test the mouse, but immediately shut down her laptop by pressing the main power button. The power went off; I waited perhaps 30 seconds to allow the memory to bleed electrons and started it up again with the main power button. It restarted normally and all was good after the restart. I told her to

continue surfing for her recipe but **not** to visit that last site. She did so and got her recipe without further incident. I later did a Malwarebytes scan just for safety but no problems or infections were found.

So that was a successful encounter with a bad actor. The next one was not successful.

2. I service several computers for friends using AnyDesk to remotely control the computers to update it and fix any problems. One is a couple with a desktop Win10 machine. The husband is completely computer illiterate and does not touch the machine. The wife can surf but is not much better at computer literacy or the dangers, and I have encouraged her to contact me by phone immediately if there were problems, besides my updating and checking her machine. Just like my Nancy, the wife was surfing for recipes. She encountered the same demanding message, and went to the site! Moreover, she gave them her bank routing number and authorized the payment of \$300! Luckily, they released her machine as they said they would. When I asked her why she did not call me for help, she said she did not want to bother me! My advise to her was to immediately contact her bank with the full story and ask them for advise on how to proceed. I do not know if she did, and what they might have told her.

Don't give anyone your bank routing number or authorize any payment! If your machine becomes frozen, turn it off and unplug it. Then call the FBI for advice. Happy (AND SAFE) Computing!