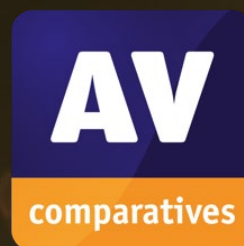


# Independent Tests of Cybersecurity Solutions



## Factsheet Real-World Protection Test Consumer Products

TEST PERIOD: FEBRUARY-MARCH 2026

LAST REVISION: 7<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2026

[WWW.AV-COMPARATIVES.ORG](http://WWW.AV-COMPARATIVES.ORG)

## Introduction

This fact sheet is a short overview of the Real-World Protection Test results of February and March 2026. The detailed overall result consumer product reports (covering four months each) are released in June and November. Each of the overall result reports will also contain a false-alarm test and will contain the awards the products reached based on their overall scores during the respective four-month period. For more information about this Real-World Protection Test, please read the details and previous test reports available on <https://www.av-comparatives.org>

## Test Cases

Our Real-World Protection Test is currently one of the most comprehensive and complex tests available, using a relatively large number of test cases. Currently, we are running this test under updated Microsoft Windows 11 Pro 64 Bit with up-to-date third-party software. Due to this, finding in-the-field working exploits and running malware is much more challenging than e.g. under a non-up-to-date system with unpatched/vulnerable third-party applications.

Over the year we evaluate several tens of thousands malicious URLs. Unfortunately, many of these have to be discarded for various reasons. We remove duplicates such as the same malware hosted on different domains or IP addresses, sites already tested, “grey” or non-malicious sites/files, and malware/sites disappearing during the test. Many malicious URLs carrying exploits were not able to compromise the chosen system/applications because of the patch level. This means that the vulnerabilities in the third-party applications on the system were already patched and the exploits could therefore not deliver their malicious payload. Users should be aware that by always keeping their system and third-party applications up-to-date/patched, they can dramatically decrease the risk posed by exploits.

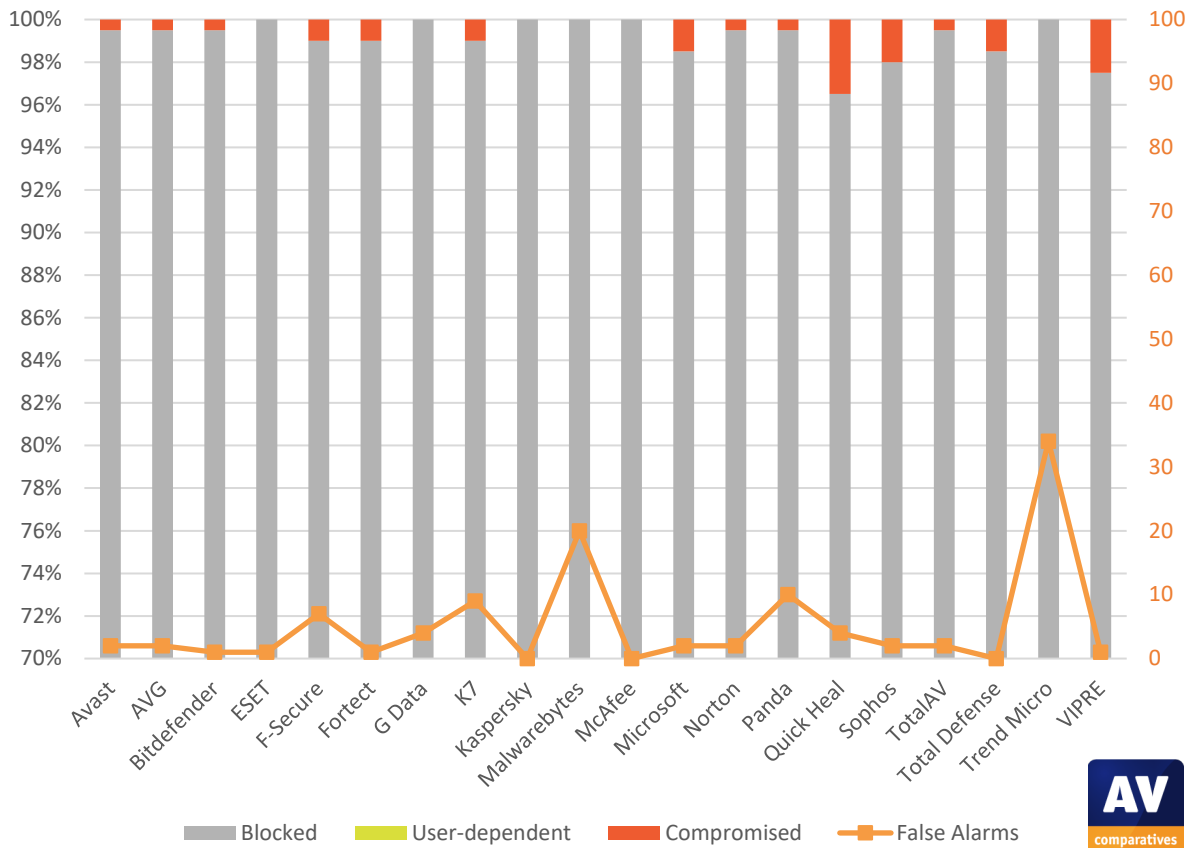
Starting from 2026, a consistent test set size of 100 test cases per month is maintained. While a slightly larger number of cases is initially tested, cases detected by all participating products are excluded after the validation phase, starting with the oldest samples, to reach the final set size. This ensures a more meaningful test set by removing older cases and improves comparability.

The results are based on the test set of **200** live test cases (malicious URLs found in the field), consisting of working exploits (i.e. drive-by downloads) and URLs pointing directly to malware. Thus, exactly the same infection vectors are used as a typical user would experience in everyday life. The test-cases used cover a wide range of current malicious sites and provide insights into the protection given by the various products (using **all** their protection features) while surfing the web.

The following products (latest version available at time of testing) were tested: Avast Free Antivirus, AVG Antivirus Free, Bitdefender Total Security, ESET HOME Security Essential, F-Secure Internet Security, Fortect PC Suite, G Data Total Security, K7 Total Security, Kaspersky Premium, Malwarebytes Premium, McAfee Total Protection, Microsoft Defender Antivirus, Norton Antivirus Plus, Panda Dome Advanced, Quick Heal Total Security, Sophos Home Premium, TotalAV Premium, Total Defense Essential Antivirus, Trend Micro Internet Security and VIPRE Advanced Security.

## Test Results

Every few months we update the charts on our website showing the protection rates of the various tested products over the various months. The interactive charts can be found on our website<sup>1</sup>. The chart below shows only the protection scores for the months of FEBRUARY and MARCH 2026 (200 test cases). The results of the false-positives test are also shown in the graph below.



We would like to point out that while some products may sometimes be able to reach 100% protection rates in a test, it does not mean that these products will always protect against all threats on the web. It just means that they were able to block 100% of the widespread malicious samples used in a test.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.av-comparatives.org/comparison/>



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