

Real World Protection Test Q&A

AV-Comparatives are among the very few independent test institutes to carry out tests on antivirus products under real-life conditions. The Whole Product Dynamic "Real World" Test, developed and carried out by AV-Comparatives, is unique. It is regarded by specialists in the field, antivirus manufacturers and IT professionals as the best and most realistic examination of security solutions.

Q: How great is the danger in reality?

A: Every day, thousands of new malicious programs appear on the Internet. As well as the number of individual programs, the numbers of malware types and infection vectors are also increasing. Some years ago, traditional viruses were the most prevalent threat type, but today Trojans and exploits are responsible for most infections. They spread using the Internet and all other communication paths made possible by today's information technology. Whether from infected websites, infected email attachments, malware on USB flash drives or dangerous shortened URLs, the danger of malware infections is rising.

Q: Why are new test procedures necessary?

A: Antivirus manufacturers have already reacted to the new threats. Cloud technologies and behavioural detection supplement more traditional malware protection methods such as signatures and heuristics.

There is an increasing number of new and unknown malware programs to defend against. Tests of individual malware protection components are relevant as far as they go, but give no indication as to how well the various technologies work together to protect the PC.

Q: Why is analysis under real-life conditions so difficult?

A: Real-life tests have proved highly problematic in the past. There have been difficulties finding the right technology and qualified staff, and in choosing the right malware samples.

Additionally, the tests had to be carried out manually by lab staff. This greatly limited the

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number of products and number of malware samples that could be tested in a given space of time. Providing a full analysis of the results was so costly that such tests were hardly viable economically.

Q: Why is AV-Comparatives' Whole Product Dynamic "Real World" Protection Test unique?

A: AV-Comparatives is one of very few institutes worldwide that have the resources to carry out real-world testing. We have used experienced gathered from running individual-component tests to develop our new, realistic testing procedures.

In co-operation with the University of Innsbruck, we have managed to develop a true-to-life test environment. The problems associated with earlier real-world tests have been completely solved. This is best illustrated by the automation of the testing process. This enables a world-record number of programs to be tested simultaneously against a world-record number of malware samples, with minimal staffing requirements.

Q: Why are the test requirements and results made freely available to the public?

A: Transparency, reliability and validity are the foundations of our test procedure. They guarantee objective test results that are recognised both by manufacturers and by users. Publishing the details of the tests promotes discussion amongst users and experts, which leads to improvements in both the testing process and the products being tested.