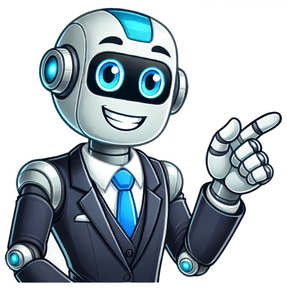
Click to verify



Heard of McAfee or Avast? Odds are, you have – even if you've never hit the "buy" button. These antivirus giants are no strangers in the cybersecurity world, trusted by millions to put a security lock on their devices. But when the rubber meets the road, which one is your best bet for top-notch security, extra features, and a price tag that won't break the bank? That's what I aim to uncover. For this showdown, I'm not just relying on marketing buzz. I'll be throwing both antivirus solutions into the ring, subjecting them to our tests, as well as sifting through the latest findings from independent antivirus labs. Get ready for a deep dive into malware protection, cost-effectiveness, extra bells and whistles, and user experience. On a time crunch? Here's my two cents: McAfee gets my vote. It aced our recent tests, offers good value, and brings added perks like a file shredder and ID protection to the table. If you don't have enough time to read the full comparison, here is the quick version. McAfee is my preferred choice, after recording impressive protection results in my own recent tests. It is also priced at a good value level and includes a number of useful security features like a file shredder and ID protection. Summary: McAfee vs Avast File shredder Very low number of false alarms ID protection Website: mcafee.com Excellent malware detection Ransomware protection Sandbox for testing files safely Website: avast.com Background McAfee is one of the most well-known antivirus brands around the world and has over 7,000 employees in 189 countries. Current stats released from McAfee claim that they cover 525 million consumer internet-enabled devices such as PCs, tablets, and mobiles. McAfee was founded in 1987 and is headquartered in the United States. You might also be familiar with the founder, John McAfee, a man who lived an extraordinary, controversial and wholly unbelievable life. Avast was founded in the Czech Republic and has grown to 1,700 employees worldwide. The company fact sheet shows that Avast currently has 425 million active users and the company's most popular markets are in the US & Canada, Brazil, France, Russia, and Germany. Some negative news broke about Avast early in 2020. Reports revealed the antivirus product had been collecting user data and selling it on through one of their subsidiaries, Jumpshot. In 2016, Avast acquired antivirus company AVG. Over the last few years, Avast and AVG have combined the backend of their products, their detection methods, behavior blocking and cloud, to offer the same level of protection with different packages and interfaces. In August 2021, Norton announced that it would be acquiring Avast antivirus. As of the time of writing, Avast and Norton products remain separate. However, in the future, Avast and Norton's detection capabilities could be combined to create a much more powerful security suite, as they are both market leaders. Norton also acquired antivirus company Avira in July 2020. Pricing & Compatibility At the time of writing McAfee has three different options for its main antivirus product, McAfee Total Protection. The only difference between the three options is the number of devices that are protected with each plan: one, five, and 10. Next up the subscription tiers is the same antivirus plus a VPN to cover five devices. Finally, McAfee offers a LifeSafe version that covers unlimited devices. In contrast, Avast keeps its offers simple with a free basic version and Avast Premium Security for one or 10 devices. It's also worth mentioning here that Avast has launched Avast Omni in the United States. This is a total solution that protects all IoT devices via your home router and also protects mobile devices wherever you go. There is a free 90-day trial available for users in the US (as long as your home router is compatible with the service) and then you have the option to upgrade after the trial period. As the tables above show, McAfee subscriptions cost more in general for like-for-like subscription tiers. One note in McAfee's favor is that it offers a discounted price for the first year of subscription, while Avast does not offer a first-year discount. Avast do offer cheaper pricing if you sign up for longer than a year, with two- and three-year subscriptions available. Avast offers a 30-day money-back guarantee, so you will need to purchase the product and request a refund if you're not happy with it. In contrast, McAfee offers a 30-day free trial so you can download Total Protection for free without a credit card. While it may seem like the free trial from McAfee is less hassle if you want to try before you buy, I can confirm that I have used the Avast money-back guarantee and it is a simple process. I simply informed them I no longer had a need for the antivirus and wanted to cancel within the 30-day period and was sent a full refund back to my payment card within a few days. McAfee's Total Protection includes ID monitoring, and that this is not included with Avast. Both McAfee and Avast are compatible with Windows PCs, iOS, Android and macOS. Effectiveness against malware To establish which antivirus provides the best protection against malware, I ran my own malware tests on a PC to see how each program performed. First, I ran a real-time test that detects malware threats as you use the PC instead of only looking for them during a scan. Next, I ran a second type of test in which I turned off the real-time detection feature in the antivirus program, re-downloaded the malware test files, and ran a scan to see the results on an already infected machine. I used various sample malware test files from EICAR (the European Institute for Computer Antivirus Research) to test how they both respond against malware in different forms and from both secure and insecure connections. I also tested the results with both a full scan and a quick scan, the latter being a lighter version of the full feature. The quick scan option does not scan the full system and only checks files in the most common areas targeted by malware. The results below show how each antivirus performed on my PC against three live samples containing both trojans and adware and four different EICAR samples. Avast allowed the EICAR samples when downloaded over HTTPS, but blocked them on HTTP. Avast did, however, detect and delete all live samples. McAfee blocked all EICAR sample download attempts and blocked attempts to install live malware samples from password-protected files too. Both McAfee and Avast have a quick scan setting within the interface. Both failed to detect the EICAR and live samples in quick scan mode. In addition to my own tests, I reviewed the latest product testing results from two respected independent test labs, AV-Test and AV-Comparatives. The latest Malware Protection Test available from AV-Comparatives was published in September 2019, giving us a recent indication of how each product is performing against malware. McAfee scored a perfect malware protection rate of 100 percent placing joint first. Avast scored slightly lower, with a perfect score of 99.97 percent protection, still placing it in the top cluster of performers. During September and October 2021, AV-Test evaluated several major security products for home users. Both McAfee and Avast received a perfect six for protection, performance, and usability. So, the numbers from independent test labs give McAfee the slight edge over Avast, but show that Avast is still a top performer. Another test run by both independent labs shows the number of times each software incorrectly identifies a file or app as a threat. The lower the number of false alarms, the better. The test results from September show McAfee recorded two false positives while Avast had four. Impact on PC performance To test the impact of each antivirus on PC speed, I compared my own experience and recorded some numbers while running scans with both products. I also looked at some performance benchmarking tests from independent test labs. To try out how each security suite performed on my own PC, I recorded the time to complete both a full scan and a quick scan. A full scan looks at every file on your machine, while a quick scan only looks at areas known to be most common for malware infections. How long each scan takes depends on several factors including the number of files and volume of the data on your PC, the speed of your PC and the antivirus engine itself. No valueMcAfeeAvastWebsitemcafee.comavast.comFull Scan Time (minutes)22360Number of scanned objects7850001870000Full Scan CPU Utilization %10072Full Scan Memory Utilization %75300Full Scan Disk Utilization (seconds)25319Control CPU Utliization % (no scan)1272Control Memory Utilization % (no scan)1028Control Disk Utilization (seconds) (no scan)6632Quick Scan Time (seconds)63364Quick Scan CPU Utilization %3942Quick Scan Memory Utilization %7773Quick Scan Disk Utilization (seconds)9125801Best deal (per month)$3.33SAVE $80 on a 2 year plan - 5 devices$2.10Holiday SALE! Save up to 65% I ran a full scan with Avast first in a time of 60 minutes which scanned 1870000 items. In comparison, McAfee took substantially longer at 223 minutes to scan 785000 items. Later, I ran a quick scan with both programs. Avast timed just 146 seconds to complete the quick scan while McAfee took almost 4.5x longer to perform the task at 633 seconds. I also recorded some data to see the numbers on how my PC's resources were affected by both antivirus programs. Avast recorded higher Control CPU and Control Memory utilization, but lower Control Disk utilization when idle (not performing a scan) compared to McAfee. During a full scan, Avast scored lower CPU and Memory utilization next to McAfee. Independent AV labs' performance tests measure how installing the antivirus impacts PC performance during eight common tasks: Downloading files Browsing websites File copying: first and subsequent run Installing/uninstalling applications Archiving/unarchiving Launching applications: first and subsequent run Each task is given a rating between very fast and slow. AV-Comparatives Performance Test from October 2021 show that McAfee and Avast score some of the highest scores, with the top very fast rating given to seven out of eight scenarios, receiving fast ratings in one. For Avast, the first run of an application was rated fast instead of very fast, and for McAafee installing applications was given a fast rating. AV-Test's performance results from September and October 2021 give Avast 6.0/6.0 and show that the software outperforms industry averages in a number of categories. McAfee also scores 6.0/6.0, outperforming many industry averages when running on both a standard and high-end PC. Both tests gave similar results, and show that both affect performance very little. From my personal experience, I found both products fine to use but noticed that there was virtually no drop off in terms of speed for launching applications and loading websites with McAfee in particular. Features The antivirus engine is the main product, but all AV brands bundle in extras to enhance PC security. Which provides the best added features, Avast Premium or McAfee Total Protection? McAfee Total Protection Award-winning Antivirus Performance Optimization Home Network Security Security Experts and Online Support Multi-device Compatibility Password Manager Safe Web Browsing File Shredder Encrypted Storage Identity Theft Protection Avast Premium Security Block viruses and other malware Scan for wi-fi security weaknesses Secure your passwords Avoid fake sites for safer shopping Safely run suspicious apps Lock out hackers with an advanced firewall Block annoying spam and phishing emails Get an extra layer of ransomware security Stop webcam spying Permanently shred sensitive files Automatically update apps Install on all your devices Both packages share common features including password managers, compatibility with multiple devices, home wifi network protection and file shredders. In this section I think it is interesting to look at what unique features each provider offers. I have highlighted a few of the most powerful features from each provider below with a short overview and what they do. McAfee Total Protection Encrypted Storage keeps sensitive files locked from intruders with 128-bit encryption. Identity Theft Protection – This is a good additional feature that is available when you're enrolled in auto-renewal. ID Theft Protection helps you stay ahead of identity thieves with account monitoring and alerts. Avast Premium Security Safer shopping – Stop criminals from stealing your passwords and banking info with the Real Site feature. This tool protects from hackers who attempt to hijack your router's DNS to send you to fake sites. Sandbox – Sandboxing allows you to open suspicious files in a safe environment before you let them run on your PC, making sure they are safe and do not pose a threat. Automatically update apps – This tool automatically updates your apps and software by searching for the latest versions online. By keeping the most popular apps on your PC updated, you prevent security vulnerabilities and minimize opportunities for hackers. Webcam protection – The Avast Webcam Shield feature blocks untrusted apps from accessing your webcam unless you allow them, so you always know who's watching you. Overall, for my needs, I found that Avast had more extra features that I would like to use. Sign up and installation I've never understood why some companies that make it difficult to sign up and start using the software. Fill this in, fill that in, download this, then that… just let me pay and get up and running. Thankfully, McAfee's sign-up process was a breeze and the first year discount was added automatically to my basket. For some reason, you have to leave auto-renewal left on if you want the free ID protection. This feels like a slightly sneaky upsell. Make sure you set a reminder in your calendar and you can choose whether you want to cancel before the next payment is due. Once purchased with my payment card and a few personal details, McAfee Total Protection was installed with just a few clicks. A first run of the malware detection could be minimized to avoid distraction and let me get on with using my PC. Avast Premium offered a similarly simple sign-up and installation, with the first scan causing little distraction while I continued to use my machine. How easy is the interface to use? Both applications look nice and modern, but which is more intuitive to use? Avast uses a clean and minimal design. You are welcomed with the home screen with easy access to the major tools. From here you can see your PC status, run a virus scan or a smart scan for weak passwords and vulnerable software. McAfee is easy to use and navigate around. The home screen shows tabs for main sections. These separate tabs take you to PC Security, PC Performance, My Privacy, and My Info. The home screen displays a green checkmark in the upper left-hand corner to confirm that your PC is safe and secure, and the antivirus can also be accessed via an icon in the Task Tray, which is a useful shortcut. Customer support Avast's support homepage splits help into popular topics including support for Installation and Activation, Refund Requests, Subscription and Account, or Sales and Billing. There are also links to a support forum and a form to report false detections. If you need to contact a support representative, you can reach out via live chat, or email. There is a technician phone support option but this is a paid extra service. Finally, Avast provides a detailed FAQ on its website. McAfee offers phone and live chat support. Technicians are available via these contact methods 24/7 and there is also a large online support hub with a chatbot, knowledge base, and forum. McAfee also gives users contact details for their social channels on Twitter and Facebook. One thing I liked about McAfee's support is that they guarantee to keep your system malware-free. If their software is unable to identify and eliminate security threats, McAfee's support team will log on to your device using TeamViewer and help you get to the bottom of the issue. In an age where users are very much on their own when it comes to solving tech problems, this extra level of support is a breath of fresh air and if you're struggling with malware, could be worth the price of admission on its own. Which antivirus is more user-friendly? When comparing McAfee and Avast in terms of user-friendliness, McAfee tends to be more user-friendly. For instance, McAfee's interface is designed to be intuitive and easy to navigate, with features like a clear dashboard, simple settings, and a user-friendly scan scheduler. These aspects make it accessible for users who may not be very tech-savvy. It offers straightforward access to its features and settings, which enhances the overall user experience. Avast, while also user-friendly, has a more complex interface that might be overwhelming for some users, especially those who are not familiar with antivirus software. Which antivirus has better speed and performance? When it comes to speed and performance, McAfee is the clear winner. It has been consistently praised for its minimal impact on system performance, ensuring that you can run scans and other security tasks without worrying about significant slowdowns. Avast, on the other hand, has been reported to have a more noticeable impact on system performance, which can be a drawback for users who require their systems to run smoothly at all times. Which antivirus offers better user privacy? When it comes to user privacy, McAfee is a champion. It has a strong and unwavering stance on user privacy, and importantly, has not been involved in any major controversies regarding the misuse of user data. In contrast, Avast has faced significant criticism and scrutiny for selling user data through its subsidiary, Jumpshot. This practice has not only compromised user privacy but also raised serious concerns about Avast's commitment to user privacy. It's important to note that this controversy has led to changes in Avast's data collection policies, but the incident still raises questions about the company's data handling practices. And the Winner Is… McAfee made a strong showing in this face-off. Its Total Protection package not only had a lighter footprint on system resources but also outperformed Avast in task execution speed. When it comes to false positives, McAfee was near-perfect, logging only two errors to Avast's seven. McAfee's free ID Theft Protection adds a cherry on top, a feature Avast doesn't offer. It also dominated in my EICAR sample tests, blocking all four, while Avast let them slide when downloaded over HTTPS. Avast isn't a slouch, offering nifty tools like secure shopping, sandboxing, and webcam protection. But when you factor in performance, malware protection, and that unsettling tidbit about Avast selling user data, McAfee emerges as the clear winner here. See also: McAfee vs Avast FAQs Malware and viruses are both types of malicious software designed to wreak havoc on your computer. However, the two terms have very different meanings. Malware refers to any kind of harmful code or software that has been created to cause damage or disruption to a computer system. This includes viruses, worms, Trojans, spyware, and adware, among many other types of malicious code. Viruses, on the other hand, are specific types of malware designed to self-replicate and spread through computer networks. While viruses can cause serious damage to your system or data, they often rely on social engineering techniques to infect a computer. Malware, on the other hand, can take many different forms and often doesn't require any interaction on the part of the user to install itself or spread. Despite their similarities, malware and viruses are really quite different from one another. So if you're worried about protecting your computer from harmful code, it's important to be aware of the risks of viruses and other types of malware. And you should always take steps to ensure that your system is properly secured against these threats. The Avast uninstallation process is pretty simple, and you can remove it from your system in three steps: Navigate to Start>Settings>Apps Find Avast in the list of your installed software Click Uninstall and complete the steps in the uninstaller to complete the removal process. Help me Widget! {{adjustImageHeightOnce()}} Get automatic alerts to text, email, and video scams, now included in McAfee plans. Keep personal info private, avoid scams, and protect yourself online with the #1 antivirus for PC performance++ Keep personal info private, avoid scams, and protect yourself online with the #1 antivirus for PC performance++ Keep personal info private, avoid scams, and protect yourself online with the #1 antivirus for PC performance++ Keep personal info private, avoid scams, and protect yourself online with the #1 antivirus for PC performance++ Award-winning security for 600M+ devices We'll scan to see if your email has been compromised in a data breach. Please enter a valid email address to scan By clicking 'Scan Now', you accept McAfee's License Agreement and Privacy Notice , confirm that you are 16 or over and own the email you choose to scan, and understand that McAfee may provide you with information regarding products and services. McAfee and Avast both have been around for a while so I wanted to test each antivirus to see which one is the overall better choice. Unfortunately, Avast has recently been caught selling users' personal data and so even though it performed decently in my tests, I can't recommend it. McAfee on the other hand has an airtight privacy policy. After extensive tests over 15 categories, McAfee also proved to be the better antivirus overall. McAfee provided perfect detection scores for malware and real-time protection against several cyber threats. You can test all of McAfee's features risk-free using the 30-day money-back guarantee. Try McAfee risk-free! After comparing Avast and McAfee using several criteria, I found McAfee to be the better antivirus. McAfee detects 100% of threats, even zero-day threats. Avast offers near-perfect malware detection abilities and a few useful extra features. Virus Scanner Offers a 99.8% detection rate, a near-perfect score. Detected 100% of malware samples, including zero-day threats. Real-Time Malware Protection Detected 100% of real-time threats but only 86% of phishing attacks. Offers 100% detection of real-time threats, including phishing attacks. System Performance Experienced 24% slow down on PC when launching popular websites. Consumes fewer system resources with no significant impact on PCs. VPN Accesses popular streaming platforms and offers fast speeds. Slower speeds on distant servers and can't access most streaming services. Parental Controls Doesn't offer parental control features. Provides standard parental controls app and supports unlimited child profiles. Firewall Offers a customizable firewall that provides robust protection. Net Guard prevents programs from making risky connections. Password Manager Doesn't include a password manager for new subscriptions. Provides a basic password manager with excellent form-filling abilities. Gaming Mode Do Not Disturb Mode suspends unnecessary background processes. Doesn't offer a Gamer Mode feature. Optimization Tools Offers multiple cleanup tools for removing junk files and trackers. App boost allocates more system resources to frequently used apps. Other Features Has useful extras like webcam protection but may sell your data to third parties. Has multiple security-focused extras, including web protection, vulnerability scanner, and ransomware protection. Device Compatibility Covers up to 10 devices on all premium plans. Supports unlimited devices on the Ultimate plan. Customer Service Most support channels are only accessible to premium subscribers. Provides multiple support channels with very helpful and responsive phone support. Price Offers 2 premium plans with very few features on the basic subscriptions. Comes with multiple pricing options and features, even on the most basic plans. Free Version Free version provides decent performance and useful features like ransomware protection and WiFi Inspector. Doesn't have a free version but offers a 30-day free trial for premium plans. Money-Back Guarantee Provides a 30-day money-back guarantee. Offers a 30-day money-back guarantee and a quick refund time. Try McAfee risk-free! Virus Scanner — I analyzed the malware detection capabilities of both antiviruses and compared the available scanning options to determine the best malware scanner. Real-Time Malware Protection — I examined the strength of real-time protection against threats offered by both AVs. System Performance — I compared both antiviruses while idle and during scans to determine which consumed more system resources and impacted my PC's performance the most. VPN — I contrasted the speeds, security, streaming capability, and server coverage of the VPNs bundled in each antivirus. Parental Controls — I checked whether the antiviruses offered parental control apps and tested the features to see if they were any good. Firewall — I tested both antiviruses' firewall features to find the most effective at keeping me safe while online. Password Manager — I tested the password manager available on the antivirus software, comparing its features with top password managers. Gaming Mode — I examined the Gamer Mode feature of each antivirus and compared their effectiveness to see which one was better. Optimization Tools — I checked the total number of optimization tools and tested them to know which one offers better features. Other Features — I tested every additional feature provided by both antivirus software to determine the one with the most useful features. Device Compatibility — I compared the number of operating systems and devices each antivirus supported and chose the one with the most coverage. Customer Service — I checked the available support options and tested them individually to determine the most helpful one. Price — I analyzed the different pricing plans provided by each AV and chose the one that offered the best value for money. Free Version — I checked whether both antiviruses provided a free version and tested to see how robust these are. I also compared the free trial options of both antiviruses. Money-Back Guarantee — I examined and tested the refund policy of both antiviruses. Try McAfee risk-free for 30 days After testing both antiviruses, I found that McAfee provides a more robust virus scanner and is more effective at catching viruses. It detected 100% of malware samples on my system, including those hidden in an archive. On the other hand, Avast detected 99.8% of malware samples, a near-perfect score. You can use McAfee's quick scan to remove the malware found in critical areas of your system McAfee supports the following types of scans: Quick Scan — Scans the parts of your device most susceptible to risk Full Scan — Scans your entire computer for known threats. Custom Scan — Let's you decide what parts of your device to scan Avast offers more scanning options than McAfee: Quick — Scans the most at-risk sections of your device Boot-Time — Scans your computer before the OS loads to detect well-hidden threats Smart — Runs a quick virus scan to check for outdated programs, dangerous browser extensions, and performance issues. Custom — You choose which type of scan to run when to run it, and what to search Full scan — Checks your whole system for threats I like how Avast checks my system for threats while it boots up McAfee's Quick scan checked 10,200 items on my PC in under 5 minutes. Avast's Quick scan was much faster as it took only 2 minutes to check 81,000 files. Similarly, McAfee's Full scan took about 53 minutes to check 590,000 files, while Avast's Full scan took only 23 minutes to scan 980,000 items. Avast beat out McAfee in scan speed, but ultimately McAfee won as it detected more threats overall and didn't let any malware slip past. McAfee offers a 30-day money-back guarantee, allowing you to risk-free test it yourself. Norton also has a 100% rate, but its full scan took 12 minutes for 778,000 items. Virus Scanner Winner: McAfee Try McAfee risk-free! Avast and McAfee offer real-time protection, with 100% detection of real-time threats, including malware, phishing links, malicious URLs in scam emails, and other web threats. I tested the real-time protection of both antiviruses by opening hundreds of malicious websites and emails. Avast and McAfee blocked all the threats, both having 0 false positives. I was pretty impressed with these results. So I decided to test more malicious sites, especially phishing links. You can secure your device in real time from malicious websites and file downloads In my tests, McAfee detected 100% of the phishing links. However, Avast could only detect 93% of the phishing sites I tested. After testing both antiviruses, McAfee was more efficient because of its cloud-based "Global Threat Intelligence" software, which can predict new and emerging threats. Real-Time Malware Protection Winner: McAfee Try McAfee risk-free! McAfee had the least impact on my PC, consuming fewer system resources than Avast. I found that Avast isn't the best for optimal system performance. It consistently runs in the background, using significant CPU and memory resources. To see exactly how much system resources each AV consumes, I recorded my CPU, Disk, and Memory utilization before and during a scan. I compared the values, which helped me determine the antivirus that had more impact on my system. Test Type CPU Utilization % (no scan) Memory Utilization % (no scan) Disk Utilization (MB/s)(no scan) Full Scan CPU Utilization % Full Scan Memory Utilization % Full Scan Disk Utilization (MB/s) Avast 12 85 86 75 99 100 McAfee 7 80 70 28 84 85 During my tests, I found that McAfee increased my CPU utilization from 7% to 28% and my memory utilization from 80% to 84%. In contrast, Avast increased my CPU utilization from 12% to 75%, which slowed down my PC. Overall, McAfee's impact on my PC was less significant than Avast's. System Performance Winner: McAfee Try McAfee risk-free on your devices Avast's VPN accessed more streaming sites than McAfee's. I compared the speeds, streaming abilities, server coverage, security, and privacy features to determine the better VPN service. Avast uses military-grade security features and offers a decent server network (700 servers in 30+ countries). While this is decent for a built-in VPN, Norton's offers nearly 5 times more server locations. I was impressed with Avast's streaming abilities. During my tests, Avast's SecureLine VPN accessed popular streaming sites, including Netflix, HBO Max, Hulu, Prime Video, and Disney+, allowing me to stream my favorite shows in HD. My colleague in the UK could also access her BBC iPlayer account lag-free. I could access my home content on Netflix, Hulu, HBO Max, Disney+, and Prime Video McAfee also provided top-grade security features. However, McAfee offered a fewer number of servers in 50+ countries. It also couldn't access streaming platforms like Hulu, Amazon Prime Video, Disney+, HBO Max, and BBC iPlayer. I had some luck accessing Netflix, but the results weren't consistent. McAfee's VPN Safe Connect was also much slower than Avast's. I experienced a 35% drop in speeds on local servers and a 37% drop with distant servers with McAfee. In contrast, Avast's VPN maintained consistent speeds across all servers, achieving an average of 100Mbps on all the servers I tested. Although Avast's VPN outperformed McAfee's, I wouldn't recommend it because Avast has been caught selling its user's browsing data to third parties. If you need a reliable VPN at par with Avast's performance, you can check the best VPNs bundled in an antivirus suite. McAfee has parental controls, but Avast does not. McAfee's parental controls feature allows you to monitor your child's activities across all devices. It helps you to block inappropriate sites, set time limits for accessing specific apps or the internet, track your child's location, and view their browsing history. You can set screen time limits, block inappropriate apps, and monitor your child's browsing history from anywhere To use McAfee's parental controls, you have to download the standalone app (McAfee Safe Family) onto your children's devices and yours to help you manage their activities. McAfee Safe Family is compatible with popular operating systems such as Windows, Mac, iOS, and Android. Once you've installed it on both devices, you can set up multiple child profiles and restrictions. McAfee's parental controls app is easy to use, even for non-tech-savvy parents. I quickly installed it on my child's phone and set up all the necessary rules within a few minutes. I like how McAfee Safe Family notifies me whenever my daughter leaves or arrives at designated locations, helping me to ensure that she's at the right place at the right time. Overall, I find McAfee's parental control features very useful. You can get McAfee's parental control features when you subscribe to the Total Security plan or by trying the standalone McAfee Safe Family app. Parental Controls Winner: McAfee Try McAfee's parental controls Both contenders offer robust firewall features. I consider a firewall a crucial feature for every antivirus. I also expect an antivirus firewall to provide more functions than the integrated Windows Defender Firewall. I was very impressed with McAfee's customizable firewall functions. I find the Net Guard feature particularly useful as it monitors programs and prevents them from making risky connections. McAfee's default firewall settings are equally effective if you don't want to implement specific network rules. You can customize your firewall protection with McAfee's range of options Avast also provides customizable firewall functions. One thing I like about Avast's firewall is that it auto-configures itself, requiring no input from you. You'll find many tools to work with if you prefer to customize it. My favorite feature is the "Stealth Mode" function which allows you to connect with public WiFi networks without exposing your device information. This helped me stay anonymous and away from the reach of hackers. Avast's firewall protected me from all network intrusion attacks In summary, both antiviruses provide smart firewall features. I found them helpful in protecting me from network attacks. With advanced functions and customizable features, Avast and McAfee's firewalls offer the right tools to keep you safe online. After checking both AVs, I found that only McAfee offers a password manager. Avast's password manager has been discontinued for newer subscriptions. McAfee, however, provides a decent but basic password manager. You can store passwords, secure notes, credit card information, and other items with McAfee's True Key McAfee's password manager (True Key) is pretty basic compared to top password managers. While it provides industry-standard AES-256-bit encryption and allows you to store unlimited logins, secure notes, and credit card information, it lacks other essential features. It doesn't support password sharing, auditing, or dark web monitoring. Despite that, I found McAfee's password manager pretty easy to use. Its autofill feature works excellently, allowing me to fill out complex online forms. I also like how the password generator helped me to create and store secure passwords. True Key is compatible with most operating systems like Windows, Mac, iOS, and Android. It also works with popular browsers such as Chrome, Firefox, Edge, and Safari. The free version of McAfee's True Key only supports 15 passwords. You'll have to subscribe to the full package to get unlimited logins. I didn't like that True Key employs password security options. If you forget your master password, you can reset your password through a link sent to your email. While convenient, if your email account gets compromised, you can lose sensitive data to hackers. Top password managers treat your master passwords more securely. For example, Norton's Password Manager doesn't provide email password recovery, only allowing you to sign in with your device's biometric login if you couldn't use your master password. Overall, McAfee's True Key offers a decent password manager that allows you to store and use logins and other items securely. Password Manager Winner: McAfee Try McAfee risk-free Avast offers a decent gaming mode feature, but McAfee doesn't provide any. Gamer mode optimizes CPU utilization and prevents interrupting notifications, scans, and updates during a full-screen activity. Avast has rebranded its Gamer Mode function to "Do Not Disturb Mode," which still performs the same functions. However, you will have to manually add the programs you want to exempt from interruptions. To do that, you must launch the Avast app, navigate to Performance > Do Not Disturb Mode, and add as many programs as you want. I prefer a more intelligent Gamer Mode feature. For instance, Bitdefender's "Gaming Profile" suspends all background processes during a fullscreen activity without having to do any manual configurations. That said, Avast's "Do Not Disturb Mode" worked effectively once enabled, allowing me to play my favorite games interruption-free. Gaming Mode Winner: Avast Avast and McAfee both offer basic optimization tools, but Avast provides the more worthwhile option. Avast doesn't have PC optimization tools for low-tier plans. Instead, it offers the Avast Cleanup Premium tool on its Ultimate plan or as a standalone subscription. Avast's Cleanup Premium offers a wide range of features like the Registry Cleaner, Shortcut Cleaner, Disk Cleaner, Browser Cleaner, Bloatware Remover, and Disk Doctor. I tested Avast's PC optimizer and was impressed to see it removed over 5GB of junk files, trackers, and browser cookies from my system. I like that Avast's Cleanup tool removed 5GB of junk files from my PC McAfee features 2 optimization tools — App Boost and Web Boost. The App Boost tool allocates more system resources to frequently used apps, thereby speeding up load times. On the other hand, Web Boost prevents videos from auto-playing when accessing websites with embedded videos, making my browsing experience faster. Mcafee's App Boost helped my PC apps to load fast Given that Avast offers more cleanup tools for freeing up space and optimizing performance, I found it more valuable than McAfee's. However, both contenders are still lacking when it comes to PC optimization. TotalAV's optimization tools include an App Uninstaller and a Startup Manager which allowed me to control which apps load when my PC starts. Optimization Tools Winner: Avast Both antiviruses offer helpful extra features. However, I found that McAfee provided more valuable additional security features. I like that McAfee offers more security-focused features (which were more useful to me) than optimization features. WebAdvisor: This feature protects you from malicious websites, including phishing links, cryptojacking, and other scams. Ransom Guard: This feature monitors programs on your system, protecting it from executing malicious changes to files, including zero-day ransomware attacks. Vulnerability Scanner: McAfee's vulnerability scanner checks your operating system for vulnerabilities, ensuring that all programs are up to date. Identity Theft Protection: It alerts you of a data breach of sensitive information like credit cards, social security numbers, and banking details found on the dark web. However, this feature is not available to every country. It's only accessible to US, Canada, the UK, New Zealand, Germany, Australia, Brazil, France, Italy, Spain, and Japan residents. Anti-spam protection: This feature checks your emails, protecting you from spam and phishing links. File Shredder: McAfee's Secure File Shredder helps you to delete sensitive files and programs to ensure your privacy permanently. File Lock: This feature allows you to encrypt and store files securely using a password and security question. Avast offers a wide range of useful extras. These features provide additional protection across all your devices. Ransomware protection: Avast ransomware shield monitors your system for suspicious changes to files (in a protected folder) by new programs, keeping you safe from ransomware attacks. Webcam Protection: With increasing privacy-related web attacks, Avast protects your webcam from unauthorized access by hackers. Sandbox: You can use Avast's Sandbox to test apps from unknown sources that could infect your device in a safe desktop environment. Real Site: Avast's "Real Site" provides you with an encrypted connection using its DNS servers, preventing hackers from intercepting your DNS connections. Secure browser: Secure Browser is similar to the Google Chrome browser but packed with Avast features such as an anti-tracker, ad-blocker, anti-phishing, banking mode protection, and an integrated video downloader for sites like YouTube. In summary, McAfee provided more useful extras and security features, including some overlapping features with Avast, such as ransomware and web protection. Still, McAfee offered unique extra features with compelling use cases. Other Features Winner: McAfee Try McAfee risk-free! Avast and McAfee work on popular operating systems including Windows, macOS, Android, and iOS. They can both be installed on up to 10 devices simultaneously. However, Avast is supported on older versions of the operating systems. Avast works on the following operating systems: Windows (7 SP1, 8/8.1, 10, and 11) macOS 10.11 or later Android 6.0 or later iOS 13 or later McAfee is compatible with the following operating systems: Windows (8.1, 10, and 11) macOS 10.12 or later Android 7.0 or later iOS 13 or later McAfee's apps are very easy to install and use. It took under 10 minutes to set it up on all my devices. I was very pleased with the interface on all the apps. McAfee's Windows and Mac apps are user-friendly with neatly arranged features. However, there were slight differences in the features available in both apps. I like the user-friendly interface of McAfee's desktop app McAfee's iOS and Android apps are equally intuitive, even though the Android app packs more features. For instance, optimization tools, anti-theft, and WiFi protection features are present on the Android app but absent on the iOS app. This is the case for most iOS antiviruses except for the iOS-focused antivirus apps. Avast's desktop apps are also easy to use. The features are neatly arranged in 4 menus, with the most features under the "Protection" tab. Avast's Mac interface is almost the same as Windows, even though a few features are missing in the Mac app, like the local network scanner that displays IP addresses and other details. If you're looking for a more feature-pack antivirus for your Mac, I recommend you take a look at the Mac-friendly antiviruses. You can find most of the useful features in Avast's "Protection" tab Avast's Android and iOS apps are easy to use with many mobile-friendly features. It has an anti-malware scanner, WiFi scanner, remote control access, encrypted photo vault, and device optimization tools. McAfee and Avast are compatible with major devices with a wide range of features. However, McAfee's apps are the most intuitive and user-friendly. Device Compatibility Winner: McAfee Try McAfee risk-free! Avast and McAfee offer multiple support options, but McAfee offers more helpful support options. For every channel I tested, I was very impressed with the responsiveness of the McAfee representatives, except for the live chat channel. McAfee offers support via the following channels: Live Chat — McAfee's live chat support wasn't very helpful. I initiated the live chat support by asking about the Web Boost feature. It took up to 18 minutes before I finally got a response from a representative. Even then, it took even more time before my issue was resolved. I had to rephrase my questions 3 times before getting a helpful response from the support agent Phone Support — The fastest way to resolve your issues is via phone support. All you need to do is fill out a form on McAfee's website with your name, email address, and phone number, and you'll be contacted in less than 10 minutes. I asked the same question about the Web Boost feature, and 5 minutes into the call, my issue was resolved. Community Forums — McAfee also offers a community forum where you can post questions and get responses from other community users, forum moderators, or McAfee employees. You can also browse the threads if you have questions that might have been asked and addressed by others. I got a response from another user 3 days after I posted the question. Avast, on the other hand, offers different support options depending on your subscription. For Avast Premium and Ultimate subscribers, you get access to 24/7 premium tech support which includes: 24/7 live chat Email support Phone support Remote access support If you're on the Avast Free plan, you only get access to the Avast community forums and a few FAQs. The online forums are, however, information-rich, and you'd get fast responses from the community in a short time. Overall, McAfee provides more support options and I found the phone support very helpful. Customer Service Winner: McAfee Try McAfee risk-free! I compared the pricing plans and features of both contenders and found that McAfee offered more value for money. However, Avast also offers competitive pricing options. McAfee offers 2 categories of plans — Total Protection and Advanced protection. McAfee's Total Protection offers 4 main price plans with the following features: Basic Antivirus (for 1 device) VPN (for 1 license) Identity monitoring Protection score Password manager Firewall File encryption Web protection File shredder 24/7 support Plus All the features of the Basic plan plus antivirus for 5 devices 5 VPN licenses Premium Features of the Plus plan plus Personal data cleanup Antivirus for 10 devices Advanced Features of the Premium plan plus Antivirus for Unlimited devices Lost wallet protection $1M ID theft coverage & restoration Security freeze The Basic plan offers good value, giving you a discount for the first year. However, if you need to cover more than 1 device, I think the Plus and Premium plans offer the best value. In comparison, Avast offers only 2 plans — Premium Security and Ultimate. The Premium Security plan is the best value. It provides antivirus protection, WiFi scanning, firewall, and web protection for up to 10 devices. McAfee offers way more features for its similar plan. Ultimate Security (Avast's top-tier plan) doesn't equally offer as many features as McAfee. Try McAfee risk-free for 30 days Avast offers a free version, but McAfee doesn't. Avast's free version is limited to a few features, but it still offers decent performance. It features a malware scanner, ransomware protection, and a Wi-Fi protector. You can also try Avast's Premium security plan for 30-days using its free trial. McAfee doesn't have a free plan. However, you can try McAfee's premium plans risk-free using the 30 days free trial. It requires linking your payment method, and you'd be charged 7 days before the trial expiration date. In conclusion, Avast provides a free version, and its free trial can be used without adding a payment method, making it the better choice. Unfortunately, Avast has been caught selling its customers' browsing data. So, you could risk your data being sold. Free Version Winner: Avast Both antiviruses offer money-back guarantees, but I found that McAfee offers more refund options and a more straightforward refund process. You can request a refund from McAfee: Within 30 days of purchasing a new plan. Within 60 days of auto-renewing a plan. At any point, if McAfee fails to remove malware from your system. It didn't take much time to request a refund from McAfee. I simply reached out via phone support and got my refund processed immediately. Within 5 days, I got my money back into my account. For Avast, the request process is equally straightforward. You will have to fill out a form on its website with your name, order ID, address, and reason for the refund from a predetermined list. Once I submitted the form, I received a refund confirmation email just 1 minute later. After that, I got my money back 7 days later. McAfee's refund policy was a little faster and more straight forward than Avast's so they win this round. Money-Back Guarantee Winner: McAfee Try McAfee risk-free for 30 days After testing Avast and McAfee using 15 different areas, I concluded that McAfee is the clear winner. McAfee outperformed Avast in malware detection and real-time protection, providing perfect detection scores. It also offers a wide range of additional security features, which proved very useful. Avast won in a few areas. Its gaming mode feature (Do Not Disturb Mode) allowed me to play my favorite games without interruptions. I like how Avast's PC optimization tools make removing junk files and trackers from your system easy. Avast excelled most with its VPN, which provides superior streaming abilities and fast speeds for surfing the web securely. However, Avast has been caught selling its users' data to advertisers. It's not worth having your private data collected and sold to unknown third parties. So, I don't recommend using Avast. Overall, McAfee proved to be the better antivirus solution in performance and features. McAfee provides different subscription plans for all budgets. You can try McAfee's premium plans risk-free using the 30-day free trial. I suggest trying the McAfee Premium plan as it offers many useful security features to cover all your devices. Try McAfee risk-free for 30 days Subscribe to a plan — Visit McAfee's official website, click on "products", and select a product you want to subscribe to. Enter your card details — Click "Get protection now" on the