Transcript: Antivirus vs Anti-Malware – Dispelling the Myth

Source video: https://youtu.be/RDQfhAMJwFo

Antimalware versus antivirus, what's the difference, or is there any? The answer is actually quite simple but unfortunately, it has been riddled with misconception partly thanks to people like Linus, now don't get me wrong, I have nothing against Linus, except the fact that he makes pathetic clickbait content with no depth – oh there goes my like to dislike ratio – but that's not the point of this video.

I would strongly encourage that you watch from beginning to the end because we're not just gonna talk about things, we're actually going to demonstrate them. So on the system we have two products, one is Bit Defender Antivirus – yes that is what it's called – the other is Malwarebytes Anti-malware. Now if you look at a lot of marketing, Malwarebytes kind of suggests that anti-malware is a new thing and it does something different that antivirus does not, they even go so far as to claim that it makes antivirus obsolete. In this video we'll see exactly how true that is, so in order to check that out we have some samples here that I'm going to drag onto my desktop. These are malware files which include all sorts of threats, pups, trojans, ransomware. And we have 932 of them. We're going to just do a copy and paste to get an exact duplicate of this folder, one of these I'm going to scan with antivirus, that is Bit Defender, the other I'm going to scan with anti-malware, that is Malwarebytes, and in the end we're going to see who does better or who catches more threats, because as the name suggests anti-malware is protection against everything and antivirus is only protection against viruses, right?

So let's go ahead and do our right click scan, so the first one I'm scanning with the Bit Defender the second with Malwarebytes. Now keep in mind there was no sarcasm when I talked about the definitions of anti-virus and anti-malware, that is exactly what those terms mean. Virus is a particular kind of malware which used to be prevalent before and isn't quite so prevalent today, and malware is an umbrella term for any kind of threat or malicious software. So it is true that malware is an all inclusive term, whereas antivirus is more specific, but does that mean anti-malware is better and detects more threats? We will find out.

Both our scans are now finished. We're going to go ahead and remove all of these files so with Bit Defender I'm going to select delete because I can, for Malwarebytes I'm going to quarantine, so all of these threats should effectively be removed from the folder at least.

Both products have now finished removing the threats. Malwarebytes wants us to do a full system restart, so I'm going to go ahead and do that.

We have logged back in and both products are back online, now it's time to look at the results. So that Bit Defender it seems has left 111 items in the folder. And Malwarebytes, huh? It's left 314. I've already done the math. This is effectively a detection ratio of 88% for Bit Defender and more like 66% for Malwarebytes.

Wait a minute, wasn't anti-malware supposed to catch more threats? And as you can see, now that we have been Bit Defender enabled, it has actually picking up threats from the Malwarebytes folder. As this test clearly demonstrates, to say that a product is better because it's anti-malware and not anti-virus doesn't make any sense, and I'll tell you why.

As the terminology goes, logically anti-malware should detect more threats than anti-virus but the reality is these terms aren't technically accurate. A lot of products have held onto the term antivirus just because the term is more mainstream and it's been historically what people called a security program, and that's the reason why products like the Bir Defender, Kaspersky, and a lot of other products still use the term antivirus.

No product in 2018 is truly antivirus. Trust me. They are all antimalware, so I would strongly recommend not to fall for this kind of stuff, where somebody says *well we have antimalware so ours is better or our product is this*, like don't fall for names, look at the actual performance of the product and then decide which one you want. As funny as it may be, it's actually true that Bit Defender is a much better standalone solution than Malwarebytes. Malwarebytes is more of an add-on product which gets significantly lower detection rates and you know does not protect you against as much malware as something like the Bit Defenders or Kaspersky. Which would kind of suggest that the reverse is true, that antivirus is more complete and antimalware is limited, but even that's not true.

So don't fall for any of these terms, whatever the product is called doesn't really make much sense. Keep in mind that the terms are based on popularity and move on. Watch actual reviews before making product decisions. Antivirus versus antimalware doesn't mean anything. I hope you enjoyed this video. I hope you found it useful. This is Leo from the PC Security Channel. Don't forget to subscribe. Thank you for watching and as always: Stay informed, stay secure.