

- » Computer virus experts have identified several thousand “strains” of viruses. Many of them have colorful names, such as the I Love You virus, the Stoned virus, and the Michelangelo virus.
- » Antivirus programs can recognize known viruses and remove them from your system, and they can spot the telltale signs of unknown viruses. Unfortunately, the idiots who write viruses aren't idiots (in the intellectual sense), so they're constantly developing new techniques to evade detection by antivirus programs. New viruses are frequently discovered, and antivirus programs are periodically updated to detect and remove them.

Antivirus programs

The best way to protect your network from virus infection is to use an antivirus program. These programs have a catalog of several thousand known viruses that they can detect and remove. In addition, they can spot the types of changes that viruses typically make to your computer's files, thus decreasing the likelihood that some previously unknown virus will go undetected.

Newer versions of Windows (8 and later) include built-in antivirus protection. For older versions, you can download an excellent free antivirus solution from Microsoft called Microsoft Security Essentials. Popular alternatives to Microsoft's built-in or free antivirus protection include Norton AntiVirus, Webroot SecureAnywhere Antivirus, and Kaspersky Antivirus.

The people who make antivirus programs have their fingers on the pulse of the virus world and often release updates to their software to combat the latest viruses. Because virus writers are constantly developing new viruses, your antivirus software is next to worthless unless you keep it up-to-date by downloading the latest updates.

The following are several approaches to deploying antivirus protection on your network:

- » You can install antivirus software on each network user's computer. This technique would be the most effective if you could count on all your users to keep their antivirus software up-to-date. Because that's an unlikely proposition, you may want to adopt a more reliable approach to virus protection.
- » Managed antivirus services place antivirus client software on each client computer in your network. Then, an antivirus server automatically updates the clients on a regular basis to make sure that they're kept up to date.