

Norton AntiVirus for the Mac - by Karl-Peter Gottschalk

Rating: Very good

Product type: Anti-virus utility

Platform: Mac, PowerMac

Operating system: MacOS

Developer: Symantec Corporation

Website URL: <http://www.symantec.com/>

It's official. The Mac, once almost immune to the virus epidemic that has dogged the DOS/Windows world for years, has now come under attack from a nasty computer version of the Hong Kong flu - the AutoStart 9805 Worm. Hitherto, we knew enough to be wary of Word files passed on by PC owners, due to the endless variety of Word macro virii.

My solution was to avoid using Word altogether, a decision made easier by the unusability of Word 6. But now that Word 98 is a pleasure to use, that is no longer possible. The twin threats of the Word macro virii and now AutoStart, that attacks QuickTime through its CD AutoStart feature, demand we must once more attend to fending off threats.

Otherwise excellent freeware like Disinfectant can no longer hold off all the alien hordes. The only solution is a commercial one, where the core product is accompanied by monthly virus definition file updates. Norton AntiVirus 5.0, successor to Symantec AntiVirus for Mac, goes one better and boasts an heuristic "Bloodhound" system to snuffle and sniff out signs of suspicious activity, and possible new virus variants.

o further facilitate keeping up to date on the virus front, Norton AntiVirus now has a LiveUpdate button that connects you to Symantec's servers via direct modem connection or the Internet. I suspect the reason my several attempts at direct modem connection failed to connect was the sudden popularity of other Mac owners taking antivirus measures. Connection via the Web to Symantec's site succeeded however.

ther improvements include turning scanning and repairing viruses into a one step process instead of the previous two, and subtly improving the interface, allowing you to designate the whole hard drive as a Safe Zone if you wish. Lastly, NAM comes on a bootable CD-ROM. Symantec has announced that they will no longer be supporting SAM through new virus definitions after a certain period of time. If you use SAM currently, start saving.

And if you want your machine to be fully protected against worms or virii or whatever else the vengeful geeks throw at us, get your copy of NAM 5.0 straight away.

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