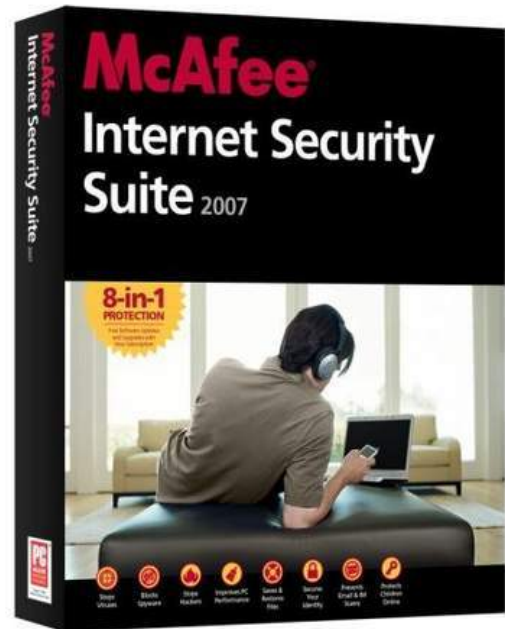


McAfee Internet Security Suite 2007

Can McAfee beat Norton in protecting your PC?

by Stephen Patrick published on 10 October 2006

When it comes to Internet Security, you can't afford to take half-measures, not unless you want a computer riddled with viruses and being hijacked on a regular basis, that is. McAfee is one of the big names in the business and constantly goes head-to-head with the other big name, Norton. In recent years Internet security suites have often looked and felt the same, after all they deserved to fulfil a single purpose - to protect your machine. However, McAfee Internet Security Suite 2007 box proudly claims it's an 8-in-1 -protection tool. This attempt to differentiate itself and offer that little bit more seems appealing on the surface but in daily use we felt it detracted from the core tasks of a security suite. However, there are a couple of key tools here that help to differentiate the package and add genuine value. Before you even get to secure your data online, you can use this suite to back-up your files or restore to a previous version. QuickClean can be used to remove old System Restore points as well as unused shortcuts. If you're installing McAfee onto a fresh machine you won't have any problems but when we installed it onto our test machine it identified previous security tools and asked for them to be uninstalled. The program can't do this automatically, so you'll find yourself manually uninstalling anything identified as incompatible. As with the other tools in this group test, the main interface is grouped together, in this instance referred to as the Security Centre, with a large green tick highlighting your system is in good health. For a more detailed break down of what is happening to your system, you can check out individual security areas, with Computer & Files, Internet & Network, Email & IM and Parental Controls being the main sections. In each section you'll find the tools that help protect that area. You'll find shared tools, such as anti-virus software, crop up a few times but are in fact the same application. The EasyNetwork tool can help manage and protect machines running on a



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home network. You'll need a license for each machine, as the software needs to be installed on each but bundles are available. Wireless networks as well as fixed are covered, making it a good choice for the mobile user. With most security suites offering the same array of features, it's refreshing to find the McAfee SiteAdvisor, which is a little tool that sits in the toolbar and displays a colour to warn about the security quality of any website page you're on. It does this by running a number of tests in the background, checking for spam and pop-ups, as well as checking the security rating of the site itself. As it works with Internet Explorer as well as Mozilla Firefox, it's a great tool to have installed if you regularly search for new sites. Updates are checked on a regular basis but along with your year's subscription you'll find McAfee will routinely send critical updates, if and when a new virus is detected. This approach is fairly standard and takes most of the worry out of maintaining a strong line of defence.

VERDICT

McAfee offers a great deal for the asking price and while it can take a while to install and set-up the way you want it, if you haven't got any form of protection on your system, this may well be the one for you.

At a glance

What is it?

Internet security suite

Good

Comprehensive, plenty of features

Bad

Not as streamlined as Norton

Verdict

It continues to offer a wide array of online security tools but it tries too hard to offer too many tools, so lacks a cohesive whole

Price £50

Our score

7/10

Your score

?/10