

<http://www.pocket-lint.com/review/3387/PC-Tools-spyware-doctor-review>

PC Tools Spyware Doctor with AntiVirus 6 - PC

Will this inoculate your system?

by Stephen Patrick published on 22 August 2008

We've grown increasingly accustomed to our online security packages being full Internet Suites and not individual products. This is because the Internet has an ever-increasing number of ways to fool and trick the unwary user. PC Tools continues to offer its software as individual products but with this latest version of its powerful spyware tools, it has combined anti-virus tools to the mix.

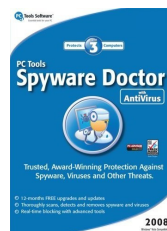
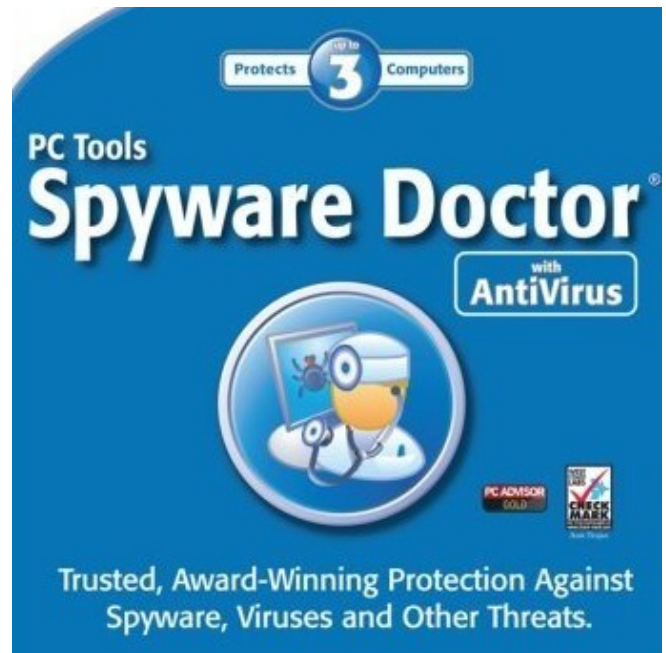
Installing the software is initially quick but once the program itself is up and running, it needs to download the latest signature list, which we found took over 20 minutes to download using a standard 8Mbps broadband connection.

However, even before it's fully set-up you'll find Spyware Doctor will start to monitor and scan your system. Scanning times vary depending on the speed of your PC and the size of your hard drive. We found on our test machine that it took 1 hour for a full scan, which is quite slow. Thankfully, it made a clean-sweep of our test files, detecting planted infections.

The interface is simple and has been designed with those who want protection but don't need to know what all the steps in the process are. If you need to fine-tune the program you'll find the settings comprehensive but most people will be satisfied with the basic setup.

Along with standard scanning, Spyware Doctor also uses real-time monitoring that it calls "Guards". In practise, there are 10 of these, such as File Guard and Network Guard and can be managed independently of each other.

Spyware Doctor now uses a feature called Behavior Guard, which itself uses ThreatFire technology to check for malware and attacks.



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Instead of using a signature or fingerprint update to help identify threats, this technology works by monitoring your system, looking for forms of behaviour more common with malicious attacks. The bottom line is that this latest version protects your PC far more effectively than previous versions.

By default, Spyware Doctor is set to run scans once a week but you can set it to run far more frequently if you wish. On the surface, this isn't a big overhaul of the version we looked at earlier this year. However, PC Tools has made a number of changes to the basic way it detects potential threats. It also uses Windows Vista's built-in security options as an extra layer of security.

The good news is that these changes haven't significantly added to the overall resources needed to run the program, so is a good option if you have an ageing machine, or opting for a budget PC. On the downside, you'll find the program adds about 20 seconds to the boot time of your PC.

Other features are standard, such as the program comes with three licenses for the same household, so you can protect multiple machines.

VERDICT

Spyware Doctor 6 has its faults: it's slower, more resource heavy than previous versions and quite expensive, but it builds on earlier successes to deliver a rounded and powerful product that we found works exceedingly well.

At a glance

What is it?

Spyware tools

Good

Thorough, easy to install and manage

Bad

Slow scans, more resource heavy than previous versions, pricey

Verdict

A pricey way to protect your PC from online threats but it offers a strong level of security

Price £38

Our score

8/10

Your score

?/10