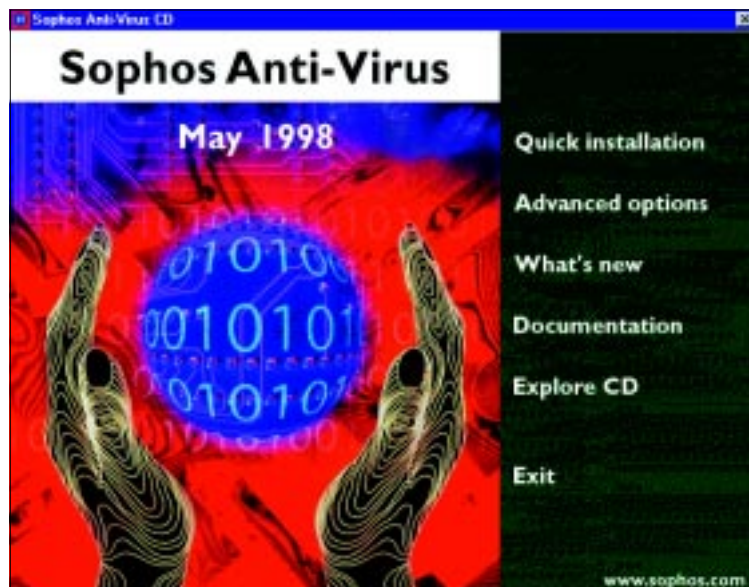


SOPHOS REVIEW

May 1998

Easy PC protection – simply the best anti-virus software for Windows 95



Single users looking for the power and robustness of corporate anti-virus software need look no further than Sophos Anti-Virus. Designed as a network product for the largest organisations, the software scales down effortlessly to provide complete virus protection for stand-alone workstations.

Sophos Anti-Virus is easy to install and even easier to update. It is delivered on CD-ROM, although users can choose to receive updates on floppy disks if they prefer. When the CD is inserted in the drive, the software is automatically installed and a series of screens allows the user to check and, if necessary, change the default options. Once installed, the software is updated by exactly the same method when the monthly upgrade is received from Sophos.

A straightforward GUI complete with configuration and information icons appears when Sophos Anti-Virus is

launched. Otherwise the software remains quietly in the background, making itself known only when it discovers a virus.

On-access scanning

The simplicity of use belies the underlying sophistication of Sophos Anti-Virus. In January this year, the software gained *Virus Bulletin's* new award for detecting 100% of viruses in its comparative review of Windows 95 anti-virus software. Sophos Anti-Virus embraces two key technologies:

- **SWEEP**, which provides on-demand scanning both immediately and according to a schedule.
- **InterCheck**, which provides on-access scanning to prevent infected disks and files being opened.

Unlike most on-access scanners, InterCheck uses a database of authorisation checksums to ensure that files are scanned only if they are new or changed. This reduces the run-time overhead dramatically compared with conventional

on-access scanners. Intercheck scans all programs, documents, disks, CD-ROMs and ZIPped files at the point at which they are accessed by the user.



This high-level protection extends even further to email attachments and Internet downloads are automatically scanned.

Dealing with viruses

When Sophos Anti-Virus discovers a virus, a message is displayed on the screen and the incident is added to the virus log which appears at the bottom of the GUI. By double clicking on the virus name in the log, users are taken to the relevant entry in the comprehensive Sophos Anti-Virus library. This currently details over 14,000 viruses and specifies recommended actions for each. This encyclopedic information can also be reached via an icon on the GUI.

A range of options is available for dealing with any infected file. Boot sector viruses can be disinfected automatically and Sophos has announced plans to provide Windows 95 users with the on-the-fly disinfection of macro viruses already available to Windows NT users. The company continues to argue its case forcefully that infected program files should be removed and the original file reinstalled, the argument being that it is impossible to guarantee that a disinfected file, although clean, is not corrupted.



24-hour hand-holding

Sophos supports its products 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. And this is 'real' support, with users able to telephone at any time and speak to people who know the software inside out. This unparalleled level of support is offered to all users irrespective of the size of the licence, whether single user, small network or multi-site corporation. Users with access to a network can email their queries or use the 24-hour support provided via the Sophos website.

Sophos Anti-Virus is also supported by comprehensive documentation. A hard-copy *Quick Start Guide*, full *User Manual* and 368-page *Sophos Data Security Reference Guide* are delivered to all new users and the latter two are also included on the CD. Indeed, the default delivery option of CD is strongly recommended as it incorporates a number of 'extras' not available on the floppy disks (although they can be obtained separately from Sophos). As well as Sophos Anti-Virus for all platforms, the CD includes the manuals, technical reports, management tools, floppy disk images for easy creation of floppy disk versions of the software, German and Japanese versions of the documentation and a specially written expert help system, which acts as an on-screen consultant.

Centralised automation

This expert help system is available as part of the Advanced Options on the CD. Although single users almost certainly will not need such help, it is worth dipping into to see just how much flexible power has

been incorporated into Sophos Anti-Virus. Using precisely the same software, from the same CD, users can extend their protection from a single PC installation to a peer-to-peer network, a small client-server network, or indeed a larger multi-server network.

It is in this networked environment that the true strengths of Sophos Anti-Virus can be seen. Different configuration options are available for maximum efficiency. For instance, SWEEP can be placed on a server with only the InterCheck client on the workstation, thus freeing up workstation resources. Similarly, all key areas such as installation, updating and virus reporting, are centralised. This gives maximum management control to network administrators and allows minimum user involvement. Updating becomes completely user-transparent: the updated software is installed on a server from where the individual workstations automatically pull down their own updates.



Among the suite of management tools available on the CD is SGET, a pull-based system which allows Windows 95 network administrators to retain complete operational control, but at the same time allows them to automate retrieval of Sophos Anti-Virus updates from the Sophos website.

The obvious choice

Its ease of use and proven rigour make Sophos Anti-Virus the obvious choice for the SoHo arena. Viewing a single PC as a network of one, the software protects against all types of virus with minimal impact on the workstation's resource. That a multi-server, multi-platform product should provide such sophistication to a single workstation sets Sophos Anti-Virus apart, well ahead of its competitors in the anti-virus market.

Installation requirements for a Windows 95 PC

386-based PC or higher
Microsoft Windows 95
8 Mb of RAM
4 Mb free hard disk space

Comprehensive cross-platform protection:

Server support										Workstation support							
DOS	Windows 3.x	Windows NT (Alpha)	Windows NT (Intel)	Novell NetWare	OpenVMS (Alpha)	OpenVMS (VAX)	Banyan VINES	OS/2		DOS	Windows 3.x	Windows 95	Windows for Workgroups	Windows NT (Alpha)	Windows NT (Intel)	Macintosh	
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	

