

Introduction

On June 3, 2009, Trend Micro released **HouseCall v7.0** for beta use and review. This document is intended to answer the most frequently asked questions about this new version.

Overview

HouseCall is Trend Micro's award-winning free online malware and spyware scanner. HouseCall v7.0 is lighter on resources, scans faster, and provides more up-to-date protection. It is powered by the Trend Micro™ **Smart Protection Network™** and includes the latest in-the-cloud scanning, threat intelligence feedback, and correlation technologies to provide earlier detection and removal of emerging threats.

HouseCall 7.0 is a showcase for the Smart Protection Network, which uses cloud-based threat intelligence during scans, and feeds threat data back into the network which is then automatically updated and strengthened as more products, services and users access it, creating a real-time neighborhood watch security service.

With the threat landscape changing more rapidly than ever before, and hackers getting more subtle at infecting users' machines, security vendors are challenged to keep up. As a free on-demand service, HouseCall 7.0 is an ideal complement to existing antivirus security by providing a quick system check for identifying emerging threats.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is new in HouseCall 7.0?

HouseCall 7.0 is a major redesign of Trend Micro's highly popular free online virus and malware scanning service. It has a new user interface, and streamlined processes resulting in shorter scan times and faster detection of active infections.

- Browser independent downloader application manages local engines, pattern files and system scans and eliminates compatibility issues often associated with other browser activated scanners
- Light and simple design lets you start scanning your computer quickly and easily.
- Targeted scanning for active malware reduces scan time to several minutes.
- Smart Scan technology utilizes in-the-cloud intelligence, delivering immediate detection while reducing download requirements.
- Smart Feedback shares threat information with the Smart Protection Network, which correlates data from a global intelligence network to quickly discover new threats.
- Enhanced detection and cleanup addresses even the most complicated threats.
- Review and restore lets you check and compare scan results and recover files.

2. Where can I find the HouseCall 7.0 beta?

The beta can be access from <http://housecall.trendmicro.com>, click on the 'Try HouseCall 7.0 beta Now" link.

3. What is meant by “active malware”? Does the malware have to be actively engaged in malicious activity at the time of the scan to be detected?

The term active malware means a program that has been installed on a computer and is capable of launching itself after the computer has been rebooted. These programs typically perform activities such as contacting a command & control center, logging keystrokes, copying personal data, sending spam, or other malicious activity.

Merely having an executable file on your computer is not considered an active threat unless it has been executed and installed.

4. Why is Trend Micro doing a beta for HouseCall v7.0? Hasn't HouseCall been available for over twelve years?

Version 7.0 introduces a paradigm shift in how HouseCall is delivered and how it performs scans; using a local downloader/scanner instead of a browser-dependent application. The beta period allows us to engage with our users on this new methodology and get their feedback on the new features and capabilities.

5. How long will the beta last?

We are anticipating the public beta of HouseCall 7.0 to last for approximately 90 days. At that time, the first dot release will become available and we will have had a chance to review and integrate user feedback.

6. Why does Trend Micro continue to provide HouseCall as a free service?

Trend Micro has offered the free HouseCall on-demand virus scanning service for more than twelve years. We feel it is important to protect not only paying customers but the general public as well.

The threat landscape is changing dramatically, and users are more at risk today than at any time in the past. Threats are harder to detect and harder to clean. HouseCall is a great on-demand security option, because of its strong ability to detect and clean computers of malware and infections.

Product Questions

7. I hear that HouseCall 7.0 downloads an application launcher. What is this launcher?

The new standalone application model frees HouseCall from browser dependencies. HouseCall users will not have to worry about browser compatibility issues or having ActiveX or Java enabled. The new model uses a local application launcher to start the main HouseCall application. When starting a scan HouseCall from the landing page the user can choose to Run or Save the application launcher file.

8. How large is the launcher and what is its function?

When a user starts HouseCall 7.0 for the first time, a small executable (1.4MB) is downloaded. This launcher application runs locally and manages the download of local scanning components, such as the scan engine, configuration files, and pattern files. On subsequent scans, the launcher checks for existing scanning components and downloads them only when they are outdated.

If user chose to Save a local copy of the launcher it can be used to open HouseCall anytime. The launcher is designed to expire 90 days after the version release to encourage users to visit the HouseCall landing page and download the latest version.

9. Why does HouseCall expire?

Because HouseCall 7.0 uses our latest technologies, we are anticipating updates every quarter. To help ensure that users have the latest version, HouseCall releases are hardwired to expire on a fixed date, 90 days after they are released. This date is not affected by the date HouseCall is downloaded, the date it is first used, or the system date. Some users may find that they are able to use HouseCall only once before being required to download again.

10. Why can't I perform full disk scans with HouseCall 7.0?

HouseCall should be used when you suspect that your computer is infected. Typically you will not know where all the files related to that infection are located. HouseCall 7.0 detects and cleans active threats without having to perform a full system scan by checking running processes and important registry and disk sections. It also checks for malicious browser plug-ins, rootkits, and other auto-run executables.

11. I placed some files with known malware in a folder and started scanning. Why was HouseCall unable to detect some of the threats?

To speed up scans, HouseCall performs selective scanning. It focuses on key system areas to address active threats and reduce the total scan time. Manually copying infected files will leave inactive copies of threats, this method does not simulate real-world infections. Real malware programs drop copies into key folders and take advantage of system settings to autostart and operate effectively. HouseCall checks critical system areas to identify and fix active real-world threats.

12. What change has resulted in the reduced average scan time of less than 15 minutes?

HouseCall 7.0 uses targeted scanning, which can identify and scan areas that are most likely to contain active threats. By looking only at critical areas of the computer, HouseCall 7.0 reduces total scan times from hours to minutes and is still very effective at fixing infections.

13. What types of threats can HouseCall 7.0 detect? Can it detect Web threats?

HouseCall 7.0 detects active malware and spyware, or basically file-based threats. It can detect Web threats that have already been downloaded and infected machines. However, HouseCall 7.0 does *not* support malicious URL blocking, which can proactively protect against Web threats.

14. Does HouseCall 7.0 replace real-time Internet security solutions?

HouseCall 7.0 provides an easy, *on-demand* check for active viruses and malware. It complements, but is not a substitute for, existing antivirus software and quickly scans the computer, removing detected active malware.

For *always-on* real-time protection, Trend Micro recommends users install Internet security software, such as Trend Micro Internet Security Pro which provides the most comprehensive protection available for your personal and financial information – whether you are at home or on the road.

15. Which languages will the HouseCall 7.0 beta version support?

HouseCall 7.0 will be available in English only, same as the current implementation of HouseCall.

16. Which operating systems and browsers are supported by HouseCall 7.0?

- Windows™ XP (32-bit) Home or Professional with SP2 or SP3
- Windows Vista™ (32-bit) Ultimate, Business, Home Premium, or Home Basic with SP1
- Windows 7, RC (32-bit)

HouseCall 7.0 is browser independent.

17. Will Trend Micro offer technical support for HouseCall 7.0?

We typically do not provide support for free tools. We do encourage users to submit feedback. We sometimes incorporate feedback into future versions and use feedback to update the product FAQs and address the most common questions and concerns.