

EICAR seal of approval

Sniffing brake for anti-virus software

The expert association EICAR wants to develop a seal of approval for anti-virus programs. This is to be given to software that complies with data protection regulations, whose data communication is traceable and which is not manipulated.

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One would think that this should be self-evident. But this is obviously not the case. The list of companies behind the initiative shows what is behind it: the Russian Kaspersky Labs, the Finnish F-Secure, the Bochum-based company G Data and Trend Micro, a group based in Japan. US groups such as Symantec and McAfee are missing.

Suspected US companies

Companies in the United States are suspected of allowing the country's intelligence agencies to access their programs. For example, encryption is often restricted by law in the US. Anti-virus software, however, relies on secure connections between users' PCs and the manufacturers' servers. Otherwise, intelligence services could smuggle in snooping programs during updates. The seal of approval is therefore also a kind of "NSA no thanks badge" that non-US companies want to give their products.

Also not involved is the German company Avira, whose free scanner has displayed ads in the past and may do so again in the future. But advertising works best when user data is collected.

EICAR seal to come this year

The EICAR seal is initially awarded to programs whose developers promise that they meet the criteria. Later, independent test laboratories will verify this. Software with the seal should be on the market before the end of this year. The cryptic abbreviation EICAR stands for European Institute for Computer Antivirus Research. The organization is known for the EICAR test file, which can be used to check whether an antivirus program has been installed correctly.