

## How to Tell if Your Anti-virus is Working

Written by Johann Taylor  
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Most of us (hopefully) have an anti-virus program of some sort installed. Normally, it quietly works in the background with little to no input from you. Every now and then you may get a message that your virus definitions have been updated, but aside from this, how do you know it is doing its job. Are you really protected? How can you test it without putting yourself at risk?

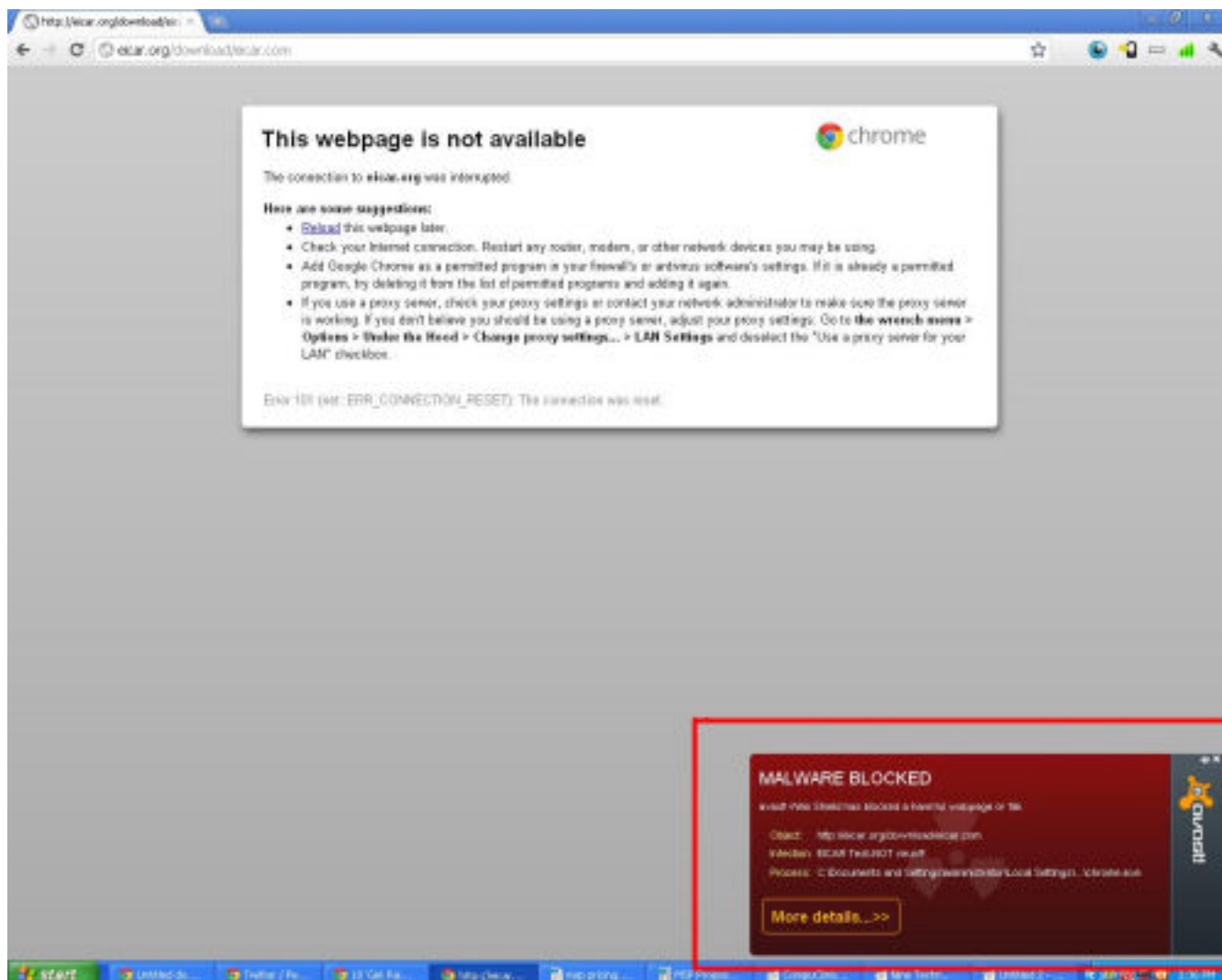
Recognizing the need for a way to test an anti-virus program's detection process, a universally recognized test file was created for this purpose. The Eicar test file is just a text file with the right set of characters and poses absolutely no threat to your computer. All major anti-virus vendors have set up their respective programs to detect and block this file for testing purposes. All you need to do is go to this [link](#) and try to download the file.

My preferred anti-virus, Avast, blocks the file and shows me this message:

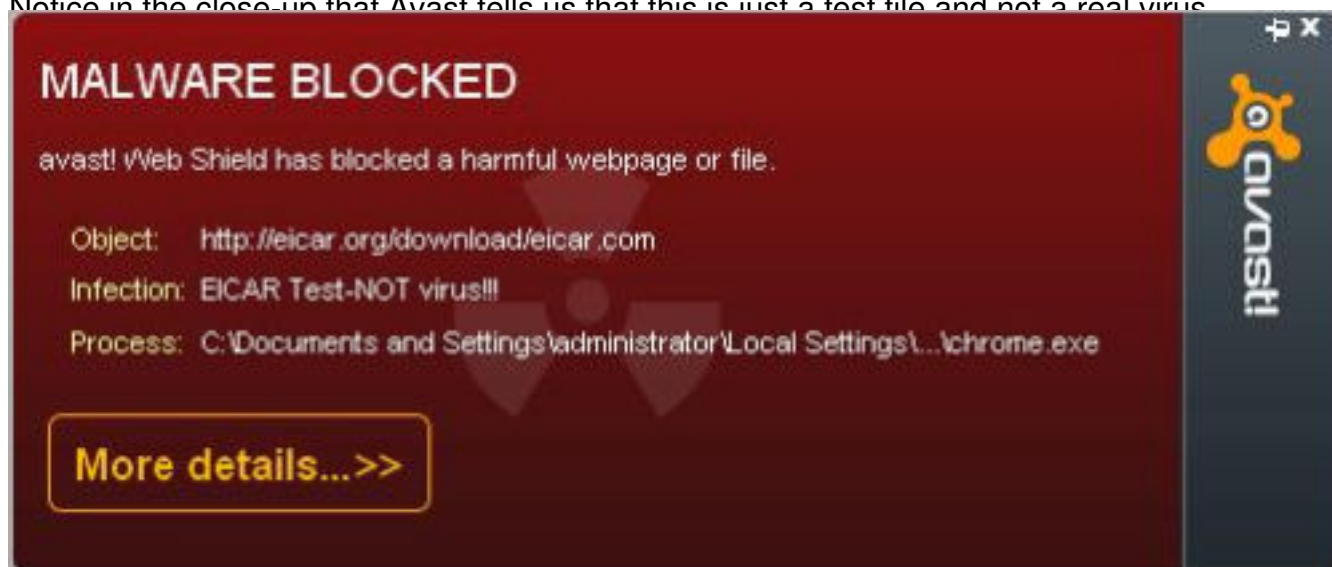
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Notice in the close-up that Avast tells us that this is just a test file and not a real virus



<http://www.eicar.org/> <http://www.eicar.org/download/eicar.com>