

## Privatefirewall 3.0 Competitor Analysis

### Overview:

With the substantial increase of broadband Internet users in the past few years, a growing demand for personal online security has been evolved. For most users, this security need can be filled with Personal Firewall software. Most of these solutions are low in cost, and relatively easy to use.

While some Personal Firewalls have many features, their primary function usually includes some form of packet filtering, which inspects incoming/outgoing information to/from the user's PC and determines whether that information should be accepted/rejected.

Privatefirewall 3.0 is a Personal Firewall that addresses these demands in the marketplace. The goal of this study was to evaluate the performance of Privatefirewall 3.0 along with other comparable Personal Firewalls.

### Test Criteria:

For our testing, we chose Personal Firewalls that had the following characteristics:

- 1) Available in a downloadable format – Most Personal Firewall are available to be downloaded (at least a demo of the full version), and usually were 1-10 MB in size.
- 2) Priced under \$60 – The major players in this market are priced anywhere from \$0 to \$49.99, while solutions above this range start to include multiple functions/solutions.
- 3) Product Information available – Each Personal Firewall must contain adequate documentation, such as a reviewer's guide or comprehensive information regarding their functionality on their website.
- 4) Singular Functionality – Each Personal Firewall must be a personal firewall ONLY, not included in a suite or multiple-functionality application

### Testing Approach:

This test was performed with the following configuration: Pentium III Processor IBM-Compatible PC, Windows 2000 Professional Operating System, and Internet Explorer 5.5/6.0 Browser.

Because many features/functions of any application can be subjective, we did not address any issues regarding user interface, ease of installation, customization, or "extra features". These are left to user preference. We decided to test each Personal Firewall against objective, universal measurements. We also decided to test each product based on their default settings, theorizing that most users would want an "install-and-go" solution.

The tests we used are from Gibson Research Corporation, widely regarded as one of the most comprehensive, objective Internet Security testing sites on the web. Their site tests include: user name ID, drive ID, Shield test (attempting to connect to a user's PC), and Port Scanning tests. They also have a "Leak Test", which simulates a

Trojan horse/virus on your PC. We also used Symantec Security Check, which includes a network vulnerability scan (attempts to connect to your PC), and a NetBIOS scan (attempts to read PC information through NetBIOS information).

		Shared Drives, User Identity	Initial hacker System Entry	Trojan Horse Testing	Network Connection	NetBIOS Connection
Product	Price	Gibson Research	Norton Security Check			
		Shields	Port Scan	Leaktest	Network	NetBIOS
Privatefirewall 3.0	29.95	passed	passed	manually passed	passed	passed
Mcafee Firewall 3.0	39.95	passed***	passed	manually passed	passed	passed
Mcafee Firewall 7.5 Bld 2 Beta	39.95	passed***	passed	manually passed	passed	passed
Sygate PF Pro	39.95	passed	passed	manually passed	passed	passed
ZoneAlarm Pro 2.6	39.95	passed	passed	manually passed	passed	passed
Norton Personal Firewall 2002	49.95	passed	passed	manually passed	passed	passed
Tiny Personal Firewall 2.0	free/\$39	passed	manually passed****	manually passed	manually passed	manually passed
BlackIce Defender 3.0	39.95	passed	passed**	failed	passed	passed
Terminet	500R (\$44)	passed	passed	failed	failed	failed
Esafe Desktop 3.1	49 Pounds	failed	failed	failed	failed	failed
NetWatcher 2000	24.95	failed	failed	failed	failed	failed
VirusMD Personal Firewall	49.95	failed	failed	failed	failed	failed

\* 1 Year Subscription

\*\* = Port 113 Visible

\*\*\* = Shields blocked, but user/drive names exposed

\*\*\*\* = Port 445 Open

Each Personal Firewall either passed, failed, or passed with user intervention for each test. The user intervention usually consisted of a pop-up message asking the user if they would like to accept/reject an incoming packet, or if they would authorize an application to access the Internet. For example, we ran the Leak Test utility with all of the Personal Firewalls and with six of them, a pop-up message appeared asking the user if they would allow the Leak Test program to access the Internet. If the user answers "NO", then the test passes.



Test Results (Note: Test results may vary based on system configuration, installed software, and other factors)

Based on the testing approach mentioned above, here are the results for the 14 Personal Firewalls we tested:

Summary:

As seen on the chart, there is a big difference in performance among the programs tested, ranging from passing all tests to failing all tests. These 14 programs seem to fall into one of 3 categories:

1) Passing all tests (some with user intervention required)

Privatefirewall, ZoneAlarm, Norton, Sygate, McAfee, Tiny

2) Passing most tests except GRC's LeakTest Trojan Horse Utility

NeoWatch, BlackICE, Conseal

3) Failing most tests, including the port-scanning test.

Esafe, TermiNet, PCViper

Of the 6 applications that passed all the tests, there were some issues:

- McAfee Personal Firewall left one port visible (Port 113)
- Tiny Personal Firewall prompted user for each and every test ever after the user authorized access for the browser to connect to the Internet
- Every application required user intervention to deny access for the Leak Test utility.

Conclusion:

While each application had different interfaces, features, and configuration settings, their primary function was to provide reliable Internet security to the user. As one might expect, the two most popular brands, Norton & McAfee, provided good protection but at a high price. Sygate, Zone Alarm, and Tiny Personal firewall both provide high performance, but both are also \$40 for business use. Out of all the firewalls that passed the tests, Privatefirewall is the least expensive business solution at \$29.95, providing maximum out-of-the-box Internet security.

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