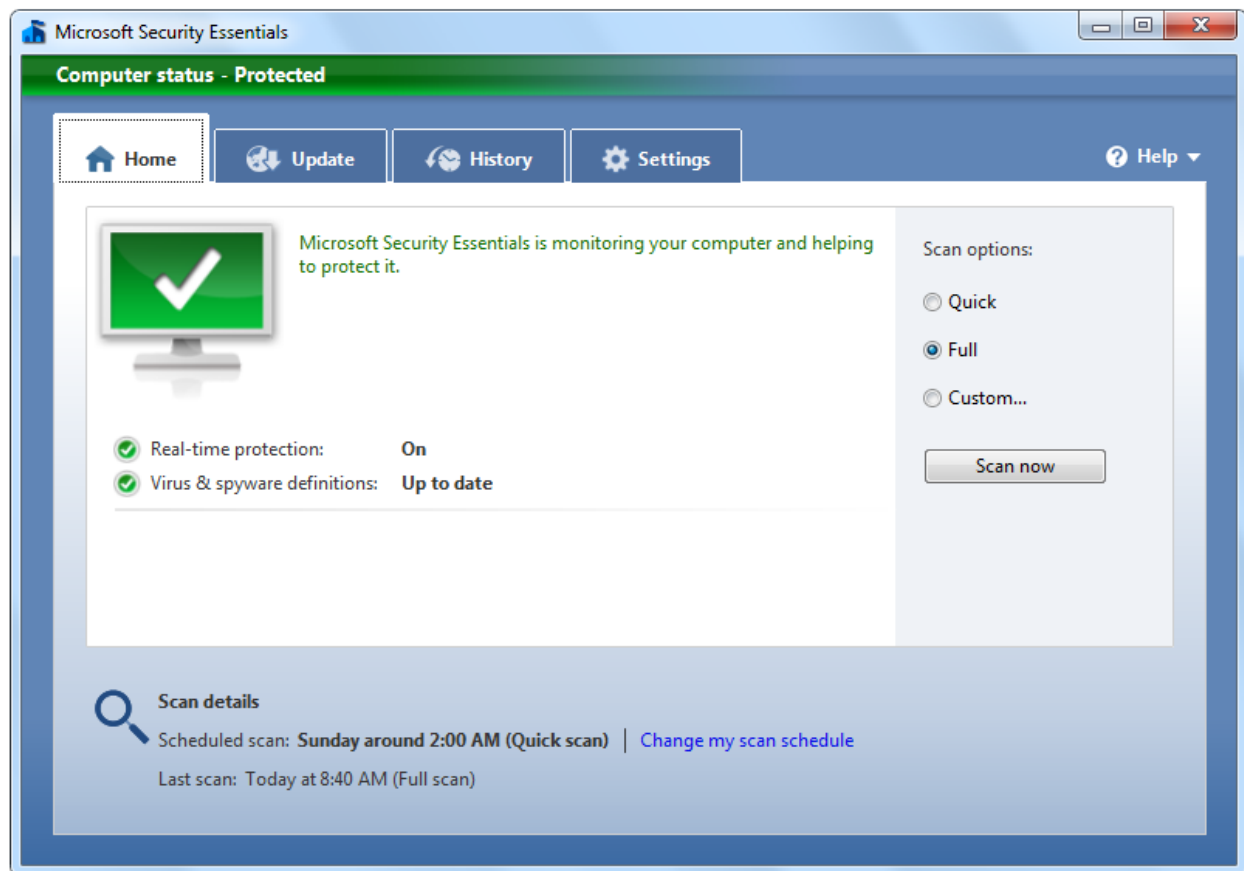


# Introducing Microsoft Security Essentials

Written by Fisnik Hasani, March 27, 2010

## Introduction

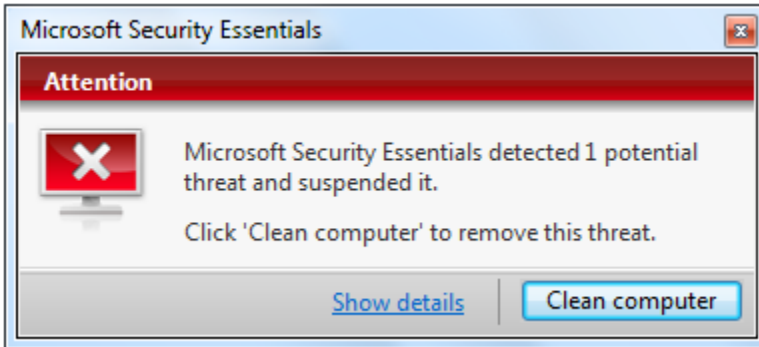
Microsoft® Security Essentials (MSE) is Microsoft's latest antivirus and anti-malware protection software. MSE works like many other antivirus software's however, the best thing with MSE is that it has a lightweight design and uses smart resource technique to minimize the impact on the day-to-day common computing tasks that the users do.



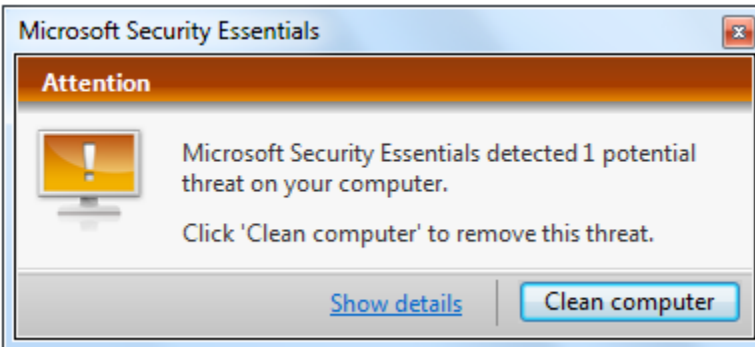
*The MSE User Interface is very clear and easy to understand.*

## MSE Notifications Explained

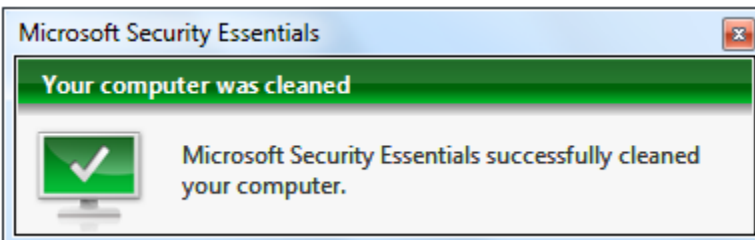
Microsoft® Security Essentials like many other antivirus programs includes a set of alert notifications which prompt in the tray area on the right-side of your Windows® Desktop Taskbar. Since these notifications are important to know, I decided that I shall explain them.



**Red notification:** *If the alert level is severe then this means that your PC has been infected by a widespread malicious threat that can damage your computer.*




**Orange notification:** *If the alert level is medium then this means that your PC has been infected by an item that can affect your privacy or make changes to your computer.*





**Green notification:** *Once MSE successfully cleans your PC, you will be prompted with a notification like this one.*


## MSE Tray Area Icons Explained


Microsoft® Security Essentials like many other antivirus programs, includes a set of tray area (or notify icons) icons that report the current status. The icon is also there to explain that MSE is hidden but can be access by a double click on its tray icon.

 **Computer Status – Protected:** Once you're PC runs normally and MSE virus signatures are up-to-date, MSE will display the default green icon.

 **Computer Status – Potentially unprotected:** When MSE detects a medium level item (e.g. a hack tool), MSE will switch its display icon to this orange icon, so that the user can see that something is wrong and then can take the recommended actions.

 **Computer Status – At risk:** When MSE detects a severe level item (e.g. Trojan or malicious software) MSE will switch its display icon to this red icon, so that the user can see that something is wrong and then can take the recommended actions.

 **Checking for updates:** Once you manually update MSE or MSE automatically updates the virus signature, MSE will switch its display icon to this blue icon with an arrow dropping from the top down.

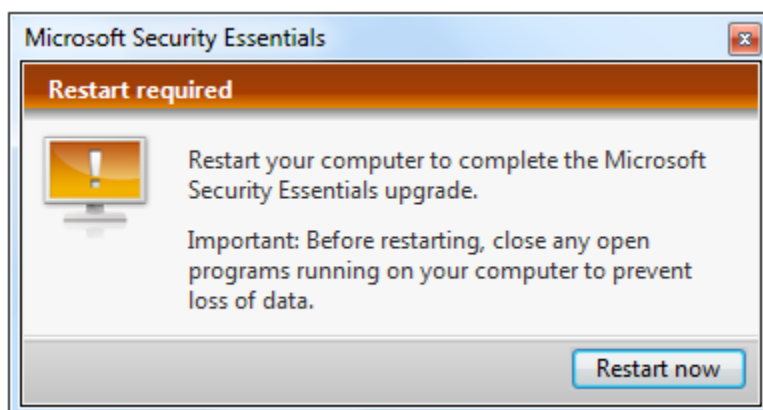
 **Scanning:** Once you manually start MSE to scan for viruses, then MSE will change its display icon to this blue icon with a spinning CD.

These simple tray icons are pretty easy to understand, once you know what each icon indicates you're secured about what has happened your computer, and what MSE is currently doing.

## MSE Upgrades and Updates of Virus Definitions

Microsoft® Security Essentials like many other antivirus programs requires a daily update of virus signatures to better combat the latest viruses and malwares. The Microsoft® Antimalware group deploys new updates for MSE typically a few times daily. Therefore you're not required to check for updates throughout the day, because once MSE checks and finds new updates, the offered updates will automatically be downloaded and added to the virus signature database. However, sometimes, Microsoft® can deliver "virus scan engine" and software upgrades then a notification

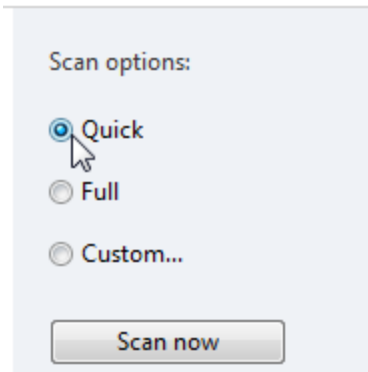
like the one shown on the picture is likely to prompt on screen.



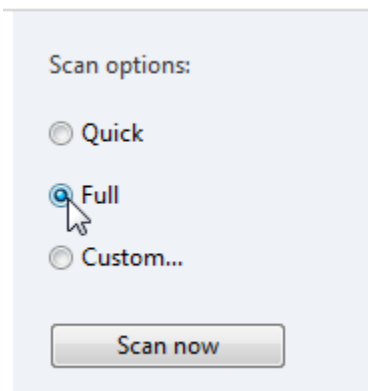
*Once MSE has upgraded a notification like this one will prompt.*

## Scanning for viruses, spyware and other potentially unwanted software with MSE

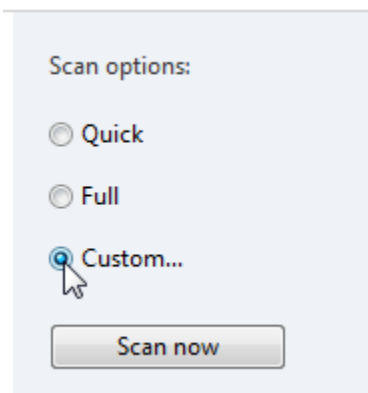
Microsoft® Security Essentials like many other antivirus programs, provides a set of scan options which the user can choose when he/she wants to perform a virus scan. However, I think that it is important to understand these scan options, so I'll explain them.



**Quick:** Quick scan compared with Full scan skips many other areas since it checks areas that malicious software, including viruses, spyware, and unwanted software, are most likely to infect. Therefore a Quick scan is much faster than a Full scan.



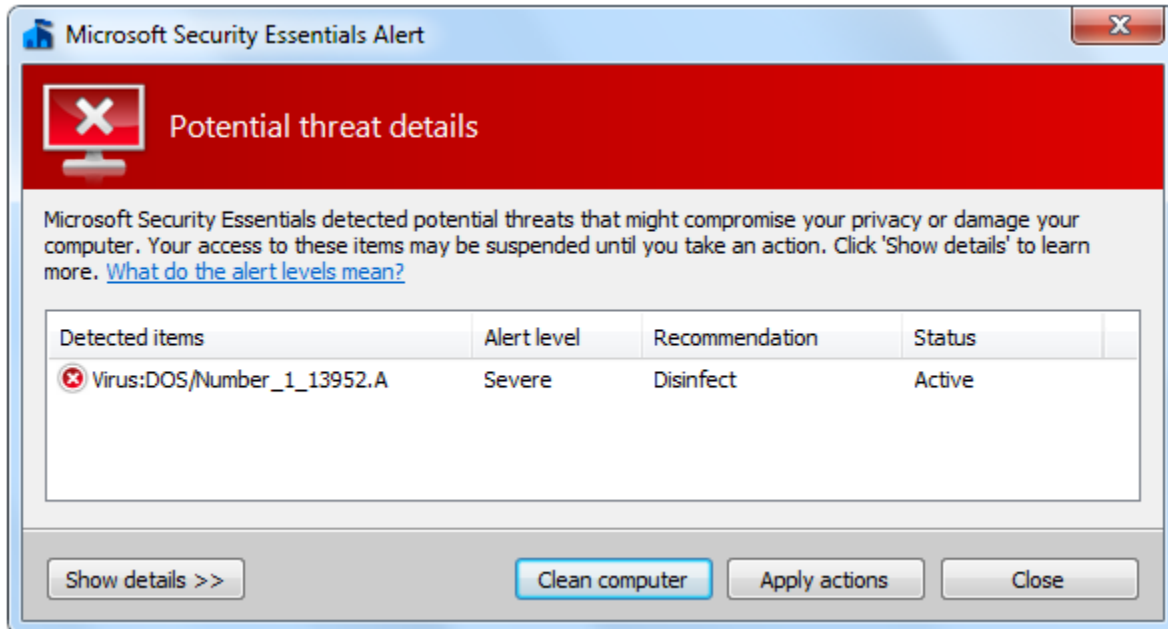
**Full:** Full scan compared with the Quick scan does not skip areas this scan type however, checks all the files on your hard disk and checks all running programs. Depending on your system, this scan can take more than one hour.



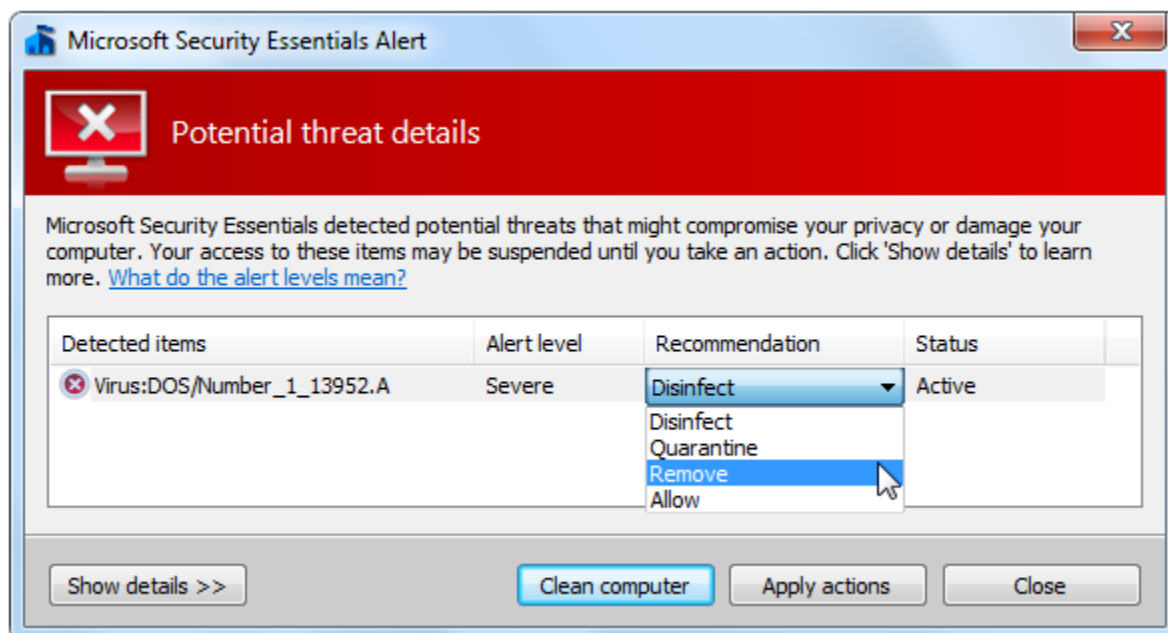
**Custom:** Custom scan checks only the user selected locations and files. However, even a custom scan depends on the number of selected paths and files, and therefore is likely to take long time.

## Cleaning detected viruses with Microsoft® Security Essentials

MSE is very fast in detecting new viruses on the PC. However, you may wonder if MSE is good in removing those dirty viruses. Well, once you're PC has been infected, MSE will alert you that it has detected a new virus. When you open the details dialog, you will get more details about the virus and you will be offered an amount of recommended actions.

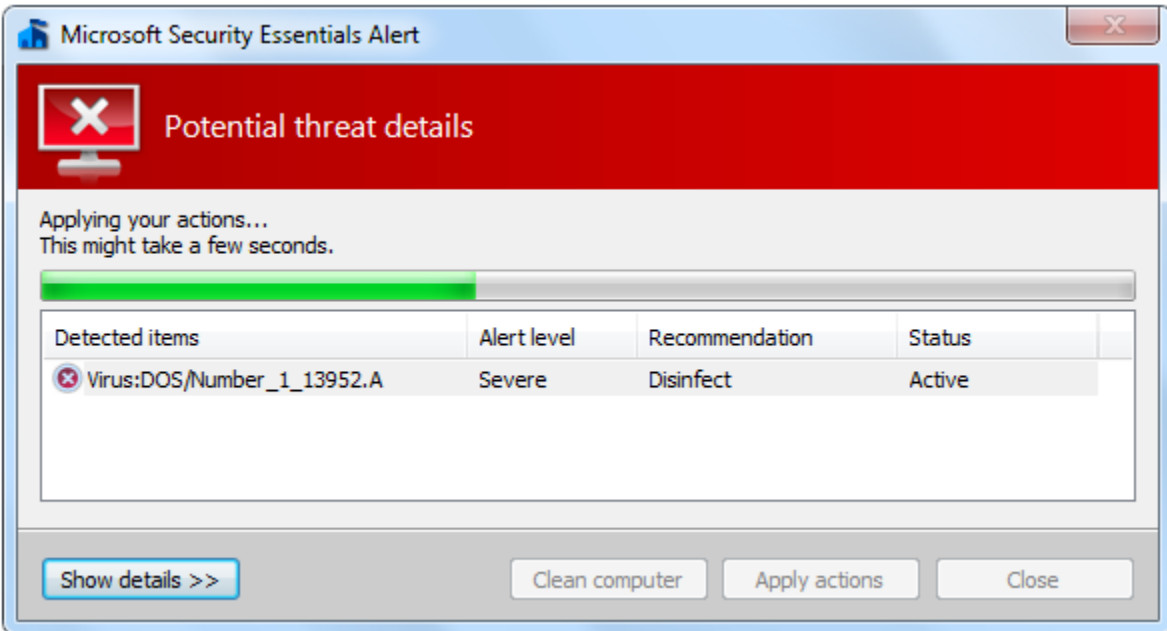


*MSE potential threat details dialog.*



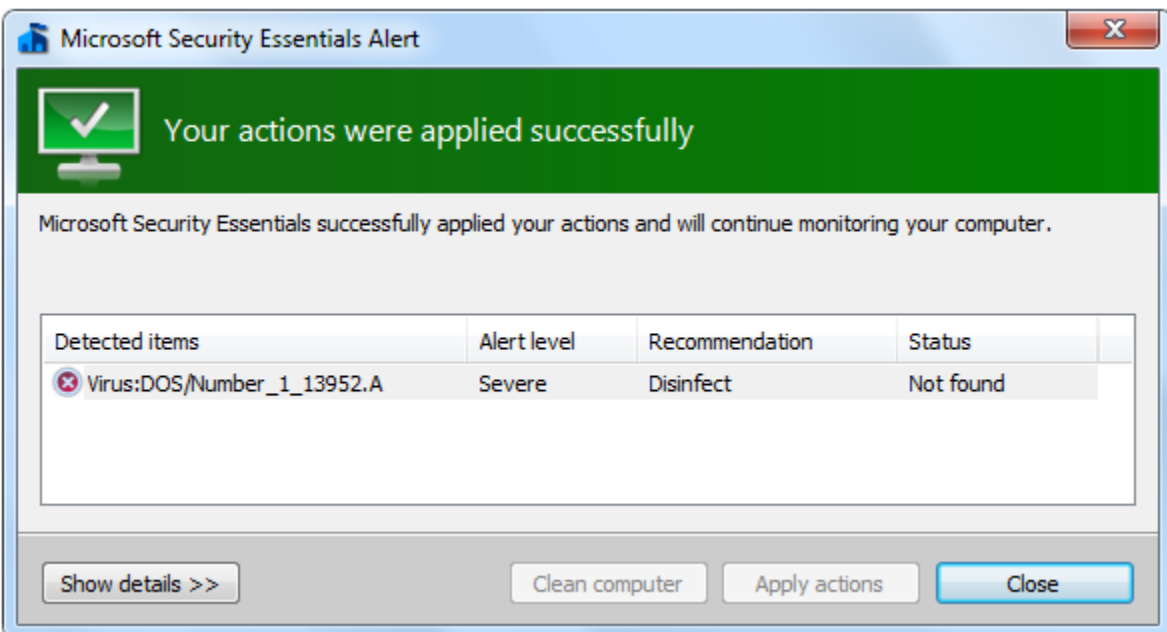
*MSE provides four different choices of recommendations.*

Once you've select a recommended action, you can click clean computer or apply actions to remove the virus/malware.



*MSE apply user actions and performing a disinfection of the infect file.*

Once MSE successfully applied user actions and cleaned your computer, the red potential threat dialog will switch from red to a green and wonderful dialog.



*MSE managed to successfully apply you actions.*

## Recommendations

As the author of this article and as a technical expert I recommend that you run MSE together with Windows® 7, since it works perfectly under Windows® seven's environment. For basic PC protection, MSE and Windows® Firewall is enough.

## Conclusions

MSE is the perfect choice of antivirus protection for the average household whether in U.S. or the rest of the world. MSE provides good virus detection technique, it uses the smart resource technique to minimize the impact on the day-to-day computing tasks that the user does. MSE does not prompt you with annoying messages every time, which is a positive thing. The most positive thing about MSE is not only its detection technology and the rest of its functions, but that it is a royalty-free product that works perfectly with Windows®, especially Windows® 7.

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**Fisnik Hasani** is the founder of ITknowledge24.com; he is also an active user helping people by solving different computer problems and other software issues and loves to apply customized ideas when possible. When he doesn't work with programming or computer and software research, he researches and spends time on climate research and energy questions.

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