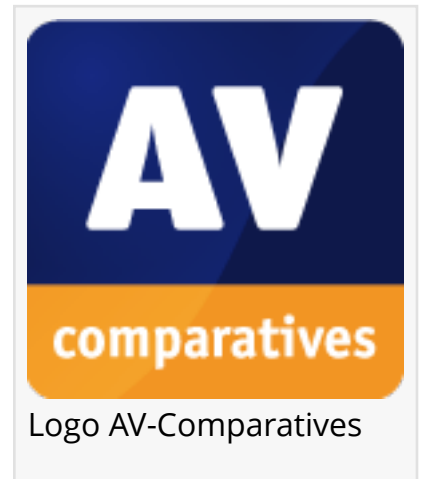


AV-Comparatives Welcome UK Guidelines on Auto-Renewal by Antivirus Vendors

Austrian AV Test Lab Applauds Efforts to Make Automatic Renewal More Transparent

INNSBRUCK, TYROL, AUSTRIA, November 1, 2021

/EINPresswire.com/ -- The UK Government's Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) recently published guidelines for antivirus software vendors with regard to auto-renewal of subscriptions. These Compliance Principles advise security software vendors who sell to UK consumers how to avoid falling foul of British consumer protection laws. Austrian AV test lab [AV-Comparatives](#) supports the principles behind the CMA guidelines.



The principle of auto-renewal is quite simple. Antivirus software is almost always sold as a service, that is to say, it is not a one-off purchase, but requires regular subscription payments to ensure that the program continues to receive updates. Auto-renewal of the subscription means that when the customer first purchases the software, the vendor retains the customer's payment details; then, when the initial subscription period (typically one year) expires, the vendor will take payment for the next period, and extend the service provision, without any action being required of the customer.

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AV-Comparatives are pleased that the British Government are trying to make auto-renewal of AV software fairer and more transparent, and hope that vendors everywhere will follow the CMA's principles.”

Andreas Clementi, founder and CEO, AV-Comparatives

Auto-renewal is likely to be of benefit to the software vendor, as it means a continued source of income for them, without any additional effort or expense on their part. For customers who are satisfied with the service, auto-renewal brings convenience, and the peace of mind that their computers will remain protected. However, the

CMA article notes that some antivirus vendors have been investigated to determine whether their auto-renewal policies comply with UK consumer protection laws.

UK laws do not prohibit the use of auto-renewal with antivirus subscriptions. However, the CMA stipulates conditions that vendors should adhere to when offering automatic renewal. In essence, these ensure that consumers are fully informed of the auto-renewal process, what it

will cost them (relative to buying a new subscription), and how to cancel it. The full list of CMA's Compliance Principles is shown below:

1. Make sure your customers are able to make a fully informed choice about auto-renewal.

2. Make sure that any price claims you make are accurate and do not mislead your customers.

3. Confirm to the customer the key points of the auto-renewing contract.

4. Make sure that your customers can easily turn off auto-renewal.

5. Remind your customers about auto-renewal in good time before it happens.

6. Once off, auto-renewal stays off.

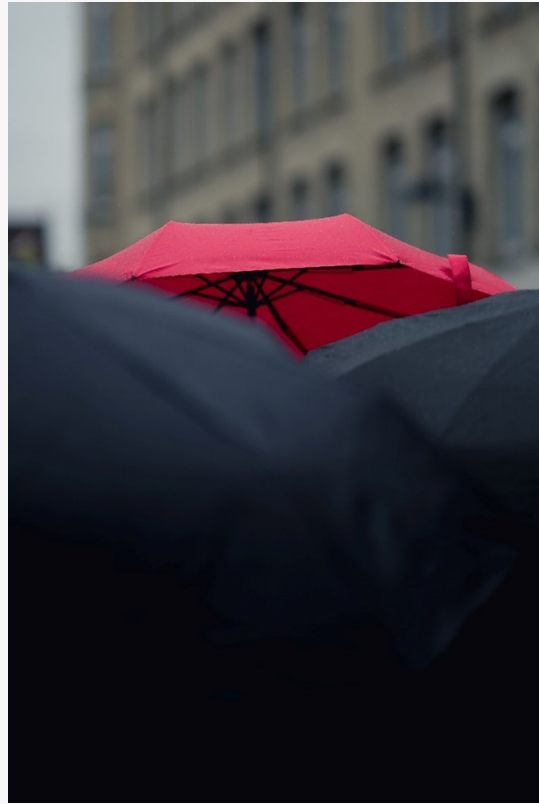
7. Give your customers the chance to change their mind.

8. Make it easy for your customers to obtain a refund if they want one.

9. Provide appropriate safeguards for customers who are no longer using the product following auto-renewal."

AV-Comparatives reports that it is aware of numerous complaints from customers regarding subscription auto-renewal. Last year, the Austrian antivirus testing lab investigated the auto-renewal policies of various consumer security-software vendors. Their findings were published in the testing lab's [Consumer Summary Report 2020](#).

The report noted that in the most extreme case, the auto-renewal price was over three times the cost of the first year's subscription. This is not in itself illegal or improper. However, it appears



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that some customers feel they were not suitably informed about the auto-renewal procedure, how to cancel it, or what the renewal price would be.

Another important factor with auto-renewal is whether it is compulsory or optional at the time of purchase. If it is optional, the customer can complete the purchase without activating auto-renewal at all. If it is compulsory, the customer has to proactively contact the vendor to prevent the subscription renewing. AV-Comparatives found that over half of the products it investigated had compulsory auto-renewal, and that 7 out of 8 users it [surveyed](#) were not happy to have mandatory auto-renewal when purchasing security software. AV-Comparatives encourages AV vendors to let customers decide at the time of purchase whether they want auto-renewal or not.

AV-Comparatives is an independent AV test lab based in Innsbruck, Austria, and has been publicly testing computer security software since 2004. It is ISO 9001:2015 certified for the scope "Independent Tests of Anti-Virus Software". It also holds the EICAR certification as a "Trusted IT-Security Testing Lab".

SOURCES

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/compliance-principles-for-anti-virus-software-firms/compliance-principles-for-anti-virus-software-businesses-that-use-auto-renewing-contracts>

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