

Antivirus programs identify viruses by checking suspect files against the signatures of known viral threats. This collection of virus identification information for all viruses that an antivirus program knows about is called virus definitions.

For every new virus that is created, a new virus profile must be made to be added to the virus definitions of the software. This information must then be uploaded to the computer of every user of that antivirus software in order for those users to be protected from the virus; otherwise the virus will not be identified by a virus scan since it is not identified in the virus definitions and it will be able to infect users' computers.

New viruses are being created on a daily basis, so virus definitions must be updated frequently for a user to be protected from new viral threats to his system.