

System Suite 9 Professional
By Bart Koslow

System Suite (SS) is a complete set of utilities to protect and maintain your computer. It includes a firewall, anti-virus and anti-spyware and programs to diagnose, fix and maintain, optimize, cleanup, recover and zip and unzip files and folders. SS comes with a 352 page printed manual. The installation CD includes Adobe PDF Reader 9.0, a manual in PDF format, and two great bonus programs, Power Desk 7 and Mailwasher, both of which I use daily and highly recommend. I have been using prior versions of System Suite for a number of years, so I was particularly anxious to check out this new version.

Anti-spyware and anti-virus has added new real time protection shields, which I quickly turned off after finding that real time protection doubled my boot time and slowed the use of my computer. New behavior based malware identification and root kit detection and removal tool are welcome additions. I tried the new optimizers for Internet Speed, Windows, and Memory without mishap. However, I found the new Data Vault, which stores information in encrypted format and allows you to paste logon, or other data, directly into your web browser, cumbersome and slow. There are much better programs to accomplish the same task.

One of the most valuable features of SS is its ability to help you recover from a system crash or malfunction. I cannot count how many times I have not been able to boot my computer successfully or have had a major malfunction that I was able to correct with the aid of Recovery Commander. The installation CD can act as a boot rescue disk, but SS does prompt you to make a separate boot rescue disk, which I did. Recovery Commander creates a restore checkpoint which can include a System Restore as well. You will be asked to create a restore checkpoint every time you install a new program. It is a good idea to create a restore checkpoint on a regular basis. You never know when you will be happy you did, or very unhappy you did not.

Version 9 replaces the previous Trend Micro malware engine (which included Anti-virus) with the new Sunbelt malware engine which protects your computer and your email very effectively. I always tell the story about a computer professional I knew in Sarasota, Florida who some years ago emailed me asking for help with a computer problem he had. When I downloaded the email, it mysteriously disappeared? I asked him to send the email again. This time I watched closely as SS indicated there was a virus in the email, and promptly erased it. I knew what his problem was and so informed him. Some days later I received a happy thank you message.

I like the Net Defense firewall that comes with SS and for the most part it works effectively. However, every once in a while it blocks a site, an update, or a program that I am using and I have to go to the Net Defense application list and change the application from BLOCK to ALLOW.

The SS manual is not only large and complete, but is well organized and well written, an exception in these days of manuals only on CD, or to be downloaded, and usually poorly written at that. Using SS you may select numerous individual programs that perform computer functions under the headings of Diagnose, Fix and Maintain, Optimize, Cleanup, and Recover, Those of us who are not inclined to delve into these programs or do not have the technical knowledge or time to do so will be happy to know that you may bypass these selections and go straight to One Click Solutions. Here you may run a one click solution to Protect, Optimize, Cleanup or Fixup your computer. If this is still too much, just go to One Click Comprehensive and run everything at once. If you are not sure what the many programs do, select Settings, and for almost every program you may customize its performance. It does not become much easier than that.

I like System Suite 9 Professional. Its utilities take care of all of the computer problems you are likely to encounter. I highly recommend it and would not be without it.

Price: Online -3 user license \$49.95

System requirements: Windows XP, Vista 32 bit. 64 MB RAM, 56MB disk space.

Avanquest North America. 23801 Calabasas Road, Suite 2005, Calabasas, CA 91302, 818-591-9600.
www.avanquest.com

Support: Free telephone support. Online database.

Avanquest North America Inc. 23801 Calabasas Road, Suite 2005, Calabasas, CA USA 91302-1547 818-591-9600