

## No. 280: Protecting Against Ransomware

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*(This is really good advice from Gregg concerning Windows Defender, which I have noted before is a fine and adequate antivirus package that comes with Windows 10. Here, Gregg gets specific about its ransomware protection, which I did not know about prior to his writing about it in this article. He also outlines how to make sure this ransomware protection is enabled and working. Thanks, Gregg! Stan)*

Windows 10 comes with its own antivirus solution called Windows Defender, and it is enabled by default when setting up a new PC. This provides some good basic malware and virus protection. However a lesser known feature is “Ransom Ware” protection, keeping folders secure from being modified or encrypted by nefarious players.

It's actually called “Controlled Folder Access”. However it is not enabled by default you have to turn it on. Go to Settings > Update & Security, click on Open Windows Security, click on Virus & threat protection, then scroll down and click on Manage ransomware protection.

The Controlled folder access toggle is set to 'off' by default . Turning it on designates specific folders that only trusted apps have permission to access, and you can add folders beyond the ones that are selected by default. There's also a section to grant specific applications permission to access your protected folders. This is required when the computer is being used for “gaming” as most games require continued access to specific files and folders.

However if you are using another company's protection program it won't allow you to turn this feature on because Windows Defender needs to be the primary Virus/Malware program for the feature to be enabled. Other software packages may also have this feature to protect against ransomware, however they are sometimes separate add on features and tend to be pricey.

All in all Microsoft's Windows Defender is actually a pretty good program. It is among the top 5 virus/malware protection programs listed by PC Magazine and Gamer Magazine. So if you feel you could be exposed to a ransomware attack on your Windows 10 computer, just a few clicks to make sure this feature is enabled and you will be protected – at no additional cost.