

The Best Free Software of 2011
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Every year at this time, PCMag takes a look at what is worth installing on your PC—software that's totally free that does the job as well as, if not better, than the big boys. That's not to say programs from Microsoft, Adobe, and hundreds of other developers aren't worthwhile, but you should always be aware of your options, especially when they're free.

With that in mind, we're here again to gather the best of the freebies. First, we re-examined our picks from last year's story (The Best Free Software of 2010) to ensure they're still worth installing and that they're still freeware. Of course, we also took a look at all of the great free software announced in the last 12 months.

The list is primarily productivity apps for Windows users (mainly Vista and Windows 7, with some XP tools)—the kind you download and install to your hard drive. However, we make frequent note of other places the apps can run:

Mac: Indicates there's a free version that also works on MacOS (Check out our Best Free Mac Software 2010 for a more comprehensive list.)

Linux: Indicates that a version is available for the various distros of the free operating system.

Web: Indicates that the app has a complimentary version online. (We'll be bringing you a Best Free Web Apps story soon.)

Mobile: This means there's a version for a smartphone. (Want more phone apps? See our Top 100 Free Apps for Your Phone 2010 story.)

Portable: This denotes that you can put the app on a USB drive and run it on a Windows computer without having to do a full installation. You can find out more about them at PortableApps.com.

Did we miss any great no-cost programs? Let us know about your favorite freebie in the comments below.

Yes, you can jump to your favorite category. Check out the table below our slideshow, use the table of contents to the right, or [click here](#) to get started.

Anti-Malware

1. Ad-Aware Free Internet Security

http://www.lavasoft.com/products/ad_aware_free.php

Windows

Our new Editors' Choice for free antivirus apps, Ad-Aware Free is effective at not only finding malware but also at blocking it (two things that don't always go together). Our reviews revealed it to be almost as good as the Pro version.

- *Read PCMag's review of Ad-Aware Free Internet Security 9.0.*

2. AVG Anti-Virus Free

<http://free.avg.com/us-en/homepage>

Windows

AVG Anti-virus Free gets top marks at independent labs, and in our tests, it does a great job of finding and removing malware, though it isn't the best at keeping an already clean system clean.

- *Read PCMag's review of AVG Anti-Virus Free 2011.*

3. Comodo Antivirus

<http://antivirus.comodo.com/antivirus.php>

Windows

Comodo does a great job of keeping systems free of malware, but in our tests, it didn't handle the heavy lifting of scanning and cleaning an infected system.

- *Read PCMag's review of Comodo Antivirus 5.0.*

4. Malwarebytes' Anti-Malware

<http://www.malwarebytes.org>

Windows

This tool is so fast and worthy that support people from other antivirus vendors will even suggest a check with Malwarebytes. Stick with the free version, as our tests of the Pro version indicate the "real-time protection" it offers isn't worth the money.

- *Read PCMag's review of Malwarebytes' Anti-Malware 1.46.*

5. Microsoft Security Essentials

http://www.microsoft.com/Security_Essentials/

Windows

The latest version of Microsoft's free virus fighter adds some network-based attack protection, but overall it's much the same as the previous version. That means okay protection, and that's still better than nothing. And, of course, it integrates very well with Windows.

- *Read PCMag's review of Microsoft Security Essentials 2.0.*

6. Panda Cloud Antivirus

<http://www.cloudantivirus.com/en/>

Windows

It's no longer our Editors' Choice, but Panda still impresses with its ability to keep a

computer clean from infection by using a cloud-based signature list of up-to-date viruses—all without a download to your computer.

- *Read PCMag's review of Panda Cloud Antivirus 1.1.*

App Launchers

7. Launchy

<http://www.launchy.net>

Windows | Mac | Linux

No matter what OS you use, you can start using Launchy as your launch pad. If you prefer to use the keyboard to get around, this skinable tool can help get your computing up to speed.

8. ObjectDock

<http://www.stardock.com/products/objectdock/>

Windows

Don't let the Mac users have all the fun. ObjectDock replicates the look of the Mac's dock with animated icons for all your apps. It can also replace the Windows Taskbar to access open programs.

9. PortableApps.com Suite & Platform

<http://portableapps.com/>

Windows | Portable

PortableApps.com is an entire platform for taking programs—many of which are in this story—and making them portable, so they can run from a USB flash drive on any PC. It puts your entire computer in your pocket. Just don't forget to take it with you.

- *Read more about PortableApps.com in [The Ultimate USB Key](#).*

Archivers

10. 7-Zip

<http://www.7-zip.org>

Windows

The user interface of 7-Zip won't bowl you over, but the power to pack files into 7z, TAR, ZIP and more will. That pales in comparison to the amazing number of archives it can unpack, as well as the amount it can compress.

11. IZArc

<http://www.izarc.org/>

Windows | Portable

Of course, IZArc can make and unpack compressed archives, but it also looks inside image files like ISOs. The interface is easy to master: Just drag a file to the IZArc icon to get going, even if it's on your USB flash drive.

12. PeaZip

<http://peazip.sourceforge.net/>

Windows | Linux | Portable

Create archives or unarchive a folder's contents, with a simple right click. Use PeaZip's extensions to add support for new archive types as they pop up.

13. ZipGenius

<http://www.zipgenius.com>

Windows

Supporting all the usual archive types for creation and extraction is great, but multi-lingual ZipGenius compares well to the competition, with a 14-year history (yeah, who knew?) and a nice-looking interface.

14. Universal Extractor

<http://legroom.net/software/uniextract>

Windows

It doesn't matter what kind of archive file you've come across, this software will be able to extract the contents. That's it. It doesn't create compressed files, it just takes them apart.

Audio

15. Audacity

<http://audacity.sourceforge.net>

Windows | Mac | Linux | Portable

Open-source audio tool Audacity works on any desktop platform to record and edit your audio files. It then outputs them to formats, including MP3s (with a plug-in). It's perfect for those getting started getting into sound production or even the pros.

- *Read PCMag's review of Audacity 1.2.*

16. Foobar2000

<http://www.foobar2000.org>

Windows

Play back just about any kind of audio file with this Windows software. It even supports Dolby 5.1 surround sound through headphones. It rips CDs and can convert a playlist of files into different audio formats.

17. MP3 Skype Recorder

<http://voipcallrecording.com>

Windows

This one trick pony—it records Skype calls (even those to landlines) to MP3 format—does its one trick perfectly. Calls can be saved in mono or stereo, in the bitrate you choose, with no limits to the length or size of the call or resulting audio file.

Backup/Synch/Storage

18. Create Synchronicity

<http://synchronicity.sourceforge.net>

Windows | Portable

Launch the app, create a profile for folders/files you want to synchronize or back up between internal, external, and network drives, schedule synch times, and let it run. Create Synchronicity is small, works from a USB flash drive, and is so easy you don't even need to know drive letters to work it.

19. Clonezilla

<http://www.clonezilla.org>

This open-source software doesn't install on your system. It's a LiveCD that you can boot from a disk. Then you use the old-fashioned interface to do a complete clone of your hard disk drive. It's probably overkill for home, but it does the trick when you have to replicate a drive on multiple systems.

20. Comodo Time Machine

<http://www.comodo.com/home/data-storage-encryption/data-recovery.php>

Windows

System Restore in Windows works pretty well to get you back to a working state from a crash, but Comodo Time Machine (no relation to Apple's) goes a little farther, giving you access to restore points when you boot up (even when Windows won't start).

21. CrashPlan

<http://b3.crashplan.com>

Windows | Mac | Linux

Sure, CrashPlan will back up your files—even if they're on USB storage or on your network—to other local storage. You only pay if you want to store files online (\$50 a year for unlimited space). To use the free version, you have put up with some ads. The coolest extra is social backup: use your friends' and family's computers for offsite backup.

22. Dropbox

<http://www.dropbox.com>

Windows | Mac | Linux | Web | Mobile

Our favorite synchronization tool is the perfect example of "set it and forget it." You put files into the designated Dropbox folder on your computer and install the software on all the computers you want. As long as the contents of that folder stays within the confines of your allotted space (starting with 2GB, but you can add more with referrals), it remains free. Files are also accessible on the Web and on smartphones, running iOS, Android, and BlackBerry.

- *Read PCMag's review of Dropbox.*

23. DriveImage XML

<http://www.runtime.org/driveimage-xml.htm>

Windows

Imaging an entire hard drive is a great way to backup anything and everything.

DriveImage XML does it with "hot images" made even when you're using the hard drive, storing them in XML files you can access from other tools.

24. DriverMax

<http://www.innovative-sol.com/drivermax/>

Windows

If you're moving from PC to PC but taking the same peripherals, run DriverMax on the original system first to back up your device drivers and then restore them later. It will download drivers for Windows XP, Vista, and 7.

25. FreeFileSync

<http://sourceforge.net/projects/freefilesync/>

Windows | Linux

All backup tools should be as easy as multi-lingual FreeFileSync. It's not only easy to setup, it doesn't waste time backing up files that don't need it, resolving conflicts instantly.

26. Gladinet Cloud Desktop Starter Edition

<http://www.gladinet.com/>

Windows | Web

Use up that online storage you're wasting with Gladinet's software—it works like a network drive, so you can store files on Microsoft SkyDrive, Google Docs, Box, and others that could cost you. The new Cloud Sync feature syncs data across multiple computers, a la Dropbox; Mirrored Cloud does the same across multiple online storage spaces.

27. IDriveSync Basic

<http://www.idrivesync.com/index.html>

Windows | Mac

Think Dropbox with more control, more free sync storage space (5GB for free, compared to 2GB), and a better price if you decide to upgrade to the Pro version . You won't get the mobile access, however. The straight-up [iDrive Backup](#) is also free for up to 5GB.

28. MozBackup

<http://mozbackup.jasnapaka.com/>

Windows

People using Mozilla products—Firefox, Thunderbird, Songbird, and any others—can't afford to be without MozBackup. It's the best way to backup and restore all of your settings and data in the programs, from bookmarks to passwords and entire mailboxes.

29. MozyHome Online Backup

<http://mozy.com/home>

Windows | Mac

The current leader in online backup doesn't offer unlimited storage to paying customers anymore, but that didn't impact the free service for individuals. You can still backup as much as 2GB online for free, and it runs in the background, so you can leave it

unattended.

- *Read PCMag's review of MozyHome Online Backup.*

30. SugarSync

<https://www.sugarsync.com/free/>

Windows | Mac | Web | Mobile

Like its competition, SugarSync offers a free edition with no strings attached, as long as you don't go over the storage limit. You can synch across an unlimited number of devices, including smartphones. The best part? The storage limit is 5GB, not your typical 2GB.

- *Read PCMag's review of SugarSync.*

31. Syncplicity Personal Edition

<http://www.syncplicity.com>

Windows | Mobile | Web

Synchronize an unlimited number of files and folders on two computers (three to five will cost \$15 a month), with up to 2GB stored online. Syncplicity works seamlessly with documents in cloud-based Google Docs and Zoho.

- *Read PCMag's review of Syncplicity.*

32. Windows Live Mesh

<http://explore.live.com/windows-live-mesh?os=other>

Windows | Mac

Two gigabytes of free online backup space is a good start, but 5GB is better, and that's what you get with Live Mesh, Microsoft's competitor to Dropbox. You can also synch files to the 25GB of storage space you get on SkyDrive.

Bittorrent

33. BitTorrent

<http://www.bittorrent.com/>

Windows | Mac | Linux

The namesake software for the BitTorrent protocol makes downloading files as fast as possible and sharing with others a walk in the park.

- *Read PCMag's review of BitTorrent 7.2.*

34. Deluge

<http://www.deluge-torrent.org/>

Windows | Mac | Linux

It's a very light, cross-platform BitTorrent manager that supports plug-ins (so you can add RSS feeds, for example) and features three interfaces: the software, Web, and a text console for power-users.

35. uTorrent

<http://www.utorrent.com/downloads/>

Windows | Mac | Portable

While similar to sister software BitTorrent, uTorrent is for the advanced user looking to branch out with extension apps and experiments with the entire protocol. It's wicked fast.

- *Read PCMag's review of uTorrent 2.2.*

36. Vuze

<http://www.vuze.com/>

Windows | Mac

Our new favorite BitTorrent client is Vuze, because it does much more than file transfer. It's got an attractive interface, and it goes the extra mile to transcode (legally!) downloaded video to play on your game console, Apple device, TiVo, and more.

- *Read PCMag's review of Vuze 4.5.*

Blogging

37. Windows Live Writer

<http://download.live.com/write>

Windows

This favorite word processing tool for bloggers now sports a ribbon interface (a la Microsoft Office) for those who want a Word-esque interface for composing posts.

38. ScribeFire

<http://www.scribefire.com/>

Windows | Mac | Linux

Not an installed piece of software, ScribeFire is actually a browser extension for Firefox, Chrome, Safari, and now Opera. It provides a space for crafting blog entries that you can post to just about any blog platform.

39. Zoundry Raven

<http://www.zoundryraven.com>

Windows | Portable

Send your missives to multiple blogging platforms with this WYSIWYG editor. The open-source Raven can run from a USB flash drive and be used with any Windows PC.

Browsers

40. Firefox

<http://www.mozilla.com/en-US/firefox/>

Windows | Mac | Linux | Mobile | Portable

Mozilla's flagship product remains a favorite due to its extensible architecture (it perfected the browser plug-in long before anyone else) and constant updates to increase performance and usability. The upcoming release of version 4 promises an even better user interface, faster JavaScript engine, and more.

- *Read PCMag's latest on Firefox 4.*

41. Flock

<http://www.flock.com/>

Windows | Mac OS | Linux

The "social Web browser" Flock built on Chromium (same as Google Chrome) is now owned by Zynga (the makers of Farmville), so expect this "built for Facebook and Twitter" browser to get even more social as time passes.

42. Google Chrome

<http://www.google.com/chrome/>

Windows | Mac | Linux

Chrome has quickly turned into the browser to beat. It's our Editors' Choice for multi-platform Web browsing due to its amazing performance, built in support for Flash, PDFs, extensions, and HTML5. It's already taken 10.7 percent of the browser market, so don't be left behind.

- *Read PCMag's review of Google Chrome 9.*

43. Maxthon

<http://www.maxthon.com/>

Windows | Mobile

Maxthon uses two Web-rendering engines (Trident like IE, and WebKit like Safari and Chrome) so you never have to worry about not viewing a Web page properly. Add to that fast performance, multi-touch support, integrated tools like an ad blocker and RSS reader, and syncing of your settings with the Android version, and you've got a freebie worth a look.

44. Microsoft Internet Explorer

<http://www.microsoft.com/windows/internet-explorer/default.aspx>

Windows

Version 9 of the world's most popular Web browser is coming soon, but version 8 has been no slouch in the features department, especially in terms of security updates (that's the price you pay for popularity). It's more standards compliant, though it will still show pages designed for older versions of IE. IE9 promises some barebones UI changes as Google Chrome's influence continues to be felt, plus major strides in privacy for users.

- *Read PCMag's preview of Internet Explorer 9 Beta.*

45. Opera

<http://www.opera.com/>

Windows | Mac | Linux | Mobile

How Opera, now in its 11th version, doesn't have a huge install base is a mystery, as few can equal it when it comes to Web standards compliance and speed. It even has a built-in e-mail client. Now that it supports extensions, Opera is poised to break out, big time.

- *Read PCMag's review of Opera 11.*

46. Safari

<http://www.apple.com/safari/download/>

Windows | Mac | Mobile

A 4-star product, Apple's browser (which isn't only for Apple devices) now sports a reader view to hide page clutter, built-in RSS reading, and better support for HTML

standards. It also continues to improve its JavaScript performance. All in all, it's a worthy alternative to the big names on any desktop.

- *Read PCMag's review of Safari 5.*

Calendar/PIM

47. Chandler

<http://chandlerproject.org>

Windows | Mac | Linux

Chandler is a personal information manager for your day-to-day business data that looks a lot like Outlook albeit without the e-mail.

48. Essential PIM

<http://www.essentialpim.com/>

Windows | Portable

Mimicking the look of Outlook is a tried-and-true approach for a PIM, and Essential PIM does so, organizing notes, contacts, tasks, and appointments in a color-coded screen.

49. Lightning

<http://www.mozilla.org/projects/calendar/lightning/>

Windows | Mac | Linux | Portable

Lightning isn't a standalone program, but a powerful extension for the Thunderbird e-mail software. It's got all of Outlook's capabilities, including a powerful calendar you can sync with Google and a task list.

Conferencing/VoIP

50. Camfrog

<http://www.camfrog.com>

Windows | Mac | Mobile

Whether you want to setup a webcam chat room or a private video/audio/text chat between friends, Camfrog can do it, even from your iPhone.

51. Logitech Vid

<http://www.logitech.com/vid>

Windows | Mac

Logitech's ultra-simple video calling service, ostensibly for its own webcams, is a free download. The software now supports 720p high-definition resolution on calls between people with HD webcams, assuming the computer is powerful enough.

52. ooVoo

<http://www.oovoo.com/Buy.aspx?pname=Free>

Windows | Mac

Oovoo provides straight up two-way video chat via webcam. You can also use it for one-minute video messages to fellow Oovoo users. Text chatting with up to six people and sending files up to 5MB is also free.

53. Skype

<http://www.skype.com>

Windows | Mac | Linux | Mobile | Portable

Skype's main function, serving as a PC-to-PC audio phone, is always free. So are audio conference calls. So is IMing between users. So is video calling from PC to PC. You only pay for Skype if you need to call landlines phones, send SMS messages, or want to get multiple people on a video conference.

- *Read PCMag's review of Skype.*

54. VoxOx

<http://www.voxox.com>

Windows | Mac | Mobile

Every type of communication you can imagine is part of the VoxOx unified hub: phone, e-mail text chat, SMS texting, social networking, you name it—even, dare we say it, *faxing*. It also translates for you on the fly and takes messages. The product of a phone company, VoxOx provides you with a free phone number to use for incoming calls (you do pay a tiny fee for outgoing calls to POTS lines).

- *Read more about VoxOx.*

Disk Utilities

55. Auslogics Disk Defrag

<http://www.auslogics.com/en/software/disk-defrag/>

Windows

Auslogics Disk Defrag reclaims deleted file space as it defrags both the hard drive and the registry. It's also part of the \$50 18-utility BoostSpeed product that adds even more functions, but a decent defrag may be all you need to improve performance.

56. Disk Space Fan

<http://www.diskspacefan.com>

Windows

Learn what's on your hard drive via a beautiful graph that will remind you of a futuristic art piece. The fan-graph is like a multi-sector pie chart you can click on and drill down to see what kind of data is in each area of your drive.

57. Easeus Partition Master

<http://www.partition-tool.com/personal.htm>

Windows

Now ready for 64-bit versions of Windows as well, Partition Master can chuck up (or reintegrate) your hard drive as you see fit, all from within Windows—no need to reboot into some DOS-esque utility. It works on drives as big as 4TB. It will even migrate data from one disk to another, and it can recover deleted or lost partitions as needed.

58. Smart Defrag

<http://www.iobit.com/iobitsmartdefrag.html>

Windows

Defragging can take a long, long time. Smart Defrag, however, was made with large hard drives in mind in order to avoid long wait times. The interface is about as easy to master as they get (pick a disk and go), and it will also run in the background.

59. UltraDefrag

<http://ultradefrag.sourceforge.net/>

Windows

UltraDefrag is a fully open-source disk and registry defragmentation tool that also handles boot time files. It's been developed with speed in mind. And if you're only worried about one or two files, it can selectively defrag what you choose.

Displays

60. Fences

<http://www.stardock.com/products/fences/>

Windows

Desktops are easy to clutter, with a billion icons vying for your attention. Fences gives you a way to corral those icons in discrete spaces on the desktop, so you know right where to put the cursor to get to what you want.

61. Dexpot

<http://www.dexpot.de>

Windows | Portable

Dexpot makes your virtual desktop pretty. It supports a different resolution and wallpaper on each virtual space and offers cool 3D transitions between them.

62. DisplayFusion

<http://www.binaryfortress.com/displayfusion/>

Windows

When you've got multiple monitors, Windows sometimes treats them like one big screen. DisplayFusion gives you back some control, with individualized wallpaper, title bars, and hotkeys. The Pro version offers a lot more for \$25.

63. Rainmeter

<http://rainmeter.net>

Windows

Rainmeter customizes your desktop to the nth degree, combining unique wallpaper skins with useful widgets that do everything from launch programs to tell you about system resources, or just provide useful info like the time and date at a glance.

64. Sysinternals Desktops

<http://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/sysinternals/cc817881>

Windows

This tiny 60-KB utility from Windows Sysinternals (owned by Microsoft) is a simple way to set up four virtual desktops on your system. Use hotkeys to switch between each desktop, or click the desktop object for a running app to switch to its screen immediately.

E-mail/Collaboration

65. Affixa

<http://www.affixa.com>

Windows

The constantly-upgraded Affixa, which incorporates the functions of the former gAttach and yAttach, is a full-purpose client for Gmail (even the Google App version) and Yahoo Mail, right on your desktop. Affixa offers a storage service for your e-mail attachments and integration with desktop e-mail programs, such as Outlook and Thunderbird. The \$3.20 per year Pro version supports multiple accounts.

66. eM Client 3.0

<http://www.emclient.com>

Windows

This Outlook clone throws in all the features you expect, plus instant messaging via many services, all in an easy-to-master interface that works with just about any e-mail server software.

67. Evolution

<http://www.dipconsultants.com/evolution/>

Windows | Linux

Novell's Evolution has been the e-mail client of choice on many Linux distros for years. It's popular enough to make the trek to Windows. Like Outlook, it'll work with Exchange servers and has the usual mix of contacts, calendars, notes, and task list.

68. PostBox Express

http://www.postbox-inc.com/express_features

Windows | Mac

This free version of Postbox—built on Mozilla's work—seeks to take on Thunderbird, with a slick interface and search, plus the ability to import all Thunderbird settings and messages. It also offers a unified inbox for multiple accounts, a quick reply box on messages, and support for add-ons for Thunderbird, including Lightning (see PIMs).

69. SpiceBird

<http://www.spicebird.com>

Windows | Linux

Picture Thunderbird but with more than just e-mail. This collaboration app integrates e-mail with IMs, tasks, and calendars in an entirely new interface that even supports Google Gadgets.

70. Thunderbird

<http://www.mozillamessaging.com/en-US/thunderbird/>

Windows | Mac | Linux | Mobile | Portable

Still the best desktop mail going—if you eschew Outlook or other costly e-mail clients—Mozilla's Thunderbird 3.1 has an easy migration tool to upgrade from previous versions, browser-like tabs for reading e-mails, and, of course, the best collection of add-ons in the

business.

- *Read PCMag's review of Thunderbird 3.*

71. Zimbra Desktop

<http://www.zimbra.com>

Windows | Mac | Linux

You don't need all of the Zimbra services (there are many) to use this desktop client. It works as a full PIM and plays nice with your POP/IMAP e-mail accounts. In fact, Zimbra connects to just about any e-mail, even Web-based accounts, such as Gmail and Yahoo Mail.

File Transfers

72. FileZilla

<http://filezilla-project.org>

Windows | Mac | Linux | Portable

Once a computer science project, FileZilla has matured into a premiere open-source FTP client.

73. FluffyApp

<http://fluffyapp.com>

Windows

Mac users have CloudApp for drag-and-drop uploading; Windows now has FluffyApp for doing the same. Configure where you want files to go, drag them to the icon in the system tray, pick from the menu of locations, and the app handles the rest instantly.

74. FTP Rush

<http://www.wftpserver.com/ftprush.htm>

Windows | Portable

Get free support to send files via FTP/SFTP/TFTP, even FXP for server-to-server file transfers without a local stop. Throw the 4.5MB portable version on your USB key so you can FTP anywhere.

File Viewers/Converters

75. FreeCommander

<http://www.freecommander.com>

Windows | Portable

Get rid of Windows Explorer and start using a replacement that has tabs, dual panes, file viewer, archive handling, multi-file renaming, FTP support, and more. It's all in FreeCommander.

76. IrfanView

<http://www.irfanview.com>

Windows

IrfanView (pronounced ear-fan-view) has been converting and viewing graphic files-and video and audio-since 1996. This tiny download supports plug-ins for viewing even more.

77. muCommander

<http://www.mucommander.com>

Windows | Mac | Linux

Install muCommander on all of your desktops no matter what the OS, and you'll find you have a common dual-pane, file explorer interface on each.

78. SecondShell

<http://www.secondshell.com>

Windows

This tiny app gives you more control over your windows from the keyboard. You can use keystrokes to resize, move, minimize, and close windows and apps without touching a mouse. Alt+Right click and use the mouse to resize a Window anywhere you click, not just on the edges.

79. Windows Double Explorer

<http://wde.codeplex.com>

Windows

This Windows 7 only utility puts two or more Windows Explorer panes into one big window.

80. xplorer2Lite

<http://zabkat.com/x2lite.htm>

Windows

Some call it the premiere Windows Explorer replacement, as xplorer2lite has more features than you can imagine: folder compare/sync, file previews, its own text editor, tabs for navigating, file renaming, and more. And that's just the free version (Pro will cost you \$30).

81. XnView

<http://www.xnview.com/en/xnview.html>

Windows | Mac | Linux | Mobile | Portable

IrfanView is great, but XnView does a lot of the same stuff in a nicer interface and on more operating systems. However, it is limited to images (no audio or video). That said, it can import 400 graphic file types.

Finance/Shopping

82. Billeo

<https://www.billeo.com>

Windows | Mac | Web

Billeo adds a toolbar to your Web browser for online bill paying, shopping, remembering

passwords and automatically entering data in forms, all securely. The search even helps you find receipts for past purchases made online.

83. GNUcash

<http://www.gnucash.org>

Windows | Mac | Web

Straight-up accounting software for you or a small business, totally free? That's GnuCash. The Gnu is for the software's GNU General Public License, which means it's free. Picture a Quicken-esque checkbook register interface. It offers reports and some nice extras like bill payment, invoicing, and statement reconciliation.

Fun/Home

84. Blumind

<http://blumind.org/>

Windows

Want to map your mind? Mind-mapping software like Blumind isn't about biology but ideas. It gives you a software diagram tool for tracking thoughts and how they connect (or just use it to make org charts and flow charts). It's also Chinese, but the language barrier isn't a problem once it's downloaded.

85. calibre

<http://calibre-ebook.com>

Windows | Mac | Linux

Calibre tracks all your ebook files, sorting by title, author, rating, tag, and more. It will convert ebook formats as needed, lets you read onscreen, and supports a lot of ebook reader hardware, including the Sony Reader and Barnes & Noble Nook.

86. Celestia

<http://www.shatters.net/celestia/>

Windows | Mac | Linux | Portable

Why use planetarium software that limits your view? Celestia goes 3D, with the ability to display 100,000 stars and solar systems.

87. FreeMind

<http://freemind.sourceforge.net/wiki>

Windows | Mac | Linux

Mind-mapping software FreeMind is written in Java, so it runs on all OSs. The interface is similar to an outline on steroids. It tracks whatever you insert as you're thinking those important, connected thoughts.

88. Google Earth

<http://earth.google.com>

Windows | Mac | Linux | Web | Mobile

Version 6 of this amazing app lets you go anywhere in the world, provides 3D views of major metropolitan buildings, and zooms right in to help you find local businesses. Old

maps can take you back in time. And you're not limited to land, as you can also explore the ocean, the surface of the moon and Mars, and search the heavens, using the integrated Google Sky.

- *Read PCMag's news on Google Earth 6.*

89. Kindle

http://www.amazon.com/kindle-store-ebooks-newspapers-blogs/b/ref=topnav_storetab_kinc?ie=UTF8&node=133141011

Windows | Mac | Web | Mobile

Amazon wants to sell books, so it makes its Kindle software available everywhere. The cool WhisperSynch feature means you can start up on the same page you left off, no matter how many times you switch devices.

- *Read PCMag's news about Kindle for the Web.*

90. Nook

<http://www.barnesandnoble.com/u/nook-for-pc/379002322/?cids2Pid=34762>

Windows | Mac | Mobile

Just like Amazon, Barnes & Noble wants to sell books—lots of books. So, it's made Nook software available on every platform it can. A nice difference on the PC version is that you can access the B&N store via the Nook software to buy books without going to the Web site, and it's all in color. And that last-page sync is available here, too.

91. Read Pal

<http://www.readpal.com>

Windows

You don't have to print that document just because you "can't" read it on screen. Read Pal formats text to the screen in many different reader-friendly ways, including a banner mode with large print, a rapid sequence mode, multi-column, and auto-scrolling text.

92. RedNotebook

<http://rednotebook.sourceforge.net>

Windows | Mac | Linux

Want to keep a diary? This journaling software is almost like blogging, complete with formatting, images, tags, and links. Of course, you get spell-check to check your prose and automatic saving so you never lose a thing.

93. Sweet Home 3D

<http://www.sweethome3d.eu/index.jsp>

Windows | Mac | Linux | Web

Create a 2D floor plan of your home or office, and Sweet Home 3D will, as the name implies, convert it into a three-dimensional space.

Graphics

94. 3DVIA Shape

<http://www.3dvia.com/products/3dvia-shape/>

Windows

3Dvia describes Shape as "Perfect for the beginner." It's a Google SketchUp competitor, with plenty of tutorials for the newbie and enough graphical power (in just 10 tools for modifying basic shapes) to keep experienced users happy. In Windows 7 with a touch screen, you can even use multi-touch support.

95. GIMP

<http://www.gimp.org>

Windows | Mac | Linux | Portable

Open-source, multi-language GNU Image Manipulation Program is a well-known Photoshop alternative and our Editors' Choice among free image editors. It can be a little too complex for newbies, but experienced users should check out its high-end tools, which far outstrip the price. There's a separate download site if you want [GIMP for Mac OS X](#).

- *Read PCMag's review of GIMP 2.6.1.*

96. FastStone Image Viewer

<http://www.faststone.org/FSViewerDetail.htm>

Windows

All the major image formats are supported by FastStone Image Viewer for not just viewing but editing and converting files.

97. Fotografix

<http://lmadhavan.com/software/fotografix/>

Windows

Perhaps the perfect image editor for a low-memory system (like a netbook), Fotografix offers all you'd expect in the way of tools in a program that's less than a megabyte.

98. Google Picasa

<http://picasa.google.com>

Windows | Web

Google's image and video manager is also an image editor, even supporting RAW images. The online component, Picasa Web Albums, gives you an easy place to share pictures with anyone, any time. It consistently remains our Editors' Choice for entry-level photo organization.

- *Read PCMag's review of Picasa 3.8.*

99. Google SketchUp

<http://sketchup.google.com>

Windows | Mac

SketchUp is for 3D newbies or above who don't want to spend the money on complicated programs, but still need a digital 3D model to show off. Video tutorials will help you get started. Version 8 comes with geo-location you can use when combining your models with Google Maps, and the ability to better create models based on photographs.

100. Inkscape

<http://www.inkscape.org>

Windows | Mac | Linux | Portable

One of the few free vector editor programs, Inkscape is like an open-source Adobe Illustrator. It uses the open Scalable Vector Graphics (SVG) format for files. Inkscape [Open Clip Art Library](#) will give you an idea of its capabilities.

101. Jing

<http://www.jingproject.com>

Windows | Mac

Jing will take a screen capture, or make a video of what you do on screen, and then lets you share the results in multiple ways, including instant messaging, e-mail, social networking and sharing sites, or a free account with Screencast.com with 2GB of storage.

102. Paint.NET

<http://www.getpaint.net>

Windows

You'll be hard pressed to find a better Photoshop clone than the fast, easy-to-master Paint.NET. It needs .NET installed to work, but when it's running, it offers everything the modest image editor would require.

- *Read PCMag's review of Paint.NET v 3.5.5.*

103. Pinta

<http://pinta-project.com>

Windows | Mac | Linux

If you know Paint.NET on Windows and wished there was a Mac equivalent, you'll be happy to know there is. Pinta is modeled on that very software, providing just-this-side-of-Photoshop excellence for no money. To run on .Net, you will need to install [Gtk# for Windows](#), and then you can run the provided .msi to install Pinta.

104. PosteRazor

<http://posterazor.sourceforge.net>

Windows | Mac | Linux

Create a poster—or even a billboard—with PosteRazor, which rasterizes small images into large formats you can print out in chunks and stitch together.

105. Windows Live Photo Gallery 2011

<http://download.live.com/photogallery>

Windows

Like Picasa, Live Photo Gallery can import photos, including those from a digital camera, help you organize and edit images, and then make slideshows, panoramas, or movies. It will even try to tag them with facial recognition and geo-tags. It's limited to Windows Vista and 7.

- *Read PCMag's review of Windows Live Photo Gallery 2011.*

Instant Messaging

106. AIM

<http://products.aim.com>

Windows | Mac | Web | Mobile

AOL's AIM network is the biggest and easiest instant-messaging platform to access from multiple places and services. With the actual software, you can do more than type at each other, you can text mobile phones, chat with Facebook friends, tweet on Twitter, and do audio and video chats with other AIM users.

- *Read PCMag's review of AIM 7.3.*

107. Digsby

<http://www.digsby.com>

Windows | Mac | Linux

The multi-protocol Digsby is back on top as our Editors' Choice for instant messaging, due to a clean, customizable interface (including an easy-to-hide buddy list), plus the usual extras we've come to expect: audio and video chat and integrated social networking. It even includes access to e-mail inboxes.

- *Read PCMag's review of Digsby (summer 2010).*

108. Miranda IM

<http://www.miranda-im.org>

Windows | Portable

The multi-protocol Miranda gets you into instant messaging fast. It's a small download that can run right from your USB drive. It supports plugs-ins to get on more than just the major networks, plus secures connections and saves your chats.

109. Pidgin

<http://www.pidgin.im>

Windows | Linux | Portable

The open-source, multi-protocol Pidgin works with IM networks big and small, with plug-ins for many others. If you like it and want it on the Mac, you should download the MacOS equivalent, [Adium](#).

110. Trillian Astra

<http://www.trillian.im>

Windows | Mac | Web | Mobile

Trillian Astra gets high marks as a multi-protocol tool, with social networking and e-mail integration. In other words, it's taking on Digsby head on. It also takes on sites like Meebo with its Web-based option. Few can beat the breadth of functions Trillian now offers. You can get even more with the \$15 Pro version.

- *Read PCMag's review of Trillian Astra.*

111. Windows Live Messenger 2011

<http://explore.live.com/windows-live-messenger?os=other>

Windows | Mobile

Perhaps eternally known as MSN Messenger, the new edition for Windows Vista/7 got an Honorable Mention as one of our best products of 2010 because of a new design with

tabbed chat windows, photo sharing, and even full-screen HD video calls. Facebook integration doesn't hurt either.

Media Managers

112. Apple iTunes

<http://www.apple.com/itunes/>

Windows | Mac

Love it or hate it, iTunes is the best known music and video manager going. It's also managed to stay our Editors' Choice because of its easy-to-use interface, huge store for buying music, videos, and apps, the ability to rent video, and well, there's Ping, which we expect someone will use someday.

- *Read PCMag's review of Apple iTunes 10.1.*

113. Clementine

<http://www.clementine-player.org>

Windows | Mac | Linux

Based on the Linux-only Amarok player, Clementine is a classic, multi-platform player. It supports multiple formats, plays Internet radio, and will copy music to any USB-based media player, even the iPhone or iPod.

114. CopyTrans

<http://www.copytrans.net>

Windows

CopyTrans can do more than just transfer music and video to your iPod or iPhone; it can actually transfer files *off* your i-Device to your computer. This is very handy, especially after a PC crash. The full suite of tools can also move your iTunes from one PC to another (even a Mac), and handle all photos on your iPod/iPhone as well.

115. Data Crow

<http://www.datacrow.net>

Windows | Mac | Linux

All you need is Java to run Data Crow, an "ultimate media cataloger" for music, videos, pictures, ebooks, and even software. It's a must for anyone with a gigantic library that needs some serious organization.

116. Songbird

<http://www.getsongbird.com>

Windows | Mac | Linux | Portable | Mobile

Acting as the media manager for non-Apple devices is just the beginning of what Songbird does. It's also a music player that can play many DRM files, even those bought on iTunes. In fact, anyone coming from iTunes will understand the interface instantly. It even has a music store.

117. WinAmp

<http://www.winamp.com>

Windows | Mobile

No longer just a Windows music player, WinAmp is a full-blown media manager and player for audio and video that is still fully customizable by the user, with add-ons and skins galore. Pair it with the mobile version for Android and it can wirelessly move music to phones; it works over USB with other players, including iPods.

• *Read PCMag's review of WinAmp 5.55.*

Networking

118. AnchorFree Hotspot Shield

<http://hotspotshield.com>

Windows | Mac

This handy software protects you at a Wi-Fi hotspot, so no one can see what you're surfing if they have a sniffer tool. The ad-supported Hotspot Shield VPN is also a great way to get connected to the U.S. when you're traveling. That can be important when you have to access sites that are limited to U.S. IP addresses.

119. Axence NetTools Pro

<http://www.axencesoftware.com/index.php?action=NTPro>

Windows

This full suite of free tools includes NetStat for a full display of all connections and ports, WinTools for info on Windows systems and what they're doing, and NetWatch for real-time monitoring of multiple host systems.

120. LAN Speed Test

<http://www.totusoft.com/lanspeed2.html>

Windows | Portable

If your Windows Vista or 7 system can see the other computers on your home network, then LAN Speed Test will check the connection speed.

121. LogMeIn Hamachi²

<https://secure.logmein.com/US/products/hamachi2/>

Windows

You can connect up to 16 client systems simultaneously with Hamachi's zero-configuration virtual private network (VPN), providing secure connections between systems.

122. NetSetMan

<http://www.netsetman.com>

Windows

Laptop and netbook users—especially those with Windows XP—rejoice! NetSetMan (Network Settings Manager) lets you create settings for connections at home, at work, or on the road and instantly among them.

123. SpiceWorks

<http://www.spiceworks.com>

Windows

Can't find a way to manage a small- to mid-sized network on the cheap? Try SpiceWorks. The company boasts that SpiceWorks: "Costs nothing. Never has and never will." It makes its money by showing you ads and connecting users to networking experts. Meanwhile, the software will make you feel like an expert with a network inventory and map of users that's unrivaled at this price.

- *Read PCMag's review of SpiceWorks 5.0.*

124. Tunngle Basic

<http://www.tunngle.net/#downloads>

Windows

Want to play a network-only game with someone over the Internet? Tunngle sets up the VPN tunnel you need from PC to PC (up to 32 "Tunnglers" can join), so your IP-only game can go online via the Tunngle service.

125. Wireshark

<http://www.wireshark.org>

Windows | Mac | Portable

You need a protocol analyzer and packet sniffer, whether you know it or not. With Wireshark in your arsenal, you capture data about your network that can tell you all about your network traffic.

- *Read PCMag's review of Wireshark 1.2.6.*

Office

126. Dia

http://dia-installer.de/index_en.html

Windows | Mac | Linux | Portable

Ready to make a diagram? Dia's flowcharty goodness is there to help you get organized, stat. Portableapps.com has a version you can run from a USB flash drive.

127. Evernote

<http://www.evernote.com>

Windows | Mac | Web | Mobile

If there's something you see on the Web that's worth noting, Evernote is there for you. It stores notes publicly or privately, with tags for easy finding. Then you can access notes online, on the desktop, or on your phone whenever you like.

128. FocusWriter

<http://gottcode.org/focuswriter/>

Windows | Mac | Linux

We've all seen those word processing tools and sites that black out the screen around the writing space, all the better to get you laser focused on your words. That's what FocusWriter does, but it also keeps around tools you need (like spell check and tabs). Essentially, it hides things when you write, but makes everything available when needed.

129. FreeOCR

<http://www.paperfile.net>

Windows

No OCR software is perfect, but sometimes it's absolutely necessary when you're dealing with reams of text. In that case, give this freebie a try to get the hard work done before you edit, whether the source is a scan, a PDF, or even a (very clean) digital photo.

130. Grindstone

<http://www.epiforge.com/Grindstone2/>

Windows

Grindstone combines a to-do list app with time management and tracking, so you can assign time limits to tasks and track the time you spend on tasks. It even checks to see if your time away from the computer counts as work on said task. When done, it'll generate a timesheet or invoice for your work.

131. Jarte

<http://www.jarte.com>

Windows | Portable

Jarte (pronounced jar-TAY) is a word processor for Windows that runs on the same engine as WordPad, but with a spiffy-looking tabbed interface.

132. LibreOffice

<http://www.libreoffice.org>

Windows | Mac | Linux

When cracks began to show in the OpenOffice.org group, LibreOffice was born, a new attempt at a vendor independent office suite. It includes a word processor, spreadsheet, presentations, drawing, database, and equation editor. It supports extensions, document templates, and imports from other file formats.

- *Read more about LibreOffice.*

133. Nocs

<http://code.google.com/p/nocs/>

Windows

If you like to edit in something fast and toolbar free, like NotePad, but want the convenience of storing your documents in the cloud, meet Nocs. It's a plain-text editor for Windows that syncs directly to Google Docs, using tabs so you can open multiple online docs at once. There's a 5-second autosave feature, so you never lose a change. It requires the full .NET 4.0 framework installed to run.

134. Notepad++

<http://notepad-plus.sourceforge.net/uk/site.htm>

Windows | Portable

Notepad++ is like a developer's tool, complete with color-coded text that's great for actual *code*, not to mention a tabbed interface, macros, and built in FTP support.

135. OpenOffice.org

<http://www.openoffice.org>

Windows | Mac | Linux | Portable

Despite the appearance of LibreOffice, it turns out that OO.o hasn't gone anywhere-yet. You can still get the suite (now technically run by Oracle) that includes a word processor, spreadsheet, presentations, drawing, and a database that all run on every desktop operating system, or via a USB flash drive on Windows.

• *Read more about OpenOffice.org 3.2.*

136. OrangeNote

<http://orangenote.littlesoftware.ca/>

Windows

More than just a database for your notes, OrangeNote goes out of its way to look good when displaying them on your desktop. It also keeps track of text sent to your clipboard, including whole documents.

137. WriteMonkey

<http://writemonkey.com>

Windows

Maybe the best distraction-free, full-screen, "zen" text editor you'll find for free, WriteMonkey has lots of nice bells for the serious writer. This includes an infobar you can customize to show document info, or just hit a key to get all the stats on your work. You can set a constant position for your work cursor, so you never hit the bottom of the page.

138. Wunderlist

<http://www.6wunderkinder.com/wunderlist/>

Windows | Mac | Mobile

Task lists make the world go round, or at the very least, they help you get things done. Wunderlist is for creating lists you can share with others, annotate, and synch with other computers and your iOS or Android phone. Oh, and it looks cool.

Operating Systems

139. Linux Mint

<http://www.linuxmint.com>

Version 10 (codenamed "Julia") of this distro—which claims to be the most widely used OS in homes behind Windows, Mac, and Ubuntu—has a number of desktop choices, an improved menu system, and is focused on making multimedia as easy as possible.

140. Jolicloud

<http://www.jolicloud.com>

An extra-lightweight version of Ubuntu for the netbook crowd, JoliCloud is meant to be fast and to go online, giving equal time to Web apps and desktop apps. You can get it to dual-boot with Windows, run by itself, or [test it out inside your Google Chrome browser](#).

• *Read more about JoliCloud.*

141. PC-BSD

<http://www.pcbsd.org>

An easy-to-install offshoot of FreeBSD, one of many Unix variants in the BSD family, PC-BSD wants to give the casual user a safe (read: malware free) place to do computing. It even offers graphical UI application installations (in other words, software install wizards just like in Windows). You can determine if it has the apps you'll need by looking at the list at [pbiDIR](#).

142. Ubuntu

<http://www.ubuntu.com>

Whether you pick the desktop or netbook edition of Ubuntu 10.10 ("Maverick Meerkat" to its friends), you'll find that the popular Linux-based OS is making great strides in its efforts to be a serious mainstream competitor. It's had a complete cosmetic overhaul from color scheme to fonts. Every user gets 2GB of storage on the Ubuntu One cloud service, multi-touch support, and, of course, all the apps you need.

- *Read PCMag's review of Ubuntu 10.10 Desktop Edition.*

PDF Readers

143. Adobe ReaderX

<http://www.adobe.com/products/reader/>

Windows | Mac | Linux | Mobile (Android)

Still the one most turn to for Adobe Acrobat files, Reader is a big program with a lot of extras (including links on how to make your own PDFs). It can run slow on lower-powered systems, but if you want the original from the creator of the Acrobat platform, this is it.

144. FoxIt Reader

<http://www.foxitsoftware.com/pdf/reader/>

Windows | Portable

FoxIt has long been a favorite PDF reading alternative. In addition to its "no bloat" claims, the software lets you annotate PDF files and convert PDF contents to text.

145. Nitro PDF Reader

<http://www.nitroreader.com>

Windows

Feel free to annotate the PDFs you're reading with Nitro PDF Reader. It sports an interface that would remind you of the ribbon in Microsoft Office. It can also extract images and text from some PDF files.

146. Nuance PDF Reader

<http://www.nuance.com/imaging/products/pdf-reader.asp>

Windows

Another PDF reader that aims to do a lot despite its diminutive size, Nuance lets you view a summary of comments in the file, Silverlight-based embedded media, and

multiple layers in graphics. It also provides easy conversion of PDF to formats used by Word and Excel.

147. PrimoPDF

<http://www.primopdf.com/index.aspx>

Windows

Nitro's PrimoPDF makes PDF files from any file you can print. It's that simple and fast. You don't even have to open the file in the original software, just drag and drop.

148. SlimPDF Reader

<http://www.investintech.com/resources/freetools/slimpdfreader/>

Windows

Like most products with "slim" in the name, SlimPDF Reader prides itself on being small, at 1.43MB (that's about 33 times smaller than Adobe ReaderX at 47MB). You may not get all the extras, but what you do get is a fast, clean PDF reading experience.

149. Sumatra PDF

<http://blog.kowalczyk.info/software/sumatrapdf/>

Windows

What the Sumatra PDF reader lacks in aesthetics—its interface is purposefully minimalist—it makes up for in fast rendering, even of graphics inside PDF files. New updates have added things like full-screen mode and better zoom performance. And Sumatra now handles text selection/copying just like Adobe Reader.

Printing

150. GreenPrint World

<http://www.printgreener.com>

Windows

The GreenPrint World utility for home users looks like a printer to your computer. Go into the utility and pick your actual printer, and it steps in to help you stop the printout of useless info or sets certain pages to monochrome in graphical preview, saving you as much as \$100 a year in waste. It'll even send the file to a PDF, so you don't have to print at all.

• *Read PCMag's review of GreenPrint World.*

151. PaperCut NG

http://www.papercut.com/products/free_software/

Windows | Mac | Linux

This print-server management software is free for a small office, with up to 5 users. You can limit the number of pages a user can print by giving them credit to spend when printing, or just monitor usage to stay on top of who's printing what and when.

152. PrinterShare

<http://www.printershare.com>

Windows | Mac | Mobile

With PrinterShare installed, everyone with the software installed—even on a phone—can print to your printer right over the Internet, and you can print to theirs. You just need to make sure you've got the PrinterShare ID for the printer in question.

153. Xerox Mobile Express Driver

<http://www.office.xerox.com/software-solutions/mobile-printer-driver/enus.html>

Windows

Rather than download a new printer driver when you connect to a new network, use Xerox's universal printer driver to print to any PostScript-capable device. It auto detects and adds devices, giving you one simple interface to use with every printer you encounter.

Process Monitors

154. Process Monitor

<http://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/sysinternals/bb896645.aspx>

Windows

The free Process Monitor from Microsoft's own Windows Sysinternals keeps track of all that's going on with Windows in real-time. Use the data later in your system troubleshooting.

- *Read PCMag's review of Process Monitor 2.8.*

155. Process Explorer

<http://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/sysinternals/bb896653.aspx>

Windows

Even Microsoft knows that the Task Manager isn't all powerful, so it offers Process Explorer to show active processes, even which DLL files are running in which directories. It provides an unparalleled amount of details about your system.

- *Read PCMag's review of Process Explorer 11.*

156. ProcessQuickLink

<http://www.processlibrary.com/quicklink/>

Windows

Uniblue's replacement for the Windows Task Manager checks what's running against its processlibrary.com database to tell you exactly what's going on with your PC.

Remote Access

157. LogMeIn Free

<https://secure.logmein.com/US/products/free/>

Windows | Mac

Next time someone across the country asks you for tech support, here's a solution: Take over their computer. As the name implies, you remotely log in and then take control of the other computer. Access requires an account with LogMeIn.

158. TeamViewer

<http://www.teamviewer.com/index.aspx>

Windows | Mac | Mobile | Portable

Forget all the annoying network settings, TeamViewer just works to give you remote access to and control of another PC or let you show your screens to someone else. Someone has to be on both ends, so you can get the access code generated by the software, but once you input it, seeing what's on the remote machine is a snap. Accessing a single system for non-commercial use is totally free.

159. TightVNC

<http://www.tightvnc.com>

Windows | Linux | Portable

The company's description says: "you can see the desktop of a remote machine and control it with your local mouse and keyboard." It's just like sitting in front of the other person's computer. The latest version, 2.0, is ready to work with Windows Vista and 7.

RSS Readers

160. FeedDemon

<http://www.feedException.com>

Windows

Most RSS reading takes place online, but you can still read your syndicated feeds fast in FeedDemon. Naturally, it syncs with your subscriptions on industry leader Google Reader and makes it easy to share posts or search them.

Search

161. Google Desktop

<http://desktop.google.com>

Windows | Mac | Linux

Searching the Web is fast and thorough using Google, and the company brings that same effectiveness to your hard drive with Google Desktop. A search online incorporates all your files in the results. Plus, it offers the ability to put Google Gadgets right on your computer desktop.

162. Copernic Desktop Search Home

<http://www.copernic.com>

Windows | Mobile

Practically the grandfather of this kind of search, Copernic looks not only at everything on your hard drive (network drives are only searched in the Pro version), but also the

contents of those files, even attachments to e-mails. myCopernic apps for smartphones extend the search, as do agent add-ons for the major Web browsers.

163. Everything

<http://www.voidtools.com>

Windows

This little multi-lingual software package indexes your PC and updates that index in real-time, to provide near instant search on the names of files and folders.

Security/Encryption

164. KeePass Password Safe

<http://keepass.info>

Windows | Mac | Linux | Portable

This software is a vault for your passwords. It uses high-end encryption to keep them safe from everyone but you. It will create some strong passwords for you, so access to sites and servers is even more secure, but you only need to know the master password to get access. Look for a KeePass browser extension to put it to best use online. You'll find the Mac/Linux versions at [KeePassX](#).

165. LastPass

<http://lastpass.com>

Windows | Mac | Linux | Mobile

With a 5-star rating, our security expert considers this an almost perfect product for managing your passwords for every phone and every browser, with just about every feature you could want (if you desire multi-factor authentication, you can upgrade to the equally awesome Pro version).

- *Read PCMag's review of LastPass 1.72.*

166. My Lockbox

<http://www.fspro.net/my-lockbox/>

Windows

This software will let you put a password on one single folder on your Windows system, while still allowing anti-virus apps to access the folder, so they stay safe and secure. A \$25 upgrade lets you password protect any number of folders.

167. TrueCrypt

<http://www.truecrypt.org>

Windows | Mac | Linux

With TrueCrypt, you can encrypt everything on a partition or drive (even your main C: drive) in real-time, or you can create a virtual disk you fill with data you want to protect.

Social Networking

168. Seismic Desktop

<http://www.seismic.com/products/desktop>

Windows | Mac

Why access just one social network on your desktop when a tool like Seesmic Desktop lets you access them all. With plug-ins, it supports over 50, including the big names: Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn. There are also unique integrations with services like Salesforce.com, Ning, Google Buzz, and many more.

169. F!acedeck

<http://www.telerik.com/products/facedeck.aspx>

Windows | Mac

Make sure you have Silverlight 4 installed, and then install F!acedeck, a graphically beautiful way to access all the good stuff about Facebook (even chat!) on the desktop, without the crap apps (no Farmville, hooray!).

170. Sobees Desktop

<http://sobees.com>

Windows | Web | Mobile

Sobees connects to Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, and MySpace, giving you side-by-side lists of status updates. There's a version for your Windows desktop or you can access it on the Sobees.com page. There are also apps for iPad and Android.

171. TweetDeck

<http://www.tweetdeck.com>

Windows | Mac | Linux | Mobile

TweetDeck runs on all the major desktop OSs, using the same popular, multi-column interface to show off Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, and MySpace updates. You can even access multiple Twitter accounts, track hot trending topics, and manage your Twitter lists. Sync your TweetDeck column setup across multiple PCs and even to mobile apps.

System Utilities

172. Autoruns for Windows

<http://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/sysinternals/bb963902.aspx>

Windows

You won't find a utility with more insight into what's auto-starting on your system than AutoRuns. Naturally, you can then make adjustments as to what should be running. It's a bit much for the newbie, but technophiles will rejoice at the sheer breadth of data displayed.

• *Read PCMag's review of Autoruns 9.*

173. Advanced SystemCare Free

<http://www.iobit.com/advancedwindowscareper.html>

Windows

With Advanced SystemCare, you're one-click away from making your computer work better and faster by cleaning up the crap inside your registry and elsewhere on your Windows system.

174. CCleaner

<http://www.piriform.com/ccleaner>

Windows

Windows frequently needs a good dusting, and CCleaner will take care of it, searching out all the files and registry entries you no longer need, whether left there by apps, browsers, or what have you.

175. Eraser

<http://www.heidi.ie/eraser>

Windows

Got files that need to be eradicated 100 percent? Eraser will make sure when you get rid of it, no utility can bring it back, by overwriting the space on the disk where the data once existed multiple times.

176. EULalyzer

<http://www.javacoolsoftware.com/eulalyzer.html>

Windows

End user license agreements, or EULAs, are seldom read. Those reams of text they say you should parse before clicking okay when you install software is half legalese, half gobbledygook, and sometimes scary. EULalyzer will look at the copy for you and check for "interesting words and phrases" that might need your attention. What you do next is up to you.

177. FreshUI

<http://www.freshdevices.com/freshui.html>

Windows

No matter what version of Windows you're running (going back to 95/ME), FreshUI provides a quick way to customize user interface settings, hardware settings, applications, and more. The "free" version requires you to register an e-mail to unlock the software.

178. Glary Utilities

<http://www.glaryutilities.com>

Windows | Portable

This set of utilities includes just about everything you'd want to help you keep Windows up to snuff. It cleans the registry and hard drives, uninstalls programs, manages startup programs, erases your online tracks, shreds files, kills duplicate files and empty folders, and includes a full process manager. You can run it all from a USB flash drive, too.

179. Granola

<http://grano.la/>

Windows

Windows and your CPU have a lot of power-saving capabilities that you may not be using to their utmost. Granola steps in to help, by activating the reduced voltage settings and other features. Then you can see just how much you save in electricity, which in turn helps you save the world.

180. ImgBurn

<http://www.imgburn.com>

Windows

IMG files, which contain the entire image of contents of a CD or DVD or hard drive, are becoming available more and more. While Windows 7 has the ability to write such images to a disk so you can get to the data, you can't beat the versatility of ImgBurn to not just write IMGs but create IMGs from discs or even files and folders.

181. Kiwi

<http://drinkprog.com/kiwi/>

Windows

Kiwi gives you control over processes and applications. It monitors programs for how long they take to launch, how long they run, how often, and more. You can use this information to decide when to turn them off or on, which Kiwi will also do automatically as you specify. You can create a set of rules from 93 preset elements that could make your computer software almost autonomous, yet you remain the master.

182. Recuva

<http://www.piriform.com/recuva>

Windows

We all delete the wrong file at times. And we all empty the Recycle Bin too soon sometimes. Recuva is there to help you recover those files, plus those lost in a crash, even on a memory card or USB storage device.

183. Solutio

www.solutio.com

Windows

Get a handle on what's happening at Windows boot time with Solutio. It counts down for you how long startup is taking and gives you a beautiful graphical interface for turning off extra programs you don't need to load at first, or at last delay them so your startup goes a little faster.

184. Speccy

<http://www.piriform.com/speccy>

Windows

When you need a quick detail about the internals of your Windows system—like exactly what version of Windows you have, the type of CPU, amount of memory, or just about anything else—turn to Speccy for your specs.

185. System Explorer

<http://systemexplorer.net/index.php>

Windows | Portable

You can use the multi-lingual System Explorer to look at what processes are currently running on your computer in far more detail than the Task Manager does. But it also will display what's running at startup, drivers, IE add-ons, and more—all of which you can manipulate to run as needed.

186. System Nucleus

<http://www.spencerberus.com/projects.aspx>

Windows | Portable

It's not just a system audit app. System Nucleus can do a backup, restore your registry, perform a mass application uninstall, stop multiple processes, analyze your disk drive space, update your device drivers, and more.

187. True System Security Tweaker

<http://www.coolstuff.ws/software/systweaker>

Windows

There's lots of utilities for tweaking hidden Windows settings, but True System Security Tweaker, as you'd expect, specializes in the security bits, making sure all aspects of your computing, from user profiles to menu items to passwords, are properly setup.

188. WinPatrol

<http://www.winpatrol.com/download.html>

Windows | Portable

This venerable Windows utility for helping take control of Windows is in its 19th version, now called the "cloud edition" because users can collaborate with others on what works and what doesn't in the software. Meanwhile, the software still monitors your system for malware and critical changes you may not have approved, and it lets you delay the start of programs launching to improve boot time.

Uninstallers

189. PC Decrapifier

<http://www.pcdecrapifier.com>

Windows

New PCs from big-name vendors come filled with crapware-software you don't need or want. PC Decrapifier gets rid of it. Run this (and SlimComputer) before you get started with any new PC to uninstall that junk and get a little closer to pristine operating condition.

190. Revo Uninstaller

<http://www.revouninstaller.com>

Windows

Uninstalling programs with their own uninstallers tends to leave things behind. Run Revo for programs you want to be rid of. It'll then go back and check for extras to delete, even bits left in the registry. It's worth the extra steps to get cleaned up.

191. SlimComputer Free

<http://slimcomputer.com>

Windows

Like PC Decrapifier, this program exists to turn new computers into the speed-demons they should be, eliminating the extra crud installed by the PC vendors. The data it uses is

crowd-sourced by other users, so the software can easily tell what promotions, toolbars, and other useless stuff you don't need.

Virtualization

192. Cameyo

<http://www.cameyo.com>

Windows | Portable

Cameyo takes a snapshot of your existing Windows system, looks at your installed software, and then lets you pick which programs you'd like to turn into a virtual package. The package can then be run on other systems that don't already have that same software installed, so any program you want becomes instantly portable.

193. Spoon

<http://www.spoon.net>

Windows

This plug-in turns your Web browser into application space. Spoon lets you run apps like OpenOffice, Paint.NET, Skype, VLC player, Stickies, FoxIt Reader, and many more, including many games, in a browser tab as if they are Web apps, rather than installed Windows apps. You could even run another browser, like Opera as your primary browser. It's a great way to try before you install.

194. VirtualBox

<http://www.virtualbox.org>

Windows | Mac | Linux

As long as the OS you want to try supports Intel x86 or AMD64/Intel64 virtualization, you can probably run it as a "guest operating system" on any host system with VirtualBox. The shared folders feature means both host OS and guest OS can access to the same files.

Video

195. Air Video

<http://www.inmethod.com/air-video/>

Windows | Mac

This is people who want videos stored on their PC to be viewed on their iPhone, iPod touch, or iPad. The software for Windows/Mac is actually server software. It even converts videos in non-supported formats to work with the handhelds on the fly.

196. Blender

<http://www.blender.org>

Windows | Mac | Linux | Portable

Even if you don't have the chops to animate Woody and Buzz, you can get started honing your skills with a tool like Blender. Whether you make a simple 3D model or an entire animated feature will only depend on your skill and time, since the software can handle both.

197. CamStudio

<http://www.camstudio.org>

Windows

If you ever needed to give a tutorial over and over again by showing what you're doing on a computer screen, you need to make a screencast. CamStudio will do that, creating an AVI or SWF video file of your actions, complete with your audio commentary, that you can then send or upload to share with others.

198. DVDStyler

<http://www.dvdstyler.de/>

Windows

Got some digital movies around that you want to share with someone who only understands technology as it attaches to a TV? DVDStyler will let you author disks in your DVD burner complete with interactive menus you design (or you can use the templates). Just drag and drop the video files and images for the background of the menus and you'll be authoring in no time.

199. Freemake Free Video Converter

http://www.freemake.com/free_video_converter/

Windows

Promising no limitations, Freemake offers this converter that will turn any of over 200 video file types into any other video file, making them suitable for YouTube, your iPhone, an Android device, or to burn to a DVD or Blu-ray disc. It will even take video direct from over 40 Web sites and convert them for you.

200. GOM Player / GOM Encoder

<http://www.gomlab.com/eng/>

Windows

GOMlab offers this duo of programs for free. The video player supports the full gamut of codecs, a patented way to play broken AVI files, and a screen capture option. The Encoder can convert just about any video the GOM Player can open.

201. Hamster Free Video Converter

<http://videoconverter.hamstersoft.com>

Windows

A clean interface doesn't even begin to describe this slick, little utility for converting videos, so you can watch them anywhere. Presets cover both the codecs and the devices you want to target. (Beware of the Bing tools in the installation if you want to keep your current settings, however.)

202. Handbrake

<http://handbrake.fr/>

Windows | Mac | Linux

Handbrake is an old hand at video conversion, and while it eschews some formats (it hates AVI containers), it's a perfect open-source, cross-platform freebie for converting videos that have to go on Apple products, even starting from a DVD.

203. Miro

<http://www.getmiro.com>

Windows | Mac | Linux

Version 3.5 is an open-source HD video player and podcast collector. It gathers new episodes of shows instantly and has a BitTorrent client and RSS reader built in. Miro pulls HD versions when available, even from sites like YouTube. Since it can download videos instead of streams, you can take your programs on the road when you lack Internet access.

204. Pencil

<http://www.les-stooges.org/pascal/pencil>

Windows | Mac | Linux

It hasn't been updated in a while, but Pencil remains available for the budding 2D animator out there to get started on flip-book cartooning projects, all from the comfort of the PC.

205. SMRecorder

<http://www.brothersoft.com/smrecorder-433677.html>

Windows

There are lots of ways to edit and upload video, but what about making one in the first place? This lightweight app will record video on your screen, audio you're playing, or take a video of what's happening on your screen. It's perfect for a screencast tutorial.

206. Splash Lite

<http://mirillis.com/en/products/splash.html>

Windows

Video players are plentiful, so if you're in the mix, it's important to stand out with at least one feature. Splash Lite doesn't support every codec and only runs on Windows, but where it excels is with good looks and features like an EcoMode to help battery life on laptops.

207. VLC media player

<http://www.videolan.org>

Windows | Mac | Linux | Portable

Why download codecs to get all those various videos to play when the VLC media player has just about every codec in the world built in? It plays almost everything, even DVDs and streaming media from a mic or webcam.

- *Read PCMag's review of VLC media player 1.0.5.*

208. Windows Live Movie Maker 2011

<http://download.live.com/moviemaker>

Windows

Our PCMag Editors' Choice for simple video editing, Live Movie Maker joins video clips and photos, or easily trims clips in a simple interface that only works with Windows Vista/7. It lacks the extras like a chroma key or picture-in-picture, but you probably won't

miss them if you embrace the product's inherent simplicity.

- *Read PCMag's review of Windows Live Movie Maker 2011.*

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