

PCMech's **Top Picks** For Free Software

Make your PC do almost anything
without paying a dime!



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7-Zip

File archiver. Great alternative to WinZIP. Supports all major compression formats.

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Audacity

Sound recording and editing. Perfect for podcasters. Has some nice, advanced features, too.

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AVG Anti-Virus Free Edition

Basic antivirus and antispyware protection for Windows available to download for free. Limited features, no support, for private and non-commercial use only.

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BitTorrent

From their website: "BitTorrent is a peer-assisted, digital content delivery platform that provides the fastest, most efficient means of distributing, discovering, and consuming large, high-quality files on the Web. Our mission is simple: to deliver the content that entertains and informs the digital world."

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CamStudio

Records screen activity from the Windows desktop into standard AVI movie files. It is an ideal tool for creating software demonstrations.

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Ccleaner

CCleaner is a freeware system optimization, privacy and cleaning tool.

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ClamWin

Open Source Anti-Virus. Very good at detecting viruses. Can be plugged into hMailServer for e-mail protection LIMITATION: Real Time scanning not implemented yet

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Cobian Backup

Full featured, automated backup software.

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Combined Community Codec Pack (CCCP)

Lets you play almost every major video format inside Windows Media Player (or many other video players). Also includes an ad-free alternative to Quicktime.

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Daemon Tools

Allows you to mount ISO files as disk images and use them as if they are in your optical drive.

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DAZ Studio 3D

Free, feature rich 3D figure posing and animation tool that enables users of any skill level to easily create stunning digital imagery.

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Dia

Dia is a program to draw structured diagrams.

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EaseUs Partition Manager

Hard disk partition manager. Resize and move partitions, create, delete, format, hide, unhide and much more.

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Eraser

Delete files securely off your hard drive utilizing DoD standards

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Evernote

Evernote allows you to easily capture information in any environment using whatever device or platform you find most convenient, and makes this information accessible and searchable at any time, from anywhere.

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FastStone Image Viewer

An image browser, converter and editor that supports all major graphic formats including BMP, JPEG, JPEG 2000, GIF, PNG, PCX, TIFF, WMF, ICO and TGA. It has a nice array of features such as image viewing, management, comparison, red-eye removal, emailing, resizing, cropping, color adjustments, musical slideshow and much more.

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Filezilla

Excellent FTP program.

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Firefox

You likely know about it and love it. But, I do, too. The best web browser out there.

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Flock

Another web browser based on Firefox, but with a lot of social media functionality included.

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Freemind

A free mind-mapping application. An innovative application for note taking and outlining. Takes time to get used to, but some people swear by it.

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GanttPV

Open source project management. Open source replacement for Microsoft Project.

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GIMP

Photo editing application that rivals Photoshop in features.

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Google Earth

The 3D map of the world that just gets better and better...and creepier. Total must-have.

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Handbrake

DVD to MPEG-4 ripper/converter.

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Inkscape

Vector graphics application. Can be a little complicated, but its pretty powerful.

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IrfanView

IrfanView is a very fast, small, compact and innovative FREEWARE (for non-commercial use) graphic viewer for Windows.

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ISO Recorder

Burn CD and DVD images, copy disks, and make images of existing data CDs and DVDs.

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JKDefrag

Disk defragmenter and optimizer for Windows 2000/2003/XP/Vista/2008/X64. Completely automatic and very easy to use, fast, low overhead, with several optimization strategies, and can handle floppies, USB disks, memory sticks, and anything else that looks like a disk to Windows.

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Juice

Want to listen to internet audio programs but can't when they are scheduled? This program lets you create your own custom online audio anytime, anywhere. Really.

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K9 Web Protection

Advanced internet filtering, designed to protect your kids from crap on the Internet.

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Keynote

Open Source note taking application, very good. It has been discontinued, but it is a great application.

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KeePass

KeePass is a program that securely stores and manages the abundance of passwords we all use on a daily basis.

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KompoZer

Easy to use, open source WYSIWYG html editor

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Launchy

Free windows and linux utility designed to help you forget about your start menu, the icons on your desktop, and even your file manager. Control your computer using keyboard shortcuts.

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MailWasher

Powerful spam blocker software to effectively stop email spam. Discover the safe way to stop unwanted e-mails before they get to your computer.

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Manycam

Use your webcam with multiple applications at the same time and add cool graphics to your webcam video window.

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Media Coder

Great tool for ripping CDs, DVDs, etc and converting between tons of video formats.

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Miro

Beautiful interface. Plays any video type (much more than windows media player). Subscribe to video RSS, download, and watch all in one. Torrent support. Search and download from YouTube and others.

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Mozilla Thunderbird

Fantastic email client and Outlook alternative. Powerful spam filtering, solid interface, and all the features you need.

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Nasa World Wind

Mapping tool similar to Google Earth for Windows. Must have the .NET Framework installed.

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ObjectDock

Put a Mac-style dock into Windows.

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Office Accounting Express 2007

A Microsoft product, this is their express accounting software and they're giving it away.

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OpenOffice.org

Big, full featured suite of tools for word processing and spreadsheets. Compatible with and a free replacement for Microsoft Word documents. Also supports OpenDocument Format.

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Opera

Opera is a fantastic web browser with many legs up on Firefox, just without all the plug-ins.

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nLite

Do custom Windows installations. Also known as slipstreaming.

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Notepad ++

Open Source programmer's notepad for Windows

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Paint.NET

Graphics editor with a very nice interface.

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PDFCreator

A virtual print driver that will allow you to print any document to PDF format. You can create PDFs without buying Adobe Acrobat.

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Picasa

The best photo album for Windows. Lets you share photos too.

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Pidgin

Connect to multiple IM accounts simultaneously in a single app, including: AOL IM, MSN, and Jabber.

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Process Explorer

Ever wondered which program has a particular file or directory open? Now you can find out. Process Explorer shows you information about which handles and DLLs processes have opened or loaded.

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Scribus

Desktop publishing application with a lot of powerful features.

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Skype

Free, voice-over IP service and application. For internet-based phone calls.

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Spybot Search & Destroy

One of the best anti-spyware utilities out there, and it happens to be a freebie.

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Trillian

A powerhouse of an IM client. Supports AOL IM, MSN, ICQ, and Yahoo as well as voice chats, file transfers and more.

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TweetDeck

A Twitter client based on Adobe AIR. Perfect for users of Twitter.

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Twirl

twhirl is a desktop client for the Twitter microblogging platform, powered by Adobe AIR.

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UltraVNC

Allows you to control a remote computer over the network or the Internet. Fast and secure.

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Ventrilo

Voice over (VOIP) group communications software. We use this on PCMech LIVE.

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VirtualBox

Free, open source way to create virtual machines on your computer.

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Virtual PC

A free Microsoft product designed to let you set up and run virtual machines on your computer. Great for running multiple operating systems simultaneously.

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VLC

Plays more video files than most players: QuickTime, AVI, DIVX, OGG, and more. Pretty good interface.

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Windows Live Writer

If you're a blogger, this is perhaps the best blogging client out there. Works with all the popular blogging platforms.

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WinMerge

WinMerge is an Open Source (GPL) visual text file differencing and merging tool for Windows. It is highly useful for determining what has changed between project versions, and then merging changes between versions.

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X-Chat 2

IRC client.

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Xplorer

A file management utility which is a lot better than Windows Explorer. There is also a paid, pro version.

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