FIVE POWERFUL PROGRAMS FOR EVERY REAL ESTATE APPRAISER

The right tools are critical to keeping an appraisal business up and running efficiently. Here are five programs that deliver significant functionality to an appraiser's daily practice. These programs can secure and shrink files, clean your OS to keep your system running efficiently, and save you from horrible mistakes when files are accidentally deleted. They can also manage password access to your OS and programs, and provide you with a sophisticated real-time backup of all of your important programs and data. Any one of these five programs are a problem solver on a multitude of levels, and together they help to fill your tool box with the five solutions that will help keep your computer up and running efficiently every day.

ZIP ARCHIVER

ZIP Archiver is a powerful and modern archival program that allows users to easily compress and open files from any archive. Users can use cloud technologies to conveniently create copies of important files, quickly send reports to their clients, or share data with colleagues.
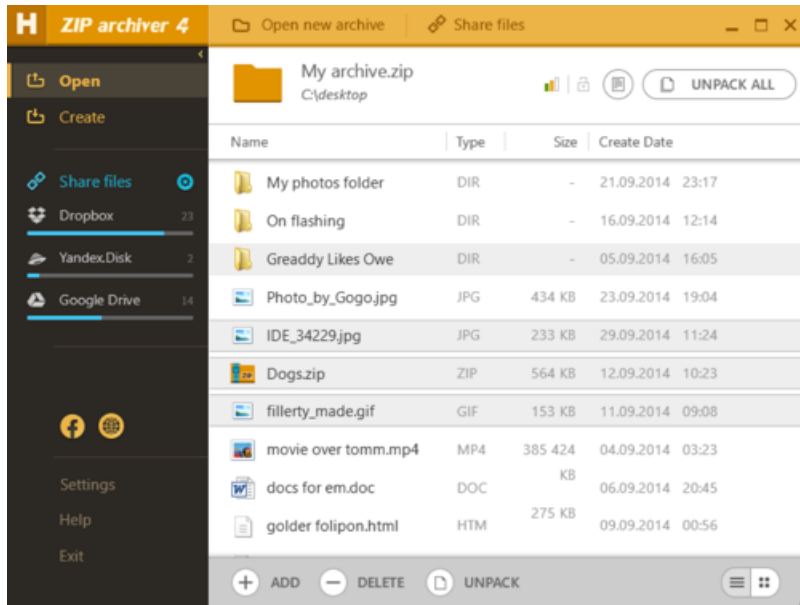
Figure 1: Zip Archiver

CCLEANER

CCleaner may be the most popular system maintenance tool ever.

Is your computer running slow? As it gets older it collects unused files and settings which take up hard drive space making it slower and slower. CCleaner cleans up these files and remedies this problem in seconds.

Advertisers and websites track your behavior online with cookies that are placed on your computer. CCleaner erases your browser search history and cookies so any Internet browsing you do stays confidential and your identity remains anonymous.

Over time your registry can become cluttered with errors and broken settings which can lead to system crashes. CCleaner's registry cleaner clears out this clutter to make your PC more stable.

Many programs run silently in the background when you start up your computer. CCleaner helps you get to work or play faster by letting you disable unneeded programs.
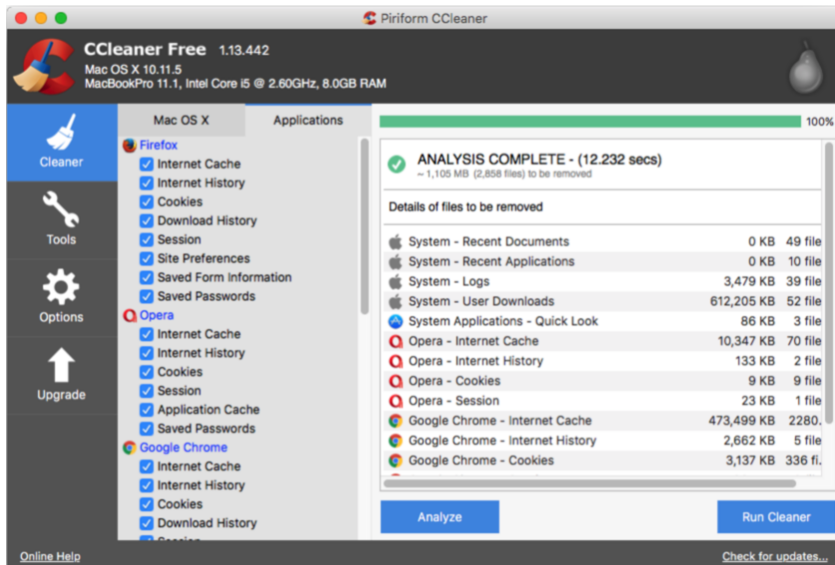
Figure 2: CCleaner

DISK DRILL

If you have ever accidentally deleted a file that you really needed, try [Disk Drill](#) to recover lost or deleted files.

When a file or folder is deleted on major file systems it's only the filename that gets affected by this action. In the most primitive case, it loses its first character, and the disk space where that file resided is marked as available for new data.

This ensures the fastest deletion possible. It also results in the disk sectors still storing the deleted data. This permits Disk Drill to recover the file.
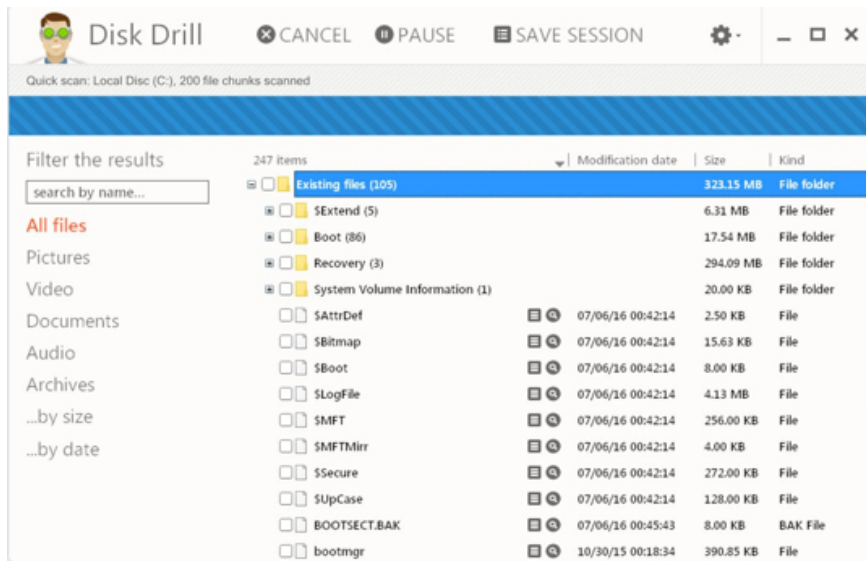
Figure 3: Disk Drill

DASHLANE

If you have ever thought about using a free password manager, try [Dashlane](). No more typing passwords and filling out tedious online forms. Automatically and easily save and later recall your passwords, personal information, and payment details. Dashlane will become your favorite everyday tool.
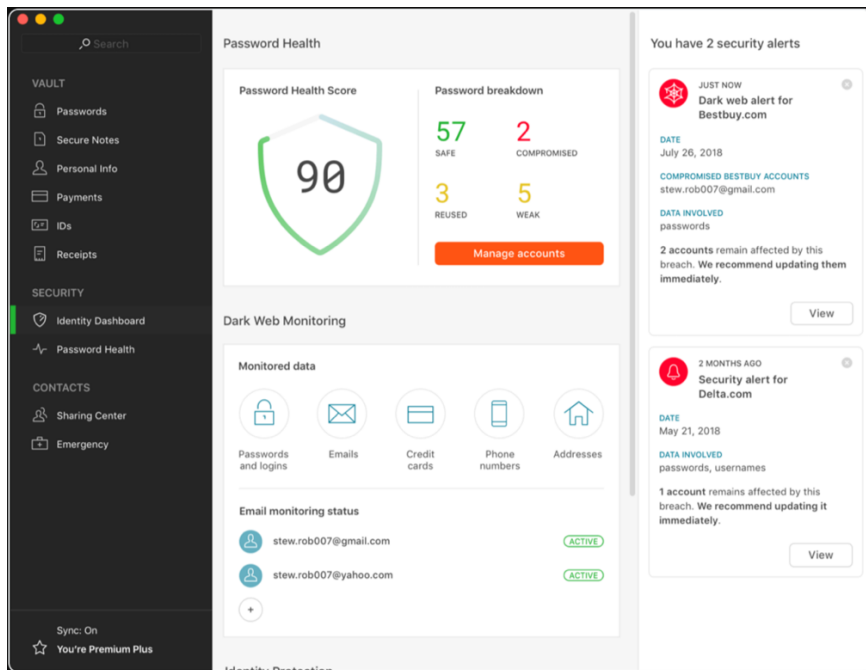
Figure 4: Dashlane

GOOGLE BACKUP AND SYNC

If you just want to backup your programs and data and not image your entire hard drive, you can use Google Backup and Sync to backup your files and folders to your Google Drive storage.

But Google Drive is much more than just a cloud-based storage and syncing service with a free storage plan. With Google Drive's apps you create, edit, store, and collaborate on documents. New utilities for the service lets consumers specify any folder on the computer for backup and let businesses save space by not duplicating files on local storage.

New paid plans under the Google One brand make storage upgrades more affordable than most of their competitors. Google Drive can help you store, back up, create, and even edit files, whether you work solo or as part of a team.

The Google Drive team continues to set the standard in collaborative software tools as part of their sync service that will keep every version of every file you save.
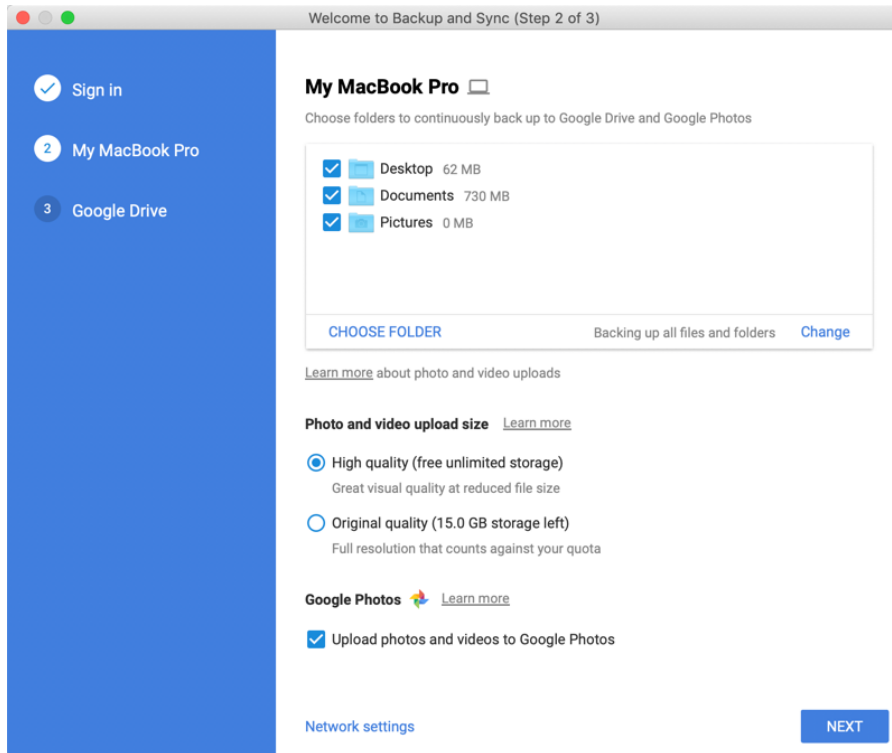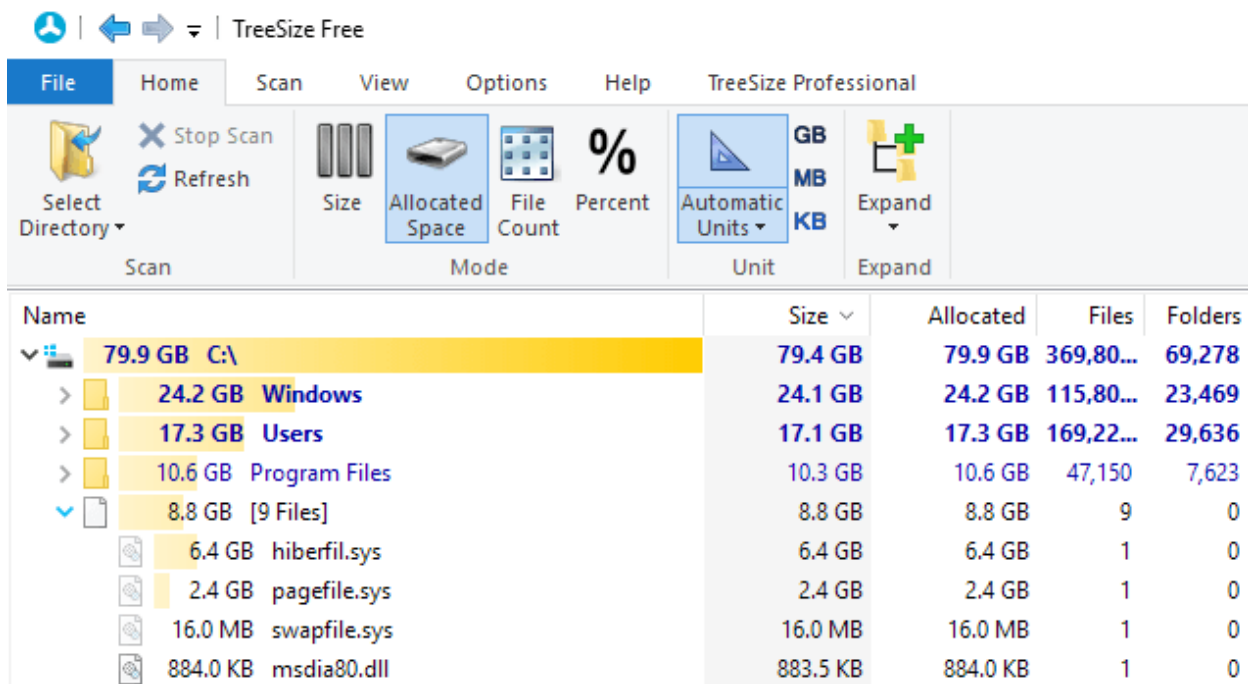
Figure 5: Google Backup and Sync

CONCLUSION

Collectively, these tools can save time, cure computer ills, undelete files, and enhance your productive capacity.

STOPPED HERE

21. Whether you know it or not, you probably have a bunch of duplicate files on your computer! It just happens. You can use Duplicate Cleaner to find and remove those duplicate files.

22. If you want to save more hard drive space, you should look into a program that will analyze hard disk space usage, like TreeSize. Other programs include Space Sniffer and WinDirStat.

23. Want to see every possible program or driver that loads when Windows starts? Check out Autoruns, which is a free tool from Microsoft.

24. Been looking for a good free photo editor lately? Check out GIMP, PhotoScape, Paint.NET, or Fotor! If you prefer an online photo editor, checkout Pixlr and BeFunky.

25. Looking for detailed information about the hardware on your computer. Look no further than HWiNFO. It can also analyze and monitor your system too.

26. If you're not running Windows 10 or don't like their default Mail app, you can check out Mozilla Thunderbird, which is still updated regularly.

27. Ever had to send a large file to someone, but your email client wouldn't allow more than 10 to 20 MBs? You can share large files (up to 2GB for free) with friends and family using a program called WeTransfer. Other programs include DropSendand pCloud.

28. The popular notes app we all know is Evernote, but there are other great options like SimpleNote, Google Keep, and Notebook.
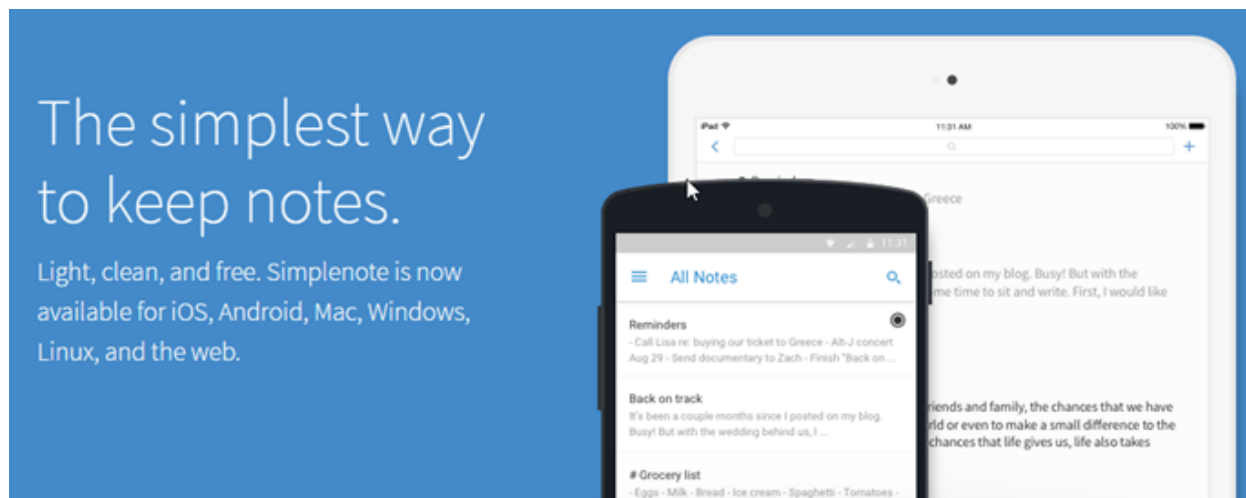
29. If you have an FTP server or a website, you will probably need a good FTP client program like WinSCP, the most popular these days. Other good options include FileZilla and CyberDuck.

30. If you're paranoid about your data, you might want to encrypt it with a program like VeraCrypt or AxCrypt.

31. Are you a web developer or coder? Looking for a good HTML editor? There are quite a few: CoffeeCup, Visual Studio Express, Atom, Sublime Text, etc.

32. Want to learn more about the WiFi networks around you? Download WiFi Inspector or Acrylic WiFi Analyzer.

33. Ever wanted to create a family tree? Legacy 9.0 is a free genealogy tool that you can use to keep track of family and relatives. Another good app is ScionPC.

34. If you constantly use the same programs over and over, it might be a good idea to download a quick program launcher. One of my favorites is Find and Run Robot.

35. OpenOffice is the most popular free Office suite, but there are other good ones like LibreOffice and WPS Office Free.

36. Ever wanted to automate a certain task in Windows? Maybe you want to have your computer turn off every day at 10pm? Or certain keystrokes you want to record and repeat over and over again? Whatever the case, AutoHotKey is an awesome program for automating many tasks in Windows.

37. I mentioned HWiNFO in #25, but if you want detailed info about your CPU and about the motherboard, then CPU-Z is a better option.

38. If you're planning to overclock your CPU, then you should download Prime95 to make sure your system is stable. If you're overclocking a GPU, check out MSI Afterburner.

39. Looking to secure your browsing traffic with a VPN? The best free VPN currently is TunnelBear, which restricts you to 500 MB of bandwidth.

40. In #14, I mentioned two professional and free movie-editing programs, but they are quite complex. If you're looking to create movies without such a learning curve, check out Shotcut, VSDC Free Video editor, and Avidemux.

41. Got kids? Need some parental control software? The best options are Qustodio and Kidlogger. Free versions are limited obviously. Also, read my post on the different ways to childproof a computer.

42. If you have a lot of music, you might want to consider a music management program like Media Monkey. Another good program is MusicBee.
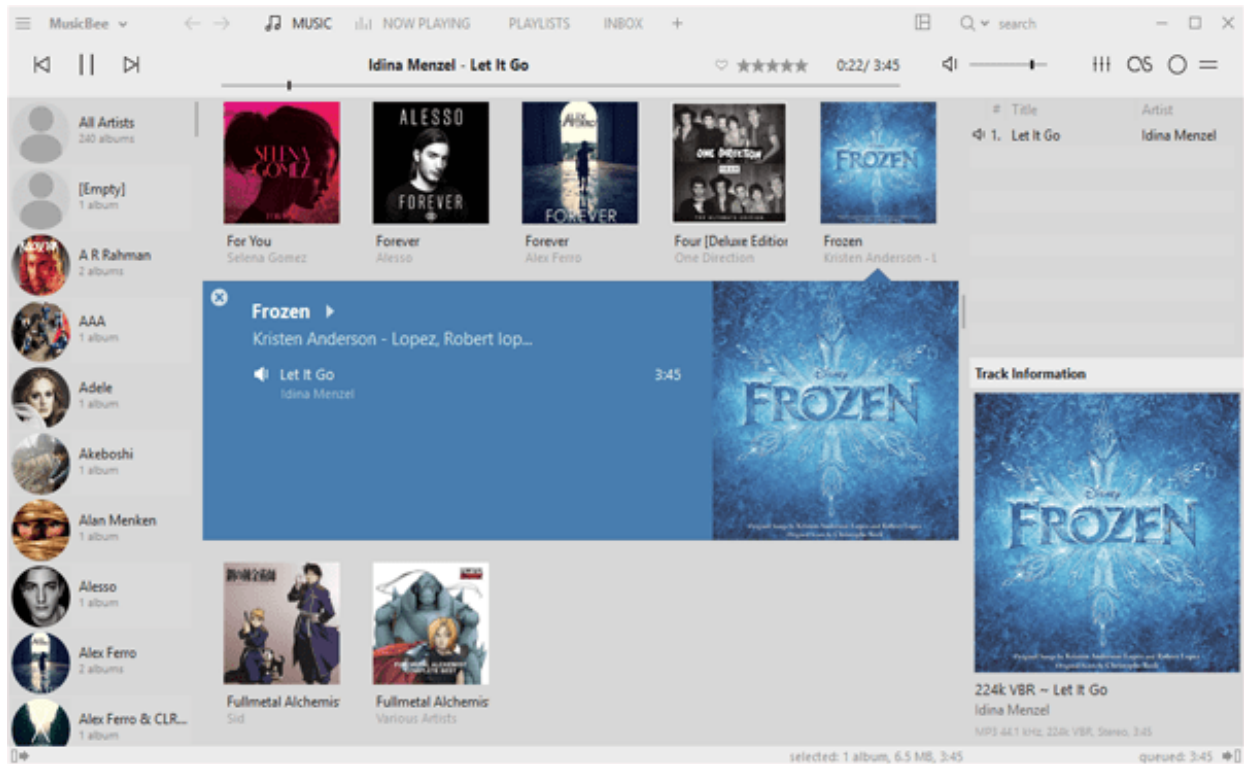
43. I talked about a VPN for secure browsing in #39, but you can also use a different browser like Tor to hide your identify.

44. If you've recently bought a new computer, you can use a program called PC Decrapifier to get rid of all those useless programs that can come bundled with the PC and slow everything down.

45. After you have a computer for a while, there are always going to be programs that you don't use anymore and that can be uninstalled. Revo Uninstaller will get rid of any program whether it wants to or not.

46. If you want to play some free games that aren't Solitaire, download Steam. They have a whole free games section.

47. If you have sensitive data on your computer that you want to permanently and securely delete from your hard drive, I would suggest using a program called dBan.

48. Do a lot of reading? A great app for reading in Windows is the Kindle app. It will also sync down to your phone or tablet too.

49. Love using Instagram? Want to download a photo, video or story from Instagram? Check out 4K Stogram.
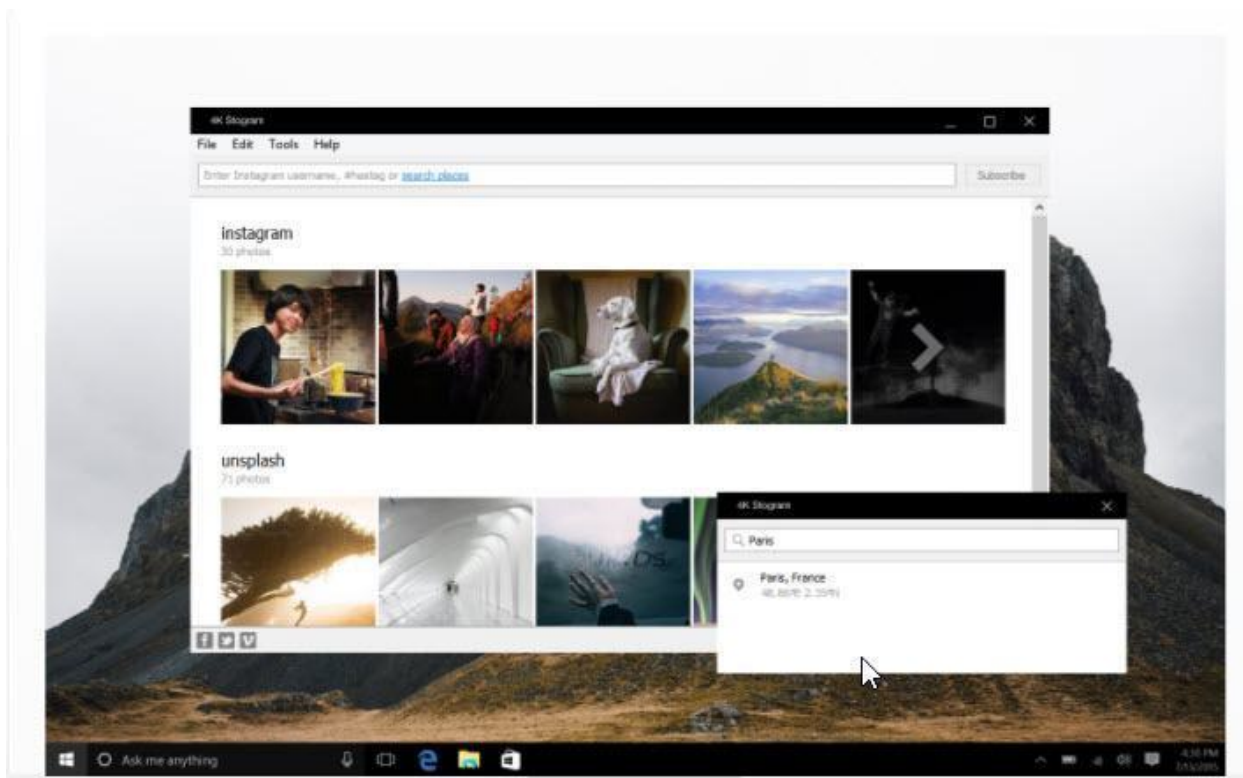
50. Looking for good screen capture software? A really good one is Screenshot Captor. Of course, Windows has a lot of built-in ways to capture screenshots too.

51. We've all heard of Skype and WhatsApp, but what about Viber? It's another tool you can use to communicate with family and friends worldwide.

52. Ever wanted your computer to speak out what you have written? It's called text-to-speech and there are a couple of good programs that do it: Balabolka, NaturalReader, and Panopreter.

53. Do you have a lot of programs that load when Windows starts? Does it take several minutes for your computer to become useable? If so, check out Startup Delayer, a program that delays the startup of programs so that your computer loads faster.

54. Do you need to create a presentation, but don't have PowerPoint? In addition to the Office suites we mentioned in #35, you can also use Canva and Prezi.

55. Follow a lot of blogs online and still miss Google Reader? RSSOwl is a good alternative.
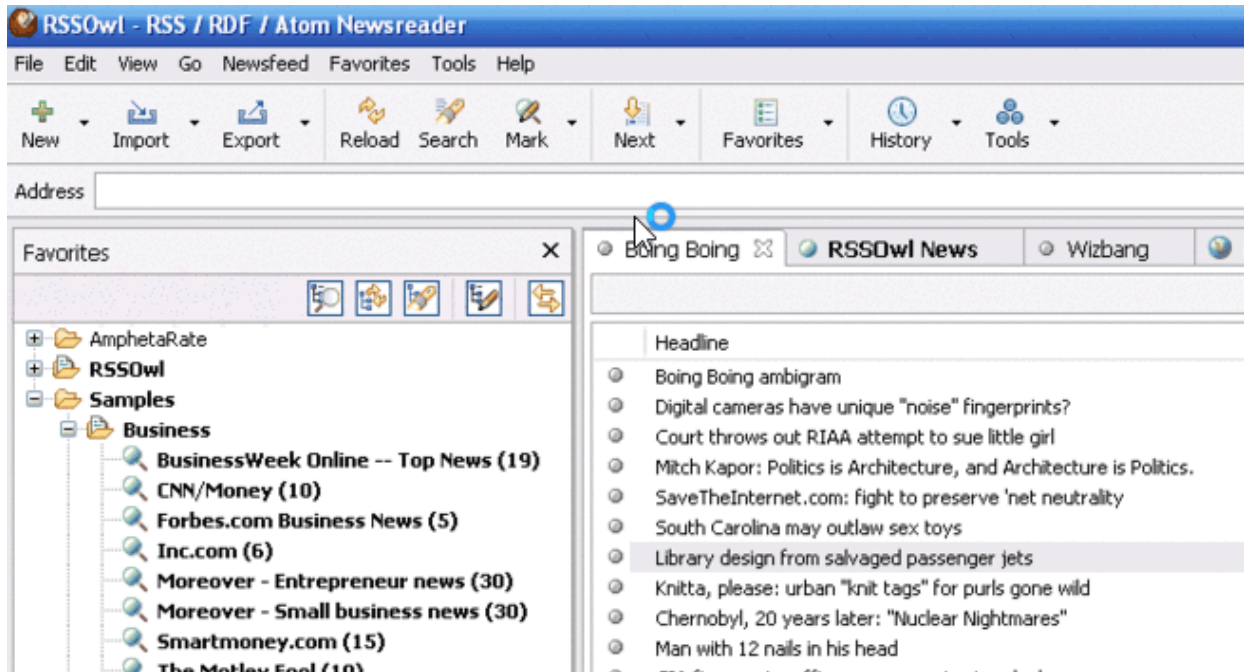
56. You've all probably heard of TeamViewer for remotely sharing your desktop, but you can also use Join.me.

57. Are you someone who prefers a supercharged Explorer interface? If so, check out Total Commander, which has been around for decades and works with Windows 10.

58. If you think you might have bad memory installed in your computer, you can check for bad memory using memtest86.

59. Want to record your screen and live stream it too? OBS Studio is a free app that does just that. TinyTake is another decent one, though the free version is limited.

60. Are you a professional photographer that needs tools like Lightroom, but don't want to pay for a subscription? Darktable is an open-source photography workflow application.

61. Speaking of Adobe, are there any good Adobe Illustrator alternatives? Yes! One good one for working with vector graphics is Inkscape. Another good one is Vectr.

62. Are you someone who needs to write something, but gets distracted easily? Check out FocusWriter and write without distractions.

63. One of the worst things that can happen to your computer is for it to become infected with Spyware. HijackThis is an awesome program that you can use to find and remove spyware. However, it's no longer active. Another good option is AdwCleaner.

64. On the topic of spyware, there are several other freeware programs like SUPERAntiSpyware, adaware, and SpyBot.

65. In addition to spyware and malware, there are also separate tools you can use to find rootkits like TDSSKiller, Sophos Rootkit scanner and Malwarebytes Anti-Rootkit.

66. Finally, if you're not able to detect a virus while in Windows, a good idea is to run an offline virus scan. One good option is Windows Defender Offline.

67. If you ever need a free CD/DVD/Blu-ray disc burning program, check out CDBurnerXP. It also has a portable version you can run off your USB stick. Another good one is AVS Free Disc Creator.

68. If you ever need to burn an ISO image to a CD or DVD, then you should use a free program like ImgBurn.

69. Are you a true nerd and still use IRC? If so, HexChat is an excellent IRC client.
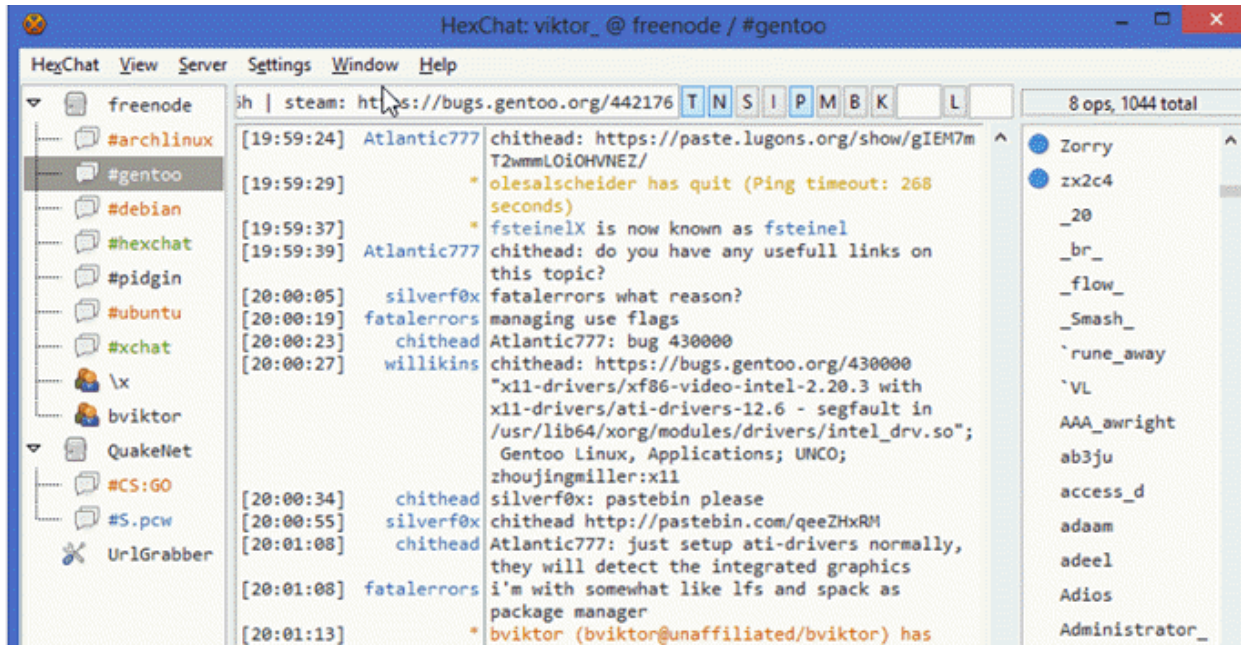
70. Ever run into the problem where you are trying to delete a file in Windows and it says that the file is in use and cannot be deleted? You can use Unlocker to delete any file that is locked by a process.
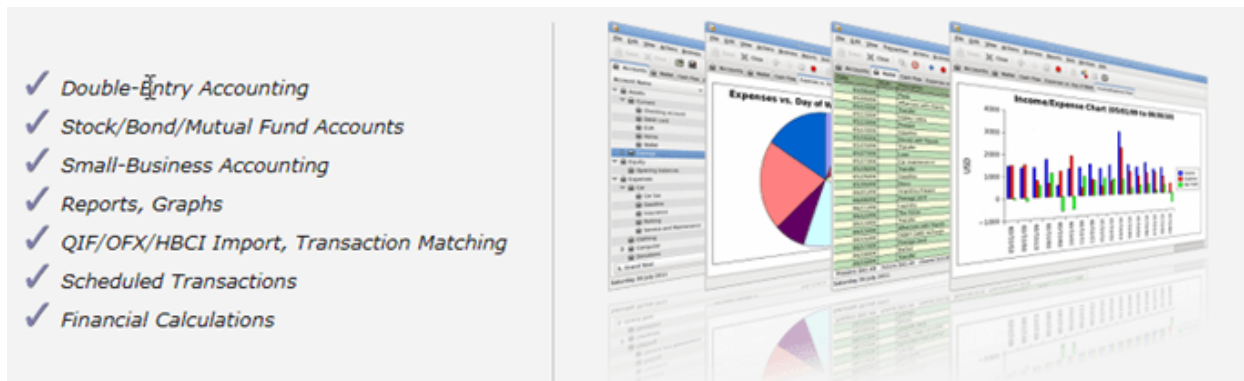
71. Are you always thinking about stuff? Then you should probably use some free mind-mapping software. Wikipedia also has a big list of mind-mapping software.

72. Need to manage a small project, but need some project management software? Check out GnattProject and Taiga.io.

73. If you want to play around with virtual machines, download the free and excellent VirtualBox from Oracle. It's the safest way to browse and test new software.

74. In #19 and #20, I talked about software to backup your computer, but forgot to mention DriveImage XML, a good program you can use to create an image of your hard drive. Other good disk imaging tools include MacriumReflect and Clonezilla.

75. Need some accounting & finance software, but don't trust the online tools like Mint and Quickbooks? GNUCash is free accounting and finance software.

✓ Double-Entry Accounting
✓ Stock/Bond/Mutual Fund Accounts
✓ Small-Business Accounting
✓ Reports, Graphs
✓ QIF/OFX/HBCI Import, Transaction Matching
✓ Scheduled Transactions
✓ Financial Calculations

76. Ever head of Blender? It's a pretty amazing program and it's free. It lets you create 3D worlds, 3D animations and 3D games. Check it out.

77. If Blender is too complex for you, another great option for sketching in 3D is SketchUp.

78. While we're on the topic, FreeCAD is open-source parametric 3D CAD modeler.

79. For space lovers, I always recommend Stellarium, which is basically a planetarium for your computer.

80. Looking for a really good partition manager? Check out GParted, probably the best not-heard-of partition manager out there. Other good options include MiniTool Partition Wizard and EaseUs Partition Master Free.

81. Looking for a file on your computer? Default Windows search sucks? Well, why don't you try out Everything, the best free Windows file search tool.
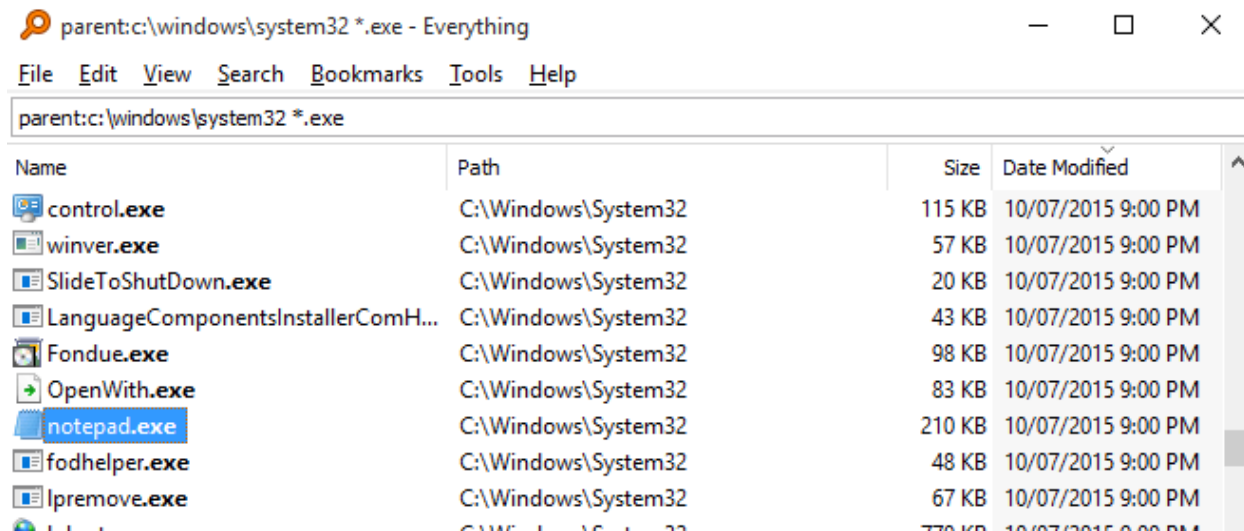
82. Wish your clipboard could store more than one item at a time? Well you should check out ClipX, ArsClip and Ditto clipboard, three cool [clipboard manager programs](#).

83. [DropIt](#) is a nifty little Windows program that lets you "drop" files onto a folder, which will then process the file according to your settings.

84. Remote desktop is great for Windows computers, but for other platforms you'll need something like [TightVNC](#) or [UltraVNC](#).

85. Got a spare computer with some extra storage on it? You can turn it into a NAS device using a program called [FreeNAS](#).

86. Since we're talking about only Windows freeware programs, you might be interested in [Disk2VHD](#), a program from Microsoft that will let you convert your current PC into a virtual machine that you can then load into Hyper-V.

87. Want to learn a new language? The best program for Windows in my view is [Duolingo](#).

88. Ever had to split a large file into a couple of pieces? If so, check out [GSplit](#), a nifty utility for splitting and re-joining files.

89. Been in a situation where you needed to compare two files and see the differences? [WinMerge](#) is a cool program that will let you compare and merge two files. It hasn't been updated since 2013, but a new version should be coming this year.
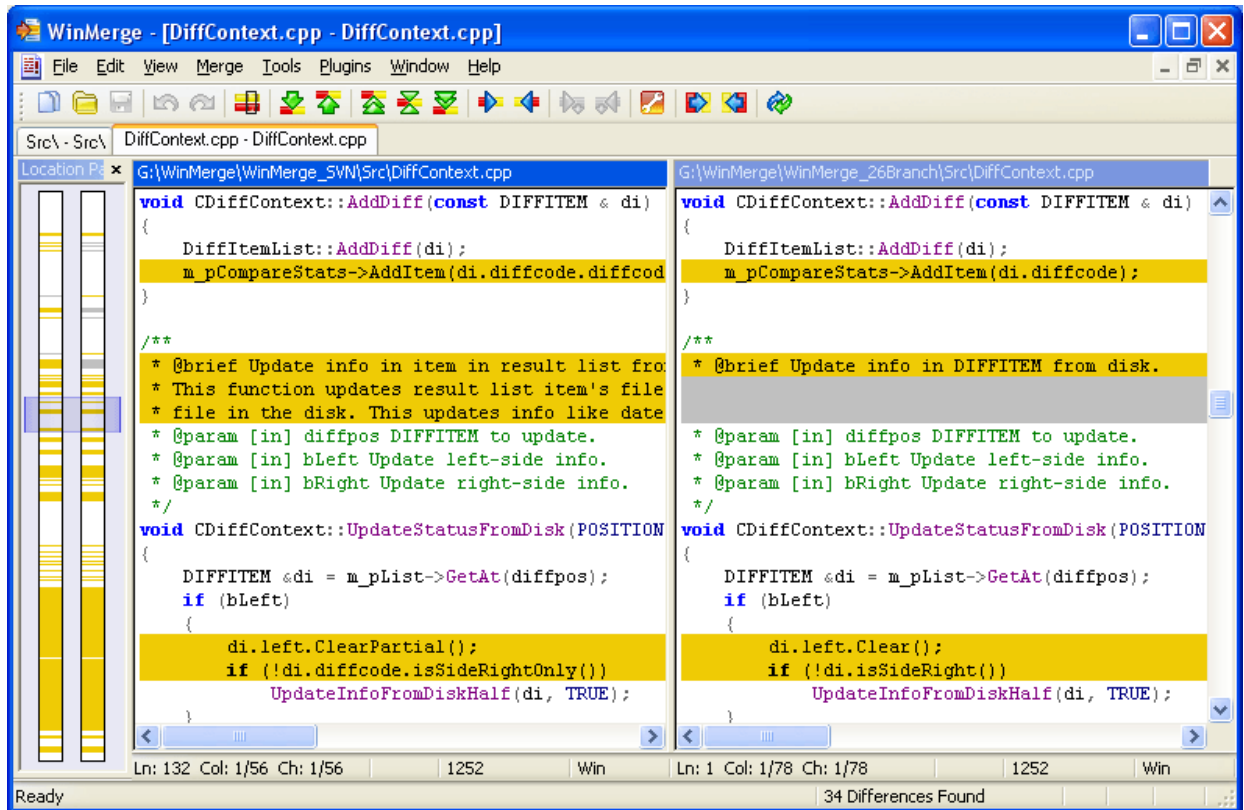
90. Need to send ultra-private and secure messages from Windows? Your best option is [Telegram Messenger](#).

91. Or what about merging multiple PDF files together? If so, check out [PDFtk](#), a toolkit that lets you merge, split, and repair PDF files.

92. For the network geeks out there, you have to try [Spiceworks](#) at home to really monitor what's happening on the network. For the really tech-savvy folks, get [Wireshark](#).

93. Want to print something at your parents' house from your house halfway across the country? Check out [PrinterShare](#).

94. Worried that the data you have saved in the Cloud with Google, Microsoft, etc. can be hacked? Encrypt it all with [Boxcryptor](#).

95. Ever needed to figure out the RGB value or hexadecimal value of a color that is on your computer screen? [ColorPic](#) is a nice utility that lets you determine the hexadecimal RGB color for anything on your screen.

96. If you have a lot of MP3 files, you probably need to edit the tags and metadata so that everything shows up properly in iTunes or your music manager app. You can use MP3tag or TagScanner to edit MP3 tags.

97. If you have more than one monitor, you can use a program like Dual Monitor Tools to customize each monitor to your liking.

98. Wish you could use Find My iPhone with all your other non-Apple devices? Prey might just be the answer.

99. One of the best ways to keep your computer secure is to make sure all the software is updated. SUMo does this for you. Other good options are FileHippo App Manager and Personal Software Inspector.