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Engines

Open Source

Below are links to the most popular Open Source resources.

<http://sourceforge.net/>
<http://www.osalt.com/>
<http://opensourcewindows.org/>
<http://opensourcemac.org/>

Other License Software

Below are links to other software that is not Open Source.

<http://alternativeto.net/>
<http://www.freealternativesoftware.com/>

Alternative Software

Alternative software can worry people due to being hard to find, install or get support.

These worries are good to have but alternative software from Open Source providers and other competitors to the main stream companies have come on so much so that anyone can now have access to these across numerous platforms.

The first thing to look at when looking at alternative software is how well it is supported, this could be via commercial support which is paid or by community groups of tech users or developers. Once you are happy that you can get support for the product you then need to look at licensing to see if the product is right for you; whether that be for the office or personal use.

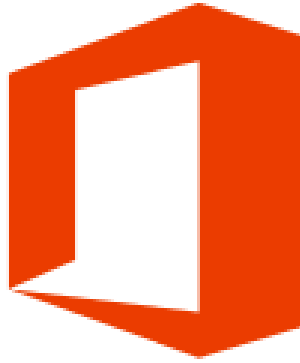
With licensing you will normally be looking at either an Open Source license like GPL which normally allows you to use the product freely provided you do not sell it to more main stream style of licenses where you could be looking at costs per machine(s) or user(s).

When looking at alternative software you find that not all operating systems / platforms are supported so making sure the software is available on all the platforms that you use might also be another headache you have not most of the good projects and alternatives do support all major platforms.

Whether your requirement is for business or pleasure you will find a massive amount of software available across the internet. To the side of the page are some very useful links of places for you to start your search for software to meet your requirements.



Office Products



Over the years Microsoft have dominated the scene of office suites with Microsoft Office and their Word and Excel formats being the defacto standard.

But as time has moved on Open Source alternatives have now included support for the Microsoft files types like .doc and .xls.

As part of supporting Microsoft formats these suites also support their own formats along with the open formats specified for document exporting and transferring giving you complete flexibility.



LibreOffice

LibreOffice is a comprehensive, professional-quality productivity suite that you can download and install for free, with no fear of copyright infringement. There is a large base of satisfied LibreOffice users worldwide, and it is available in more than 30 languages and for all major operating systems, including Microsoft Windows, Mac OS X and GNU/Linux.

Features include

Writer is the word processor inside LibreOffice. Use it for everything, from dashing off a quick letter to producing an entire book with tables of contents, embedded illustrations, bibliographies and diagrams. The while-you-type auto-completion, auto-formatting and automatic spelling checking make difficult tasks easy (but are easy to disable if you prefer).

Writer is powerful enough to tackle desktop publishing tasks such as creating multi-column newsletters and brochures. The only limit is your imagination.

Calc tames your numbers and helps with difficult decisions when you're weighing the alternatives. Analyze your data with Calc and then use it to present your final output. Charts and analysis tools help bring transparency to your conclusions. A fully-integrated help system makes easier work of entering complex formulas. Add data from external databases such as SQL or Oracle, then sort and filter them to produce statistical analyses. Use the graphing functions to display large number of 2D and 3D graphics from 13 categories, including line, area, bar, pie, X-Y, and net.

Impress is the fastest and easiest way to create effective multimedia presentations. Stunning animation and sensational special effects help you convince your audience. Create presentations that look even more professional than the standard presentations you commonly see at work.

Draw lets you build diagrams and sketches from scratch. A picture is worth a thousand words, so why not try something simple with box and line diagrams? Or else go further and easily build dynamic 3D illustrations and special effects. It's as simple or as powerful as you want it to be.

Base is the database front-end of the LibreOffice suite. With Base, you can seamlessly integrate your existing database structures into the other components of LibreOffice, or create an interface to use and administer your data as a stand-alone application. You can use imported and linked tables and queries from MySQL, PostgreSQL or Microsoft Access and many other data sources, or design your own with Base, to build powerful front-ends with sophisticated forms, reports and views.

Math is a simple equation editor that lets you lay-out and display your mathematical, chemical, electrical or scientific equations quickly in standard written notation. Even the most-complex calculations can be understandable when displayed correctly.

LibreOffice also comes configured with a PDF file creator, meaning you can distribute documents that you're sure can be opened and read by users of almost any computing device or operating system.

Office Suites

LibreOffice

Visit the website for more information and downloads
<http://www.libreoffice.org>

OpenOffice

Good alternative to LibreOffice is OpenOffice by Apache. This suite is as complete as LibreOffice with versions of each MS Office application.
<http://www.openoffice.org>

Office Applications

Scribus

Scribus is an Open Source program that brings professional page layout to Linux, BSD UNIX, Solaris, OpenIndiana, GNU/Hurd, Mac OS X, OS/2 Warp 4, eComStation, Haiku and Windows desktops with a combination of press-ready output and new approaches to page design.
<http://www.scribus.net>

GanttProject

GanttProject is a cross-platform desktop tool for project scheduling and management. It runs on Windows, Linux and MacOSX, it is free and its code is open source.
<http://www.granttproject.biz>



Graphic Products



If you don't need the power of GIMP there are other alternatives like Paint.NET.

Paint.NET is free image and photo editing software for PCs that run Windows. Its features an intuitive and innovative user interface with support for layers, unlimited undo, special effects, and a wide variety of useful and powerful tools. An active and growing online community provides friendly help, tutorials, and plugins.

If you don't use the Windows platform the clone of Paint.NET called Pinta.

Pinta is a free, open source drawing/editing program modeled after Paint.NET. Its goal is to provide users with a simple yet powerful way to draw and manipulate images on Linux, Mac, and Windows.

The official websites for these two products are: -

<http://www.getpaint.net/> (Paint.NET)

<http://pinta-project.com/> (Pinta)



The need to edit pictures, even if it is just to resize them for a document you are writing so that the document is a reasonable size for distribution is becoming more and more a necessity.

Most operating systems come with a basic drawing / painting application, but these are often very basic and don't provide a simple and quick way of doing things.

In the commercial world image manipulation software can cost lots of money, and generally needs lots of training to use correctly to get the most out of it.

One of these popular products is Adobe Photoshop which is a feature rich product, this product is almost the standard skill set requirement for graphic designers in the work place.

If you don't have the money and need the power of Photoshop there is an alternative for you which is available for most platforms called GIMP, GIMP stands for GNU Image Manipulation Program and can be downloaded from <http://www.gimp.org> for free.

GIMP is extremely well supported with hundreds of tutorials, it even has its own magazine.

Other Image Apps

CinePaint

Started as a fork of the Gimp project, the goal is to create a more professional graphical editing application aimed at the movie industry. One of the major differences from Gimp is that CinePaint support up to 32-bit colors. And in order to get 32-bit images into CinePaint it supports a number of professional image formats such as: Cineon, DPX and OpenEXR.

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

Gimpshop

If you feel at home in Photoshop, but need an open source alternative - Gimpshop is the way to go. Gimpshop is a hack made on top of the original Gimp project which changes all menus, dialogs, etc., in order to make them look as much as their counterparts in Photoshop.

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

Web Browsers



A web browser (commonly referred to as a browser) is a software application for retrieving, presenting and traversing information resources on the World Wide Web. An information resource is identified by a Uniform Resource Identifier (URI/URL) and may be a web page, image, video or other piece of content. Hyperlinks present in resources enable users easily to navigate their browsers to related resources.



Although browsers are primarily intended to use the World Wide Web, they can also be used to access information provided by web servers in private networks or files in file systems.

The major web browsers are Google Chrome, Mozilla Firefox, Internet Explorer, Opera, and Safari



Mozilla Firefox

Mozilla Firefox is a free and open source web browser developed for Windows, OS X, and Linux, with a mobile version for Android, by Mozilla Foundation and its subsidiary, the Mozilla Corporation. Firefox uses the Gecko layout engine to render web pages, which implements current and anticipated web standards.

Internet Explorer

Internet Explorer (formerly Microsoft Internet Explorer and Windows Internet Explorer, commonly abbreviated IE or MSIE) is a series of graphical web browsers developed by Microsoft and included as part of the Microsoft Windows line of operating systems, starting in 1995.

Google Chrome

Google Chrome is a freeware web browser developed by Google. It used the WebKit layout engine until version 27 and, with the exception of its iOS releases, from version 28 and beyond uses the WebKit fork Blink.

Opera

Opera is a web browser developed by Opera Software. The latest versions of Opera use the Blink layout engine. Earlier versions used Opera Software's proprietary Presto layout engine and had additional internet suite features such as sending and receiving e-mail messages, managing contacts, chatting on IRC, downloading files via BitTorrent, and reading web feeds.

Apple Safari

Safari is a web browser developed by Apple Inc. and included with the Mac OS X and iOS operating systems. First released as a public beta on January 7, 2003 on the company's OS X operating system, it became Apple's default browser beginning with Mac OS X v10.3 "Panther".

Operating Systems

Over the years there has been a huge spotlight on two of the most popular operating systems, but most people don't really know what an operating system is.

The description provided on Wikipedia is "An operating system (OS) is a collection of software that manages computer hardware resources and provides common services for computer programs."

Now that we know that an operating system is a platform that allows you to interact with your hardware and software we shall look at the two most well know operating systems which are Microsoft Windows & Apple Mac OS.

Both operating systems run on similar hardware & have their merits; but Apple's is currently closed to hardware provided by them only where Microsoft is open to different manufactures.

While these two commercial operating systems fight each other Open Source operating system called Linux has really come into its own for desktop computing.

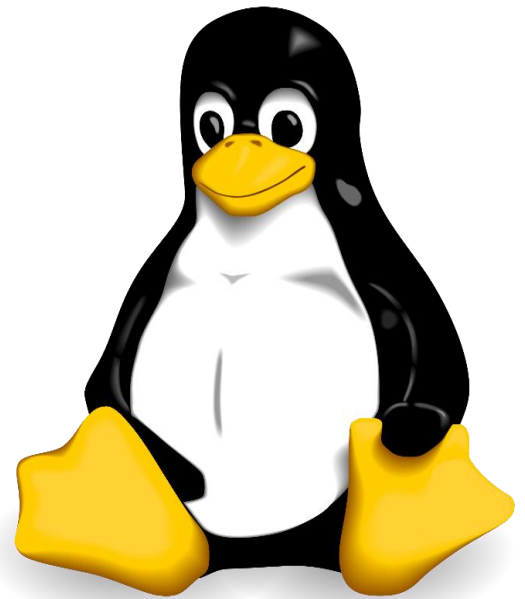
What is Linux?

Linux is a Unix-like computer operating system assembled under the model of free and open source software development and distribution. The defining component of Linux is the Linux kernel, an operating system kernel first released on 5th October 1991, by Linus Torvalds. Because it considers Linux to be a variant of the GNU operating system, initiated in 1983 by Richard Stallman, the Free Software Foundation prefers the name GNU/Linux when referring to the operating system as a whole.

How do I get Linux?

Unfortunately this is a difficult question to answer as Linux comes in many different flavors called a distribution.

A Linux distribution (often called distro for short) is a member of the family of Unix-like operating systems built on top of the Linux kernel. Such distributions are operating systems including a large collection of software applications such as word processors, spreadsheets, media players, and database applications. These operating systems consist of the Linux kernel and, usually, a set of libraries and utilities from the GNU Project, with graphics support from the



Which Distro?

This is also a very difficult question to answer has each distro has its own merits, some release updates quicker than others, where others have commercial backing & support etc...

Something that that we can point you in the direction of is the current most popular and intuitive flavors of Linux which come from the Debian branch: -

- Ubuntu
- Linux Mint

Linux Mint is now the 4th most widely used home operating system behind Microsoft Windows, Apple Mac OS and Canonical's Ubuntu.

ubuntu

Linux Mint
from freedom came elegance

Do you know you might be using Linux?

Google Android

Android is a Linux-based operating system designed primarily for touchscreen mobile devices such as smartphones and tablet computers. Initially developed by Android, Inc., which Google backed financially and later bought in 2005. Android was unveiled in 2007 along with the Open Handset Alliance: a consortium of hardware, software, and telecommunication companies devoted to advancing open standards for mobile devices.



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Other Applications

Over the previous pages we have covered the general type of applications that most people and companies use, but below we shall list some very good but more specialist applications what you can get as alternatives from the main stream.

Audacity

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

Audacity is a free, easy-to-use, multi-track audio editor and recorder for Windows, Mac OS X, GNU/Linux and other operating systems.

Gramps

<http://gramps-project.org/>

Gramps is a Free Software Project for Genealogy, offering a professional genealogy program the system performance but also disk failure redundancy as the file can be generated using most of the file and parity bit.

FileZilla

<https://filezilla-project.org/>

FileZilla is a cross-platform graphical FTP, FTPS and SFTP client a lot of features, supporting Windows, Linux, Mac OS X and more. FileZilla Server is a reliable FTP server for Windows.

PeaZip

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

PeaZip is a free cross-platform file archiver that provides an unified portable GUI for many Open Source technologies like 7-Zip, FreeArc, PAQ, UPX...

CutePDF

<http://cutepdf.com/>

CutePDF Writer is the free version of commercial PDF converter software. CutePDF Writer installs itself as a "printer subsystem". This enables virtually any Windows applications (must be able to print) to convert to professional quality PDF documents - with just a push of a button!

Notepad++

<http://notepad-plus-plus.org/>

Notepad++ is a free (as in "free speech" and also as in "free beer") source code editor and Notepad replacement that supports several languages.

Not all of the mentioned software is available on all operating systems / platforms, also this list is not exhaustive either.

Another thing to remember is that not all software is suited for every user and you might find or know about another product that you prefer.

So if you have a preferred program don't just jump ship to one we have mentioned, instead maybe install our suggestions on your system as well and try them making sure they are right for you first.

We at Strobe IT hope this article has been a useful guide in the world of alternative software.

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