

The 10 best apps for your new Windows PC

Anyone who has used Windows through more than one version knows that, no matter how many utilities Microsoft adds to its operating system, there are always apps and utilities that will enhance your use. We listed several good ones in last year's edition; this year, we have a few new ones to add to the mix. If you have a brand new system, consider installing some (or all) of these.

We've rounded up our favorite and most-used games, apps, and entertainment. Check out our app picks for iPhones, Android phones, PCs and Macs; our favorite mobile games from Apple Arcade and Google Play Pass; and our top choices for gaming PCs, the PS4, Xbox One, Nintendo Switch and VR. We've also listed our favorite streaming shows on Disney+, Hulu, ESPN and Netflix, some great sci-fi books, and exciting new podcasts. (Note: pricing was accurate at the time of publishing, but may change.)

Affinity Photo

Photo: Affinity

You'll probably want an image manipulation app for your new PC, and while Adobe Photoshop remains the king in terms of functionality, getting it means that you'll be stuck paying Adobe on a subscription basis. That's fine for some, but Affinity Photo is easier to recommend if you want a lean, capable photo app that is also affordable (it's a \$49 one-time purchase) and can be installed on as many machines as you'd like. The interface is similar to Photoshop, so veterans shouldn't feel too lost, and Affinity Photo's creators are adding new functionality on a regular basis. — Cameron

1Password / LastPass

It should go without saying that one of the most important ways you can avoid identity theft and track all those hundreds of passwords you've created over the years is by using a good password manager. While there are a variety of good ones out there, 1Password and LastPass are two of the most recommended, and you can't go wrong with either. Both will pop in to save your passwords, both will add your ID and passwords automatically to your apps, and both will recommend random combinations that will keep bad actors guessing. You can try them both out and pick the one that suits you best. – *Barbara Krasnoff*

TreeSize

Photo: Jam Software

Drive space is limited, and can get used up quickly. Before you know it, you'll try (and fail) to install something because something else is hogging your drive. A handy free app called TreeSize Free is great to have because it helps you find out exactly what is taking up the most space. Sometimes it tells you things you might already know – for instance, that your photo collection takes up half of your drive. But in other cases, it illuminates some dormant, unnecessary files

that, once deleted, can free up several gigabytes of space. – *Cameron Faulkner*

LibreOffice Writer

Photo: LibreOffice

If you'd prefer to use a local client to create your documents rather than a less-secure online word processor – and you don't want to pay for Microsoft Word – LibreOffice Writer is an excellent choice. Over the years, this open-source application has become a sophisticated, highly useful word processor that has most, if not all, of the features that more expensive business applications offer. – *Barbara Krasnoff*

Malwarebytes

Photo: Malwarebytes

Back when I was still on Windows 8, I got hit by some drive-by malware that didn't let me reboot or access my anti-virus software – or any executable file. I would have been totally screwed – if I hadn't had Malwarebytes on my hard drive. I started it up (and yes, it did start up, despite the malware), ran it twice, and it found and completely eliminated the nasty from my system. Since then, I always make sure I have a copy handy, and I run it every once in a while, just to make sure. It's one of the most effective anti-malware solutions out there, and the version that disinfects is free for personal use. – *Barbara Krasnoff*

VLC Media player

Photo: VideoLAN

Media players have improved vastly during the 20-odd years that VLC has been around, but this open-source media player is still my go-to for a simple, effective, and useful Windows player. (It's also available for Macs, iPhones, Chrome OS, Android, and a wide variety of GNU/Linux platforms.) It's simple, efficient, runs a wide range of audio and video codecs, and, well, just works. – *Barbara Krasnoff*

Audacity

Photo: Audacity

Podcasts and other audio entertainment are big these days. If you're an audio creator – or are hoping to become one – Audacity is a good audio editor to install. It's got a variety of recording and editing tools, supports 16-bit, 24-bit and 32-bit audio, has a variety of plug-ins and offers previews of the effects those plug-ins will have. And it's all free. – *Barbara Krasnoff*

Wox

Photo: Wox

Some things are worth repeating, and so we are once again recommending Wox. Wox brings a Mac-like launcher to Windows that lets you find apps and files or quickly search the web. It's very similar to Alfred on the Mac, and it's a much more powerful way of searching than the built-in Windows search. Wox also supports plug-ins so you can customize exactly what you search for, or even translate languages right within the launcher. – *Tom Warren*

Clipmate

Photo: Clipmate

Clipmate has been a useful utility through many versions of Windows, saving and making available thousands of your clipboard saves rather than just the last one. You can also edit your saved clips, reformat them, and share them. While Windows 10 has (finally) included the ability to access more than a single clipboard save, Clipmate remains a tool that could be practical for almost anyone's arsenal. – *Barbara Krasnoff*

Ninite

The Verge's Grayson Blackmon reports that whenever he's starting over on a Windows build he always uses Ninite to

jumpstart the process for all the essentials. It packages everything as one downloader/installer and installs it onto your new PC – no muss or fuss. Just go to the Ninite website, check off which apps you want to install (the long list includes various web browsers, messaging apps, media players, document and image creators, and others), and hit the Ninite button. It's as easy as that. – *Barbara Krasnoff*

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