

THE COMPUTER CORNER

No. 234: Top Freeware Picks

Stan Kaplan, WB9RQR 715 N. Dries Street Saukville, WI 53080-1664
(262) 268-1949 wb9rqr@att.net

My favorite site for safe freeware, majorgeeks.com, publishes a list of “**absolute best, five stars rated, totally free programs for your computer**”. These do not have any hidden toolbars or third-party programs, and they are not wrappers (bundeware). This list changes as new, good software is written, so go read the list as you need it at the following URL: <https://tr.im/1Wxcl>. Here is a sample of a just a few of the categories with just a couple of the picks. The person writing these descriptions is Tim Tibbetts, one of the two majorgeeks honchos.

All-In-One Suites

Simple System Tweaker: There is a handful of safe, tested tweaks most geeks will apply to a computer. This does it for you and saves potentially hours.

Advanced SystemCare: ASC is an all-in-one suite to keep your computer running fine and forget about it. Majorgeeks likes Driver Booster from them as well.

Anti-Spyware & Anti-Malware

Malwarebytes Anti-Malware: Malwarebytes is one of our all-time top downloads and for good reason. It's simple, fast and effective. You can purchase full time protection so you don't get infected again.

SUPERAntiSpyware: SUPERAntispyware might not be a recognizable a name to you but don't let that stop you. SUPERAntiSpyware has saved majorgeeks a few times when other programs have failed to detect or remove a problem.

Anti-Virus Protection

Avira Free Antivirus: Avira has good speed, accurate detection and removal and has been consistently rated a 4.7 out of 5 by our readers. A pro version is also available.

Microsoft Security Essentials: Microsoft finally got into the game with free protection for all Windows users in 2010. While the detection and removal is very good we feel it can be a bit slower for power users.

Backup

Macrium Reflect: I have used Acronis True Image for years but it's not free and it has almost no quality competition. Macrium Reflect is the one program that comes really close. Backup files, a complete image and much more.

Dropbox: No need for a second hard drive, external drive or DVD. With Dropbox you can use the Cloud to back up your important files. You can also share and sync.

Browsers

Pale Moon: As you're about to notice, geeks tend to lean toward Firefox over Chrome and Internet Explorer. Hence there are a few awesome alternatives that tweak the Firefox code. This one promises 25% more speed and is a 5 star program all day long.

Cyberfox 64-Bit Web Browser: If you want a 64-bit version of Firefox, here you go. And it's pretty awesome.

CD\DVD\Blu-Ray Burning Tools

CDBurnerXP Portable: I usually have this one on my computer. Light, and easy to use. The installer version always has some sort of bundleware so you want this portable version to avoid that.

InfraRecorder: InfraRecorder is another often overlooked tool. It's small and has plenty of features similar to CDBurnerXP.

Data Recovery

Wise Data Recovery: Another tool that is part of an entire suite of tools and a really good one too. Often overlooked, you would be mistaken to do so.

Recuva Portable: For free, Recuva is an excellent choice. It's fast, easy to use and can even try to recover lost emails, deleted music and Microsoft Word documents or temporary files.

Drive Cleaners

Wise Disk Cleaner: Do you find CCleaner too conservative? Wise Disk Cleaner can often free up an additional gigabyte or more removing files CCleaner won't touch. I happen to love it personally.

Privatizer: Privatizer takes the traditional drive cleaner approach but adds in an additional focus on security as well.

CCleaner: CCleaner has been around and highly rated for many years. It also has a start-up manager, registry cleaner and shortcut to remove programs.

Driver Updaters

Driver Booster: I've used this one for years and it works great. It does offer to install one of their other programs at the end, but since it's not malicious or a wrapper it makes it onto the list.

Driver Easy: A newer program, this one also can back and potentially repair driver problems.

OK, that is a big enough sample. Here is a complete list in alphabetical order:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. All-In-One Suites | 12. Email Clients |
| 2. Anti-Spyware & Anti-Malware | 13. File Compression |
| 3. Anti-Virus Protection | 14. Graphics |
| 4. Backup | 15. Multimedia |
| 5. Browsers | 16. Microsoft Office Alternatives |
| 6. CD\DVD\Blu-Ray Burning Tools | 17. Partitioning |
| 7. Data Recovery | 18. PDF Alternatives |
| 8. Defragmenting Tools | 19. Text Editors |
| 9. Diagnostics | 20. Uninstallers |
| 10. Drive Cleaners | 21. Honorable Mentions |
| 11. Driver Updaters | |

Remember, these are the top-of-the-top, and they are all free! The fact that they are free does not mean they are not good. Indeed, many are better at what they do than the pay-for alternatives. Visit [majorgeeks](#) to see your options. Happy Computing!