

February 7th, 2008 The Top 50 Proprietary Programs that Drive You Crazy – and Their Open Source Alternatives

Posted by Jimmy Atkinson in [Software](#)

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Not every proprietary program can drive a person crazy, right? Some, like Norton Ghost, are superb tools for anyone to use. But, the fact that these tools are proprietary can drive open source fanatics up a wall. It's not the price of the software that makes the real difference (although it's a reason to migrate from one software to another for many people); it's the idea that proprietary software comes with boundaries that keeps the user experience confined to...well, being the user. That's enough to drive any developer crazy.

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The following fifty proprietary programs are listed in no particular order within broad categories along with their open source alternatives. In some cases you could probably write your own book on frustrations with the proprietary programs shown here. In other cases, you'll discover that the open source alternative isn't quite up to snuff yet. And, in other cases still, you'll learn that some proprietary programs are real gems, but that the open source advocate can replace those gems with equally shiny objects from the open source repertoire.

Basics

1. **Windows Vista OS to Ubuntu OS:** This is Microsoft's operating system (OS), and even Microsoft fans have become [disillusioned](#) with this product. Open source OS alternatives [have expanded](#); but these OS often are difficult for the average user to install, learn, and operate. Why deal with it when [Ubuntu](#) has become so easy to use that even the most computer illiterate can jump into this operating system with very little time spent on a learning curve? In fact, users can purchase a [Dell](#) computer with Ubuntu already installed. Remember, however, that when it comes to using open source software that the open source community often focuses on applications that can be used through Windows, Mac, Linux, or Unix with the majority seemingly devoted to Windows.
2. **Internet Explorer Browser to Firefox Browser:** Sure, Internet Explorer (IE) is free; but, that's because it comes packaged with Windows' operating systems. Free is far different from open source software, where users have more control over how that software works. While you might feel more comfortable with a proprietary operating system, you can still use an open source browser like Mozilla's [Firefox](#), an exceptional product that expands its use with 'add-ons' created by avid users.

Office Suites

3. **Microsoft Office to OpenOffice:** If the price makes you feel that Microsoft has worked you over, then switch! If you compare Microsoft's Office with other products, then you're looking for something that includes an email client, a word processor, a spreadsheet tool, and a multimedia presentation application. The only product that provides a competitive edge against Microsoft is [Google](#) (that includes Gmail, Google Docs, Google Presentation and more). But, some would argue that Google isn't truly open source. So, the next best bet alternative would be [OpenOffice](#), an open source project that includes everything you'd find in Microsoft Office except the email client.
4. **Mactopia to NeoOffice:** Another Microsoft office suite, but this time meant for Macintosh computers. Try [NeoOffice](#) instead. NeoOffice® is a full-featured set of office applications, including word processing, spreadsheet, presentation, drawing, and database programs for Mac OS X. This suite is based on the OpenOffice.org office suite, but it has integrated dozens of native Mac features and can import, edit, and exchange files with other popular office programs such as Microsoft Office.

Office Tools

5. **MathWorks MATLAB to Scilab:** MATLAB is a highly used application for numerical computing. It provides a programming language that allows users to work with numbers in any possible way imaginable through visualization. Scilab is the open source alternative to MATLAB, and it provides visualization of numerical data just as MATLAB does. Scilab is partly compatible with MATLAB, and both tools are suited for Windows, Linux, and UNIX.
6. **Microsoft Access to Kexi:** Microsoft Access is a versatile tool for creating database-driven applications and to maintain office or personal data. Access contains an embedded database engine, but it also connects to other databases through ODBC. On the other hand, [Kexi](#) allows users to design forms to gain access to and to create data, just like Access. Kexi also contains an embedded database engine and it can import data to Microsoft Access databases. Plus - Kexi is open source, whereas Access belongs to Microsoft.
7. **Microsoft Word to OpenOffice Writer:** If you want to break that office suite down and begin to replace the suite item by item, then you can start with this product first. [Writer](#) is the word processor component of the OpenOffice.org software package that is similar to Microsoft Word, and with a roughly equivalent range of features. Writer can be used across a variety of platforms, including Mac OS X, Microsoft Windows, Linux, FreeBSD and Solaris. Writer also includes the ability to export Portable Document Format (PDF) files with no additional software, and can also function as a WYSIWYG editor for creating and editing web pages. One plus over Word is that Writer carries functions and number formats in its tables from [Calc](#), OpenOffice's spreadsheet application.
8. **Microsoft Excel to OpenOffice Calc:** Another Microsoft product, Excel still carries its productivity pluses as a spreadsheet, but it no longer carries an air of absolute necessity. Google's Docs can bring an online, sharing atmosphere to your spreadsheets now. As for a truly open source product that can replace Excel, try OpenOffice.org [Calc](#). This tool provides full spreadsheet functionality incl. a huge number of

statistical and scientific functions, pivot tables and charts.

9. **Microsoft Visio to Dia:** Visio actually is a great application that allows users to go from complicated text and tables that are hard to understand to diagrams that communicate information at a glance. The only thing that spoils the context is the fact that this software is that it's not open source. Instead, use **Dia**, a GTK+ based diagram creation program for Linux, Unix and Windows released under the GPL license. Dia was 'roughly' inspired by Visio, which should make this tool easy for transition.

Productivity

10. **Blackboard to Moodle:** Blackboard has been the CMS (Course Management System) 'industry standard' for educational purposes for many years. This program allows instructors to build courses, manage student workloads, and more. But **Moodle** has gained significant ground as an open source alternative to Blackboard, as it helps educators to create effective online learning communities in a scalable package that costs nothing to use.
11. **Box to Cabos:** If you're into file sharing, you've probably heard of **Box.net**, if not used them. Not only can you share files, Box allows you to store your files securely online, allowing you to access them from any computer, phone or mobile device for a fee. **Cabos**, another file sharing program that's open source, provides simple sidebar user interface, firewall to firewall transfers, proxy transfers, Universal Plug and Play, iTunes + iPod integration, "What's New?" searches, international searches, and more. All you need is Windows 2000 or later. Mac OS X 10.2.8 or later. Mac OS 8.6 or later. Granted, you don't have the file storage capacity, but at least you can share files with Cabos without that extra storage capacity.
12. **Microsoft Project to Open Workbench:** Microsoft allows users to control project work, schedule, and finances, and effectively communicate project data to other users. But, it costs to do that with Microsoft. Instead, use open source **Open Workbench** to accomplish exactly the same project details for free. When users need to move beyond desktop scheduling to a workgroup, division or enterprise-wide solution, they can upgrade to **CA's Clarity™ system**, a project and portfolio management system that offers bidirectional integration with Open Workbench.
13. **Mindjet to FreeMind:** Mindmapping is a way to share ideas among individuals and groups for productivity. This type of activity takes time, but it saves time. So why should you pay for a product when you can save money by using **FreeMind**? This latter product will accomplish all the Mindjet does and more. That "more" is the fact that FreeMind is open source.

Graphic Programs

14. **Adobe Illustrator to Inkscape:** Adobe's vector drawing system is one of the best in the industry. However, like Photoshop, the price can be prohibitive for some designers and artists. Try **Inkscape** instead, an open source vector graphics editor similar to Illustrator, CorelDraw, or Xara X. Inkscape uses the W3C standard Scalable Vector Graphics (SVG) file format and it supports many advanced SVG features (markers, clones, alpha blending, etc.). Finally, the streamlined interface is easy to use to edit nodes, perform complex path operations, trace bitmaps and much more.
15. **Adobe PhotoShop to GIMP:** Even if you're paying for upgrades instead of the original package, the price for Adobe's Photoshop can be prohibitive for some photographers and graphic designers. Try **GIMP** to see if this open source tool can't provide you with all the power you need for your photography and graphic design needs. GIMP stands for Gnu Image Manipulation Program, and it's the solution that comes closest to emulating the Photoshop environment.
16. **Adobe Premiere to Avidemux:** Premier is state of the art real-time non-linear video editing for any format including High Definition (HD). Supports 16-bit color resolution, GPU accelerated rendering for faster effects and even advanced DVD authoring. On the other hand, **Avidemux** provides Windows, Mac, and Linux users with an easy-to-use open source tool for DVD/DivX converting and editing. Avidemux also has scripting support for automation and even offers DVD authoring with the addition of the open source software, **dvdauthor**.
17. **AutoCAD to Archimedes:** AutoCAD is an AutoDesk tool used by any designer who creates design drafts - mostly architects. **Archimedes** is an open source computer aided design (CAD) alternative that focuses primarily on architectural design. AutoCAD definitely has the winning score thus far, but Archimedes shows promise. The latter program contains all the drawing features a designer would need, but its interoperability is weak. Designers still can export scalable vector graphics, so there's a real market for this open source tool (this opinion isn't based upon Archimedes' newest release).
18. **Microsoft PowerPoint to OpenOffice Impress:** You can make a move away from this Microsoft tool with the use of Google's Presentation or with OpenOffice's **Impress**. Both tools represent full-featured presentation applications that allow users to create and modify diagrams and pictures right within the application.
19. **Microsoft Paint to Tux Paint:** While not a serious graphics program, it is widely used by many computer users, mostly children Try **Tux Paint** instead of Paint, as this open source product stands apart from typical graphics people edit software (such as GIMP or Photoshop) in that it was designed to be usable by children as young as 16 months of age. The user interface is meant to be intuitive, and utilizes icons, audible feedback and textual hints to help explain how the software works.
20. **TruSpace to Blender:** Caligari offers a range of products that enable designers and artists to produce 3D images - at a hefty price. **Blender**, on the other hand, provides one tool that provides full multiresolution sculpting capabilities with 2D bitmap/3D procedural brushes (Paint, Smooth, Pinch, Inflate, Grab) supporting symmetry. And, that's just the beginning of Blender's capabilities. This open source software is free to download and use.

Web Editors

21. **Adobe GoLive CS2 to Mozilla SeaMonkey:** GoLive is an integral part of the Adobe Creative Suites products, so it works with your InDesign documents and allows those documents to be converted to Web pages. But, you might want to try Mozilla's **SeaMonkey** before you commit to the total Adobe suite option. The Mozilla SeaMonkey project includes a Web-browser, email and newsgroup client, HTML authoring program and IRC chat client. The Composer is simple but it handles tables, CSS, positioned layers and more without sweat. Add-ons currently include

- [Scribfire](#), the blog editor that integrates with your browser and lets you easily post to your blog.
22. **Adobe Dreamweaver to NVU**: While this tool is a powerful WYSIWYG (What You See Is What You Get) HTML editor, other options exist that can save money. [NVU](#) (pronounced N-view, for a "new view") is a complete Web Authoring System for Linux Desktop users as well as Microsoft Windows users to rival programs like FrontPage and Dreamweaver. Use NVU to create Web pages and manage a Website with no technical expertise or knowledge of HTML.
 23. **Macromedia Flash Professional to OpenLaszlo**: Developers use Flash to create multimedia events on the Web. Since the program utilizes vector-based graphics, it provides a venue that goes beyond the Web. As an open source product, [OpenLaszlo](#) provides developers with a platform to create zero-install Web applications with user interface capabilities of desktop client software. In other words, OpenLaszlo applications developed on one machine will run on all leading Web browsers on all leading desktop OS. These applications, like Flash, provide animation, layout, data binding, server communication and more.
 24. **Microsoft Frontpage to Bluefish**: While not as powerful as Dreamweaver, Front Page is a widely used proprietary application used to create Web pages. Take a gander at [this list](#) to understand your many open source options for HTML editors. Try [Bluefish](#) as one option that can save you money and, possibly, time.
 25. **Windows Notepad to ConTEXT**: Yes, you can get the world's most versatile HTML editing tool absolutely FREE when you purchase Windows version 2.0 and above. But, why would you want to do that when you can work with open source [ConTEXT](#)? This application is a small, fast and powerful freeware programmers text editor, developed to serve as a secondary tool for software developers.
 26. **Altova XMLSpy to XML Copy Editor**: XMLSpy is one of the most popular XML editors on the market today. Its editing features and support for both schema and DTD development along with XSLT, XQuery and XPath development make it an ultimate XML tool. As an open source alternative, [XML Copy Editor](#) is a versatile XML editor primarily focused on text editing with XML files. However, XML Copy Editor provides many other features including validation of DTD and XML schemas - as well as XSLT and XPath with tag-free editing. Both tools are Windows applications.

Publishing

27. **Adobe Acrobat to PDFCreator**: Yes, you have a free trial to create a PDF through Adobe. However, this [PDFCreator](#) easily creates PDFs from any Windows program. Use it like a printer in Word, StarCalc or any other Windows application.
28. **Adobe Framemaker to DocBook**: Adobe Framemaker software represents a powerful authoring and publishing solution for technical communicators who want to author and publish technical documentation in multiple languages. While this software is reliable, so is [DocBook](#), an open source publishing tool. Additionally, you have access to all the free wikis and documentation that shows how to install, use, and customize the tools and stylesheets.
29. **Microsoft Publisher to Scribus**: When it comes to Desktop Publishing (DTP) Microsoft's Publisher provides more control over document elements than Microsoft Word through a DTP-oriented approach. However, professional users still consider this program an entry-level application. Since it's part of the Microsoft Office Package, many users will find its costs negligible as well. With that said, [Scribus](#) offers an open source DTP alternative. Scribus brings award-winning professional page layout to Linux/Unix, MacOS X, OS/2 and Windows desktops with a combination of "press-ready" output and new approaches to page layout. Scribus supports professional publishing features, such as CMYK color, separations, ICC color management and versatile PDF creation.

Communications

30. **AIM to Pidgin**: Give it up. AIM, AOL's Instant Messenger, no longer rules. The open source alternative is [Pidgin](#), a multi-protocol Instant Messaging client that allows you to use all of your IM accounts at once. Let's break that down: No matter if you use Windows, Linux, BSD, and other Unixes. You can talk to your friends using AIM, ICQ, Jabber/XMPP, MSN Messenger, Yahoo!, Bonjour, Gadu-Gadu, IRC, Novell GroupWise Messenger, QQ, Lotus Sametime, SILC, SIMPLE, MySpaceIM, and Zephyr. Can AIM do that? No? Well, then.
31. **FeedDemon to RSS Bandit**: FeedDemon for Windows constantly searches through feed search engines with keyword-generated searches as well as generalized searches. It also allows offline reading as it 'prefetches' your subscribed feeds. NewsGator also synchronizes with FeedDemon so you can gain access to news without your computer. Except for the fact that FeedDemon isn't open source, it's an ideal, robust reader. But, for open source fanatics, [RSS Bandit](#) provides an equally robust alternative RSS and Atom reader that allows you to keep track of all of the news feeds you follow. Its newspaper view can be customized and the templates are compatible with those used in FeedDemon. Plus, RSS Bandit allows you to synchronize everything with NewsGator online. Finally, RSS Bandit also provides access to news on news servers (similar to Google Groups) - it uses NNTP to read and post to newsgroups anywhere on the net. It integrates to Google Groups by linking to posts on their website.
32. **Microsoft MSN Messenger to aMSN**: Microsoft offers MSN Messenger to the masses as freeware on Windows, and it's grown from a simple IM application into a trendsetter in a competitive market. Features include voice and video chatting, gaming, remote support - on top of that it allows connection through mobile devices when you are not near a computer. [aMSN](#), the open source Windows alternative to MSN, aims to mimic its proprietary competitor as much as possible. Most of its extra features are added through plug-ins. You can add, at your leisure, POP3 email support and translation, voice clips, Webcam support, Chat logs, Conferencing support and more.
33. **Microsoft Outlook to Thunderbird**: Say that you decided to switch to OpenOffice, but you need an email client to replace Microsoft's Outlook. Try Mozilla's [Thunderbird](#), an application that carries a similar interface and that is easy to use. Additionally, you can use [Lightning](#) to integrate Mozilla's [Sunbird](#) calendar application with Thunderbird.
34. **Skype to Wengophone**: Skype is a very strong freeware internet VoIP (Voice over IP) product in the telecommunications industry. It started with a simple and free PC-to-PC telephony, but today offers full integration with existing telephone systems. Skype today also offers voicemail, video conversations and sending SMSs. Its open source alternative, [Wengophone](#), also provides free PC-to-PC calls as well as chat and video conferencing. Created by Wengo, this phone also can provide SMS and call-out features that allow users to communicate with any phone at reasonable prices.

Media

35. **iTunes to Songbird**: If you're accustomed to the equation where "Apple + iPod + iTunes" equals a ton of money, then you might consider a switch to **Songbird**. Songbird is an open source player and a platform committed to "playing the music you want + from the sites you want + on the devices you want." Songbird thereby challenges the conventions of discovery, purchase, consumption and organization of music on the Internet.
36. **Nero Burning Rom to K3b**: Nero Burning Rom is a popular tool to burn CDs, DVDs and Blu-ray discs. This software includes backup, cd copying, audio features and more, and it's easy to use. But, it's not open source like **K3b** (Windows). This latter program creates and burns CDs and DVDs, including ripping with DivX/XviD encoding, DVD copy, ISO burning, Video CD (VCD) creation, Audio CD creation for almost any audio file, CD-TEXT support for audio CDs, support for DVD-RW and DVD+RW and much more. Oh, and did we add that it was easy to use?
37. **Quicktime to Darwin Streaming Server**: Apple's QuickTime 7 Pro is good for everything from creating podcasts to transcoding media in more than a dozen formats. And, the software isn't that expensive when compared to other products. But, why not use an open source application that shares the same code base as Quicktime Streaming Server? **Darwin Streaming Server** is an open source project that's perfect for developers who need to stream QuickTime and MPEG-4 media on platforms such as Windows, Linux, and Solaris.
38. **TiVo Desktop to Galleon.tv**: Tivo-to-Go users were disappointed to discover that their Tivo software **wouldn't work** with Windows Vista. Some answers to this problem included spending more time and money on various solutions that might work to restore that software's functionality. One solution included using the open source software, **Galleon**, instead of trying to "fix" Tivo or Windows Vista. Galleon is a free open source media server for the TiVo® DVR which allows you to enjoy many kinds of content and interactive applications right on your TV. The server runs on your home computer and organizes your media collection so that they can be viewed on your home network. Galleon also brings Internet content and applications to your TV.
39. **Windows Media Player to Miro**: This application seems ubiquitous...no matter what you try to open, Windows Media Player is in your face, right? Well, replace that in-your-face attitude with **Miro**, an open source program that turns your computer into an internet TV. Miro has 2,500 unrestricted channels with a huge selection of HD content. Plus, you have access to any publisher with video RSS feeds, including anyone on YouTube, Revver, Blip, and many, many more.

Utilities

40. **CuteFTP to Filezilla**: Sure, CuteFTO is cute, but it's not free. Sure, it's reliable, but so are many other File Transfer Protocol applications. Try **Filezilla**, a fast FTP and SFTP client for Windows with tons of features - easy to install, easy to use, very reliable, secure, and open source.
41. **iBackup to ZManda**: Who can you trust with your backup files? It's difficult to decide, as price alone means nothing. You want safe, reliable servers or tools that can keep your backups available and intact. iBackup has proven to be worthy of that task, but you might want to look at **ZManda** as well. This open source solution protects more than half a million of servers and desktops running various versions of Linux, UNIX, BSD, Mac OS-X and Microsoft Windows operating systems worldwide. Not only do they backup information, they're into recovery as well.
42. **Norton Ghost to Partition Image**: Norton Ghost isn't a shabby backup system, as it's a complete tool that backs up everything but the kitchen sink. If you have a complete disk failure, Norton Ghost can bring it back to life on a new hard disk (although you don't need to make a complete backup every time). You can take this backup to external drives, CDs or DVDs. If you're an open source advocate, however, Norton Ghost doesn't cut the cake. You'll want something like **Partition Image** (for Linux) or **Ghost for Unix** (G4U) for Windows or Unix users. Both tools are disk cloners that act differently, but they're as robust as Norton Ghost. Read more at their respective Web sites before you make the jump. (For a complete rescue disk including Partition Image see **SystemRescueCd**).
43. **Rational Purify to Valgrind**: IBM's Purify is a well respected and much used debugging tool. It uses topnotch memory corruption and memory leak detection to keep hard-to-find bugs from any application. As an open source alternative, Valgrind also detects leaks and other memory related programming errors. But, it also detects threading bugs and includes a call-graph profiler that detects bottlenecks in code. as well as threading bugs. A user might say that Valgrind is better than Purify, even if it is open source.
44. **WinZip to 7-Zip**: Some of us grew up with WinZip, so it's sad to say goodbye. But, we all gotta leave home at some point, and when the open source **7-Zip** beckons, maybe you should heed the call...

Security

45. **Kaspersky Anti-Virus Personal to Winpooch**: Kaspersky Anti-Virus probably is among the top products on the market for Windows-based anti-virus tools, mainly because it's well known for its outstanding detection rates. It commits to multiple tasks as it protects against viruses, script viruses, checks file archives (such as zip files) and removes viruses from mail. It also provides protection against spyware as well as adware. As an open source alternative, however, **Winpooch** also scans files on your computer, detects malware, and prevents all the viruses, trojan horses and other problems that Kaspersky hunts down as well. Winpooch, by the way, adds a real-time scanning capability that ClamWin (noted below) lacks.
46. **McAfee VirusScan to ClamWin**: McAfee is well known as one of the oldest companies in the anti-virus market. Many individuals need to deal with this software company, as its tools come packaged with many new Windows OS computer systems. The plus side to McAfee is that it is reliable and that it offers 24/7 support. The downside is that it's not open source. **ClamWin**, on the other hand, is a free Antivirus for Microsoft Windows 98/Me/2000/XP/2003. It features high detection rates, scheduler, automatic download of virus database updates and a plug-in for Microsoft Outlook. As noted above, ClamWin doesn't provide on access realtime scanning, but when combined with WinPooch, this capability is added.
47. **Norton Personal Firewall to WIPFW**: Many people could work with Norton in their sleep, as this company has been around that long. The Norton Personal Firewall for Windows will monitor and check all Internet traffic and it will reject any attack or intrusion attempt. Ubiquitous popups and permissions are part of the game, as it seems that each new Website carries its own set of Norton no-nos. As an alternative, **WIPFW** is a firewall for Windows based on IPFW for FreeBSD UNIX. It provides virtually the same features, functionality, and user interface as

Norton Personal Firewall. The big difference? WIPFW is open source.

Financial

48. **Authorize.net to OpenSSL**: Granted, Authorize.Net's preferred payment gateway connection, Advanced Integration Method (AIM), provides the highest level of customization and security to merchants for submitting transactions online. But, why pay for a secure SSL when you can get an open source product for free? The OpenSSL Project is a collaborative effort to develop a robust, commercial-grade, full-featured, and Open Source toolkit implementing the Secure Sockets Layer (SSL v2/v3) and Transport Layer Security (TLS v1) protocols as well as a full-strength general purpose cryptography library. A worldwide community of volunteers uses the Internet to communicate, plan, and develop the [OpenSSL](#) toolkit and its related documentation manages the project.
 49. **Microsoft Money (Plus) to TurboCash**: While Microsoft Money Plus is much more than a personal accounting software, [TurboCash](#) can boast that claim plus more. TurboCash is open source and free to use. In fact, you might compare TurboCash more to Quickbooks than to Microsoft Money. However, as a personal finance tool, TurboCash is much more user-friendly to the average home budgeter than Compiere.
 50. **Quickbooks to Compiere**: Few people are unfamiliar with Quickbooks, as this software has made its way into many a small business computer. If you feel that few opportunities exist to switch, think again. [Compiere](#), produced by [Global Era](#), provides one solution to open source ERP (Enterprise Resource Planning) and CRM (Customer Relationship Management) solutions for any small to large business. Compiere 3.0 marks the introduction of Compiere Professional Edition, a new premium offering targeted at larger organizations that require more advanced services and commercial licensing from Compiere.
- **Ivan Kirigin** Says:
February 7th, 2008 at 1:18 pm
From experience, I can say that Octave and SciPy are the best alternatives to Matlab.
 - **Askrates** Says:
February 7th, 2008 at 4:15 pm
You forgot one program: The bloated piece of poo-poo that is realplayer. It is one program that drives me crazy, but where I don't know any alternative for playing .rm files
 - **DiBosco** Says:
February 7th, 2008 at 5:00 pm
Few things to say.
 1. You're confusing Ubuntu with Linux. Ubuntu is just one flavour of Linux. You should point out that there are other distributions out there that are as easy, or easier to set-up than Ubuntu. Some, like Mandriva, even come with all the codecs for playing DVDs and work better with WiFi.
 2. A program I found better than Kexi as a database front end is Knoda.
 3. KDE based distributions like Kubuntu and Mandriva come with Konqueror which does many things, including ftp made very easy.
 4. What's a virus? 😊
 - **Balefire** Says:
February 7th, 2008 at 5:28 pm
Hi, like the list of alternatives and found some I never heard of before!
There is always one alternative which I have no idea why it keeps making it way onto these lists - NVU. While NVU was admirable for its vision, nothing has happened to it for almost 3 years when v1 was released. It's buggy, prone to crash and corrupt your HTML. A bug-fixed version KompoZer (<http://www.kompozer.net/>) was released due to the lack of any interest from the creators of NVU. At least KompoZer does have an active release cycle.
Please consider updating your list! (No I don't have anything to do with either NVU or KompoZer, just get fed up with NVU being rewarded for doing squat and KompoZer being ignored for actually fixing problems).
 - **Stumbler** Says:
February 7th, 2008 at 6:28 pm
Wow! Great list, lots of information and very helpful. many thanks.
 - **DrFreemanstein** Says:
February 7th, 2008 at 6:55 pm
Awesome list! Thanks for compiling! Some favourites of mine up there...and some I have not heard of before, but will try now!

- **tracyanne** Says:
February 7th, 2008 at 8:20 pm
Not only Ubuntu: There's Mandriva, PCLinux OS, Fedora, SuSE, Linux Mint.

In fact any of the major Linux Distributions are as easy as Ubuntu or easier even easier in many cases.
- **tracyanne** Says:
February 7th, 2008 at 8:22 pm
Not only GIMP: but also Krita, which comes with the KDE desktop, but can also be used with Ubuntu's GNOME desktop. Krita also provides CMYK color processing.
- **tracyanne** Says:
February 7th, 2008 at 8:34 pm
Kaspersky Anti-Virus Personal to Winpooch:
McAfee VirusScan to ClamWin:

Not really necessary on Linux. But it will stop you from passing viruses on to your Windows using friends.

The fact of the matter is if your AV picks up a virus it's probably already too late.

Norton Personal Firewall to WIPFW:

Linux comes with the same firewalls that are used to protect Enterprise gateways.
- **Peter** Says:
February 7th, 2008 at 9:19 pm
You're Authorize.net to OpenSSL comparison is apples to oranges. OpenSSL is a library interface that allows various programs to communicate in an encrypted fashion over the internet as well as performing other encryption-related tasks. Authorize.net is a payment gateway that is used to accept credit card payments from merchant e-commerce websites and send the payments through to the merchant's bank. There are several alternatives to Authorize.net available but I am not aware of any that are "open source" as Authorize.net provides a service and is not in the business of creating and selling software.

To illustrate this point there are many sites that use OpenSSL to communicate with Authorize.net.
- **Etienne Savard** Says:
February 7th, 2008 at 9:22 pm
"The following fifty proprietary programs are listed in no particular order within broad categories along with their open source alternatives"

If that's true, freewares should not appear in your list. So, instead of ConTEXT (freeware) you could list NotePad++ (<http://www.notepad-plus.sourceforge.net>) which is a true Open Source replacement for notepad.

Also, I agree for most Open Source substitutes you gave on your list except for those:
 - Microsoft Access to OpenOffice Base (<http://www.openoffice.org/product/base.html>)
 - Adobe Premiere to ...: there is no Open Source non-linear video editor (at the moment) equivalent to Premiere. The closest Open Source replacement for Premiere is Kdenlive (<http://www.kdenlive.org>).
 - Microsoft Money (Plus) to GNUCash (<http://www.gnucash.org>) or KMyMoney (<http://kmymoney2.sourceforge.net>)
Thanks for sharing your findings!
- **Brian Rock** Says:
February 7th, 2008 at 9:36 pm
@Other Linux People

I think he merely suggested Ubuntu to suggest one easy to install and easy to use distro of Linux. It by no means has a claim to "best" or "easiest to use" distro - but it surely is a good and easy to use one. For this type of list, it helps to have one alternative - even if there may be a list.

As for Office Suites, I think that Open Office is far better than Google Docs and other Google Apps. I don't mind the lack of an e-mail client - it provides all the office computing power that I need.
- **Ruc Razy** Says:

February 7th, 2008 at 9:42 pm

Great List. However I am not sure that K3B [Nero alternative] is a Windows app. I believe that is Linux-only.

Askrates, try Real Alternative and Quicktime Alternative that use Media Player Classic to render rm and mov files. Work perfectly on my system. Just google for download links. [Not too sure about them being open-source, but they are freeware]

Balefire, here's another vote for KomPozer over NVU.

- **Paul** Says:

February 7th, 2008 at 9:51 pm

I live in Ecuador, and it is impossible for us to buy a licensed AutoCAD or Illustrator. I've been using The Gimp and Inkscape since a couple of years, and I'm downloading Archimedes right now!

Best Regards

- **true** Says:

February 7th, 2008 at 10:02 pm

What about the VLC player..It reads most of the formats.. I love it

- **lefty.crupps** Says:

February 7th, 2008 at 10:29 pm

2. Askrates – check out VLC, it plays everything. It is also open source, and even Free software (GPL).

Yes, just having open source code doesn't mean its Free software, not restricting your abilities on how you use it. Free software doesn't restrict your use or its distribution. Luckily, most (all?) of the software above is Free software I like that most!

- **Ali** Says:

February 7th, 2008 at 10:47 pm

OpenOffice also allows you to create .pdfs with just a touch of a button. No need to download more software when you already have a program that does what you like!

- **Paul** Says:

February 7th, 2008 at 11:09 pm

Askrate, you can always use the open-source version of the realplayer called helix. Helix runs on just about every os and platform there is.

- **Pradeep** Says:

February 7th, 2008 at 11:33 pm

How about RDBMBs

MS SQL 2000 to postgresQL

- **noksagt** Says:

February 8th, 2008 at 1:52 am

The OSI and FSF do not consider SciLab to be free/open source. Second recommendation of Octave and/or SciPy.

The backup software is amanda, not zmanda (they are merely a company that currently supports the software). It serves a different niche than online backup providers.

Gnucash is an excellent, cross platform program for personal accounting.

- **Topaz** Says:

February 8th, 2008 at 3:03 am

Topaz exclusively uses Open Source software with the exception of the operating system.

Thank you for your fine list!

- **Sav** Says:

February 8th, 2008 at 3:52 am

Askrates - there is a program called Real Alternative which is exactly what it's name suggests - http://codeguide.com/about_real.htm

- **ramon** Says:

February 8th, 2008 at 4:26 am

an excellent notepad alternative - excellent is an understatement - is textpad. sure, you get an infrequent reminder to purchase, but it comes fully-featured and it's light-weight.

- **s** Says:

February 8th, 2008 at 5:54 am

for mindmapping i suggest to give VYM a try as well as for project management give TaskJuggler a chance! both are unique names, use google for finding them.

- **Bill** Says:

February 8th, 2008 at 6:47 am

The choices available to business users are impressive. Innovation is alive and well in open source software. Thanks for publishing the list.

The Compiere listing (#50) incorrectly attributes Compiere software to Global Era, Inc. More correctly, Compiere, Inc. offers commercial backing, support and services to its global network of nearly 100 authorized partners across 25 countries.

- **OHaleck** Says:

February 8th, 2008 at 7:41 am

That's a great list! Thanks! I will be getting some of the software you listed definitely.

However, there is still one big problem I cannot solve: how can I synchronize my data (contacts, meetings) between my PC, my PocketPC PDA (terrible ActiveSync) and my Nokia (non-symbian) phone without using MS Outlook? I am using Thunderbird & Lightning, but have no clue what to use with it.

- **TemporalBeing** Says:

February 8th, 2008 at 8:12 am

Love WinPooch, however, my experience on two systems - one Win2kSP4, one WinXP - has been that it makes the PC unusable as it schedules the AV (ClamWin in my case) to be a nearly the highest priority and nothing else can get CPU time. Otherwise, it is a great product. I hope the issues get solves quick b/c I would love to be using it more. That said, it is only a 0.6.x release at the moment - so they know they're not a mature product yet. Can't wait to see 1.0!

- **Pep Pla** Says:

February 8th, 2008 at 8:48 am

There is something wrong with this list: at least one program is currently only supported on windows: OpenWorkbench

Check this:

http://www.openworkbench.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=19&Itemid=6#platforms

I think it is not a good alternative because it "forces" you to use a non open source piece of software.

You may check ganttproject which is licensed under GPL and supports Windows/Linux/MacOSX

Pep

- **planetmcd** Says:

February 8th, 2008 at 8:51 am

Balefire,

The nvu index page links to Komposer. I don't think they're trying to hide it.

- **Free Gamer** Says:

February 8th, 2008 at 9:12 am

Errata in this. Check your facts.

From the ConTEXT FAQ:

"Can I get ConTEXT source files?

This is a freeware project, not OpenSource."

Try Notepad++ instead:

<http://notepad-plus.sourceforge.net/>

- **Sylvan** Says:

February 8th, 2008 at 11:07 am

Mactopia isn't a product; it's the branding for Microsoft's Mac software area. The product is "Microsoft Office 2008 for Mac" or "Office:Mac 2008". It's also "Macintosh", no capital I. 😊

- **reiterating** Says:

February 8th, 2008 at 11:25 am

Like several other posters have already mentioned: VLC media player from videolan.org. VLC plays Flash videos, those annoying real media files as well as the equally annoying Quicktime videos. And, unlike many bloated media players (i.e. Windows Media Player, Real Player), VLC is lightning fast.

- **RobbieCrash** Says:

February 8th, 2008 at 11:25 am

The GIMP is NOT a Photoshop alternative for anything other than home usage.

You cannot operate in a professional or even serious hobby manner with the GIMP.

Yes it's great for what it is, but it is NOT a replacement for Photoshop.

- **bazer49** Says:

February 8th, 2008 at 11:30 am

great list-have been trying to get a premiere alt. for ages will now try avidmux
will try winpooch as well
let you know

- **Jadd** Says:

February 8th, 2008 at 11:31 am

Internet Explorer is not free of charge, you can only legally use it if you own a Windows license.

- **Tim Fuller** Says:

February 8th, 2008 at 11:39 am

I don't see the logic in changing from Skype. The software is free and available on Win/Linux/Mac. It's the original open source telephone in my opinion. I remember toying with it when it was probably in the state of development of the company you note and that was many years ago.

Skype to Skype is free. Options to receive and make calls from Skype and non-Skype users are cheap and well integrated. Plenty of third party support.

That change recommendation just doesn't make sense.

Enjoy.

- **J** Says:

February 8th, 2008 at 11:40 am

What's the best alternative to MS SharePoint?

- **HPAVC** Says:

February 8th, 2008 at 11:42 am

gimp != photoshop, the gimp interface is horrid just the menubar itself is a crime.

OpenLaszlo? Should have mentioned the apps are compiled down to flash and thus are not a flash alternative wholly.

- **Pondfish** Says:

February 8th, 2008 at 11:47 am

Your list has convinced me to stay with Windows. Most Windows apps you've mentioned been matured over the years, and there are fewer

vendors to deal with for support.

At least the Open Source community is keeping the vendor community on their toes.

- **jOrge** Says:
February 8th, 2008 at 11:50 am

Also think Kexi is not free for Windows.
OpenBase that comes with OpenOffice works ok if you are used to Access.
- **HPAVC** Says:
February 8th, 2008 at 11:52 am

Box to Cabos?

More aptly Box to Google Docs or Sourceforge, Cabos doesn't provide well anything its an app + p2p network at best.

Box is used by people to shuttle files to people (an accountant can have all their clients upload QBK files or what have you to their box account) that isn't happening with Cabos
- **Tyler** Says:
February 8th, 2008 at 11:53 am

Nice list! I've been looking for some alternatives to some programs and this post helped me big time!

Thanks for putting this list together.

-TW
- **Jason Friesen** Says:
February 8th, 2008 at 11:57 am

NVU vs Dreamweaver: DW includes many prepackaged ASP/JSP/PHP/CFML scripts for quick, visual, point-and-click programming. It's a great timesaver: put the functions in and tweak them as needed after the fact. Last I looked, NVU does nothing like this.

I'd happily switch to an open-source, Mac-compatible alternative if I knew of any.

j
- **xxdesmus** Says:
February 8th, 2008 at 11:59 am

You do realize that Box != Cabos right?

1st of all, Box.net does offer a 1GB free account. 2nd of all, Box.net is nothing like Cabos. Cabos is file searching/sharing. Box.net is file storage (and sharing if you decide to). Totally different kinds of products.
- **Mr Rabbit** Says:
February 8th, 2008 at 12:02 pm

gimp is by NO MEANS a photoshop alternative
Inkscape is by NO MEANS an illustrator alternative.
gimp and inkscape are both train-wrecks, interface-wise and neither support CMYK.
There is a reason Adobe's apps are the industry standard. It is because they are great, solid, versatile and can be used regularly in a professional production environment AND by a hobbyist to produce the same high-level work. this can NOT be said for The Gimp nor inkscape. Now apologize.
- **Not My Real Name** Says:
February 8th, 2008 at 12:03 pm

FeedDemon's open source now.
- **Not My Real Name** Says:
February 8th, 2008 at 12:03 pm

@HPAVC
You can get something called GIMPShop, which is GIMP but with a photoshop interface.

- **J.Dautz** Says:
February 8th, 2008 at 12:04 pm
s/NVU/Kompozer
- **Not a Hippie** Says:
February 8th, 2008 at 12:08 pm
Wow, nice propaganda you f**king hippie.

You're also a f**king idiot if you think that Dia compares with Visio or that *any* Linux desktop can approach the usability of Windows. F**king idiot.
- **mezo22** Says:
February 8th, 2008 at 12:14 pm
Great list. The only thing I disagree with is Dia. I have used MS Visio for years and have searched high and low for another program that is close, and have yet to find one.
- **Chris Snyder** Says:
February 8th, 2008 at 12:16 pm
Nice list, I hope you republish with some of the fixes and additions mentioned in the comments.

- vlc really deserves to be there; how else are you gonna play your region 2 dvds?

- the Gimp interface causes allergic reaction for many designers, but it does some things (script foo) that Photoshop doesn't, and behaves much better than adobe's recent bloatware.

- the QuickTime to Darwin Streaming Server comparison is another apples/oranges thing. QuickTime is a player/encoder. Streaming Server is a server. And anyway, just use Apache to "stream" your video.

Cheers!
- **Mem's** Says:
February 8th, 2008 at 12:16 pm
To build Flash SWF, can use directly Flex Builder or Flex SDK + FlashDevelop.
OpenLaszlo can also generate SWF but is like PHP Ming, all features not supported...
- **OmahaVike** Says:
February 8th, 2008 at 12:20 pm
avidemux is NOT a replacement for premiere. in fact, it's nowhere near the type of package which premiere is. try cinelerra as the proper non-linear editor. it IS open source, there's just no community-based development.

simply trying to help those aspiring video producers/editors out there.
- **Edan** Says:
February 8th, 2008 at 12:21 pm
Photoshop cannot be replaced by GIMP. GUI is just not as comfortable, from personal experience.
Songbird is awesome, but I still think iTunes is better.
Except for those two that I personally tried, hell yeah (Firefox FTW ^^).
- **Carl** Says:
February 8th, 2008 at 12:24 pm
Kexi is not free. It is \$55 to buy.
- **zorax** Says:
February 8th, 2008 at 12:25 pm
Very nice list. I've used many with great success but there are many I have not noticed before and look forward to trying out.
In the past I've used Real Alternative and QuickTime Alternative to replace Real and Quicktime with great success. VLC is excellent also.
A nice replacement for Word is AbiWord.
Paint.net is a good replacement for Windows Paint, but as far as I know it's just for Windows.

- **vj** Says:
February 8th, 2008 at 12:26 pm
you forgot partition magic gparted
- **NonLinearMan** Says:
February 8th, 2008 at 12:29 pm
Greetings everyone! There IS good non-linear video editing software available for Linux and MacOS, and it is named: Cinelerra. I have used it for some local cable TV commercials and online video as well. I recommend it highly, and encourage you to try it out. I am not a compensated skill for the authors of this software, simply a happy end-user. 😊 Here is the Wikipedia link for more details:
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cinelerra>
- **275** Says:
February 8th, 2008 at 12:31 pm
Is there an open-source alternative for hosting eemeetings? Something similar to WebEX, Centra...
- **philippe** Says:
February 8th, 2008 at 12:31 pm
Great list.

Instead of NVU I would suggest Radria
<http://radria.sqlfusion.com/>
Its active, i've been using it for sometime and I love it.
- **rico** Says:
February 8th, 2008 at 12:39 pm
Funny. Most of this OSS stuff is nice for the poor or amateurs but not for pros.
- **mathew** Says:
February 8th, 2008 at 12:42 pm
Tim Fuller: Skype is NOT open source, at all. It also uses a proprietary protocol. Whereas other VoIP clients like Wengo and Gizmo are interoperable, Skype only works with other Skype clients. It's as proprietary as software gets.
- **Rikki** Says:
February 8th, 2008 at 12:42 pm
Good list but:

Adobe Premiere to Avidemux

Is like comparing an F117a to a hot air balloon.
- **MasterPatricko** Says:
February 8th, 2008 at 12:46 pm
Great list! However you give the impression that by switching to the open-source "alternative" you are sacrificing something to gain its freedom ... in many cases the open-source programs are wonderful in their own right and far more fully featured than their closed counterparts.
- **Luca** Says:
February 8th, 2008 at 12:52 pm
Any real valid alternative to Active Sync that drove me crazy more than one time?
- **nate** Says:
February 8th, 2008 at 12:59 pm
Another recommendation for Octave- unlike Scilab, which is only "partially compatible" with MATLAB (it's not, though, and the translation scripts suck hard!), Octave is fully compatible with MATLAB syntax- though it doesn't implement all of MATLAB's features. It's really useful if you don't work in a vacuum and actually want collaborate with other groups or feel like using some elaborate user-written MATLAB extension.
- **mdwstmusik** Says:

February 8th, 2008 at 1:00 pm

“What’s the best alternative to MS SharePoint?”

We use eGroupware.

- . Says:

February 8th, 2008 at 1:10 pm

yes. lets all attack someone fanatically in an irritating and almighty fashion.

- **The Dude** Says:

February 8th, 2008 at 1:15 pm

OpenSSL is in no way a substitute for Authorize.net. OpenSSL is a programing library that facilitates secure/encrypted connections between a variety of programs. Authorize.net is a payment gateway that companies use to process payments of credit cards and e-checks. In fact, may people use OpenSSL to communicate with Authorize.net.

It’s kind of like saying that Firefox is an open source alternative to EBay (or something like that).

Just my 2 cents.

The Dude

- **emptyset** Says:

February 8th, 2008 at 1:16 pm

I’m surprised no one mentioned MPlayer. It runs on *nix/OS-X/Windows and plays FLV and that Real player crap that may still be laying around on your HDD... and it plays just about everything else too.

<http://www.mplayerhq.hu/>

- **Derek Buranen** Says:

February 8th, 2008 at 1:18 pm

kompozer > nvu

- **Andrew B.** Says:

February 8th, 2008 at 1:24 pm

You’re only missing one thing and that is Free GIS software.. there’s such a wealth of it out there. I’d like to say thats far too ‘specialized’ to speak of, but you did mention AutoCAD.

- **Terry Smith** Says:

February 8th, 2008 at 1:28 pm

Awesome list, thanks!

- **Spook** Says:

February 8th, 2008 at 1:31 pm

I don’t see the logic in changing from Skype. The software is free and available on Win/Linux/Mac. It’s the original open source telephone in my opinion. I remember toying with it when it was probably in the state of development of the company you note and that was many years ago.

Uhh... Skype is not free software. Yes, there’s no charge, but that doesn’t make it free. It has never to my knowledge been free or open source.

- **Danny** Says:

February 8th, 2008 at 1:33 pm

I like OpenProj as an alternative to MS Project. OpenProj can open and work with MS Project files:

<http://openproj.org/openproj>

- **Broker Boyce** Says:

February 8th, 2008 at 1:38 pm

Thanks for the great list. know it took some time to compile it. I like the ability to try out alternatives to the boxed programs. I use Mac and

PC because I can't get some programs to work on each one. This list will give me something to work on for a while. I would love to drop the PC. Thanks.

- **Bob** Says:
February 8th, 2008 at 1:41 pm
Turbocash link is dead. The front page loads but everything else is dead. Not an encouraging sign.
- **Tom** Says:
February 8th, 2008 at 1:44 pm
Cool list, but I do not think NVU is a good replacement to dreamweaver.
Quanta, Kompozer and Radria are better alternatives.
The last one is web based and compatible mac, windows and linux. It includes tons of modules and Add-On scripts that NVU doesn't have.
- **Mr smokey bear** Says:
February 8th, 2008 at 1:45 pm
SM player plays just about everything and includes codex
- **Sam** Says:
February 8th, 2008 at 1:54 pm
I used to use Bluefish, but now I use Geany. I love EditPlus on Windows, Geany is a very nice alternative. My favorite feature is regex search/replace across multiple files.
- **Mr. Open Source** Says:
February 8th, 2008 at 1:59 pm
Microsoft Visio comparing with Dia???? You are OUT OF YOUR MIND. Dia can't do 90% of the things that Visio does. Wanna bet?
Also, it is extremely lame to compare Adobe Illustrator with Inkscape and Adobe Premiere with Avidemux.

What's gonna be next? Comparing MS Calc vs Gnome Calc?
- **howard** Says:
February 8th, 2008 at 1:59 pm
Although nice in terms of a list, you are off the mark at least 2 things. Cabos and box.net don't compare at all. Online storage versus a filesharing program, it's wrong.

With openlazlo vs Flash Professional....again....openlazlo is at best a competitor to Adobe Flex. Guess what ? Adobe Flex's code is opensource. Why you failed to mention that is a mystery to me. But it makes me think you want to pitch opensource against big corporate. Which is wrong, really.
- **dean** Says:
February 8th, 2008 at 2:02 pm
very nice list!

followed many of the links, thanks!

never mind nay sayer, most folks have opinions on such matters, which are just that - opinions.
- **bobafred** Says:
February 8th, 2008 at 2:06 pm
just wanted to note that the filezilla client is now available for linux and mac, in addition to windows.
- **Kelly** Says:
February 8th, 2008 at 2:07 pm
Let me fix that for you.

Basics

1. Windows Vista OS to Ubuntu OS
Debian

2. Internet Explorer Browser to Firefox Browser
SeaMonkey (Mozilla)

Office Suites

3. Microsoft Office to OpenOffice
KOffice

4. Mactopia to NeoOffice

Office Tools

5. MathWorks MATLAB to Scilab
Isn't Ocatve the thing to use here?

6. Microsoft Access to Kexi
Yes

7. Microsoft Word to OpenOffice Writer
KWord

8. Microsoft Excel to OpenOffice Calc
KSpread

9. Microsoft Visio to Dia
Dia is ugly, use Kivio

Productivity

10. Blackboard to Moodle
DO IT NOW! BB is awful!

11. Box to Cabos
Box sounds like file sharing site trying
to sound legal. If you want to pirate^w
I mean "share some perfectly legal files",
use BitTorrent. Good clients include
Deluge, rtorrent, transmission and
KTorrent.

12. Microsoft Project to Open Workbench
KPlato or Planner

13. Mindjet to FreeMind

Graphic Programs

14. Adobe Illustrator to Inkscape
OK

15. Adobe PhotoShop to GIMP
Krita

16. Adobe Premiere to Avidemux
Ha ha, very funny. Not comparable.

17. AutoCAD to Archimedes

18. Microsoft PowerPoint to OpenOffice Impress
KPresenter

19. Microsoft Paint to Tux Paint

20. TruSpace to Blender
closest you're going to get

Web Editors

21. Adobe GoLive CS2 to Mozilla SeaMonkey
GoLive has what to do with SeaMonkey?

Use Kompozer (bugfix of NVU, which is derived from Mozilla (SeaMonkey) Composer.

Or use Quanta. Or vim.

22. Adobe Dreamweaver to NVU
Kompozer or Quanta or vim.

23. Macromedia Flash Professional to OpenLaszlo
No and No - Use HTML, CSS and JS, not this other crap

24. Microsoft Frontpage to Bluefish
Kompozer or Quanta or vim.

25. Windows Notepad to ConTEXT
Vim, or if you insist on a gui non-modal editor use Scite or Kate or GEdit or leafpad
On Win32, Scite or Notepad2 or Notepad++

26. Altova XMLSpy to XML Copy Editor

Publishing

27. Adobe Acrobat to PDFCreator
OK

28. Adobe Framemaker to DocBook
What do you think the connection is between page layout software and a documentation system? Use Kword or Scribus or even LaTeX (kile or lyx if you want a latex editor).

29. Microsoft Publisher to Scribus
Yes

Communications

30. AIM to Pidgin
Any of the many good Jabber/XMPP clients. Psi is one good one.
AIM via a server transport.

31. FeedDemon to RSS Bandit
Newsfox (Firefox/SeaMonkey ext.)

32. Microsoft MSN Messenger to aMSN
MSN via a Jabber server transport.

33. Microsoft Outlook to Thunderbird
All email clients suck. tbird, Claws, mutt and Gmail suck the least (in different ways).

34. Skype to Wengophone
OK

Media

35. iTunes to Songbird
Amarok or Rhythmbox or mpd or xmms2

36. Nero Burning Rom to K3b

Yes, or brasero

37. Quicktime to Darwin Streaming Server

38. TiVo Desktop to Galleon.tv
Tivo to MythTV

39. Windows Media Player to Miro
Miro is a new category, not comparable to anything, esp. not WMP. To replace WMP, use mplayer or gxine. VLC is ok-ish.

Utilities

40. CuteFTP to Filezilla
Yes, or Konquoror

41. iBackup to ZManda
tar+bzip2

42. Norton Ghost to Partition Image
OK

43. Rational Purify to Valgrind

44. WinZip to 7-Zip
Ok-ish, better to uncompress with the appropriate cli tool. Compress with bzip2

Security

45. Kaspersky Anti-Virus Personal to Winpooch
Winpooch?!

46. McAfee VirusScan to ClamWin
On win32 yes. On Linux do not bother with clamav unless you run a Mail server with Win32 clients

47. Norton Personal Firewall to WIPFW
Core Force is based on OpenBSD's PF

Financial

48. Authorize.net to OpenSSL
What?! Not comparable

49. Microsoft Money (Plus) to TurboCash
GnuCash or KMyMoney

50. Quickbooks to Compiere

- **Jack** Says:
February 8th, 2008 at 2:17 pm
IMO Amarok is much more widely used than songbird...
- **Xurxo** Says:
February 8th, 2008 at 2:20 pm
greit list, I also love crimsom editor (now open source as emerald). AbiWord is excellent too, if you want a light full text editor, ... Eclipse and Aptana are really good programming/web editors (Aptana is free, but maybe not os
- **Wyno** Says:
February 8th, 2008 at 2:24 pm

All these apps may be great for a home user, but have you actually ever tried them in a production environment ? Try keeping a network secure while running any of those 'to' apps. Especially in educational environments where every CIS major who takes 1 class thinks they're suddenly an expert ? No to mention the fact of person info security. AND interoperability. I've been running Vista for over a year with no issues other than drivers, and that's pretty much cleared up.

- **Patrick** Says:
February 8th, 2008 at 2:25 pm
There is no replacement for MATLAB. Just type 'why' on the command line to discover why.
- **Mike** Says:
February 8th, 2008 at 2:33 pm
great firewall and anti-virus for free <http://www.comodo.com>
- **Scott** Says:
February 8th, 2008 at 2:37 pm
I can't really speak for most of the programs on the list, but I can say for sure that GIMP does not even approach the capability of Photoshop. I find the interface to be non-intuitive and it lacks even the most basic controls that set Photoshop apart from competitors. I support open source software, but Adobe is a company which has shown that proprietorship has clear and overwhelming advantages to open source in some cases.
- **Tobes** Says:
February 8th, 2008 at 2:45 pm
You forgot one of my favorites - PHP with MySQL in place of those huge oracle databases. i run my website off mysql and couldnt be happier with it.
- **Brian** Says:
February 8th, 2008 at 3:00 pm
Got an alternative to Quicken 2007?
- **Peter Nicol** Says:
February 8th, 2008 at 3:25 pm
Re: Matlab. Try Maxima. (type Maxima CAS into a search engine). Highly recommended.
- **mike** Says:
February 8th, 2008 at 3:29 pm
 - SyncBack for back ups
 - Eclipse for Java programming
 - WinMerge to compare text files
 - Password Safe for storing all your passwords and more
 - AVG antivirus software
 - EditPlus for text editing
 - Sunbelt Kerio Firewall
 - xplorer2 instead of windoz explorer
 - Agent Ransack instead of windoz explorer searching
 - Rename-It! to bulk rename files
 - Sequoia View to visualise harddisk usage
- **Micanopy Mike** Says:
February 8th, 2008 at 3:56 pm
Anybody suggest a draw program other than Dia? Have tried Dia but ran into too many questions about its use and found no quick answers. Still looking for a very simple to use draw program suitable for creating electronic circuit diagrams and flow charts that will snap lines to objects and provide for easy mixing of text and objects. Also need to be able to create a library of symbols.

Micanopy Mike
- **oelewapperke** Says:
February 8th, 2008 at 4:33 pm
Sorry to say, but you must be joking ... comparing visio to dia ... is beyond stupid.

Dia would not even make a good diagramming tool for windows 3.0. It's actually below that standard.

I get the impression many of the "alternatives" you offer suffer from this.

...

Kexi is no access, not by a long shot
The streamlined interface of inkscape ?

I mean I'm pro-open-source. But it can't solve all our problems, and it destroys alternatives. With the number of developers "working" on open source, there should be 5 office suites, different ones, 5 visio's (and not a single dia), ... there aren't.

Proprietary software is clearly superior for many of these tasks I'm afraid.

- **Marc C** Says:

February 8th, 2008 at 5:24 pm

Interesting list, but as others have mentioned, many open source tools, while promising, cannot currently replace many of the commercial packages listed in the article. As a user of mindmapping software, for instance, no way does Freemind even come within sniffing distance of Mindjet's Mindmanager features (it will eventually, but it still has a long way to go). The same applies to image and video editing apps: no single open source app currently approaches Photoshop's or Illustrator's power. Specialists will prefer commercial apps that have been around for a long time, with a large community and tested support services.

On the flip side, I can definitely see open source mainstream office applications threaten Microsoft's market, as many people never use advanced features and will "get by" with just the basics. The emergence of online services just confirms this trend.

- **Ash** Says:

February 8th, 2008 at 5:27 pm

35. iTunes to Songbird
forget that Amarok 4TW!

- **linkerjpatrick** Says:

February 8th, 2008 at 5:44 pm

As much as I would love for Scribus to be the answer to the bane that is Microsoft Publisher it just doesn't cut it. Yes, I hate and I repeat hate Microsoft Publisher but I will give it one thing. As far as MS apps go it is pretty user friendly. Not as good as Apple's Pages program but the people who are comfortable and use Publisher will not use Scribus.

I run Windows on my Mac for three reasons, 1.) to support and help out customers who use Windows, 2.) Publisher 3.) Internet Explorer I wish Publisher would either die or MS would create a port for OSX along with the rest of the office suite but alas they refuse. I guess they want something that keeps people using Windows but it's a pain for web developers, graphic designers, etc. who keep getting publisher files from clients.

- **Geoffrey** Says:

February 8th, 2008 at 5:58 pm

Look at all the haters. Let's see your list. Oh, wait, your list is nonexistent. Pfft

- **jpwm** Says:

February 8th, 2008 at 6:14 pm

I am grateful for this list. I work in a small independent high school with a laptop program and want to be able to give my students every opportunity but budgets are buggers. With such support not only can they have good tools available, but they can learn about the open source world and ethic.

Also, after years of not being able to afford high end software but getting tastes now and then, it has been my experience that whatever interface or procedures you have used always 'seems' to be the best and only dabbling with alternatives doesn't give you the time to really learn how it works- you only can see how it's different and than mistakenly conclude that it could never replace what you use. In reality, it probably can do over 90% of your current needs and save you tons. Unless you completely commit, it's really hard to make some of the declarations made above. I'm sure some have and their comments are justified.

- **Billy** Says:

February 8th, 2008 at 6:27 pm

I'm surprised not to see Audacity somewhere on this list.

- **Nowandever29** Says:

February 8th, 2008 at 7:17 pm

You forgot DriveImage XML - open source partition backup and recovery software for Windows, that writes to standard XML and BIN files. It works great!

- **ezra212** Says:

February 8th, 2008 at 7:51 pm

Just had to chime in and agree with comments #10, #69, and #82... the Authorize.Net / OpenSSL comparison just makes no sense. The page you link to for Authorize.net allows you to buy SSL certificates from Comodo... but Authorize.net itself is a payment gateway (that can work with SSL certificates issued by ANY company, including OpenSSL). OpenSSL is not a payment gateway.

- **oj** Says:

February 8th, 2008 at 8:25 pm

linux lacks windows drm support

- **lx** Says:

February 8th, 2008 at 8:30 pm

K3B is linux only, as its not actually a true "burning" software, The actual disc recording in K3b is performed by cdrecord or wodim, cdrdao, and growisofs, which are command line utilities for linux.

- **TabernacleDrama** Says:

February 8th, 2008 at 8:56 pm

I just read them in reverse (e.g. GIMP -> Adobe Photoshop) and then went through my computer to see if I needed to replace anything (e.g. if I have GIMP, I better get Photoshop)

These 'underdog' always lists fail to impress me. There is a reason that the programs on the left in your column (the right in my column) are at the top of their respective markets: because they're the best.

Call me a sellout. Call me a servant to 'The Man'. Whatever. I call me 'rational'

Good Day

- **Mark** Says:

February 8th, 2008 at 9:34 pm

Please stop perpetuating the myth that Ubuntu is easy to use, because it will take even an expert a week to make it working OS. You can't play mp3s, or watch video, and none of your hardware will work. Vista, on the on the hand, has worked fine for months. And no, viruses haven't been a problem for most users for years. Linux is no more secure than Vista, by simple design.

- **ryan** Says:

February 8th, 2008 at 9:37 pm

linkerjpatrick you might want to look at codeweavers crossover software it may allow you to run publisher without having to reboot.

- **k10145** Says:

February 8th, 2008 at 11:17 pm

I tried turbocash based on this recommendation and its sucks. Sorry. Don't do that - Money is a superior product.

- **Guillermo Quezada** Says:

February 9th, 2008 at 12:49 am

Well I think we have seen a lot of Desktop applications for end user but also a powerful side of Open Source is hidden for many users because they don't think the command line is useful i.e.:

Web databases?? -> LAMP

Personal firewalls?? -> iptables

Video editing?? -> mencoder, ffmpeg

Image manipulation -> convert

Publishing?? -> LaTeX

Presentations?? -> Beamer (LaTeX package)

Text editors?? -> vi, emacs, pico, nano

Text editing?? -> Sed & Awk

Disk Partitioning?? -> fdisk, cfdisk

Media players?? -> mpg123 or mplayer

IDS?? -> Snort

Sniffing?? -> tcpdump
Proxy?? -> Squid
Internet services?? -> Bind, Apache, ISC DHCP, vsftpd
Calendar?? -> cal
Data plotting?? -> gnuplot
Debugging?? -> GDB
PC status?? -> top, vmstat, ps

Who said the command line is obsolete??

Yes I use all that apps most of my time, and I don't need some graphical enviroment to work with I'm a geek so what?? 😊

- **Tyler** Says:

February 9th, 2008 at 1:09 am

Nice lists, I recently made the switch from Vista to Ubuntu. Some of these will save me some time searching, thanks.

- **mkm** Says:

February 9th, 2008 at 5:01 am

I would suggest oxygen xml editor (<http://www.oxygenxml.com/>) instead of XML Copy Editor. You can get a trial license for 90 days and you can renew it with another trial license every 90 days (free of charge) 😊

- **Dan** Says:

February 9th, 2008 at 6:23 am

That's nice to know but there are many many other open-source alternatives to a single proprietary program. It's a fact that many open-source alternatives are better than prop. soft.

- **Skrue** Says:

February 9th, 2008 at 7:41 am

I love Gimp, and use it a lot for my photos, and on Ubuntu. I learned how to use it on <http://meetthegimp.org/>, where you can download videotutorial for free(and all made on Ubuntu). Check it out:-)

- **Clayton Emery** Says:

February 9th, 2008 at 7:48 am

Another web page maker alternative is Netscape's Composer, which is buried in the Netscape package. I run very simple (no frames, no flash) web sites, and experimented with free composers, and found it the simplest, most intuitive, and most WYSIWYG. CE

- **Aswin Nair** Says:

February 9th, 2008 at 8:43 am

I think a good include would be Hard Disk Partition softwares. The proprietary ones in the market are from PGP and a great open source alternative is TrueCrypt.

- **Mike Smith** Says:

February 9th, 2008 at 8:46 am

Let me second that: the open source alternative to MATLAB is SciPy (Scientific Python).

Scilab is nice, but it has nowhere near the user base or number of packages.

If you need MATLAB compatibility, Octave is the obvious open source choice, but being compatible with MATLAB, it inherits many of MATLAB's design flaws.

- **give the guy a break** Says:

February 9th, 2008 at 9:00 am

For the millions of internet newbies everywhere this list is very nice. For the other crabby comments, grow up and find something else to bitch about, maybe your keyboard is your only friend and mouth peice, but that doesn't give you permission to be nasty. Acting human is difficult if you live online, get a real non virtual life. Appreciate that this person took time to help others with less knowledge or money.

- **David Jacques-Louis** Says:

February 9th, 2008 at 9:48 am

Skype to Wengophone: Skype is a very strong freeware internet VoIP (Voice over IP) product in the telecommunications industry. It started

with a simple and free PC-to-PC telephony, but today offers full integration with existing telephone systems. Skype today also offers voicemail, video conversations and sending SMSs. Its open source alternative, WengoPhone, also provides free PC-to-PC calls as well as chat and video conferencing. Created by Wengo, this phone also can provide SMS and call-out features that allow users to communicate with any phone at reasonable prices.

No this is rubbish, Skype is better.

- **Mats** Says:

February 9th, 2008 at 10:32 am

Using Linux instead of Vista isn't really possible for everyone but otherwise the list looks nice. As someone else said, use Kivio instead of Dia, it looks better and can use Visio stencils.

- **A passer-by** Says:

February 9th, 2008 at 12:22 pm

That list gives ideas, which don't necessarily have to be the whole truth. I got some interesting ideas, saw some mistakes and got some other interesting ideas from other comments. Now, what I really think it's a disgrace is these people insulting the author or talking in such a disrespectful way... Is there any need to show disagreement in such a hateful way? Sad, very sad...

Thanks for the list and to all those who added something in a normal and civilized way. Those so full of hate and so empty regarding manners should go to sleep and leave us all here sharing different points of view and learning from each other's knowledge.

- **Khai** Says:

February 9th, 2008 at 1:56 pm

Actually trueSpace 3.2 is free and has been for a few years now...

- **Kweg** Says:

February 9th, 2008 at 2:42 pm

I love using Last-Exit on my ubuntu laptop in lieu of the last.fm player. It is amazingly lightweight which is fairly important for my now-ancient laptop. Good list though!

- **walter** Says:

February 9th, 2008 at 4:24 pm

one category thats missing is games. I'm don't play any of the games, but it seems all the games my teenagers want to play are for windows. Vista is ok, but XP may be better. I use Kubuntu at home, and have had some issues, but nothing major. The worst issue is syncing my palm treo 700 (can't get it to work). Another office suite that i'm checking out is Lotus Symphony, which IBM is releasing free of charge. it's based on openoffice, and it looks good so far. I haven't found anything as good as MS Outlook. Kontakt is ok, but Outlook is still better.

- **bob the mob** Says:

February 9th, 2008 at 5:15 pm

RE: The whiny comments regarding GIMP and Inkscape:

"PS/Illustrator has/have a more 'intuitive' interface." That's funny, when I try to use PS on my friend's computer, I get frustrated when I can't find simple functions that I could have selected in a second on GIMP. Maybe it's because I'm used to the GIMP gui and not PS's, and not because GIMP has a better interface? It's about what you're used to, not which is easier to use.

"There's no CMYK support." The first five results for "gimp CMYK" provide a plug-in for it. Inkscape is nearing implementation for CMYK, and already has a work-around. Keep patting yourself on the back for dropping \$500+ on a program/s that is/are almost redundant. Who am I kidding, everybody complaining here probably pirated them anyways.

- **archangelrichard** Says:

February 9th, 2008 at 8:03 pm

"Opinions are like a**holes, everybody has one"

Seriously, having over 30 years in this business, every program has its pluses and minuses. The intent of this list was to clearly show some open source alternatives that the author, I REPEAT, THE AUTHOR has experienced.

I doubt that it was meant to be all inclusive or all knowing.

I also use many of these proprietary solutions, other proprietary software and many of the open source software. Each has its place. In several cases the proprietary software seemed so 'left handed' to me that I gave up on it (and some rather expensive software at that) - for example I use paint shop pro over adobe illustrator because I am not a graphics artist, I do web pages, programming, training, etc. and I need a simpler

tool with a far easier interface. That is my specific use.

And one final word to those children with the negative comments who insist on putting in their two cents worth about the value of the open source to the proprietary - you missed the point of the article (It was never a comparison or which is better for a specific task / person - next time read the article). Kiddies, please remember before you go spouting off like this again: Only you can make yourself out to be a fool; the best anyone else can do is point out just how successfully you have done it.

- **David** Says:

February 10th, 2008 at 8:05 am

In reverance to: hacknot.info I would like to contribute the following story:

1. One day a fictitious developer arrives on the FOSS scene named: Devilooper.
2. Devilooper's current gig leads to: the download and installation of an unamed Java app on an Ubuntu or Windows box or both.
3. Devilooper uses the newly installed Java app or framework until she begins pushing the envelope which incurs problems and issues.
4. In an effort to get some help: Devilooper subscribes to the newly installed Java app or framework's mailing-list, wiki or blog (if allowed).
5. Devilooper kisses the ring and gets a response or 2 from the mailing-list gurus and users.
6. The Java app or framework gurus extend some help but Devilooper has more work to do and the Framework has unresolved issues.
7. In desperation, and because of the interest in the downloaded application, Devilooper checks-out the source from CVS or SVN in an effort to discover for herself what exactly are the issues, bugs and problems with the target software.
8. The Framework gurus get a notice or flag that Devilooper has checked-out the source code.
9. Devilooper returns to the ML only to discover that the mailing-list has fallen mysteriously silent: an unannounced full-stop in traffic from the ML.

- **Ozh** Says:

February 10th, 2008 at 11:11 am

the gimp is not even trying to "emulate" photoshop. It's completely different in aspect, interface, philosophy.

TBH, photoshop will be the last thing that will stick me to windows

- **Dirk** Says:

February 10th, 2008 at 11:54 am

'Free2design' is a good and completely free AutoCAD clone...

- **Mark** Says:

February 10th, 2008 at 12:07 pm

Nice list. I must point out that there *still* is nothing really close to AutoCad. Archimedes is probably going to be pretty good on its own, but it is very much alpha and it isn't really trying to be an ACAD replacement. And, did I mention that it's VERY much in Alpha - something about a re-write. I'm playing the typical user here - I downloaded it, launched it and it doesn't work. Yeah, I have JVM v 1.6 (which is the current version) and yeah, I saw that it wouldn't work on that version, but in a real environment, I would've gone ahead and let Java *update itself* and then Archimedes simply is out of commission.

- **John Lee** Says:

February 10th, 2008 at 12:10 pm

Two others I have not seen mentioned are Real Alternative which is a Real Player alternative and the other is Quicktime alternative and you can guess what that does. Far better than putting either of the original programs on your computer and watching them try to take over. Have you ever tried deleting Quicktime? It just comes straight back, I think because of itunes which is something else that I don't allow on my computer as there are far better free alternatives.

- **Nick Fessel** Says:

February 10th, 2008 at 12:31 pm

Also, for people who don't like iTunes, try [SharePod](#), a free iPod management utility.

- **bayoujim** Says:

February 10th, 2008 at 2:32 pm

Congratulations, what an excellent page!

Ubuntu is easy to use, Years ago my learning curve for Windows was far longer than my learning curve for Ubuntu.

After 3 weeks I started feeling comfortable with Ubuntu and with great satisfaction of mind. So what if it takes time, what else do we have.

Long live the Ubuntu!

- **Mike Dallos** Says:
February 10th, 2008 at 2:40 pm
great frickin' list!!

Thanks!!

Mike
Niskayuna, N.Y.
- **Mark Reynolds** Says:
February 10th, 2008 at 3:10 pm
This if for #126 Walter. I have a palm Treo and am using ubuntu. Just install "j pilot" from the repos, open it up click on "File" Preferences". Select the settings tab and use the following.

Port usb:
Serial Rate 9600

They main one is the port. Then click autosysn in jpilot first and then on your Treo usb hotsync cable.
- **David Joyner** Says:
February 10th, 2008 at 7:11 pm
As has been pointed out, SciLab is not FOSS.
Octave is one possibility, but SAGE is I think the best choice. (Octave is available as an optional SAGE package.) SAGE is available at <http://www.sagemath.org/>
- **David Joyner** Says:
February 10th, 2008 at 7:24 pm
I should have added that scipy is a standard component to SAGE.
- **Marcin** Says:
February 10th, 2008 at 8:49 pm
I would say from Matlab to Octave 3, rather than to Scilab.
- **RLWhite** Says:
February 10th, 2008 at 9:02 pm
Wiimote -> Mimio, ebeam, prometean board
Kindlelab -> Smartboard Notebook
Edusim -> Secondlife
- **Todd Deshane** Says:
February 11th, 2008 at 1:09 am
Very interesting and useful list.

Clonezilla is worth a look for a Norton Ghost replacement:
<http://clonezilla.sourceforge.net/>

Also for burning software Brasero on Linux is another good one to look at:
<http://www.gnome.org/projects/brasero/>
- **OHaleck** Says:
February 11th, 2008 at 8:01 am
How about ActiveSync?
- **MistressOfTheDorkness** Says:
February 11th, 2008 at 8:30 am
Brilliant!

Thanks! You've mentioned some of my favorites, but, also a few more that I hadn't tried yet.

Cheers!

- **MarksTheDoorWithBlood** Says:
February 11th, 2008 at 1:23 pm

I'm looking for a good OpenSource program to replace Adobe OnLocation or Magic DV Rack. Any suggestions? Thanks.

- **Vadim P.** Says:
February 11th, 2008 at 8:40 pm

There's like, practically nothing to replace activesync capability.

I guess windows os + windows program = one stealthy relationship you can't mix.

- **jake** Says:
February 12th, 2008 at 12:30 am

great list. i loves me some open source.

- **Riley Boughton** Says:
February 12th, 2008 at 1:03 am

Nice list. Definitely useful and some great apps there. Ubuntu is definitely a great free OS alternative. It's my Linux distro of choice. 😊

- **rsperberg** Says:
February 12th, 2008 at 6:54 pm

Fascinating to read through this list and see many of the migrations I myself have made, including CuteFTP to Filezilla, QuarkXPress (& InDesign & other DTP apps) to Scribus, XMLSpy (& XMetaL & Epic Editor & Stylus Studio) to XML Copy Editor, Winzip to 7-Zip, IE to Firefox, and Illustrator to Inkscape.

All on Windows btw.

In every case, it wasn't the money but the usability. I'm much happier with each of these new choices.

(And Audacity, which one of the other commenters mentioned.)

One small note – XML Copy Editor (which I run on WinXP) also releases on Linux with packages for Arch, Fedora, Gentoo, Slackware and Ubuntu listed on the website. A great program, which I can recommend to anyone wholeheartedly.

Thanks for the list. I'll investigate some of your suggestions as needs arise.

- **rsperberg** Says:
February 12th, 2008 at 7:01 pm

I also should mention another great program – CmapTools.

I find the concept maps I make with CmapTools more useful than mindmaps, so it is a replacement for Mindjet in that regard. But obviously concept maps are not mindmaps so it's not a direct equivalent.

IHMC CmapTools: cmap.ihmc.us

- **OracleTube.com** Says:
February 13th, 2008 at 5:34 am

is there are free windows native alternative to freemind (mindmapping) software ?

I have partly coded this up in vc++, i want somebody to work on this. mail me at vpsingh88(at)yahoo.com

cheers,
Praveen.

- **Belva** Says:
February 13th, 2008 at 10:51 am

Thanks for the effort, Jimmy; "equally shiny objects" indeed! Always good to get another devotee's input when exploring new OS programs.

Thanks also for being willing to put up a list that was open to "critique" and thanks to the folks who offered their own comments, experiences & thoughts in a positive way.

- **Ron** Says:
[February 13th, 2008 at 3:01 pm](#)
Great topic to post. I think there's many other alternatives out there even from the one's mentioned. The problem is usually finding out what they are. This is a good start.
- **sianz** Says:
[February 13th, 2008 at 5:02 pm](#)
with the exception of some OSS, most other open source software are meaningless when time is of the essence.

I hire 20 graduates who have been using photoshop in their academics for designing, and should I move to gimp just because it is OSS?

The time wasted on retraining could be used for something else. In any biz, time is money, I will hire someone who is fast at photoshop, not at gimp.

Not all OSS are suited for replacement for real professional work.

It's the same for operating systems, when I buy 40 boxes of dell desktops, I want the OS to be up 15 mins it is plugged in. I have no time to get some guy to install linux and search/compile drivers if there's hardware issues.

Looks like the majority opinions are from people who have too much time on their hands.

I'll take a serious look if there's ever going to be an Oss for a switch/router and even checkpoint alternatives.

Right now, they are just toys for wannabes to me.
- **linkerjpatrick** Says:
[February 13th, 2008 at 6:45 pm](#)
I have considered Crossover Mac but I also provide support to some customers and family that pretty much require me to have a full copy of Windows. However I'm trying to wean these people of the fact that I will be able to do this. Seriously however it's not just a Windows issues per se. I wish Publisher was more like Word or Excel and compatible with more programs.
- **George Beinhorn** Says:
[February 13th, 2008 at 8:06 pm](#)
PCLinuxOS = less buggy than Ubuntu.

MS OneNote => Basket Notes in Linux.

Scribus = buggy, problematic.

OpenOffice. Hm. Have you tried formatting a 300-page self-published book in OO? I have. Not an experience I would care to repeat. A far better alternative is the commercial TextMaker for Linux, BSD, and Win. In brief tests, I was able to swap files between TM and MS Word (XP and 2007) and preserve Tracked Changes.

Can't live without a Win program (Dreamweaver? Indesign? Photoshop?) - install WinXP as a VirtualBox guest and keep working.
- **Taroogs** Says:
[February 14th, 2008 at 4:12 am](#)
i'm using only 6 of the 50 open source software listed here, but out of the 6 is the top 3 (Ubuntu, Firefox and OpenOffice)... so far, these are enough for me 😊
- **Technical Writing Geek** Says:
[February 14th, 2008 at 8:24 am](#)
I'm currently trying out InfraRecorder to replace Nero. This seems a viable contender as well.

I'm not sure OpenOffice and DocBook are ready to replace their venerable alternatives. Some things are still done better by the originals.
- **Ryan** Says:
[February 14th, 2008 at 3:52 pm](#)

You know, I like OSS as much as the next guy, but I have these lists that just say well here's the OSS equivalent of the commercial/proprietary package you used. Have at it. In most cases the alternative is not mature enough, lacks key features or is harder to use and / or has a horrid user interface.

Some laughable examples are:

Photoshop -> Gimp

Dreamweaver -> NVU

Outlook -> Thunderbird

And in many cases if an end user dare mail the list and ask for a feature they are flamed because "we're making this software for free here, buddy, like it or lump it." "You got the source, just hack it to do what you want."

- **jonoh** Says:

February 15th, 2008 at 3:42 am

this is a handy list of sftwr altrntvz. thanks!

these comments would be even more useful if they were attached inline to the software in discussion vs. clumped into one big list at the end.

- **Jan-Helge Fagerström** Says:

February 15th, 2008 at 3:04 pm

You have forgot cinepaint (<http://www.cinepaint.org/>)as an alternative for Photoshop

- **Roland** Says:

February 15th, 2008 at 5:08 pm

Great list - thanks! I'm have been using a number of these programs for some time, I plan to check out several more as a result of reading this. I second the vote for SMPlayer - I tried VLC and MPlayer, and SMPlayer is just or good or better, plus you don't need to go hunting down new codecs regularly. IBM has served up Lotus Symphony, which is based on Open Office code. The interface is a bit different from OO - one could say "dumbed-down" a bit, but in some ways much better. LS is to be integrated into the R8 release of Lotus Notes, if that matters to anyone. Finally, I cannot believe that someone seriously wrote that he runs Windows on a Mac so that he can use IE...

-Roland

- **DOBius** Says:

February 15th, 2008 at 8:41 pm

realplayer may run on linux also..

- **Dan** Says:

February 16th, 2008 at 8:14 am

You missed out Notepad++! I can't believe that - it's possibly the best open source HTML editor for Windows that there is!

- **bigjohnny** Says:

February 17th, 2008 at 12:05 am

Windows Media Player to MPUI

opens MPG, AVI, Divx, Quicktime, Realplayer, nearly everything. It's a GUI for mplayer.

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

- **alex** Says:

February 17th, 2008 at 3:46 am

I disagree with your choices with XML editor, do you know editix : <http://www.editix.com> .

Best regards

Comments are closed.