

Your Favourite Windows Apps

Hugh Macdonald

I've been paying a lot of attention to Linux of late in the pages of PC Update, but of course the fact remains that the majority of members use Windows as their main operating system. And members love to hear from other members about what applications they're using, in case there is some interesting or useful program that they haven't heard of that might help them to use their computer better. So I also decided to consult Yammer and the Windows 10 group on what their favourite Windows apps were.

I have omitted a lot of run of the mill answers here, in order to save space. Most people know that the major web browsers are Google Chrome, Mozilla Firefox and Microsoft Edge and have chosen their favourite, a lot of members use Mozilla Thunderbird for their email and many members are aware of LibreOffice, which has been previously reviewed in PC Update, and is an excellent free alternative to Microsoft Office.

So in no particular order, I present some of the less common suggestions offered by members in the Windows 10 Yammer group, in the hope you might spot something here that will help you to get more out of your computer:

All of these are free to download and use, unless otherwise noted.

Notepad++ - this is an excellent programmer's text editor. You can edit all sorts of files in it and it colour codes markup and corrects syntax if it is dealing with a familiar language such as HTML.

Macrium Reflect - probably the best way to backup your computer in Windows these days. It takes a full image of your hard drive which you can either restore back to a new drive if your old drive crashes or you can mount in Windows Explorer and restore files from. The Home version is freeware.

TreeSize Free - a handy utility for managing your files and examining your drives, with many more features than are offered in Windows Explorer.

ClipMate - a handy utility that extends the features of the Windows clipboard.

PDFSam - a very handy program for splitting or merging PDF files. Its merging features are actually used in the production of PC Update each month.

Total Commander - an alternative to TreeSize Free above. It has similar features so try them both and see which one you prefer.

CCleaner - probably the best utility for cleaning out the unnecessary files that gather in Windows and slow it down. It can also repair the registry and uninstall programs.

Spotify - If you like to stream your music, Spotify is great if you are prepared to put up with the occasional ad (on the free version).

Gravity - If you are into USENET newsgroups, then Gravity is one of the best choices.

Irfanview - A basic image viewer and editor.

VMWare Player - If you want to run virtual machines such as distributions of Linux from Windows, then this is one of the top choices for doing that.

Audacity - If you are into audio editing, then this is the application that has all the features that you'll

need.

Portable Apps - More of a website (www.portableapps.com) than an actual application but contains versions of a lot of common and popular Windows applications that can either be run from a USB flash drive or simply copied to a directory of your computer and run. Handy if you want to run an application once without installing it, or if you change computers a lot and want to take fully setup applications with you.

All of these applications can be found by doing a search for their name and finding the website to download them from. A lot of them can also be easily installed using www.ninite.com which lets you pick from a list of applications and creates a custom installation program that you download and run which installs them in a batch for you.

Thanks to Stewart Gruneklee, Dave Simpson, Russell Cooper, Ian Mitchell, Nick Downing, Jon Teeuwsen, David McKendry, Phillip Lynch, Shane Mason, Peter Shute, Richard Solly and Graham Swanston for their contributions to this article.