

Xmetalfanx Software Guide – rev 1.03



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Introduction

This is a guide/list to some of my favorite programs. I have found in many cases there are perfectly good free alternatives to some “commonly known” and expensive programs. With this guide, I hope to let people see they do not have to continue to pay money for software they use just because “that program was always there”

Software Piracy

I am talking true freeware or Open source software (unless otherwise noted)

I am on no way referring to illegal ways of getting legit programs. If you like a program that is not free, BUY IT... It is illegal and in my opinion “not right” anyway to pirate software. It is JUST WRONG.

GiveAwayOfTheDay.com Exception

I do have to mention GiveAwayOfTheDay.com, which gives away legal copies of program licenses for free. The main “catch” to GAOTD is that:

- You get no support from the software company
- You get no “Free future upgrade/updates (*updates depending on the program*)

GiveAwayOfTheDay, is PERFECTLY LEGAL and legit .. I still have a number of programs from years past, from GAOTD

Whats New

Rev 1.0 to Rev 1.01 Changes:

- Fixed location of some graphics that did not line up correctly

Rev 1.01 to Rev 1.02 Changes

- Fixed a few stupid (as in “I do not know how I missed them”) spelling mistakes
- Trying new “alignments” to make certain pages “read better”

Todo List (For future releases)

- Add list of “Codec Packs” to the guide
- Add a TON of compression programs to the guide

Commonly known shareware (paid) programs -vs- Open Source or Freeware alternatives

I just want to say that the freewares I list are just the ones I know and sometimes even use regularly, they are NOT THE ONLY freeware alternatives

CD and DVD Burning Software

Paid	Open Source or Freeware
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Nero Burning Software• Roxio's Burning Suite	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Imgburn• CDBurnerXP• InfraRecorder

Office Suites/Productivity Software/Text Editors/Spreadsheet Programs/ ...etc

Paid	Open Source or Freeware
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Microsoft Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Open Office• Libre Office• Notepad++• Editpad

Antiviruses

Paid	Paid, but great choices	Freeware (the only two free choices I recommend)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• McAfee Antivirus• Norton Antivirus	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Eset's NOD32• Kaspersky Antivirus	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Avast• Avira

System Utilities/System Tools/ "Tune up" sites and software for regular maintenance

Paid	Not Free, but worth a look	Freeware (the only two free choices I recommend)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Any of those sites you see advertised on TV To "double the speed" of your computer. You can see my opinion on these sites in my "Computer Optimization Guide"</i>• System Mechanic	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• JV16 PowerTools<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ One of my "old favorites" and one I have used for what seems like 10 years now• Acoulogic's BootSpeed<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ The main reason I would slip this program is that many of the features (Disk and Reg Defrag, Temp File Cleaner) are offered by the company as "stand alone" products for free	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Glary Utilities

Graphics Editors/Viewers

The type of editing and needs of the editor (you) differ and the level you are at editing graphics can make a difference on which one's I recommend

Paid	Freeware Editors	Editors/Viewers
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Adobe Photoshop• Adobe Photoshop Elements• Corel Paint Shop Pro (formerly from Jasc)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• GIMP – A must try for any Photoshop user• Paint.net• Inkscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• IrfanView• Xnview

Video Converters

The type of editing and needs of the editor (you) differ and the level you are at editing graphics can make a difference on which one's I recommend

Paid	Freeware
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>ANY PROGRAM YOU HAVE TO PAY FOR</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Format Factory• Freemake Video Converter• “Any Video Converter”

Office Programs

Microsoft Office Alternatives

- Even as recently as July 2011, I have seen people say how much they think the "only way to go" is to use Microsoft Office, instead of the free alternatives. I disagree 100% with that assessment and do not understand where that idea comes from. People that do not know any better will listen to them and buy Microsoft Office for no reason.
- **** If you try one the free alternatives, and don't like it... you can always remove it and THEN purchase Microsoft Office ** ;.... if you (I am sure for companies, there may be some kind of charge, but still it will be cheaper then Microsoft Office) DO like it, then you just saved yourself and maybe your company a lot of money.
- (As a side-note: I am currently typing all of these guides in Libre Office)
- I do want to say I have seen people in businesses, that have used Open Source, Microsoft Office alternatives, for over 8 years and never had an issue with the alternatives (for them or any "partners" that they had to send files to)
 - The only issues I have ever had with these programs is when creating a file with "Bullets" or "Numbered list" in one program (MS office, then opening in one of the free alternatives) .
 - SOMETIMES the alignment doesn't "line up" correctly.
 - I can not say that this is STILL an issue, since it may have been fixed/adjusted since I last checked

The whole idea of Open Source is NOT to have one company in control of the project ...

- Free Office Alternatives



▪ Libre Office

- (<http://www.libreoffice.org/>)
- I am not 100% sure on how it came about, though, it seems to have had to do with Oracle buying Sun Microsystems who “own the rights” to Open Office and wanting (Oracle) more control of Open Office. (Sort of *against* the principle of Open Source)
- Former Open Office developers branched out again using the code they made for the last “pre-Oracle “ Open Office and made Libre Office, which is always being updated



■ **Open Office...** (<http://www.openoffice.org/>)

- This is the most well known alternative and is Open Source and despite what some say, IT CAN read and write ALL MS Office formats, that I know of.
- Jan 2013 Update: I have to say that Oracle has apparently sold Open Office to Apache and Open Office is in fact open source and being updated again. The main reasoning for the Libre Office split, from Open Office, is (summing it up) in effect removed,
 - I can not say (my opinion/prediction) of what will happen with Open Office. Will they “merge”?, Will Open and Libre office both be open source alternatives to Microsoft Office?... Only time will tell

■ *Personal Comments about the office suites*

- I have Open Office, Libre Office (no need for both, but my Hard Drive has enough space so, "why not?"), AND a student Edition of Microsoft Office 2003 installed at the same time and not run into any issues...
- I would say if you have *Libre* or *Open* Office (*other than testing, just to see what the other is like*) there is no reason to install the other suite, since they are so similar.
- I DID run into trouble with Libre Office and Open Office on Ubuntu ... seems on Linux you have to choice one or the other... I would advice to go with Libre Office in that case., for the reasons above (Open Office is not obsolete, though Libre Office is sort of a “new Open Office”)

◦ *Other Free Office Related Applications*



■ Abiword

- (<http://www.abisource.com/>)
- A free word processor that may suit the needs of some people that need a good "MS Works" type word processor, however they do not need or want a full office suite. Even if you install MS Office, Libre Office, and Open Office, there is no reason you cant try Abiword, as well.
 - This may be “overkill” on Word Processors, however, it's your computer, so “why not?”



■ Editpad Lite

- (<http://www.editpadlite.com/>)
- This is a Notepad replacement that will color code MANY types of code for easier readability. Many programmers would appreciate this, as its not a bloated notepad replacement, but it just adds enough features that makes it more useful.



■ Notepad++

- (<http://notepad-plus.sourceforge.net/>)
- This is a Notepad replacement that will color code MANY types of code for easier readability. Many programmers would appreciate this, as its not a bloated notepad replacement, but it just adds enough features that makes it more useful.

■ Notetab Lite

- (<http://www.notetab.com/>)
- This is an Old program that hasn't been updated much over the years, but like Notepad++, it adds tabs (useful for those that don't want 100's of notepad windows open) and many other useful text tools, that definitely makes this program worth a look.

■ Universal Viewer

- (http://atorg.net.ru/universal_viewer/)
- This program is a context menu (right click on an icon) option that allows you to view many application's files without having to have that program be installed ... I DON'T THINK this would work on many audio/video formats (an alternative to codecs) ... but it may work for graphics formats.

Media Players

There are many infections going around that ask you to install a Codec (in basic terms these tell the media players info what the video is and then information is then used by media players to play the video). I am going to try to list some common codecs and legit Media player, although I know I will not be able to listen them all.

- *Legit Video Codecs Include:*
 - Divx,
 - Real Media (.rm files),
 - Real Audio (.ra files),
 - .RAM (Streaming real media files),
 - .WMV files (although,
 - .WMV are the file types that are most likely to be infected, from what I have seen)
- Common Legit Video Playing Programs:
 - My Favorites:



VLC

- (<http://www.vlc.com>)
- Multi-platform
- Robust / Tons of Features and options
- One of the best for Video File Support



GOM Player

- Close second place, to VLC
- Tons of options

- others:



▪ Quick-time Alternative / Real Alternative / Media Player Classic Alternative

- (<http://sourceforge.net/projects/mpc-hc/>)



◦ KMPlayer

- ([Http://www.kmplayer.com/](http://www.kmplayer.com/))
- The renderer, I always have all of my videos OR DVDs lag during playback... Give this a try and if that doesn't happen to you, great. If i do find out what I am doing wrong, and how to fix it, I will gladly remove this comment. KMPlayer seems like a great option

- *Not legit Video activity:*
 - When I media player redirects you (in general) to any website instead of prompting you with a “You need to install BLAH BLAH codec”. I have commonly seen this in .WMV files (although I am NOT saying “all and any .WMV files, are infected”

- **Legit Audio Players:**



- **Xmplay**

- (<http://www.un4seen.com/>)
- One of my Favorites, that does well in Wine on a Linux system too. Its smaller, customizable and has some good skins



Foobar

(<http://www.foobar2000.org/>)



Jet Audio

(<http://www.jetaudio.com/>)



- **Winamp**

- (<http://www.winamp.com/>)
- One of (if not THE) MOST well known audio player you can download... Skin and Plugin make Foobar highly customizable and despite the other players, I still find myself installing Winamp on my computers anyway.

Best Freeware Graphics programs

Viewers/Editors



Xnview

- (<http://www.xnview.com/>)



Irfan View

(<http://www.irfanview.com/>)



Faststone Viewer

(<http://www.faststone.org/FSViewerDetail.htm>)

Photoshop-type Editors



GIMP






- (<http://www.gimp.org/>)
 - Can (graphically) edit PDF files



Paint.net

(http://www.getpaint.net/redirect/main_hm.html)

PDF Sections

- *Viewing PDFs*
 - To open PDFs in a program (Windows-based) other than Adobe Acrobat Reader, Try one of the following 100% FREE tools that are much smaller than Adobe's PDF Reader, Adobe Acrobat Reader
 - **PDF Vlewer**

 - **FoxIT Reader** (<http://www.foxitsoftware.com/>)
 - Though on my old computer (from 2002) I still like version 4 better than 5.... even version 5 is MUCH smaller than Acrobat Reader.
 - 
 - **SumatraPDF** (<http://blog.kowalczyk.info/software/sumatrapdf>)
 - This one doesn't have alot of "wiz-bang" features, though for some people (me for instance), that is perfect
- *Saving/Converting to PDF*
 - **PDF Creator**

 - **PrimoPDF** (<http://www.primopdf.com/>)
 - No Real Comments try it for yourself and see how it works for you
 - 
 - **doPDF** (<http://www.dopdf.com>)
 - Very nice ... not a lot of features, though it produces good quality results for my needs
 - Does NOT require the installation of other software for it to work, like BullZip's opti
 - 
 - **Bullzip PDF's print driver** (<http://www.bullzip.com/>)
 - Seems to complain about needing "Ghost Script Updates" doesn't seem as lite as some of the other choices, but I am not saying not to try it.... Especially since it's FREE

- **NovaPDF** (<http://www.novapdf.com/>)

- *Editing PDFs*



- **Nitro PDF Professional**
 - [\(Not FREE\)](#)



- **GIMP**
 - (<http://www.gimp.org/>)



- **Inkscape**
 - (<http://www.inkscape.org>)

Video File Section

○ *Viewing Video Files*

- The two best (as long as you have the proper Codecs); Both of these are 100% FREE



VLC

(<http://www.vlc.com>)

- Multi-platform
- Robust / Tons of Features and options
- One of the best for Video File Support



GOM Player

(<http://www.gomlab.com/>)

- Close second to VLC
- Tons of options

○ *Converting Video Files to Video Files*

- Here are some suggestions on media file converters ... I can not claim that "every program" can handle "every" format... but as I person who has done work with common video files and codecs ... They all support the most comment formats you will find.



- **Any Video Converter** (http://www.filehippo.com/download_any_video_converter/)
 - Simple interface and it has a ton of options...



- **Handbrake** (http://www.filehippo.com/download_handbrake/)
 - multi-platform option
 - may not handle “every” format, although, it still is a great choice and I use it myself, all the time



- **"Super "** (http://www.filehippo.com/download_super/)
 - its good but the interface can be confusing for some (and I am a "techie" type and I think it could even be organized a bit better



- **File Factory** (<http://www.pcfreetime.com/>)
 - DOES CONTAIN ASK TOOLBAR, in installer
 - I saw this recommended alot, and while I am still playing around with video quality ... it looks OK if you like this interface and it works well so far... a good alternative to the prior ones I recommended.
 - As far as the “Ask Toolbar” goes ... simple uncheck the box “install Ask Toolbar” ... and it doesn't install (Ask Toolbar, I mean ... File Factory installs just fine)



- **Freemake Video Converter** (<http://www.freemake.com>)
 - This one may be one of the nicer one's for new users (not saying the others are hard to use) but the GUI is nice and simple, while the program has a ton of options. The few tests I have done come out good and I would recommend this one.



- **Xmedia Recorde** (http://www.videohelp.com/tools/XMedia_Recode)
 - or (<http://preview.tinyurl.com/men98e> - Softpedia)
 - Clean interface ... nothing "fancy"
 - which is a good thing, some other programs (not listed here) try to get too fancy and make it confusing even for people like me who know what they are doing
 - I have only tested it once and it was decent. (speed and options)
 - (After more testing: I have run into issues with this one crashing when I try to convert the videos... I convert the same videos in say “File Factory” or “Freemake Video Converter” and neither of them

Bottom line for video converters

These are all good options, and in some way, shape or form, I have used all of them.

You may have to play with the settings to get desired results (I mean if you set the settings really low, and come up with a video file that is pixalated... that's not the programs fault. but the settings ... even I have to do a few "trial and error" tests on videos at times... just wanted to point that out to some people that would blame the programs themselves

- ***Video Files to DVDs***
 - Note: Some of these are duplicates from the “Video to Video” section.



- **Freemake Video Converter** (<http://www.freemake.com>)

1. All you have to do is insert the desired videos
2. Select "To DVD" or "DVD"
3. Choose what you want from: the following list and click OK
 - Burn DVD
 - Convert to ISO Image of DVD
 - Save to Folder Structure
 - (VIDEO_TS and AUDIO_TS Folder structure of a DVD)



- **DVD Styer**

- A well done, multi-platform DVD Creator
- Very Customizable
- Custom Menus
- Custom audio tracks

- **DVDFlick** (<http://www.dvdflick.net/>)

- I just want to note this one here, as I do know about it, though up until now, I have NEVER had luck with it ... crashes ½ way through the video conversion, invalid DVD structures that were not able to play in any software much less hardware DVD Player

- **Video Editing**

- I am NOT a video editing pro, however, I have found a few programs that can in some way shape or form edit videos



- **Avidemux** (<http://www.avidemux.org>)

- Great Free Video Editor



- **VirtualDub** (<http://www.virtualdub.org/>)

- This is the original, and its a great choice
- There are "Mod" versions of VirtualDub that are equally as good in thier own way .. they may be missing a feature here or there... BUT SAY (EXAMPLE HERE) have support for a video format that VituralDub (Original) doesn't have

Free and Powerful Burning Software



- **InfraRecorder** (<http://infrarecorder.org/>)
 - GREAT, simple, but powerful program that reminds me of a Free "Nero Burning Rom" without all of the extra "fluff"
 - InfraRecorder reminds me of CDBurnerXP .. simple, but not "too simple" ...



- **CDBurnerXP** (<http://www.cdburnerxp.se/>)
 - A very GOOD alternative to Roxio, and "Nero (Burning Rom)".
 - This is definitely on my top 10 must have software now, and even if you don't think you will change over from Roxio or Nero ... at least give this program a shot before paying all that money for a bloated piece of software, that you may not need.



- **ImgBurn** (<http://www.imgburn.com/>)
 - THIS ONE I USE ALOT
 - This may be confusing for some new users
 - It has TONS of options, and has never (*not counting a dying DVD Burner*) created a coaster.
 - It can be used for:
 - Data CDs and DVDs,
 - Video DVDs (to play on your TV set) ..
 - VideoCDs, (I am not really sure about)
 - if you can use a program to create an ISO of a "Video-CD Project" you have done, you CAN use ImgBurn to burn the ISO,
 - ImgBurn also allows you to make ISO's from existing discs

Compression Programs



- **7-Zip**
 - (<http://www.7zip.org/>)
 - writing:
 - 7zip and Zip files
 - Does not edit existing (add/remove files from ...) 7zip files. I have tried the latest alpha (test of a test version, in layman's terms) and it still doesn't seem to work, though the developer is taking user feedback, and is hard at work on it
 - Reading:
 - Bz2, Gzip, Zip, 7zip, Rar, Rpm, Tgz, xar, deb, and cabs ... JUST TO NAME a few of the most popular formats



- **Bandizip** (<http://www.bandicam.com/bandizip/help/>)
 - Reads most common archive formats
 - Writes Zip and 7zip, however it can not edit (add/remove files and folders) from an existing 7zip file



- **HaoZip** (http://www.haozip.com/Eng/index_en.htm)
 - Writes: Zip, 7Zip, .Tar.Gz, .Tar.bz2, and a few others



- **IzARc** (<http://www.izarc.org>)
 - Reads most common archive formats
 - Writes Zip and 7zip files AND
 - With alot of formerly free zip programs going shareware (Power Archiver, ... FilZip,...etc), I think this is still a good program that has the same interface as Winzip, but has remained free



- **KauiZip** (<http://www.kauizip.com>)
 - Reads most common archive formats
 - Writes Zip and 7zip files AND .Kz which is a format only used in this program and it is SUPPOSE to be more compressed then zip and 7zip files.

Comments: I have done a few “tests” and have not seen .Kz anymore compressed than 7zip or Zip, like it claims, though .Kz is “on pair” with the other two, MORE COMMON formats



- **PeaZip** (<http://www.peazip.org/index.html>)
 - Reads most common archive formats
 - Writes Zip and 7zip files
 - This is an old freeware I have known about for years, though I never really gave it a chance (I had chosen to use Power Archiver or Winrar). The more I mess around with it, the more I like it. I do have to say I like HaoZip best now (seems like a Winrar clone, though Winrar writes .RAR and .ZIP files ... HaoZip (and Peazip, for that matter) write .ZIP, .7zip, and a few linux formats that I know of (.tar.gz, .tar.bz2)

Closing

My Website:

For more tips, programs, suggestions, and security information, please visit my sites at <http://xmetalfanx.awardspace.us> or <http://xmetalfanx.x10.mx/> .. When I have fully uploaded my files, both sites will be exactly the same (think of them as mirrors). I have had bad luck with web-hosts, and did not originally intend to “have a mirror setup” for my site, though once the idea came to me, it seems to make sense.

When fully uploaded, both sites will be considered my “homepage” and I do not have any preference as one host as a “homepage” and the other as a “Mirror of my homepage”.

Different web-hosts I have had in the past, have canceled service without notifying me and when signing up for another host, I have had to wait, so my site was offline (off the internet) for in some cases a week or more at a time. I figure even if one of these hosts, stop service, then I still have the other host to refer people to.

This guide was typed in:



- **Libre Office**... (Free Office Client for a variety of Operating Systems)
 - (<http://www.libreoffice.org/>)

Thanks

I want to give thanks to sites, programmers, and friends, along with people I never met, but give great advice .. I know I may forget some (there are so many I want to thank; however, I hope to include everyone I want)



- **Ghack.net** – News, “new” (to me) programs, tech advice and news
 - Of course I mean the contributors to Ghack, not just the webmasters themselves



- **FreewareGenius.com**
- Programmers and developers (along with all beta testers, ...etc) of the mentioned programs...
 - I am constantly updating this “Guide”, so I am not sure if listing all programs here would really be “smart” though if you see your program listed, I thank you for making a great product