Software

The term software was once used for all non-hardware components of a computer. Using today’s terminology, however, the documents and photos you create are usually referred to as data files rather than as software. The instructions that tell a computer how to carry out a task are referred to as a software.

The two main categories are system software and application software. Whereas application software is designed to help a person carry out a task, the primary purpose of system software is to help the computer system monitor itself in order to function efficiently. Operating systems are classified as system software. Device drivers, utilities, and programming languages are also system software.

Application software categories include:

Music software offers many ways to work with music, sound effects, and narration from your desktop, laptop, or handheld computer.

Location-based software is able to access your current location and use it to show you the closest shops, restaurants, ATMs, and theaters.

Vertical market software is designed to automate specialized tasks in a specific market or business. Horizontal market software use to keep track of income and expenses, pay bills, and track inventory.

A type of system software called utility software is designed to help you monitor and configure settings for your digital gear, its operating system, or application software.

Spreadsheet software provides tools to create electronic spreadsheets.

Database software helps you enter, find, organize, update, and report information stored in a database.

Software installation is the process of placing a program into a computer so that it can be run or executed. You can use some software without installing it, but other software has to be installed before you can use it.

From a legal perspective, there are two categories of software: public domain and proprietary. Public domain software is not protected by copyright because the copyright has expired, or the author has placed the program in the public domain, making it available without restriction. Proprietary software has restrictions on its use that are delineated by copyright, patents, or license agreements. Based on licensing rights, proprietary software is distributed as commercial software, demoware, shareware, freeware, and open source software.

Although you buy commercial software, you actually purchase only the right to use it under the terms of the software license. Some commercial software is free.

Demoware is distributed for free and often comes preinstalled on new computers, but it is limited in some way until you pay for it.

Shareware is copyrighted software marketed under a try-before-you-buy policy. To use it beyond the trial period, you are supposed to pay a registration fee.

Open source software may be sold or distributed free of charge in compiled form, but it must, in every case, also include the source code.

Freeware is copyrighted software that is available for free. It is fully functional and requires no payment for its use.

Security software is designed to protect computers from various forms of destructive software and unauthorized intrusions. Security software can be classified into various types: antivirus, antispyware, anti-spam, and firewalls. Each type focuses on a specific security threat.

A computer virus is a set of program instructions that attaches itself to a file, reproduces itself, and spreads to other files. A key characteristic of viruses is their ability to lurk in a computer for days or months, quietly replicating themselves. While this replication takes place, you might not even know that your computer has contracted a virus. In addition to replicating itself, a virus usually delivers a payload which can corrupt files, destroy data, or otherwise disrupt computer operations.

Antivirus software is a type of utility software that looks for and eradicates viruses, Trojan horses, worms, and bots. Some antivirus software also scans for spyware, although several security software publishers offer spyware detection as a separate module.