

# 2011: The New Year in Free Software

Updates to your favorite free programs

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# Software Mega-Trends

- **Browser Wars**
  - Faster, leaner, less cluttered, specialized spin-offs
- **To the Cloud! (online applications)**
  - Graphics, office, media, security, file storage/synchronization
- **Free (as in beer) versus Free (as in speech)**
  - OpenOffice/LibreOffice
- **It's OK, touch my junk**
  - Developer focus/energy on touch-enabled devices and apps
- **If you've got it, flaunt it**
  - Optimization for multi-core and hardware accelerators

# Internet Applications (Browser)

- Firefox 4.0

- Release Candidate available now, formal release imminent
- New tab features (tab location, “App” tabs, tab groups)
- Switch to tab from address bar (by typing tab name)
- Firefox Menu button (compact menus in Title Bar)
- Faster JavaScript (JägerMonkey engine, up to 5x faster)
- Exploitation of hardware acceleration for graphics
- WebGL support (3D graphics without a plugin)
- SVG support (scalable vector graphics)
- OpenType font support
- Full HTML5 support (web video, audio, drag&drop, file handling)
- Synchronization (settings, passwords, bookmarks, etc.)

# Internet Applications (Browser)

- Pale Moon

- Windows-optimized version of Firefox Browser
  - Claims 25% performance improvement over Firefox
  - Optimizes “out” the cross-platform interfaces
- Closely tracks, and derived from, Firefox releases (curr. 3.6.13)
- A few functions not supported (mostly for speed/memory reasons)
  - ActiveX
  - Accessibility Features
  - Parental Controls
  - Older CPUs
- No support for Firefox 4 until after it stabilizes

# Internet Applications (Browser)

- Google Chrome

- Development style: release in small, continuous increments
- Just announced a “stable” version 10
  - Definitely a full-function browser
  - Very fast V8 JavaScript, but Firefox 4 performance close
  - “Sandboxed” Adobe Flash
  - Built-in PDF viewer
  - “about:flags” URL to enable/disable experimental features
- Future versions (11) coming out in frequent beta updates
  - Different Javascript engine versions, similar webkit
- Version 12 starting to build

# Internet Applications (Browser)

- Internet Explorer 9
  - Available as a Beta download
  - Only available on Vista or higher
  - New “minimal real estate” interface
  - Much faster, maybe (?) approaching Chrome or Firefox speeds
  - Many updates to standards support (like Firefox)
- Opera 11
  - Fast, Secure, and looks a lot like Firefox 4
- A lot of design convergence in the browser arena

# Internet Applications (Mail)

- Thunderbird 3.1
  - Available since June 2010
  - Easier migration
  - Easier account setup (wizard)
  - Improved, faster search
  - Very mature, mostly small, incremental user features in plan
- IncrediMail 2
  - Mail client alternative with a lot of “fun” features
  - Background images, 3D effects, emoticons, animations, sounds
  - Limited IMAP support, no encryption

# Office Applications

- **OpenOffice 3.3**
  - Document read or read/write protection passwords
  - Improved Thesaurus support
  - Simpler Print interface
  - Improved spreadsheet calc performance
- **LibreOffice 3.3.1**
  - Branched off from OpenOffice
  - All the features of OpenOffice 3.3, plus:
    - Scalable Vector Graphics (SVG) image support
    - Expanded list of import filters (Works & Lotus docs, PDF)
    - More compatibility with Excel spreadsheet formulas

# Office Applications

- IBM Lotus Symphony 3
  - Another OpenOffice derivative
  - New Features
    - Support for true Visual Basic scripting
    - Support of Office 2007 OLE objects
    - Nested tables
    - New clip art library
    - More templates
  - Dropping support for importing Lotus SmartSuite documents

# Office (PDF) Applications

- PDFCreator 1.2
  - Print to a PDF file from any program
  - New support: Ghostscript 9.0, TrueType fonts, transparency in PNG files, AES 128 bit encryption of PDF files
  - BullZip PDF Printer another good alternative
- PDFill PDF Tools 8.0
  - Merge, split, reorder, reformat, encrypt/decrypt PDF files
  - Convert images to PDF, and vice versa
  - Scan to PDF

# Digital Photography

- Picasa 3.8
  - Face Movie (slideshow composed of pictures of some individual)
  - Batch upload (create/update multiple online album in 1 operation)
  - Integration of Picnik web-based photo editor
  - Support of both XMP and EXIF photo information
- Paint.NET 3.5.8, GIMP 2.6.11
  - Mostly bug fixes and performance improvements in 2010
- Microsoft ICE 1.3.5
  - Image Composite Editor – builds panoramic photos
  - Very good stitching and exposure blending

# Online Digital Photography Tools

- Picnik
  - Integrated with latest Picasa
  - Simple tool menus with more advanced features “deeper down”
- Pixlr
  - Comparable to many installable photo editing programs
- LunaPic
  - Full feature set with emphasis on effects and animation
- Sumo Paint
  - Image editing with focus on paint tools and graphic design

# HDR Photography

- Luminance HDR 2.0.2
  - Under new management, activity has picked up
  - Faster, more stable, more RAW file support
- Oloneo
  - Currently available as free Beta, may become a priced program
  - RAW editing/processing
  - Extremely fast, real-time HDR processing via slider controls
  - Adjustment of multiple, independent light sources within a photo
    - Control white balance, temperature, tint of up to 6 sources
  - De-noising with detail retention
    - Comparison of stack of multiple “identical” photos

# Virtual Computing

- VirtualBox 4.0.x
  - Major GUI enhancement
  - Reorganized into base/extension packs, install only what you need
  - Enhanced ability to move a *running* virtual machine from one host to another (aka *teleportation* or *live migration*)
  - Resource control - limit virtual machine's CPU and I/O bandwidth

# Music/Multimedia

- **MediaMonkey 3.2.4**
  - Mostly adding support for syncing with new music devices
  - Great program for organizing a large music collection
  - Rip, encode, organize, burn, sync (to portable device), play
  - “Gold” version available for \$39, but free version sufficient for most
- **MusicBee 1.2**
  - Much more stable and complete, compared to last year
  - Similar functionality to MediaMonkey, but totally free
    - Except no integrated CD Burning option
    - Recommend InfraRecorder or CDBurnerXP for CD burning

# System Utilities

- CCleaner 3.04
  - Still one of the best disk cleaner utilities
  - Cleans unused/temp files, browser cookies/cache, registry
  - New native 64-bit support
  - More intelligent browser cookie cleaning
  - Support cleaning of almost all major browsers
  - Drive Wiper (overwrite free space, or all, to eradicate latent data)
- TrueCrypt 7.0a
  - Support of hardware-based encryption in i5/i7 processors
  - Auto-mounting of encrypted volumes
  - “Favorites” list of encrypted volumes

# Backup/ File Sharing Utilities

- Dropbox
  - Online file storage of at least 2GB, for free, with registration
    - Additional free storage earned by inviting new users, up to 8GB
  - Automatic background sync
    - Between online storage and files in a local “Dropbox” folder
    - Just “drop” a file in the Dropbox, it syncs automatically
    - Files also get synchronized across multiple computers
  - Access to files also available through a web interface
  - Subfolders can be shared with other registered users
  - Files transmitted and stored securely (SSL, AES encryption)
    - However, not encrypted on the client side!
    - If storing sensitive data, consider using file encryption

# Disk Partition Backup/Restore

- Macrium Reflect 4.2 (Free Edition)
  - Complete backup and restore of disks and/or disk partitions
  - Backup images can be mounted as a virtual drive
    - Enables browsing with regular tools like Windows Explorer
  - Images can be saved to disk, flash, network, CD/DVD
  - Scheduler for unattended backups
  - Linux-based bootable Rescue CD or Flash Drive

# Remote Support

- Teamviewer 6.0
  - “QuickJoin” for simpler invitation to presentations
  - Automatic reconnect after remote system reboot
  - Protect TeamViewer options with a password
  - Other improvements for commercial users

# Gizmo's Freeware

- Great source for analysis/review of free software
- Paper: 9 Great Freeware Programs for Every PC
  - Microsoft Security Essentials (Security)
  - CCleaner (Disk Cleaner)
  - Auslogics Disk Defrag (Disk Optimizer)
  - 7-zip (Zip archive builder/extractor)
  - EditPad Lite (Windows NotePad replacement)
  - PicPick (Screen/Window image capture, with autoscroll)
  - BullZip PDF Printer (Any application print output to PDF)
  - PhraseExpress Boilerplate Text Manager (Insert common phrases)
  - PureText Format Stripper (Copy any text, paste without formatting)