



June 2015 Newsletter

Should I start with great “free” programs (apps)? Why not! Everybody who knows me knows I love the free stuff! I’ll include some I’ve mentioned in the past.....



- *Avast -I’m still going to suggest that you go with Avast free for your anti-virus. One of the things I love about it is that it can find outdated software programs, and by clicking on Update you can take care of all those Adobe and Java security updates. It also has what is called a boot scan. This will clean up most machines of bad viruses and malware. <https://www.avast.com> Remember that Macs need an anti-virus too!*

- **Malwarebytes** - *If you haven't downloaded and installed it already, do it now! It's the best free program for catching dangerous infections that can make you vulnerable to hackers. <https://www.malwarebytes.org/>*
- **Superantispyware** – *the free version picks up tracking cookies, Trojans and finds Malware programs that are installed on your machine. <http://www.superantispyware.com/>*
- **System Explorer** – *This is a program that can give you more detailed information about your computer's activities at a glance. You can see details about what programs are running, how well your computer is performing and even check the security clearance of running processes. What's really nice is that you can get an abbreviated version of everything just by clicking the System Explorer icon in the system tray. <http://www.softpedia.com/get/System/System-Info/System-Explorer.shtml>*
- **Home Bank** - *Do you want some “Free” personal accounting and budget software? You can manage bank and credit card accounts, set a budget and track your spending. You can also see trends in your spending over time, track expenses with multiple payees and much more. This program makes it easy to import documents from Quicken and Intuit to find all your expense reports in one place. HomeBank gives you firm and detailed control over tracking every cent you have, but just like anything else, you have to be diligent in managing it. <http://homebank.free.fr/>*

- **Desktop instant translations powered by Google** - Free Language Translator is a useful translating utility powered by Google Translate which enables you to translate texts between more than 40 different languages. It has some nice features such as automatic source language detection, accuracy calculator and even the option to create a personal dictionary. <http://free-language-translator.en.softonic.com/>
- **Dashlane's Free Password Manager** - Automatically import your passwords from Firefox or any other browser into your secure password vault. Save any missing passwords as you browse. Make a new password right within your browser. Get automatic alerts when websites get breached. Passwords are encrypted! https://www.dashlane.com/passwordmanager/?utm_source=adwords&utm_medium=ppc&utm_campaign=US%20-%20Search%20-%20Brand&utm_term=sitelink-passwordmanager&gclid=CjwKEAjwhbCrBRCO7-e7vuXqiT4SjAB2B5u7FZAUimJXk2UunmoE7K0sOecFZ0x0cIPYloY_eDSs9RoCQb_w_wcB
- **Fotor** - A free simple photo editor for PCs, Macs and smartphones that can turn basic snapshots into masterpieces. All it takes is a few clicks or taps to turn your photos into professional-looking photography. Fotor has easy tools for making collages or photo cards. Plus, you can even try your hand at High Dynamic Range (HDR) photography. This is what gives some photos those amazing colors. The Mac version you can get from the Apple store. <http://www.fotor.com/windows/>

- **Free Classes with Highbrow** - With Highbrow, you will receive 10 emails over the course of 10 days. These emails aren't very long, but are simple and bite-sized enough that it's easy for you to retain the information. Click the Sign Up button on the home page to get started. Next, you will select your class. Note that you can only sign up for one course at a time. This is to ensure that you don't get lost in a sea of never-ending emails. The emails you will receive, however are clean, crisp and not bogged down with ads to maximize your interest. Better yet, there's a wide variety of courses to choose from. The categories include Art, Health, History, Literature, Nature, Philosophy, Productivity, Psychology, Science and Startups. Topics range from "Being and Staying Productive" and "Breakthrough Technologies from MIT" to "Must Watch TED Talks about the Future of Tomorrow" and "Healthiest Vegetarian Foods on the Planet." Once your course is selected, sit back and enjoy the daily emails with your 5 to 10 minute class for the day! <http://gohighbrow.com/>

Travel Apps.....



- **Off Exploring** (Free; Android, iOS) - Manage and post updates to your Off Exploring travel blog. You can even make posts and save them offline, so you can post them when you're back around Wi-Fi. <http://www.offexploring.com/>

- [TripLingo](https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/triplingo-business-class/id596556793?mt=8) (Free; iOS) - This app focuses on giving you a working conversational knowledge of 12 different languages, including idioms, colloquialisms and slang. It even includes a handy voice translator! <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/triplingo-business-class/id596556793?mt=8>
- [Google Goggles](http://google-goggles.en.softonic.com/android) (Free; Android, iOS) - If you need help translating street signs or menus in a foreign language, just snap a photo and Google Goggles will translate for you. It can also provide background on businesses, famous landmarks and more. <http://google-goggles.en.softonic.com/android>
- [Postcard On The Run](https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/postcard-on-the-run/id412496810?mt=8) (Free; Android, iOS) - In today's digital age, good old-fashioned postcards seem to have taken a backseat to flashy photo-sharing apps. Not anymore! This app makes sending physical postcards a snap. It lets you create personalized postcards directly on your phone. You can even add video, or a scratch and sniff feature! <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/postcard-on-the-run/id412496810?mt=8>
- [Lonely Planet](http://www.lonelyplanet.com/) (Free; iOS) - Lonely Planet has travel guides for more than 50 top vacation destinations. Download this app for access to audio phrasebooks, maps, walking tours and city guides. <http://www.lonelyplanet.com/>

- Stay (Free; Android, iOS) - This great app lets you discover new and exciting places in more than 120 different cities. While traveling abroad can dramatically increase your phone bill, Stay.com features offline maps, so you won't add any extra data charges while trying to find your way around. <http://www.stay.com/>

This should give you a few ideas of what's out there for the asking, and you don't have always pay for the "good stuff"!



*Personally, I think that the advertising on websites has gotten more prolific. If you surf the Web, you're going to see ads. That's a given, and there's not much you can do about it. What you can change is whether or not you see **targeted ads**. These are the ads that follow you from site to site and seem to know what you've been looking at online. Advertisers record and store your online habits on your computer as a small file called a **cookie**. You can remove these yourself, but they'll just keep coming back. Instead, you want to opt out of ad tracking entirely. Consumer Choice Page will find any cookies from participating companies on your computer. You can then choose to opt-out of receiving their advertising. <http://www.aboutads.info/choices/> Some ads have "ad choice" in the corner of the ad. If you open it up, it will often let you opt out there too.*



See if a website is legit....I know I often wonder if it's a scam or not.

ICANN WHOIS will let you find out. I'm sending a link with my business address in it so you can test it.

<http://whois.icann.org/en/lookup?name=shirlscomputersolutions.com>



*Did anyone ever tell you to scan your flash drives before you transfer information from them? Well you should! Viruses and malware can be passed from computer to computer with a flash drive and one malicious virus has been making its way around because people are slacking off on running scans on external drives. The Hacking virus 'Bladabindi' targets Windows users. **Some of the Bladabindi variants could capture keyboard press, control computer camera and later send collected sensitive information to remote attackers.** Bladabindi is infecting Microsoft Windows operating system and spreading via infected removable USB flash drives and via other malwares," the latest advisory by the agency said. This is still out there...since 2014! So what do you do? Before you open a flash drive, or external hard drive, go to the computer icon, open it up and find the drive that you just plugged in. Do a right mouse click on the*

drive and choose your anti-virus software/anti-malware software listed in the menu to scan the device.



RevSlider is another one to watch out for. If you use Wordpress on your website or have a WordPress Blog, you should check to make sure it's not infected. Go to this link and enter your website address. <https://sitecheck.sucuri.net/> They'll let you know if it's safe!



I get a lot of calls from people who tell me that their machines are down because they can't connect to the Internet. It's not always the machine, but sometimes it's the website you're visiting. Check out this link to see how it works. http://downrightnow.com/?inf_contact_key=53fd8d9ed9eb339b0d69989108d1c31f79455c64003ec49d2e0cc32bc9ec5f49



OK, how old is your computer and how is it running? Do you think that it's on its last legs? Here's a checklist to go through to see if your machine is ready to be replaced.

- 1. Software glitches*
- 2. Hardware glitches*
- 3. Noisy hard drive or system fan*
- 4. Boot failures*
- 5. Poor performance*

If you have several of these issues and your machine is over 6 years old, Maybe it's time!



*Well, it's finally happening.... **Windows 10** is set to hit the market on July 29th! I'm sure that many of you are going to be thrilled to get rid of Windows 8! I'm taking the information from a CNET mailing that I get so you can understand how to go about getting this "free upgrade". One word*

of caution.....don't be too quick to upgrade because I'm sure there are still bugs to work though, and it would be good to read some reviews on the new operating system before you make the move. Remember you have a whole year to upgrade before it's no longer free!

Microsoft has a lot riding on Windows 10. The new OS has the task of erasing the bad experiences people had with the touchscreen-focused Windows 8, which ultimately failed to catch fire among PC users. Windows 10 comes packed with new features, such as a redesigned Start menu, the Cortana voice assistant and a new browser called Edge, all designed to win over jaded Windows users. The new OS will also offer a more unified experience among PCs, tablets and smartphones as a way to convince consumers to go the Windows route for all their devices. As such, the company wants to make sure that current device owners know they can now get in line to pick up Windows 10.

So how can you now reserve your free copy of Windows 10?

- First, you must be running Windows 7 Service Pack 1 or Windows 8.1, and you must have installed a March the Windows update dubbed KB3035583, according to blog site VentureBeat. That update will already be on your PC as long as you have Automated Updates enabled.*
- Peek at your Windows system tray in the lower right corner, and you should see a new icon displaying the Windows logo. Hover over it, and the popup messages says: "Get Windows 10."*
- Click that icon, and up pops a window that explains how the free upgrade works. Once it's available, Windows 10 will*

automatically download onto your PC. You'll receive a notification after the download is complete so that you can choose an appropriate time to install it.

- You can scroll through the various screens of the Get Windows 10 window to read more about the new OS.*
- When you're done, simply click the button to reserve your free upgrade.*
- The reservation screen asks for your email address so you can receive the notification. Enter your email address and click the Send confirmation button. You can now close the Get Windows 10 window.*
- Should you change your mind and wish to cancel the reservation, just click the Get Windows 10 icon again.*
- Click the three horizontal lines in the upper left corner to display the menu and click the link for View confirmation.*
- Then click the link to Cancel reservation and click the button for Cancel reservation to confirm your choice.*

Windows 10 is a free upgrade. The upgrade covers the full version of Windows 10, not simply a trial or limited version. It also ensures that you can run Windows 10 on your specific device for free "for the supported lifetime of your device," according to Microsoft.

But there are some caveats. The free upgrade applies only to Windows 7 SP1 and Windows 8.1. So if you haven't upgraded Windows 7 to SP1 or Windows 8 to 8.1, you'll have to perform those tasks first. Also, you have one year from July 29 to upgrade your PC to Windows 10 for free. After that year is up, you'll presumably have to purchase Windows 10 yourself.

Those of you running Windows RT or RT 8.1 are out of luck. Microsoft has excluded Windows RT and RT 8.1 from the free upgrade offer.

About the author



[Lance Whitney](#) Journalist, software trainer, and Web developer Lance Whitney writes columns and reviews for CNET, Computer Shopper, Microsoft TechNet, and other technology sites.

Computer term of the month – Camera RAW



Camera RAW files are unprocessed, meaning all the photo processing is done on the computer. It is like taking a film negative to a dark room to be developed. The RAW file is the negative and the computer serves as the dark room. Pretty cool!

Hmmmm, every month I think to myself “what can I write about in my newsletter”. Once I start writing I think of things I’ve encountered with clients during the month or about things I’ve read. Hopefully something here will be of help to you.

Spring cleanup for computers is important...give me a call if you need any help getting rid of the malware or updating your software.



Happy Fathers Day and Happy Spring...it’s finally here!

Warm Regards,

Shirl

www.shirlscomputersolutions.com

Specializing in computer repair & training, upgrades, removal of viruses, and instruction in Digital Photography and Photoshop. Other services include scanning of photos, negatives, transparencies and copy of VHS and Cassette tapes to DVD!



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www.avast.com

