The no-nonsense

Software Guide

for Start-ups and Small Businesses

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By The **The App Trekker** of the Software Journey Blog:
www.SoftwareJourney.co.za

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Introduction

Firstly thank you for taking the time to subscribe by email and downloading this e-book.I truly hope that you find this e-book useful whether you run a business or a student. If you got this e book by other means, do subscribe to Software Journey for more great (and free) content.

Do you have an idea for a start up but the the sheer costs of the software is setting you back? Are you a student and find yourself unable to afford the software you need to learn for your career? Perhaps you have a small business and find that you actually have to take out a LOAN just to purchase the various software packages you need to run your business? Maybe even find that you are using less-than-legal copies of a popular operating system on your PC?

If you said yes to any of these then this guide was made especially for you. If you don't fall in any of these you are still welcome and I truly hope that you find this E-book useful.

WHAT CAN THIS GUIDE DO FOR ME?

- ✓ Helps you potentially save money by presenting you with excellent software alternatives (both free and paid).
- ✓ Provides you with links to where you can learn how to use these alternatives (where applicable)
- ✓ Informs you of initiatives that provide start-ups with free industry leading programs, tools and services.
- ✓ Provides information where students can get cheaper or free software for learning purposes.
- ✓ Lists online tools and services that could replace or compliment traditional PC software packages.

WHAT THIS GUIDE WILL NOT DO

This guide isn't an all encompassing guide, it does not list ALL the free programs available, it lists only programs that are Good, reliable,

well trusted and preferably comes with some form of support.

What is a software alternative?

Alternative software is any software that can do the same (or similar job), most alternatives are more affordable and in many cases (such as with open source software) you can find them for free as well.

This guide will give you a brief list of more affordable (or free) alternatives for you to use. Not just any alternatives, but very good alternatives. A good alternative needs to be functional, usable and be able to provide you with the tools to provide professional results. A good alternative needs to be reliable, it needs to be up to the task when your business grows. Good alternatives comes with support if things go wrong. This guide aims to present to you just that: Good alternatives.

How do I use this guide?

The best starting point is the table of contents. All the software are listed under categories. The table of contents has clickable links that will take you straight to the relevant page.

Each program, app, service or software has been categorize according to function. So if you are looking for a Microsoft Word alternative you'll find it in the General & Office section while the good video editors can be found in the Media and Design section. Each program has a short description, listed pros and cons as well as other details such as supported operating systems. Where applicable you'll also find external links to places where you can learn how to use the program or links to more detailed reviews.

This is the first edition of the guide, it is provided free of charge and aims to assist as many people as possible. Over time this e-book will grow to include many more free or cheaper alternatives. The latest version of the book will be available for subscribers of the Software Journey Blog.

Whose this Guide for?

There are three main groups of people I have targeted this guide for. But even if you do not fall under any of these categories you are

more than welcome to read this guide.

Those starting a Business:

Whether it's an online business or a small design firm chances are the cost of propriety software will set you and your new start up a few thousands of dollars (or Rands) back. This can prove challenging especially for sole proprietors or smaller partnerships.

Whether you are starting a business from home or renting out a small office space, these programs will provide you a full range of functionality while allowing you to save.

Those who already has a small business

Even though you already have your business up and running, chances are that you wouldn't mind saving a extra few thousands that you could perhaps use elsewhere in your business.

Students

The life of the student is usually the broke to almost broke life. Tuition, textbooks and laptops can be expensive. So why should software be?

What's the catch?

With this e book, there isn't one. But with alternative software sometimes there are a few catches. Alternative software sometimes sacrifices on extra features. These I'll be listing in the pros and cons list, I'll also be linking to full reviews of the programs should you wish to learn more.

Where can I get more info?

You can get more detailed information as well as other great content off my website at www.softwarejourney.co.za

General Office

Documents, Spread Sheets and Presentations

WPS Office

Alternative for : Microsoft Office
Platforms : Mac (OSx), Linux, Windows
Type : Propriety (free and paid)

WPS Office is a highly praised Microsoft Office alternative handling your documents, spreadsheets and presentations.

The free edition gives you all the editing power you need but all printouts and pdfs will be watermarked. You can still download the older free version which does not have this limitation and gives you more advanced features such as macro support and mail merge.

Get the program: *Download WPS Office*

From the blog : *WPS Office review*

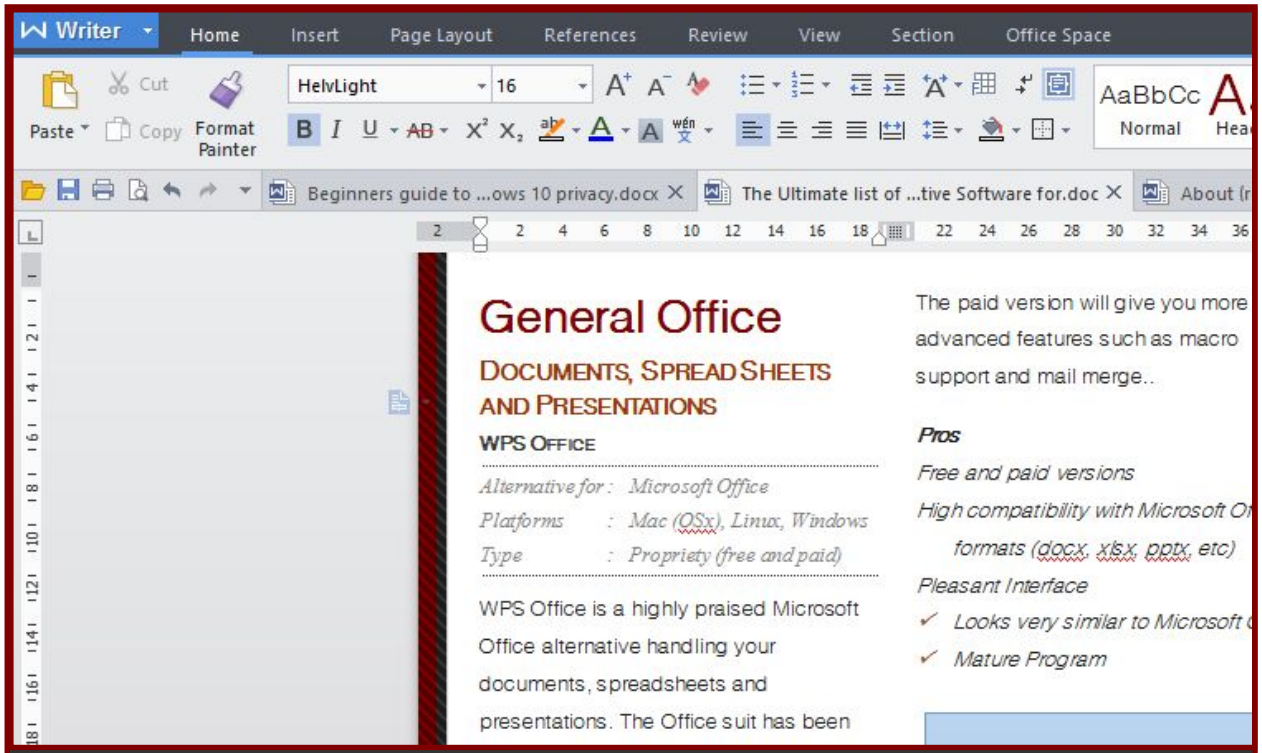
Get Help : *From WPS website.*

Pros

- ✓ *Free and paid versions*
- ✓ *High compatibility with Microsoft Office formats (docx, xlsx, pptx, etc)*
- ✓ *Looks very similar to Microsoft Office*
- ✓ *Mature Program*
- ✓ *Extra features such as tabs and easy paragraph and table tools*
- ✓ *Powerful enough for professional work*

Cons

- ☒ *Free version puts watermarks on prints and pdfs*
- ☒ *Does not have advanced picture and text effects.*
- ☒ Does not support open-document formats (OpenOffice/ Libre Office formats).



WPS Office was used to make this e-book.

LIBRE OFFICE

Alternative for : Microsoft Office
Platforms : Mac (OSx), Linux, Windows
Type : Open-Source (free)
Support :

LibreOffice is one of the most well known alternatives to Microsoft Office and handles Documents, Spreadsheets, Presentations as well as Databases..

A fork off the OpenOffice project, LibreOffice has been under constant development and even supports features that are not present in Microsoft Office such as the ability to import Vector images.

On the whole Libre Office is a complete and capable Office program. It's only major caveat is that it's Microsoft Office format compatibility leaves much to be desired.

If you do not receive documents or presentations that was made in Word or PowerPoint then LibreOffice is a viable option for your business.

Being open-source it provides all it's features completely free.

Get the program: *Download Libre Office*

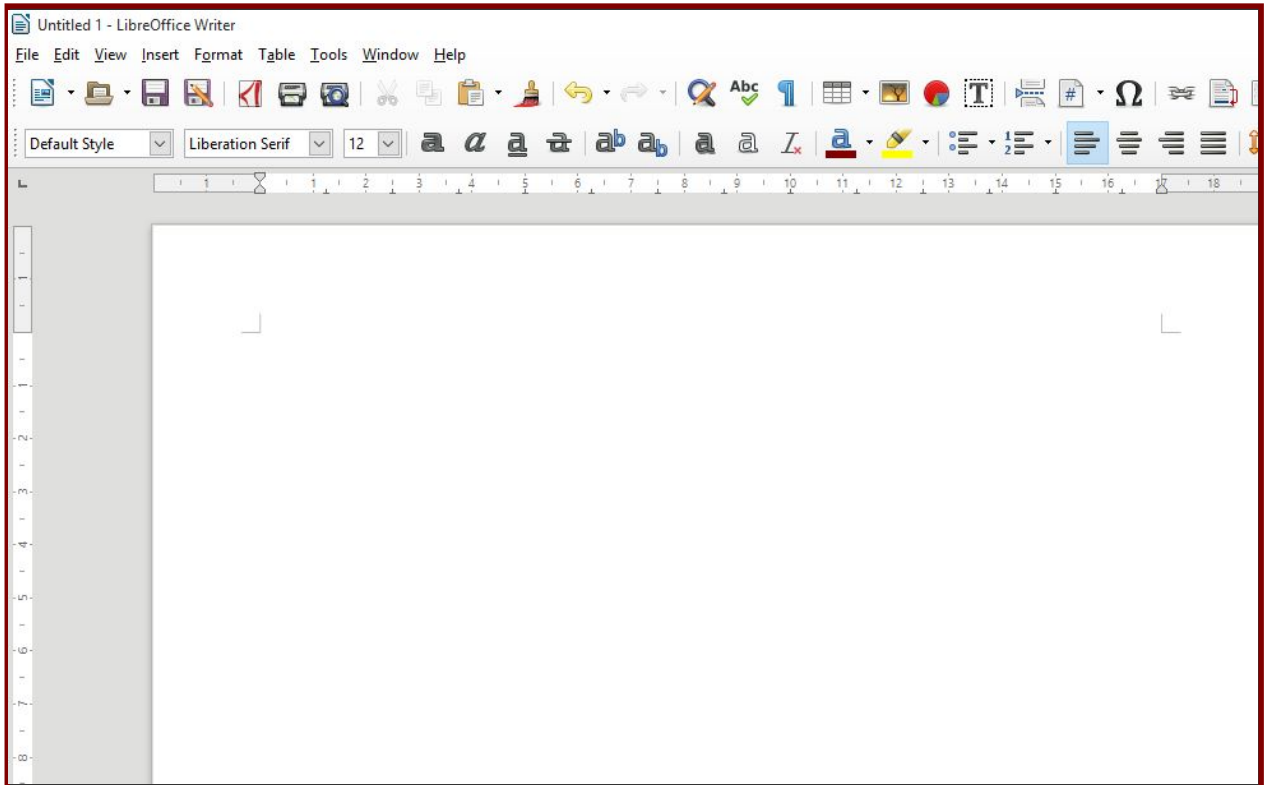
Get Help : *Libre Office Support*

Pros

- ✓ *All features completely free*
- ✓ *Insert Vector Images*
- ✓ *Powerful Editing features*
- ✓ *Can Edit PDF's*

Cons

- ☒ *Microsoft Office format supports leaves much to be desired*
- ☒ *Lacks quick table styles and picture effects*



LibreOffice is under constant development and receives plenty of love from it's fans.

Online Office services

Microsoft Office Online

Platforms : Cloud-based

Type : Propriety (free)

Microsoft Office online provides you with free online versions of Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint as well as Sway- Microsoft's new online presentation tool. These online versions provide plenty of powerful collaboration tools as well as all the basic formatting options and tools that you will need on a day to day basis.

Since it's developed by Microsoft you are also guaranteed format compatibility with the PC counterpart.

In order to access these tool you'll need to create a free Microsoft Account. The online programs are available in the top left menu.

Get the service : *Office Online Website*

Get Help : *Microsoft support*

Google Docs

Platforms : Cloud-based

Type : Propriety (free)

Chances are you already have a gmail address. If that's the case you already have access to Googles online suite Google Docs.

Google docs covers all your essential formatting needs but also gives you world class collaboration tools as well as tight integration into the entire Google eco-system.

Google docs does allow a certain degree of offline editing (via the chrome browser) and also has a free mobile app..

The main weaknesses of Google Docs is that it's compatibility with Microsoft Office formats isn't always perfect and it's presentation program can be lacking.

Get the service : *Google docs Website*

Get Help : *Google Docs forums*

MailChimp

Platforms : Cloud-based

Type : Propriety (free and paid)

MailChimp manages all your email subscribers. It provides a free options (with a limit of 2000 subscribers) and a paid version once you are ready to upgrade for more functionality.

Get the service : *Mail Chimp Website*

Get Help : *Mail Chimp support*

Drop Box

Platforms : Cloud-based

Type : Propriety (free and paid)

Drop Box is a virtual hard-drive that stores and syncs your files as well. This can prove useful in both collaboration and ensures that all your devices have access to the latest version of the document or file. The first 2 Gigabytes of storage are free.

Get the service : *Drop Box Website*

Get Help : *Drop Box help center*

Communication and emails

Inky

Alternative for : Microsoft Outlook
Platforms : Mac (OSx), Linux, Windows
Type : Propriety (free)

Inky is an easy to use email client which offers a simple interface. It supports both POP and IMAP email and has some advanced email sorting features

Pros

- ✓ *Simple to use*
- ✓ *Built in advanced email sorting features*
- ✓ *Simple to add new email accounts*

Cons

- ☒ *Not as robust or extendable as Thunderbird or Outlook*

Get the program: *Download Inky*

Get Help : *Inky Help*

Mozilla Thunderbird

Alternative for : Microsoft Outlook
Platforms : Mac (OSx), Linux, Windows
Type : Open-source

Developed by the same people who brought you the Firefox web browser, Thunderbird proves to be a reliable and trusted email client.

It is feature rich and supports plenty of extensions.

Pros

- ✓ *Plenty of extensions available which adds plenty of extra functionality*
- ✓ *Secure*
- ✓ *Widely used with a loyal community supporting it*
- ✓ *Receives regular security updates*

Cons

- ☒ *Requires a few extensions to be installed to be a full Outlook replacement*
- ☒ *No longer actively developed by Mozilla (apart from security updates).*

Get the program: *Download Thunderbird*

Get Help : *Mozilla Support*

Skype

Alternative for : Standard Calls
Platforms : Mac (OSx),Windows
Type : Propriety (free)*

Get the program: *Download Skype*

Get Help : *Skype Help*

AntiVirus and PC security

This list will be populated over time. For now here's a basic list to get you started.

AVAST

Platforms : Mac (OSx), Windows
Type : Propriety (free and paid)

Avast offers fantastic protection in both it's free and paid versions.

It offers a full range of features and has recently scored very highly in lab tests.

Get the program: *Download AVAST* (free-version paid-version)

Get Help : *AVAST Support*

AVG

Platforms : Mac (OSx), Windows
Type : Propriety (free and paid)

AVG comes with a free and a paid edition and has been protecting PC's for a number of years.

It comes with a nice few extras such as identity protection, email protection, link checker and AntiVirus shield.

It's consistently among the top 5 anti-virus reviewed and will work in the background silently.

It's major drawback is that it does constantly remind you about it's paid version.

Get the program: *Download AVG* (free-version paid-version)

Get Help : *AVG Support*

Malwarebytes Anti-Malware

Platforms : Mac (OSx), Windows
Type : Propriety (free and paid)

Trusted for years by IT technicians MalwareBytes is a solid Anti-Malware tool that works well with a traditional Anti-Virus program.

It's Chameleon tool allows it to run even on infected systems.

Pro's

✓ *Powerful Anti-malware tool*

Con's

☒ *No resident shield in free version (Requires manual scan unless you opt for the paid version)*

Get the program: *Download Malwarebytes*

Get Help : *Customer Support*

Website Design

Coding and development

Notepad++

Alternative for : Dreamweaver or Coda

Platforms : Mac (OSx), Linux, Windows

Type : Open-source

Notepad is a simple lightweight code editor that can edit a multitude of programming languages including most languages used in web development including HTML, CSS, Java, JavaScript, PHP and Python.

Because it's lightweight it will run on the most modest of PC's and is not a resource hog.

It supports side by side views and tabs for organizing various elements of your project and it can be extended via hundreds of plugins which is available on the Notepad++ website.

Pros

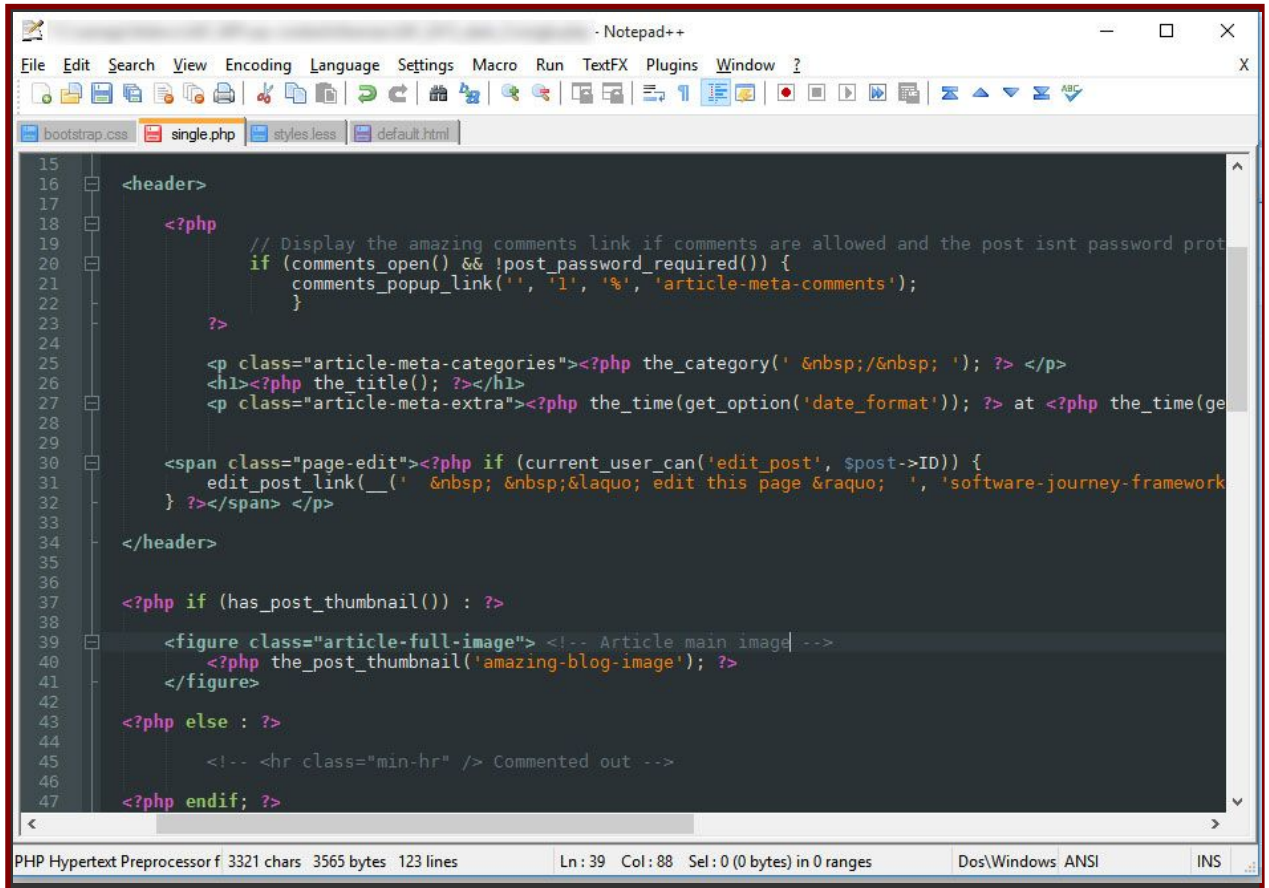
- ✓ *Lightweight and fast*
- ✓ *Handles a vast range of languages*
- ✓ *Multi-platform*
- ✓ *Open-Source*
- ✓ *Mature Program*

Cons

- ☒ *Not a full IDE*
- ☒ *Interface not the best looking*

Get the program: *Download Notepad++*

Get Help : *Community support*



Nothing fancy here, just some php template code for a Wordpress Theme

Additional Tools

These aren't alternative software but they should prove useful to any existing to starting Web-design and Development Company

Google Chrome

Platforms : Mac (OSx), Linux, Windows
Type : Open-source

Chances are you already using this popular website browser. But did you know that Google Chrome also makes an excellent tool when designing websites? Activating developer tools with the keyboard short-cut [Ctrl+Shift+I] will allow you to analyze your website and see exactly where the issues lie. A very useful tool for web designers and web developers alike.

Get the program: *Download Chrome*

Get Help : *Google Support*

Live Reload

Platforms : Mac (OSx), Linux, Windows
Type : Open-source

While this may not count as alternative software, this little app will automatically refresh your browser so that your changes are shown in real-time.

Get the program: *Download Live Reload*

Get Help : *Live Reload website*

WinLess

Platforms : Windows
Type : Open-source

WinLess is a lightweight precompiler that will automatically compile all your Less files into minified css files.

Get the program: *Download Winless*

Get Help : *No support it seems :(*

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