

Advice from Middle Aged Female Tech
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I have been in the industry and with my own company since 1994. In the entire time I have worked in this field it has been very few times any two techs ever agree completely. What advice I give here is based on my experiences, testing and what I know that works.

I am always about saving money, not spending on things you don't need to. So, let's start with the basics.

Antivirus Programs: Ok, this is important, and a must have on any computer you own, PC or Mac, but we are only going to be talking about PC (IBM, Dell, HP, window based Computers). Microsoft came out with MSE (Microsoft Security Essentials), this program is FREE, and is RATED higher than McAfee, Norton, and Webroot. By rated higher, this means it takes up less resources (power and energy) and catches and destroys more. I have beta tested it for Microsoft back in 2009, and still use it today on all 10 of my computers. <http://windows.microsoft.com/en-US/windows/products/security-essentials>

Office Programs: For most people this is a MUST, Office Suites have been an integral part of computer since dos and 3.1 days (in the beginning). Microsoft Office has been a standard because of offices and everyone needing to be able to read, edits, and saves, from important office documents to Mom's recipe. Here is the catch, you don't NEED to have the expensive Microsoft Office Suite to do this, and there are two FREE programs that work perfectly to read, save and distribute Microsoft Office files, Word, Excel, and Power Point. These are: Libre Office: <http://www.libreoffice.org/download/> and older (still current and updated, just older on the market) Open Office: <http://www.openoffice.org/download/>

Picture Editing Programs: Most people have heard of "photoshoping" a picture, that term even came from the VERY expensive program call "Photoshop" by Adobe, not going to say this isn't an EXCELENT product, all adobe products are, BUT, they are also VERY EXPENSIVE. Yes, you guessed it, there are FREE programs out there that will do 90% of the same thing, and without the very hard learning curve. GIMP: <http://www.gimp.org/downloads/> - Now for a simple FREE great program for picture viewing and fun and simple editing (red eye, copy paste, auto and manual color enhancement, or just viewing) there is Infranview: http://www.irfanview.com/main_download_engl.htm You should, for full fun with this program download the free plugins: <http://www.irfanview.com/plugins.htm>

PDF Files: If you are ONLY going to view PDF files (Portable Document Format), then adobe reader (free program) is all you need, BUT, if you need to edit, make PDF's, or save PDF forms you will need a program. Adobe Acrobats Pro is the standard, GREAT program, but like all of adobes purchased programs they are EXPENSIVE. There free versions, even places you can upload to the internet to make a PDF into a word document, This website does a good job, best I have seen online:

<http://www.pdfonline.com/pdf-to-word-converter/> . For programs to download for free there are only two I recommend, PDF creator: <http://sourceforge.net/projects/pdfcreator/> and CutePDF Writer: <http://www.cutepdf.com/products/cutepdf/writer.asp>

These are only the most popular programs to save money on, there are so many out there, there are programs being shoved to you that are free on the web that 'ads' are trying to sell to you. Don't fall into that trap, do a little 'googling' on line and try the free ones, or learn how to do it for free.

That being said, this is just food for thought. I **DO not** represent any of the companies I have mentioned.

Send me your questions: Montgomery@Hollyecho.com and I will answer, include if I could post your questions in my next article.