



BUG-BYTES

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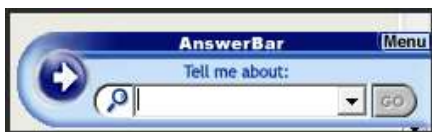
JUNE 2009

GOOD SOFTWARE SOFTWARE LESS THAN \$100

COMMERCIAL SOFTWARE BARGAINS



In last months Bug-Bytes I reviewed very useful and interesting freeware products. Reviewed were software packages that I own and use, or software that I downloaded and evaluated for Computerbugs. Let's start off with some good freeware products that I missed.



First, One freeware product that I overlooked was *1-Click Answers* from www.answers.com. Press the Control key and click on a word and 1-Click Answers gives you instant access to a dictionary with the correct spelling for the word. Once you try the product, I think you will want to continue to use it. Shown above is their optional input bar that shows up at the lower right of your screen.



Another product I overlooked was *PC Wizard 2008* from www.cpubug.com. The program provides under-the-hood system information about your hardware. In addition it benchmarks your computer. The underlying information is updated about once a month.

PC Wizard has five buttons each with a wealth of information. The buttons cover Hardware, Configuration, System Files, Resources, and Bench marking.

<http://www.cpubug.com/pcwizard.php>



XNVIEW is a free file viewer and file converter. If you receive a document that you your computer can't read, because you do not have the program that created the document, XnView may be able to read it.

Open the XnView link and click on the link for formats to see if the format you want to read is available.

<http://pagesperso-orange.fr/pierre.g/xnview/enformats.html>

<http://www.xnview.com/>

This month, I will cover commercial packages with which I am very familiar, and that based upon my experiences I feel comfortable recommending to Computerbugs users.

I WILL COVER THE FOLLOWING PRODUCTS:

AD MUNCHER
ADOBE PHOTOSHOP ELEMENTS 7
ASHAMPOO BURNING STUDIO
CUTEFTP LITE
DISKEEPER PRO
EXPRESS ASSIST
GOODSYNC
LINKSTASH

MICROSOFT WORKS
PC MAGAZINE UTILITIES
ROBOFORM
SNAGIT
TWEAKVISTA
VERSION TRACKER



AD MUNCHER is a premium ad blocker at a very reasonable price. It is much more aggressive in blocking ads than the free ad blocker included with Windows XP or Vista, or ad blockers from Google and other vendors with toolbars.

Ad Muncher works with popular browsers to suppress annoying ads and banners. It speeds up the loading of web pages that previously held numerous ads. The product includes an extensive ad blocking database. It works right out of the box. Ad Muncher works with Windows 95, 98, ME, 2000, XP and Vista.

It costs \$19 for a single computer payable when you register. Lower rates are available for multiple computers.

<http://www.admuncher.com/>



ADOBE PHOTOSHOP ELEMENTS provides advanced photo editing for the serious home photographer. The package includes many one-button corrections that can vastly improve photos. The current version of the product is version 7. With a single stroke, edit a specific area and

apply special effects from a library of 50 effects, improve lighting, and add textures among other editing tricks.

Quickly clean scenes of unwanted artifacts (when you have taken multiple shots of the same scene). Use the new Adobe Photomerge Scene Cleaner to brush away unwanted objects in your scene.

Use the Photomerge Group Shot option to create a new photo combining the best faces and body postures from several similar shots. In one photo someone looks away and spoils the shot. In another shot of the same people and scene someone closes their eyes. With the Group Shot option you can pick the best shots of individuals and combine them into one great group shot.

MAP YOUR MEMORIES

You can create maps of showing where your pictures were taken. See the sample below. Make the maps for



your family and friends with whom you share pictures, or just to permanently remind you of where you were when the pictures were taken.

Download a free trial to determine if this is the right product for you.

The retail price is about \$75. However, you may qualify for a competitive rebate if you are using a competitive product, or if you are upgrading from an earlier version of Adobe

Photoshop Elements. For instance, check with www.amazon.com. They offer free shipping. A rebate coupon is included in the box with the software.

Adobe Photoshop Elements costs a small fraction of the price of Photoshop CS4 for professionals, yet it offers many professional features. The CS4 package for professional with high volume needs is about \$700. Photoshop Elements 7 with the \$20 rebate is priced at about \$55.



ASHAMPOO BURNING STUDIO is the easy way to burn CDs, and DVDs, to burn or rip music, burn movies and photos, copy media disks, to combine a whole CD/DVD in a file, to modify a CD/DVD, and to print covers, labels, and booklets.

The interface is very simple to follow, and it is compact and fast. The program is not bogged down with features that duplicate stuff you already have, and the lower price reflects that design philosophy. Burning Studio is priced at \$49.95. The current version is version 8.0. Try before you buy.

www.ashampoo.com

CUTEFTP LITE provides drag and drop file transfers. FTP stands for File Transfer Protocol and it is used to transfer files from one computer to another computer. For instance, it is the easy way to transfer new and changed files to your web site.



In use, you see a two-column display. On the left is the directory holding the file you want to transfer. On the right is the directory/folder in which you want to transfer your file. You just drag and drop the file from the left

column to the right column. Voila! The transfer is done.

www.globalscape.com



DISKEEPER is a disk defragmentation program. What it offers over the free stripped down program offered in XP and Vista is a feature called Automatic Defragging. Diskeeper Home and Pro versions add useful features that are not found in the defragmenting products that ship with your operating system.

You can try the product version of your choice before buying the product.

www.diskeeper.com

See the following link to compare the features of their different versions.



EXPRESS ASSIST effortlessly backs up and restores Outlook Express, Windows Mail, and Windows Live Mail, messages, settings, and rules. It converts Outlook Express messages to a form that Windows Mail understands and vice versa.

The current version of Express Assist is version 9. Try the product before you buy it. It costs \$39.95 if you decide to keep it.

Read about it in more detail at . . .

<http://www.ajsystems.com/expressassist/ea.html>

GOODSYCH synchronizes files between computers, such as between your desktop computer and a laptop computer, or between any combina-



tion of computers. The program is fast and easy to use. It can also be used as a backup program.

Again, try before you buy. It is \$29.95 to buy via download, or an extra \$4.95 if you want the program sent to you on a CD.

<http://www.goodsync.com/>

LINKSTASH stores your favorite internet links in an easy to recall and use form. The program works with Internet Explorer, Firefox, Netscape, and Opera.



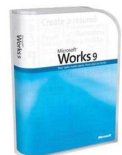
Your favorite bookmarks are stored in an easy to read database. Just input one of the keywords that you, or the program, store and the program jumps right to the section holding your bookmarks. The product costs \$24.95 for a single license. Alternatively, sign up with TrialPay with one of their partners and become a customer. TrialPay pays Xrayz Software and you get the product for free.

LinkStash is unbelievably easy to use in comparison with Internet Explorer Favorites or other browser Bookmarks.

<http://www.xrayz.co.uk/>

See the Trial pay details here:

<http://www.trialpay.com/checkout/?c=9251c6f&tid=6rGiUUo>



MICROSOFT WORKS 9 is a vastly improved mini office suite. You can edit and share Works documents and spreadsheets with Microsoft Office Word and Excel users. This is a good choice for home users who are familiar with and prefer Microsoft Office products, but who only want Word and Excel type

capabilities. Works costs a small fraction of the cost of Microsoft's full fledged Office Suite.

See a demo here:

<http://www.microsoft.com/products/works/default.mspx>



PC MAGAZINE UTILITIES are in a separate category, a subscription category. PC Magazine creates exclusive software utilities that are available for downloading, but only if you pay a small subscription price.

You can opt for the annual subscription (\$19.97) to their utility library, or choose the single-download rate (\$7.97). I think you will quickly discover that the annual subscription makes good economic sense.

See the first link below to view their library of utility software. Their library includes exclusive software programs created by Zeff Davis and featured in their monthly magazine, along with a list of useful software, shareware, and demos.

View all of their programs here:

<http://www.pcmag.com/category2/0,2806,2130,00.asp>

See www.pcmag.com for what PC Magazine offers on their web site.

ROBOFORM, using a master password that you supply, stores and retrieves passwords and personal data. The stored data is



used to automatically fill in the blanks in online purchase requests. This can save you a lot of time.

When you install RoboForm it also installs a toolbar in Internet Explorer. Fill in your basic information, such as name and address, and even credit card information, and it is securely

stored in a database on your computer. If you wish, RoboForm will generate a secure password for you and then store the password for later use by that particular web site.

Try the product before you buy it. Buy it for \$29.95 for a single license.

<http://www.roboform.com/>



SNAGIT is the premier screen capture and editing program. SnagIt is what I use to create screen shots for Bug-Bytes with arrows, edges, text, and other features to highlight portions of the images.

See SnagIt details by clicking on the link below:

<http://www.techsmith.com/>

Again, **try before you buy**. Buy this capture tool for \$49.95.

Vista users can use the Snipping Tool. If you don't see the tool, click on Vista Icon (took the place of Start Icon), select Control Panel, Program and Features, click on Windows Features. Turn on PC Tablet options. That will restore the Snipping Tool if it is missing. The Snipping tool does not have the annotating features of SnagIt. However, casual users will probably find that the screen shots do what they want to do.

Users who want a free limited snipping tool will find it at www.gadwin.com. Download their PrintScreen program.

TWEAKVISTA enables Vista users to fine tune a large number of Vista settings from just one



program. For many of the tweaks, you select the user profile that best matches you use of your computer.

See the screen shot of the menu on the next page.

One outstanding feature is the ability to time how long it takes to startup your computer. You can use that information to compare before and after you make changes to your computer.

Another really useful tweak greatly increases the performance of broadband connections, or at least it did for me.



The program costs \$19.95.

VERSION TRACKER scans your computer and then presents a report. The report compares the installed versions of the software on your computer versus the most current versions of the software. It provides links to update your software to the most current version.



The list is a good resource to use to help you locate updates. However, the list also includes upgrade versions. See the next article for a discussion of the differences between updates and upgrades.

<http://www.versiontracker.com/tools/installedProduct.php>

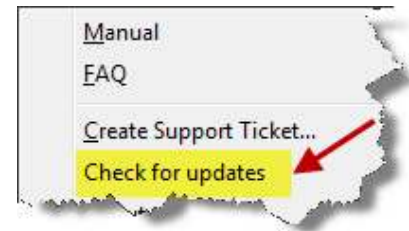
UPDATES VERSUS UPGRADES

UPDATES involve incremental changes and fixes to software that you already own. That is, in the case of software for which you paid, you are entitled to free updates of that software, or for updates to freeware software that you have already downloaded.

For instance if you own version 7.0 of a particular software product, the vendor may offer a version 7.1, or 7.1.257. The additional numbers after the first digit indicate an update to the original release.

Note, to manually check for updates, click on help in your products menu. Look for an update link. Alternatively, look for a sub menu that includes a link to the update. See the screen shot sample at the top of the next column for GoodSync.

UPGRADES. However, if a product goes from say version 7 to version 8 that indicates a major change in the product. Major version changes are



known as upgrades. To obtain the upgrade, you have to pay an upgrade fee. The upgrade fee is a fraction of the cost of buying the product new.

When you purchase and upgrade, look to see if the vendor offers a rebate. The rebate, sometimes know as a competitive rebate, may be offered to those who are switching from some competitors product to the new product. However, rebates are also offered to the owners of older versions of the software. Think of the rebate as loyalty bonus.

For instance, www.amazon.com frequently offers low prices on upgrades, and often includes rebate information for the upgrades that they sell. Sometimes, they offer their discount in addition to the rebate. Check. Your purchase may qualify you for free shipping. Sometimes the prices at Amazon, including shipping, are much less than buying the same products directly from the vendors' web sites.

Compare prices before you shop, including the cost of shipping. Browse the reviews so you are a well-informed buyer, and check the seller's ratings with other buyers as shown on the shopping site you select.

The following web sites are also very good comparison shopping site. You may want to try them as well.

www.pricegrabber.com

www.pricewatch.com