Free software

For the purposes of this presentation, we will look at some software which you can acquire and use without paying for it. Amongst the many different types are:

- Freeware refers to a software that you can use without incurring any costs.
- Nagware is the free version of a commercial program which can be upgraded for a price.
- Freemium refers to a program that is offered at no cost, but money (premium) is paid for extra, more capable features.
- Shareware refers to a program that is initially available without any costs attached, and users are encouraged to distribute copies. However, that cost-free period usually lasts for a certain period; thereafter, a user is required to pay for continued use.
- Open-source software is normally free, as in no financial cost, but is always free in the meaning that anyone is free to modify the source code.

Whilst we are not going to specify which category each one falls into, let's have a look at some software which is free and can either replace or augment the functionality of Windows 10's native applications. Some of the remarks are actually from the creator or an online review, so may not be quite as they seem. We hope also to stimulate some discussion in the group.

There are 3 programs made by the Mozilla Foundation, as follows:

FIREFOX
This browser replaces Internet Explorer and Edge.
It stops annoying popups and it has tons of amazing plugins that can make surfing the web even better.

THUNDERBIRD
Replaces Microsoft Outlook or Mail.
Thunderbird is an email client that has five big things going for it: it's free, it's full featured, it's lightweight and runs quick, it has an unparalleled spam filter, and it protects you from those ridiculous phishing attacks by clearly indicating which emails send you to a bogus website.

SUNBIRD
Replaces Microsoft Outlook's calendaring functions.
This is the Mozilla Foundation's calendaring program. It's extremely easy to use and easy to share your calendar with others.

OPENOFFICE (OR LIBRE OFFICE)

Replaces Microsoft Excel and Microsoft PowerPoint.

If you want to replace the rest of the Office suite, these are among the options. They include replacements for Excel and PowerPoint (and workable replacements for Access, Word and other Office elements).

It is however possible to buy older versions of Microsoft Office 2019 online for considerably less than the retail price (often less than £20).

CLAMWIN (OR AVG FREE, AVAST FREE, KASPERSKY FREE)

Replaces Norton AntiVirus, Windows Defender or McAfee.

You MUST in this day and age have good security software on any device connected to the internet. Windows Defender is included with Windows 10, but does not get particularly good reviews for its effectiveness. On the other hand it is the only free security suite which does not constantly nag you to upgrade to a paid version.

GIMPSHOP (AND PAINT.NET AND IRFANVIEW)

Replaces Adobe Photoshop.

These photo-editing programs are extremely capable, and 2 of them (GIMP and Paint.net) allow photo construction in layers in the same way as PhotoShop.

MUSIKCUBE
Replaces iTunes.

MusikCube is the best choice available for a music organizer and player. It organizes your mp3s, makes it really easy and really fast to find them, and allows you to make some incredibly clever smart playlists.

HANDBRAKE
Unique.

Handbrake enables you to stick a DVD in your DVD drive and have the contents of that film stored to your hard drive in a form that can be read by pretty much any media player. Useful to put a few movies on your laptop for travel purposes, so you don't have to worry about keeping track of DVDs while on the road.

KEEPASS
Unique but essential.

KeePass is a program that securely stores and manages the abundance of passwords we all use on a daily basis. (And if we don't use different passwords everywhere, why not?)

TRUECRYPT
Unique but essential.

TrueCrypt enables you to convert a memory stick into a strongly encrypted data storage device, meaning that you can store personal data on it without worrying about losing it and having personal information get out and about.

NASA WORLDWIND

Replaces google earth.

Worldwind is very similar to google earth in that it allows you to browse the globe, and is utterly incredible for viewing three-dimensional landscapes of any place on earth.

GNUCASH

Replaces Microsoft money or Quicken.

GnuCash is a slimmed-down version of the bloated Microsoft Money and Quicken packages, but it contains all of the features you need for managing your money. The interfaces are incredibly simple – it functions much like a chequebook ledger on your computer – but there's a lot of functionality hidden throughout the software.

PDFILL

Merge, split, reorder, delete, encrypt, decrypt, rotate, crop and reformat pdf pages, add information, header, footer and watermark, to convert images to pdf, pdf to images, to delete, flatten and list form fields, to scan to pdf, to create transparent images, and more. (I am not absolutely sure that all of these functions are available in the free version, but many definitely are.)

THE END