@ Work
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FREEBIES ON THE NET

IF YOU THINK that nothing in life is free, maybe you haven't surfed the Internet. Okay, so it's not completely gratis; you still have to pay for online services and hardware. But once you are plugged in, you can find plenty of freebies. This month, learn how to download free (or almost free) software, utilities, and other useful computer applications. And for extra credit, you can explore great sites around the virtual globe.

Easy downloading

Downloading is easy, and software on the Web is usually free. In some cases, the programs are free to download and keep. In other cases, you can test new software applications—such as, spreadsheets, screen-savers, word processors, games, and utilities—before you buy. At first, downloading may seem complicated, but it's not. Follow these guidelines and before you know it, you'll have all kinds of cool tools on your computer.

Before you begin to download files, create a directory or folder and name it "download" or something similar. Then you will be able to find, execute, organize, and delete programs quickly on your hard drive. Once a file is downloaded to your computer, you must take additional steps before you can use the software. According to the Beginners Central Web page (**http://www. digital-cafe.com/~webmaster/ begin00.html**), here are the basic steps for downloading a program:

- Check the specifications of the software to make sure your computer can run it.
- Download the file t your download directory.
- Make a note of the file name so that you can find it later.
- Disconnect from the Internet and Windows applications.
- Using file manager (for PCs), locate and enter the download directory.
- Find the downloaded file, and execute it. (This can be done by using the File>Run command or double-click on the file name.)
- Follow the installation instructions provided by the program.

Nasty viruses. Here are a few precautions to heed when you download software from the World Wide Web:
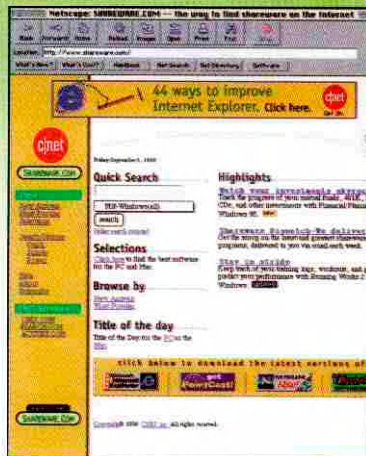
- To decrease the chance of contracting a computer virus from an unprotected site, don't download software from personal home pages, and don't accept software from individuals, especially strangers. The commercial sites tend to be safer because they usually have firewalls with virus protection.
- Perform a virus scan on all incoming files. Virus-protection software includes McAfee and Norton for PCs, and Disinfectant and HyperCard stacks for Macintosh.
- Make sure that your computer has enough memory to run the downloaded application. The originating site usually lists the software's system requirements.
- Don't rely on Beta software. "Beta" products are still in the testing and development stage. Beta programs and applications may have bugs (coding or formatting errors) that can cause the software to crash (malfunction). If that happens, you may have to reboot your entire computer system.

If you have problems downloading software from an FTP site, go to Shareware.com's help page

SHAREWARE SITES

Get your hands on all types of software at these sites:

- Shareware.com. **http:// www. shareware.com.** This site is a searchable database of more than 16,000 software files.
- The Jumbo List. **http:// www. jumbo.com.** True to its name, this site offers more than 23,000 shareware and freeware programs for Windows, DOS, Mac, OS/2, and UNIX platforms. (Watch out for the elephants!)
- The Shareware Shop catalog. **http://www.bsoftware.com/s ctlg.htm.** This site offers shareware in such areas as business, investment, recreation, and programming.
- The Consummate Winsock Apps List. **http://cwsapps. texas.net/.** If you want Internet utilities—such as video viewers, audio players, and Web browsers—go to this site. The utilities are organized by such categories as WAIS, gophers, news-readers, and Windows 95 and Windows NT applications. Each freeware or shareware software is rated and described.

If those sites don't sate your appetite for software, you can find similar resources by entering the keywords "tools" and "shareware" in any of the large search engines.

(http://www.shareware.com/SW/NFF/Help/Download/0,7,,0400.html) to find answers to common downloading problems and the procedures for using downloaded files.

Shareware, freeware, and crippleware. Here are the main types of downloadable applications on the Net.

▶ *Shareware*, offered with a try-before-you-buy evaluation, is free to download. But after a specified time, a shareware's author will ask you to register and pay for the application or remove it from your system.

▶ *Crippleware* is a type of shareware that loses its functionality if you don't register it after a specified amount of time.

▶ *Freeware* is copyrighted software that you can download, use, and share legally with others. Most freeware applications are free for non-commercial use only.

So, practice safe downloading and enjoy!

Sources: Marcia Conner, Northern Web's Beginners Central, Electronic Frontier Foundation's Guide to the Internet by Adam Gaffin, and the ASTD Information Center.

Mail your online experiences and suggestions to atwork@astd.org.

COOL SITES

Here are a few sites that may enhance your career.

▶ Kelly Services. **http://www.kellyservices.com.** This site features a resume-maker database that lets prospective and current Kelly employees submit their credentials online. It also provides links to other Web sites on HR issues, technology, and business.

▶ Training Technology Resource Center. **http://www.ttrc.doleta.gov.** TTRC offers information on government initiatives that support workplace training, skill standards, and training-related research.

▶ Training Consortium. **http://www.trainingconsortium.com.** This international online network-and-referral service features a search engine for finding trainers by industry experience, area of expertise, location, and

target audience. Trainers can register their "stats" for $275 annually. The site also includes a product page, calendar of events, supplier directory, a directory of conference and meetingsites, career-opportunities page, resource page, and related-sites page.

FREE ZINE

Groupware News, a free electronic magazine from Lorge Communications Technology Publishing, covers Lotus Notes, Novell Groupwise, Microsoft Exchange, and other hardware and software products. To subscribe, e-mail **gwsubs@lorge.com.**

VIRTUAL VERNACULAR

From *Wired* magazine's "Jargon Watch" section, here are some buzzwords to keep you hip and happenin'.

▶ **Alpha Geek.** The most knowledgeable, technically proficient person in an office or organization. "Ask Jane, she's the alpha geek around here."

▶ **Bitnik.** Someone who uses a coin-operated computer terminal in a coffeehouse to log onto cyberspace.

▶ **Blendo.** A combination of different media, including graphics, scanned images, animation, and text. Blendo is similar to multimedia but with more of a kitchen-sink approach. Also called "meltomedia."

▶ **Cybrarian.** A person who makes a living doing online research and information retrieval. Also known as a "data surfer" or "super searcher."

▶ **Plug-and-Play.** Refers to a new employee who doesn't need any training. "The new guy is great. He's totally plug-and-play."

WORDS TO SURF BY

Here are some helpful terms for navigating cyberspace.

▶ **Download.** To copy a file from a host system to a computer. There are different methods for downloading files; most check the file periodically as it is being copied to ensure that no information is being destroyed or damaged.

▶ **Firewall.** A program that acts as a gatekeeper between a computer and the world. Firewalls offer different degrees of security in protecting proprietary information. A firewall keeps track of everyone who tries to access a site, and it prevents unauthorized entries. Firewalls are also used to speed up network traffic.

▶ **File Transfer Protocol.** FTP lets users access files from computers at remote sites. FTP files can be downloaded.

▶ **Hypertext Transport Protocol.** HTML is a type of coding used on Web pages to identify links, graphics, and text.

▶ **Hyperlink** (or just plain "link"). A way to connect two Web pages via a word, phrase, or graphic. Typically, links are underlined 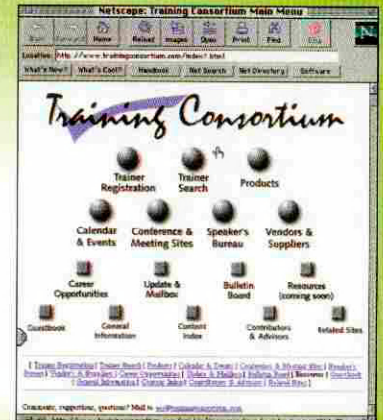and appear in different colors.