

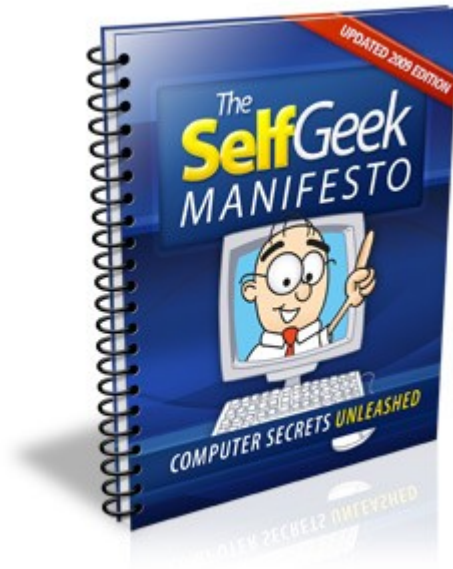
# Free Software Unleashed

(Third Edition – Spring 2009)

by Rich Pryor

A [SelfGeek.com](http://SelfGeek.com) publication

From the Author of:



**[The SelfGeek Manifesto: Computer Secrets Unleashed!](#)**

The latest version of this report can be downloaded at:  
<http://www.SelfGeek.com/Free-Software-Unleashed.html>

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## **Introduction**

Welcome to *Free Software Unleashed!* I have been an Information Technology (I.T.) Consultant for nearly 20 years. Over the years I have learned that complex challenges sometimes require an investment in commercial software. Prices range from moderate to obscene. Therefore, for the benefit of my clients and myself, I always try to find a freeware or modestly price shareware program that will accomplish the same task.

The 2009 version of this special report includes some of the classic programs I have used for many years, as well as some new gems that I have recently discovered.

I am pleased to be able to share this information with you, and hope you will find it valuable. Check out my websites at <http://www.SelfGeek.com> and <http://www.Computer-Secrets-Unleashed.com> for more great computer tips and tricks.

Best Wishes,

*Rich Trapp*

## **Desktop Utilities**

### **CCleaner**

If you find your computer running slower...and slower...and slower, then it is time for some housecleaning! Did you know when you surf the Internet your browser downloads thousands of files and stores them on your computer? At first this helps you browse faster as commonly used files are available locally and don't have to be re-downloaded, but after awhile the plan backfires as your machine gets bogged down trying to keep track of all those files! The solution: download [CCleaner](#) and run it at least once a week to zap all the temp files that are slowing down your machine.

### **Switch Off!**

If you have a need to turn your computer off automatically, the most elegant utility I've found is called simply [Switch Off!](#) It hasn't been updated lately but the current version works great. Whether you want a one-time switch off (say, after a lengthy download completes) or just want it to restart every night at 3:00am, (after your backup or virus scan?) Switch Off! ...is for you.

### **TreeSize Free Edition**

Wondering where all your disk space went? Check out [TreeSize Free Edition](#) – a freeware program that will tell you just that! Right-click on your C: drive and choose “TreeSize Free” and you'll soon have a list of just that....drill down for details until you find the offending files!

### **7-Zip**

Everyone needs a ZIP program, but there is no need to pay \$30 for Winzip! Instead, download the free [7-Zip](#) program. It quickly and easily adds and extracts files from Zip archives as well as it's own 7z format, which can really cut down the size of your compressed files. Like many other programs listed here, it is free and open source. I install it on every machine I manage.

## **BelArc Advisor**

The free [BelArc Advisor](#) tool is fantastic for doing an audit of your computer! After a quick and painless install, it gives you a detailed report of:

- Your hardware configuration, system type, including processor type, amount of RAM, hard disks (including total size and available space), and installed printers
- Which operating system you are running, including service packs, a user list, installed updates and which critical updates you do not have installed
- A complete list of installed software, including the serial numbers for many products and installation keys for Microsoft Windows and Office products.

## **Screen Hunter 5.0 Free Edition**

If you ever want to capture graphics off the screen or a web page, the best free screen capture software I've found is [Screen Hunter 5.0 Free Edition](#). In fact, I use it to capture the images for my website and eBooks.

## **Eraser**

Let's face it...sometimes there are files that you want to delete, and be SURE they are really deleted. [Eraser](#) to the rescue! This freeware program is offered under the GNU Public License, and it will overwrite your files so well that even Homeland Security won't be able to see them. Not that they would.

## Productivity Software

### OpenOffice

Don't have the money to pay for Microsoft Office? What if I told you about an absolutely free, open source office package that is compatible with Microsoft Office? It's called [Open Office](#), and I used it to write this book. It's also great for creating PDFs! They have released V3.0 and it's better than ever – what are you waiting for?

### Picasa

If you are looking for a free program to organize all your digital pictures, look no further than [Picasa3](#). This program literally blew me away when I loaded it the first time. Upon first launch, Picasa will scan your entire hard drive for pictures, and then organize them in an amazing and easy-to-browse timeline format.. (I recommend you move all your pictures in to your “My Documents\My Pictures” folder first, because once Picasa knows where they are, it will be confusing if you move them manually.)

Picasa allows you to easily view all your pictures individually or in a slide show, Labeling is a snap, and great basic editing features (including red-eye elimination etc.) are all built-in. It's also easy to upload your pictures to order prints. Just select the pictures and choose from among numerous online photo stores including Kodak Gallery, Snapfish, Shutterfly, Wal-Mart, CVS, Ritz, Walgreens, and about a dozen others. Add the ability to easily share photos online by posting to web albums or your blog, and you have one amazing piece of software.

### Irfanview

For viewing images.....[Irfanview](#) is free and it is awesome. It supports every type of image you've ever heard from GIFs to JPGs to BMPs to PNGs and a bunch more you might not know even exist. It also converts images to other formats and sizes. Highly recommended!

(Note: The one odd thing about Irfanview is the strange icon it uses for all your image files. It looks like a squashed cat – obviously the author is a dog lover (or a cat hater

anyway.) Good news though, you can change it. It's not obvious where to do this, but here is the trick: Launch Irfanview, then go to Options → Properties → Extensions tab → Miscellaneous button. Choose another icon and save your changes. I like the palm trees!)

### **Foxit Reader**

If you want a fast, simple PDF reader, check out [FoxIt Reader](#). Like all these programs, it's free and does a super job of viewing Adobe PDF files. While Adobe Reader sometimes seems to take 10 seconds to load, FoxIt pops up your PDF for viewing almost immediately. It's all I use!

## **Internet Communication**

### **Firefox (Web Browser)**

Internet Explorer has been plagued with security problems over the years, and many users including myself have experienced unexplained random crashes with the release of Version 7.0. [Mozilla Firefox](#) has emerged as the solution to these problems. Free and open source, it has over 200 add-ons available. It's fast, stable, and so far immune to the security problems that have dragged IE down.

### **Thunderbird (Email client)**

While you're at Mozilla, check out [Thunderbird](#). If you are sick of Outlook or just don't happen to own it, and are looking for a full functional email client, Thunderbird is a great option. It supports multiple email accounts and can even download from your Gmail / Hotmail / Yahoo account.

### **FileZilla**

If you are in need of an FTP client to upload files to your website or download software, the best one I've found is [FileZilla](#). The user interface is elegant and easy to navigate, and of course, since it is free and open source, the price is right!

### **Utorrent**

FTP is great for uploading your website or downloading software, but the best way to download in 2009 is by using BitTorrent. [uTorrent](#) is the best BitTorrent client around. You know it has to be free or it wouldn't be in this report! When I was learning BitTorrent the first time I tried several different clients and there is no doubt that uTorrent blows the rest of them away.

## **Internet Security**

### **AVG Internet Security**

You MUST have both anti-virus and anti-spyware software on your computer if you're going to surf the Internet. Keep reading that sentence over and over until it sinks in. Then go to the [AVG website](#) and download their free version (free for home, non-commercial use that is.) AVG Free Edition includes Anti-Virus, Anti-Spyware, and Linkscanner Active technology that protects you in real time as you surf. (Or even better, grab a free trial of [AVG Professional or AVG Internet Security](#) to add features such as Identity Protection, Anti-Rootkit, Web Shield, Anti-Spam, and Firewall protection.

Free is the best price of all, but even AVG's paid editions are half the price of the "big guys". I really like their two year license, which saves you even more money and doubles the time between renewal.

### **WinPatrol**

[WinPatrol Free Edition](#) is a great program for preventing unwanted programs from installing themselves on your system. "Scotty the Watch Dog" will monitor your startup folders and the registry for changes, and alert you when they happen. Just install some software? Then you probably want a new startup program. Surfing the web and all of a sudden a site tries to install some spyware? No thanks! A professional version is available that has more features and details, but the free version works great. Voted one of PC World's 100 Best Products of 2007.

### **Spyware Blaster**

[Spyware Blaster](#) is another great anti-spyware tool that acts as more of a preventative medicine. This tool patches your system to prevent some of the more well known spyware from installing. Spyware Blaster does not stay resident all the time, so it uses zero memory! Just run it occasionally to download updates and enjoy the added protection.

## **MalwareBytes Anti-Malware**

In the past I have used and recommended Spybot Search & Destroy and AdAware, but a couple times recently I have run across spyware that [MalwareBytes Anti-Malware](#) detected and the others did not. The “quick scan” is just that – it only takes a few minutes and is very effective. When I sit down at a computer and determine it is full of spyware or malware, this is the first tool I install.



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