9.0 Software Picks - Windows 7

Here's my list of Windows 7 software I feel essential to my work as an Everyday User, IT Enthusiast and Developer.

I also have a Mac OS X list for Apple users.

If you are a Windows XP user, refer to this older list which compensates for programs that are not part of Windows 7 or do not work in Windows XP.

To keep things clean, I use the following notation,

* - Can be manually dropped into the system without an installer and can be made portable (not reliant on the Windows registry).
~ - Semi-portable. Can be setup without installer but will set itself in the Windows registry.
64-bit - 64-bit version exists.

If you do not quite like the software here http://alternativeto.net is a great site that shows alternatives.

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Office and Day to Day

1. PicaView 2.0 (Old but really great for previewing multiple images and converting images with a right-click) * Does not work on Windows 7 64-bit. XnView Shell Extension or NConvert with a plugin for the Windows Shell may be a replacement.
2. PDF-XChange Viewer 64-bit (fastest and most stable one out there + allows basic editing)
    - I find I like to Uncheck add in for browsers (makes things more stable)
3. PDF Creators
    a. PrimoPDF (Note this is still not as good as Adobe's PDF creator. You might want to verify the output on an Adobe Reader first). However, it is the only free product so far that passes the printing of a Word Document with an embedded Visio diagram test.
4. VLC Media Player - play DVDs and almost any video format
5. Microsoft Office - Really I tried alternatives but this is the de facto standard for work.
6. Microsoft Visio Professional - Again the best drawing tool out there.
7. Can't stand using the Lotus Notes client - And of course IBM makes it next to impossible to download http://www.ibm.com/developerworks/lotus/library/damo/ and http://www-01.ibm.com/support/docview.wss?uid=swg21161211 and http://www-10.lotus.com/ldd/nflsblog.nsf/dx/latest-damo-release?opendocument&comments
8. Resize Browser Window - Useful for consistent screenshots.
9. HMA Online Proxy Browser - I use to change my country to see appropriate prices when browsing.

Manage Your Music

1. TuneUp - Automatically fix songs and add album cover art based on song samples and TuneUp's database.
2. http://www.discogs.com/ - If you can't find your album art on TuneUp use this.

Desktop Sharing

Team Viewer - Free and requires no sign up. Cannot see the mouse cursor though

GoToMeeting - Requires a paid account of roughly $50/month, good for meetings supports both text based chat, phone call ins, and mics can also be used with web cam.

Video Conferencing

http://www.yakity.com/ - No install as it just uses flash. I believe it is powered by http://www.tokbox.com/

Essential Utilities

1. HoeKey* - Make use of that Windows key and many other key combos. Here are my keys combinations. AutoHotkey might be another alternative worth exploring.
2. PureText* (Strips away formating when you paste using Winkey-V) As there is no install,
   a. Copy to the directory of your choice
   b. Start the program and it will appear as a PT icon on your system tray
   c. Right click the icon and choose options
   d. Check the box to "Automatically run PureText each time...."
3. Araxis Merge 64-bit - Best diff tool I have ever found. (disable Ribbon Interface, check do not show splash window, add folder filter to ignore .svn folders and make the default encoding UTF-8 No BOM). DetalWalker looks promising and cheaper.
4. 7-Zip - I am starting to use this now as my primary compression software (even over WinRar).
5. WinRar 64-bit - better than winzip (does all the same stuff with zip files) plus allows you to create self-extracting splittable files and has a superior compression format called rar.
6. VMWare Workstation - allows you to virtualize operating systems. If you do not know what this means you are missing out.
   a. I map the host apps and vmdata folder and then generate c:\apps\ and c:\vmdata\ symbolic link using,
      i. mklink /D C:\apps Z:\apps
      ii. mklink /D C:\data-vmshared Z:\data-vmshared
7. RamDisk* - Use some of your memory as a hard disk to speed things up. Currently using 3.5.10 RC20. On very first use I create C:\RAMDisk.img with my temp folders setup, save it and then uncheck "Save Disk Image on Shutdown".

Second Tier Essentail

1. Erase - with a right-click you can securely delete or move confidential file
   a. Disable running of scheduled tasks
2. Metapad* - almost as tiny and fast as notepad but with unlimited undo's and a couple of other nice features. However, I do find I use notepad++ more often now.
3. Snagit - screen capture utility. Most used feature, autoscroll, which scrolls to capture all contents of a window.
4. GoFullPage - Chrome Browser extension to capture entire webpage
5. Quick SFV 64-bit - use md5 or sfv files to ensure integrity during transport of files.
6. Synergy - Control multiple computers from one keyboard and mouse over your network.
7. Oscar's Renamer Pro - I have not tried this, but it promised to be similar to Chgname 3.2 which allows renaming of multiple files or folders by converting the list into a text editor. Really great way of renaming things on mass.
8. TeraCopy - Consider TeraCopy when copying lots of files over a network. It is faster, verifies files, allows pausing and keeps track of failed copies which you can redo.
9. Any Video Convert - This was the only free utility I could find that works with VOB files and could combine them. VLC and Handbrake could convert, but they had trouble loading multiple VOBs.

Secure Your Data

1. **AntiVirus** I use different ones on different computers. As a power user I disable the on the fly scanning to conserve cpu and memory.
   a. Avira Personal Edition - has highest detection rate but has pop-up advertisement. Though it can be disabled, I actually recommend buying a license.
   b. Avast Home Edition - Recommended by Dickson. Very good but I don't like having to renew my keys every once in a while.
   c. AVG - Free version does not check for malware.
2. Telnet - you actually have to go into Windows 7 and install this manually.
3. Any Password - centralize your passwords. Now I am looking at an open source alternative called KeePass which I can hopefully hook up to an application server and make online. Even more ideal, I can perhaps hook up KeePass with a java web app with 2-Factor authentication.
4. KeePass* - a central place to keep your important data with one master password or master key file. I currently am using the Kepass 2.10.
5. LastPass - Looks to be better than Any Password and KeePass in that it keeps passwords centrally on a server. Master password is hashed locally on desktop. Also has browser plugins.
6. Second Copy - I have been using this forever to backup my data. My favourite feature, it can keep versions of you backups, like the last 3 versions of the file.
7. SyncToy - Microsoft provides a free product for syncing folders. Not sure if feature rich as Second Copy (multiple backup versions) but

will ask Roderick to install and check it out (since he's not using anything at the moment).

Communication Utilities

Servers

1. FTPDMIN - Minimal ad-hoc zero footprint command line FTP server with no password required. Use for quick transfer.

SSH and SFTP Clients

Critical for administrator in order of preference,

1. Termius - My new favourite on the Mac and may be better than BitVise.
2. BitVise Tunnelier - The simplest and most reliable program I have found for SFTP and Tunneling that is also free for personal use and individual use within a company.
   a. No Putty Integration (console included is not as universally compatible)
   b. GUI for tunneling
   c. Hides in System tray
   d. Does not support drag and drop from desktop
3. Kitty (Portable Version)* - Takes the actual Putty code base and improves the interface with the following key features. Here are the details of my personal configuration file,
   a. Portable option - instead of Windows Registry saves to local file in the directory
   b. Transparent Windows (CTRL-Up Arror and CTRL-Down Arrow)
   c. CTRL-F7 Pin Window to always be on top (useful with Transparency and especially with second or third monitor) - though I tend to use Winkey+F9 using Hoekey
   d. Improved sizeable, searchable, folder based session manager, but still not as good as Putty Connection Manager
   e. Change default or individual colour scheme to one of these collections
4. Putty - I find this to be the most reliable compatible and universal. However, the interface is dated and Kitty is much better. I now package this as part of Putty Connection Manager. Generally I adjust the defaults to:
   a. Window - Columns = 100, Lines of scrollback to 2000
   b. Window, Translation - Received data assumed to be in which character set: UTF-8
5. Putty Connection Manager mremoteng.org - Has a unzip package version. It is not truly zero footprint, but you can export all your connects and import to a new computer.
6. ~~Super Putty (code based from Putty Connection Manager which appears abandoned)* (evaluating move to mremoteng.org) - An updated tabbed and tree based listing interface to Putty (no install, though it does use the registry consider talking to this developers about not doing this)~~
   a. ~~For convenience I create a manual package. Just download the manual package and unzip to a directory of your choice and then execute puttycm.exe.~~
7. SecureCRT - Cross platform and has all the features you would want. Approximately $100 for a license.
   a. Moving Sessions btw Mac and Windows
   b. Launching from Browser (it's just a checkbox)

This is a very important tool to my everyday work these days,

ExpandDrive (create a map drive over SSH for easy development). ExpandDrive hands down is the best tool I found yet for Windows.

SFTP Net Drive - Free. ExpandDrive has been crashing so I found this alternative. I am just about to try it out on a VM.

For AS/400 - Looking at IBM i Access for Client Solutions which comes with your iSeries license.

Browsers

1. Firefox 3.x US version for compatibility + plugins,
   a. TextMarker Go - Now my new favourite highlighter. Additional features F2 to jump to next highlight is also nice. Change colour using CTRL or SHIFT. F12 to use keyboard to highlight.
   b. MM3-ProxySwitch - Simple UI for switching proxies but still a bit too complicated for novices.
      i. After install Right click on white space beside the help and choose Customize
      ii. Scroll down and look for the mm3 icon
      iii. Drag icon to where you want on the browser, I put it on the right of my address bar
   c. Spell checking in forms will only be enabled unless if you have a dictionary. Right-click on a form field and **Add Dictionaries...**
   d. Disable anti-virus scanning on downloads
      i. about:config
      ii. browser.download.manager.scanWhenDone
   e. New Tab Homepage - show homepage on new tab create.
   f. English Canadian dictionary or whatever dictionary you want and change it to the default.
   g. Tab Mix Plus - manages tabs for multi-row, also gives the ability to remove the "x" on the tab to prevent accidental closing
2. Chrome
   a. Proxy Switch! - Quick proxy switcher and because Chrome shares proxy settings with IE using this more often then Proxy

Switcher. Note as of Chrome 45 (May 2015) MAPI which this plugin relies on has been disabled. To fix, load Chrome, launch chrome://flags/#enable-npapi and enable "Enable NPAPI Mac, Windows".

   b. Control cache folder via command switch "...chrome.exe" --disk-cache-dir="CACHE_DIR" --disk-cache-size=N
3. TCP View (Systernal utility to watch all open connections, good for network troubleshooting).
4. Proxy Switcher Lite - only free decent utility to quickly proxy switch in IE. Not too happy with it though.

Networking

LAN Speed Test v2.0* - Simplest tool to measure your network speed.

NameBench - Find the fastest DNS servers in your area.

Developer Utilities

General

1. ieWatch (watch all details of traffic flow in browser)
2. Eclipse IDE for Java EE Developers where I manually bundle Java and Tomcat.
3. TortoiseSVN + improve performance + configure to integrate with Araxis
4. Adobe Photoshop 7.01 - Small and light and does everything I need compared to the newer editions.
5. Photopea - Free Web Version of Photoshop. For some people this is all they might need. Also, extremely useful when on someone else's computer with not graphics software.
6. Tail for Win32 - Nice tail utility which can watch files. Got it from Dimitri.
7. JAD (JAva Decompiler)
8. WinTask - Record Windows actions as macros. Great for repetitive testing of websites.
9. Notepad++* - Recommend by Shawn. No installer required. No install necessary. There is also an option to make it portable so nothing is kept in the registry. Check out my configuration. More neat things about the editor,
      a. "Alt + Left Mouse Click" puts you in Column Mode Select
      b. To select columns without using the mouse use ALT+SHIFT and the cursor keys
      c. UTF-8 support
      d. text highlighting for many languages and more via plugins
10. TopStyle - The best CSS editor and as of version 4.0, a very good all around editor for HTML too. The search and replace functionality I find to be particularly easy to use (allows simple * type searches), powerful (regular expressions) and reliable (unlike Windows built in search). From the creator of HomeSite if you still remember that.
11. RegexBuddy - Still to try. Looks like promising GUI based builder for making Regular Expressions.
12. SoapUI - Web Services simulator. Watched a developer use it and it was pretty impressive.
13. ??? - with the 2012 rising of mobile devices, we once again need to simulate slow downloads.

Security

Test Old SSL on Browsers - Badssl.com let's you see how your older browsers might react to older SSL setups.

LDAP Browsers

1. JXplorer* - recommended by Shawn who's a PKI expert so it must be good.
2. Softerra - polished but I recall not as good as JXplorer and it costs money.

Database Clients

I am still trying to find a good one. Currently I use RazorSQL but it does not have a great Visual Query Builder. The best Visual Query Builder I have ever used has to be Microsoft's SQL Query back in MS SQL 7.0 days. However, it only works with MS products so I would like to see something like that but working with Postgres and HDSQL.

- Navicat Premium - looks good seems to support major databases.
- Active Query Builder - another good looking one.

Data Manipulation

Google Refine* - Online tool to clean up data.

Command Line Tools

I also have a collection of command line tools I use occasionally. I also developed a method of using organizing and invoking these tools without adversely affect my system path.

> This section still needs to be completed.

Server and Systems Admin

These tools are useful to server and systems administrators.

1. TeraCopy - copy large amounts of data. Faster than Windows, verifies files, keeps audit trail, pauses and allows recopy of failed items. Free solution is good enough in most cases.
2. Rufus - Create Bootable USB from ISO

Power User Utilities Usually (Not Installed Until Needed)

1. cpuz* - find details on your memory speed ect...
2. Partition Magic - When in a pinch this is good to re-partition stuff.
3. Acronis Imaging* - I used to use Ghost but you can nolonger create a simple boot disk. Acronis you can.
4. Virtual Clone Drive - Mount an ISO file as a CD-ROM. Free and no spyware.
5. AC3Filter - When playing video that only has 5.1 Digital Audio the automatic downstream to Stereo Surround sound sometimes has issues with the voice channel (the middle channel) being too low where you can not hear the voice acting. Example, for Star Wars Episode IV - Revisited and even dvds you might rent. If your TV does not have the option for Documentary Mode which increases the voice channel you need this program with the following adjustments.
6. Wink - Super easy way to capture screen clicks and turn into flash movies. Great for giving a visual tutorial.
7. Microsys A1 Website Download - Download an entire website. Superior to HTTrack when it comes to websites required authentication. You can login manually to start your session then initiate the download. Just make sure to exclude the logout link. In the 90's I used Teleport Pro which even back then was more feature rich. I have not looked at it since though.
8. EMEditor (good with distinguishing and using UTF-8, ISO sect.. fast, light with text highlighting)
9. WinTask - Great automation and testing tool for Windows.

Web Master

http://www.lipsum.com/ - Generator of Lorem Ipsum dummy text. The standard text in of the printing and typesetting industry.

Windows 7 Optimizations

- Remove backup SP1 Service Pack files.

Multi-Media

Handbrake - Great open source converter software. Still not sure how to convert MKV with subtitles to M4V yet. This thread might help.

Video Downloader - Instead of installing suspiscious software use a website service like KeepVid.

To Do

Update Kitty to at minimal change font colour for blue which is too dark. Consider other things too included in this article, http://dag.wieers.com/blog/improving-putty-settings-on-windows