



## \*The Best Computer Services are FREE

1. **Google Desktop** ([desktop.google.com](http://desktop.google.com)) has conquered the search function on your PC. This free program offers the same kind of fast, accurate searching of your computer hard drive that Google does to the Web. After you download and install this program, it spends a couple of hours cataloging everything on your hard drive. After that, you type in what you're looking for in the Google Desktop search bar, and quick as a flash your search results display.
2. **Craigslist** ([craigslist.org](http://craigslist.org)) gives you free classified ads arranged by city (Tampa Bay) and by category: For Sale, Jobs, Housing, Services, Local Community, Personals, and Events. Register with Craigslist to simplify the process of placing free ads and keeping up with them (but you don't have to register to use the service). Use your phone number for contact, not your email address.

### ***Free Software Saved Many Lives in the Aftermath of Hurricane Katrina***

*PC World* magazine cited free software that saved countless victims of flooding after Hurricane Katrina. Airmen used Craigslist ([craigslist.org](http://craigslist.org)) to find postings of people who needed help. Some people posted their own distress notices, while others were posted on Craigslist by desperate relatives.

Using Google Earth ([earth.google.com](http://earth.google.com)), the airmen were able to go directly to the address of each victim because Google Earth had overlaid street addresses on top of the newest aerial photos of flooded New Orleans.

3. **Tweak VI Basic** ([find.pcworld.com/56750](http://find.pcworld.com/56750)) lets you adjust Windows VISTA to make it friendlier to use.
4. **Meebo** ([meebo.com](http://meebo.com)) Download this program if you would like to be able to simultaneously log into all seven instant messaging services at once--AIM, Google Talk, ICQ, Jabber, MSN Live Messenger, Yahoo Instant Messenger, and Meebo's own network.
5. **Jajah** ([jajah.com](http://jajah.com)) is a website that allows you to make FREE local, long-distance, and international calls using your existing phone. The catch: Both your phone number and the one you're calling must be registered with Jajah. Users are limited to 30 minutes of talk time a day. After you download and install Jajah, and your party does also, you type in your phone number plus the number you're calling. When your phone rings, you pick it up, and are connected to the other party.
6. **Avast** ([avast.com](http://avast.com)) is an anti-virus program rated as high as the ones you pay for. Download this program, remove your previous anti-virus program, and enjoy 7 different varieties of shields, safe surfing tools, and real-time virus protection for your operating system and for Outlook. Avast downloads and installs updates automatically and works with Win XP or Vista.

7. **VLC Media Player** ([videolan.org/vlc](http://videolan.org/vlc)) will play those video and sound files that Windows Media Player and Real Player will not. It plays audio and video formats, also DVDs, VCDs, and many streaming protocols.
8. **Google Picasa** ([picasa.google.com](http://picasa.google.com)) is a free photo-editing program that makes it simple to touch up your photos, create a slide show, or make a screensaver or wallpaper using your photos. Download it from Google and install it to see just how simple it is to use.
9. **Gmail** ([gmail.com](http://gmail.com)) is free email from Google. It gives you fast, safe e-mailing, stores every email you send or receive, and has a very simple uncluttered interface. It doesn't just give you web-based email; it can work with your existing email software instead.

\*Excerpted from "101 Fantastic Freebies," *PC World* magazine, May2007, pp. 76-88.

10. **MOZY** (mozy.com) is a free backup program that will not bug you to buy advanced features. You can back up only the portions of files that have changed since your last backup, and you can browse through 10 days worth of backups to locate previous versions of files.
11. **Google Blogger** (blogger.com)-is home to tens of thousands of web logs (blogs). You can read other people's blogs or create your own. blog. Templates allow you to start posting in a snap.
12. **YouTube** (youtube.com) has the largest collection of videos (both homemade and copied) on the web. It's easy to search, well-organized, streams video quickly and smoothly, and you can upload your own videos to YouTube for others to enjoy. What's not to like???
13. **NoteTab Light** (notetab.com) improves on Windows Notepad by allowing you to open multiple files at once. Each file runs in its own tab, so you can switch back and forth. Many nifty, built in features, such as one that strips HTML out of a document, a clipboard for text clips, macros, and more.
14. **Audacity** (audacity.sourceforge.net) This free program includes audio recording tools and sophisticated editing functions for creating your own sound recordings, movies, etc. You can add sound effects, use a sound mixer, and even create audio soundscapes from scratch.