

# Using Free Software for your studies.

This document is for information, not specific recommendation (although everything here reflects the way I work myself). It is meant to help people who wish to use Free software for part or all of their work with their computer. For an explanation of Free (and the reason I am using a capital letter for the word, because it means a lot more than 'no cost'), see [www.fsf.org](http://www.fsf.org)

## 1) Operating system:

You can use Free software on a proprietary operating system (eg Windows, MacOSX, iOS). If you want to go the whole hog, though, you can replace Windows or OSX with Linux, which is totally Free. There are many different versions ('distros') – Ubuntu is the most friendly to newcomers, being at least a simple to set up as Windows. NB – if you have a laptop, check first that the Linux you choose will work with it – Macbooks, in particular, can have issues with the wireless. Android is a version of Linux optimized for mobile devices, by the way.

## 2) Web Browser:

Firefox is the obvious choice: works on Linux, OSX, Windows and more. Using scroogle instead of Google ([www.scroogle.org.scrapper.html](http://www.scroogle.org.scrapper.html)) respects your privacy and does not track you or bombard you with adverts as Google does.

## 3) Word processor, spreadsheet, database, slideshow:

LibreOffice: works on Linux, OSX, Windows and more. Can read and write Microsoft format files too, if you need to work with people who choose to use those MS Office. OpenOffice is very similar, but not quite 100% Free (though it is costless).

## 4) Image manipulation software

GIMP is a very powerful system similar to Powerpoint: works on Linux, OSX (uses X-windows), Windows and more. ImageJ is specially designed for science and runs on Java Virtual Machine (which is itself available for on Linux, OSX, Windows and more).

## 5) Reference Management software:

Zotero works with LibreOffice and runs either as a stand-alone application or under Firefox, where it allows your documents to pick up material from bibliographic databases directly. Works on Linux, OSX, Windows and more.

## 6) pdf reader:

Skim (OSX). Document viewer (Linux). Free pdf reader [http://download.cnet.com/Free-PDF-Reader/3000-18514\\_4-75332387.html](http://download.cnet.com/Free-PDF-Reader/3000-18514_4-75332387.html) works on Linux, OSX, Windows and more. (Adobe reader is free of charge but not Free).

## 7) Multimedia:

VLC player – plays pretty much anything. Works on Linux, OSX, Windows and more.

## 8) Code editor:

Bluefish. Works on Linux, OSX, Windows and more. Amaya is also useful, especially for HTML.

## 9) E-mail:

Evolution (Linux), Eudora OSE (Linux, OSX, Windows), Thunderbird (Linux, OSX, Windows).

## 10) Calendar

Sunbird (Linux, OSX, Windows) or Thunderbird (which includes Sunbird).