

# Open Source Software

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I use Linux exclusively for my research and day to day work. Over the past year or so i have identified my favourite applications from the myriad of options available within the open source community. My selection is presented below.

## 1. Operating Systems

Did use : [Fedora Core 2](#) (2004 - early 2005)

Use now : [Fedora Core 3](#) (early 2005 - present)

Why use it : Very easy to install and comes with an excellent base standard of applications.

## 2. Window Manager

Did use : [Gnome](#) (2003 - mid 2004)

Use now : [Fluxbox](#)

What is it : Fluxbox is yet another windowmanager for X. It's based on the Blackbox 0.61.1 code. Fluxbox looks like blackbox and handles styles, colors, window placement and similar thing exactly like blackbox (100% theme/style compatibility).

Why use it : This window manager is far more minimalistic than heavy window managers like GNOME or KDE. There is a simple settings files which contain all the configurable elements.

## 3. Update Program

Use now : [YUM](#) - Yellow Dog Updater Modified

What is it : Yum is an automatic updater and package installer/remover for rpm systems. It automatically computes dependencies and figures out what things should occur to install packages. It makes it easier to maintain groups of machines without having to manually update each one using rpm.

Why use it: Really easy to use and integrates nicely with fedora. There is no GUI supplied but some are available. Also yum mirrors are available on the [heanet](#) in Ireland!

## 4. Instant Messenger

Use now : [GAIM](#) - GNU AIM

What is it : Gaim is a multi-protocol instant messaging (IM) client for Linux, BSD, MacOS

X, and Windows. It is compatible with AIM and ICQ (Oscar protocol), MSN Messenger, Yahoo!, IRC, Jabber, Gadu-Gadu, SILC, GroupWise Messenger, and Zephyr networks.

Why use it : Excellent GUI, very stable and integrates with most chat protocols with one handy window. Supports MSN, Yahoo, ICQ and others.

## 5. Web Site Management

Use now : [Apache Forrest](#)

What is it : Apache Forrest is an XML standards-oriented documentation framework based upon Apache Cocoon, providing XSLT stylesheets and schemas, images and other resources. Forrest uses these to render the source content into a website via command-line, robot, or dynamic application.

Why use it : Great tool for building web sites quickly and to a very high standard. There is a lead in time of about 3 hours to read documentation and to get things going but it's time well spent.

## 6. Mail Client

Use now : [Evolution](#)

What is it : The most popular groupware client for Linux, Novell® Evolution™ integrates e-mail, calendaring, tasks and contact management in one easy-to-use application. As part of Novell Linux Desktop, Novell Evolution integrates smoothly with other applications and communications tools and connects to corporate communications architectures including Novell GroupWise® and Microsoft Exchange.

Why use it : Very stable and user friendly mail client and calender application. Looks just like Outlook but isn't susceptible to so many viruses!!

## 7. Document Preparation

Use now : [LaTeX](#)

What is it : LaTeX is a high-quality typesetting system, with features designed for the production of technical and scientific documentation. LaTeX is the de facto standard for the communication and publication of scientific documents.

Why use it : Incredibly high quality output. There is quite a lead in time with this tool when compared to applications like Microsoft Word and Open Office but once you get the hang of the markup its very easy to update documents.

## 8. Presentation Preparation

Use now : [Prosper](#)

What is it : Prosper is a LaTeX class for writing transparencies. It is written on top of the seminar class by Timothy Van Zandt. It aims at offering an environment for easily creating slides for both presentations with an overhead projector and a video projector. Slides prepared for a presentation with a computer and a video projector may integrate animation effects, incremental display, and such.

Why use it : If you already know [LaTeX](#) its a far more flexible solution than Powerpoint for creating presentations. Combined with Adobe Acrobat as it's reader this is an excellent solution.

## 9. UML Diagrams

Use now : [Dia](#)

What is it : Dia is designed to be much like the commercial Windows program 'Visio'. It can be used to draw many different kinds of diagrams. It currently has special objects to help draw entity relationship diagrams, UML diagrams, flowcharts, network diagrams, and simple circuits. It is also possible to add support for new shapes by writing simple XML files, using a subset of SVG to draw the shape.

Why use it : This program is so easy to use. It also plays very well with LaTeX as files can be exported in an .eps format.