



# My favourite (free) resources

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As an IT consultant, part of my business is to provide solutions for people who are having difficulties with their computers—both Mac and PC—and to give advice to those who want to upgrade their computer equipment. I like to think laterally to help ensure my clients can achieve their technological goals. As my business card says: “Anything is possible”.

## My selection criteria:

- Reliability is the key to anything; time is too precious to have to repeat the mistake of trying to save a dollar with inferior products.
- Scalable, technology WILL change and data WILL grow.
- Nothing lasts forever so never rely on your data being safe in one place.
- Back up! Offsite backup is for everyone.

Like life, most new electronic devices do not come with a detailed instruction manual. That said, there are three rules to adhere to that I think are invaluable. What's more they are free! (And can potentially save enormous amounts of time and stress.)

## 1 Virus protection

[www.free.avg.com](http://www.free.avg.com)

It is essential these days to have something rather than nothing when it comes to virus protection. I have been using the free edition of AVG for several years with no qualms. It does a sound job without slowing up your workstation. Optimisations for Windows Vista & 7 see immediate protection to popular social networking sites without being obtrusive.

The paid version offered by AVG, along with other paid versions from popular vendors, often contains features not necessary to most individuals. Paid features will see parental filters that parents can set up to protect their young ones and more advanced integration to applications such

as mail where increased Spam filters could be just the ticket if receiving 100 emails a day has become the norm. 24/7 technical support is available to those who have paid, but often key infections will need the onsite presence of a computer technician rather than remote desktop support.

## 2 Backup!

[www.dropbox.com](http://www.dropbox.com)

Backups can be as simple as a USB memory stick or a hard disk drive with files copied over to it once a month. There are more complex and automated systems allowing for hourly and weekly backups, however they can become expensive to an individual. Dropbox is perfect for filling the daily gap. It works seamlessly to your smart phone, laptop, desktop and is securely stored in the cloud to be accessed anywhere there is an internet connection.

The free space available to you is only 2GB but is expandable to 8GB by referring colleagues. It's perfect for documents and projects that you work on daily. More space can be purchased for a small price, but the storage of your ever-growing music, photo and video libraries are often best backed up locally to a hard drive, as the content does not necessarily change daily.

Once you visit the Dropbox website there is a two-minute video on the home page that will explain how it all works. A picture is worth a thousand words, and this video is a million ideas in two minutes!

## 3 Google

[www.google.com](http://www.google.com)

This is every technician's favourite tool in the box! Just ask Google anything; you'll get answers via text, videos or pictures that will show you an answer. From satellite and street views of your next appointment through to how to program that new touch screen to control your model railway. It contains a wealth of knowledge without the price tag or the dusty shelves that the ever-dating encyclopedias gave us.

The free Google translator makes it perfect for hunting down that rare eBay find in another country by instantly telling you what you are looking for in another language.

Simply put, with Google at your fingertips “everyone can unleash their inner genius.” ■

**Josef Buckland** is the proprietor of WAPPLES, a 24/7 IT consultancy and solutions provider to the Fraser Coast. With a passion for technology fused with traditional values, he manipulates a methodical thought process and a vast array of specialised skills to deliver miracles to clients, which others had seen as an impossibility.