

Observations on software I regularly use:

Purpose	software program	used for	comments
Bitmap editing	Adobe Photoshop	Enhancing photos, adding titles, creating cards	Nothing beats Photoshop in terms of functionality and ease of use. It isn't cheap but given the amount I use it, it has proved extremely worthwhile
Vector graphics	Xara Designer Pro	Creating images, illustrations, stationery, brochures, web sites, simple DTP	A general purpose program, my favourite for illustration. Intuitive and good value for money. The whole program includes photo enhancement, web site creation and some DTP features but Xara have available subsets of the program for anyone not wanting to purchase the whole program. Although I have Adobe Illustrator I find myself automatically reaching for Xara
Word processing	Microsoft Word	Letters, essays, labels,	If you can't beat it join it. I used to be a WordPerfect fan but now MS Word is the main horse in town, but Libre Office is free and definitely worth considering.
Desktop publishing	Indesign CS5	Magazines, newspapers, books	Designed by Adobe from scratch, Indesign meets all needs in a logical way. If your design needs are not onerous you could probably use Xara Designer Pro or Page & Layout Designer for a fraction of the cost.
Spreadsheets	Microsoft Excel	Anything in tabular form, including calculations	A great program, easy to use; versatile and accomplished. It can be used simply as a sortable table or for accounts
Website design	Adobe Dreamweaver, formerly Macromedia	Creating web sites	Many use a wysiwyg program which accomplishes everything without needing to know language basics. This is fine but it doesn't enable you to modify a page created in anything else. Besides, having mastered code, that I enjoy the extra freedom that goes with this program
ftp	FileZilla	uploading web site files	This free open source program does exactly what it says on the tin - simple to use
backup	FreeFileSync	keeping a back up of changed files	This free open source program creates an identical copy (mirror) of your designated folder and contents on your removable storage drive, updating, adding and deleting files that have changed to bring it in line. It will do two-way sync if desired