

Tech Bit 13

Carry Your Apps With You

Everyone has a flash drive, right?

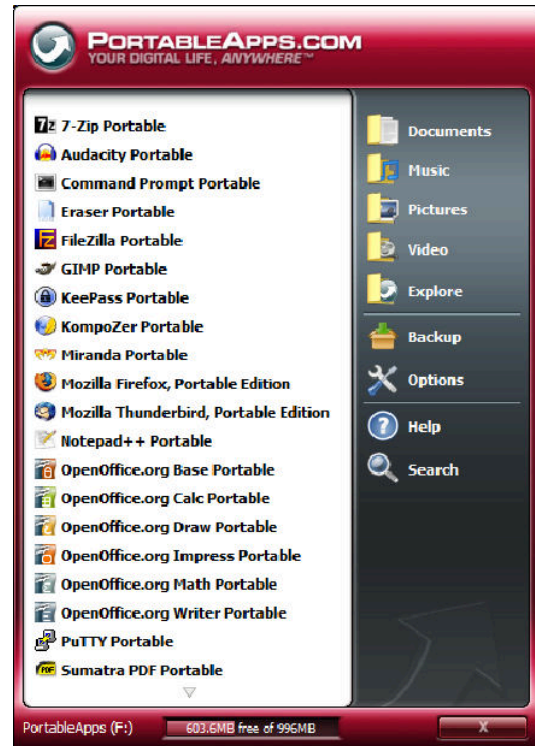
Beyond carrying important documents, like a scan of your passport, you can carry a complete office set up that will run on any Windows computer you can find, such as a spare at a client or the hotel's business center.

Rather than worry if they have the right applications, carry them with you on your flash drive.

The first implementation of this was U3, a proprietary system for running applications off flash drives, created by Kingston Memory. It's problem was, being proprietary, not many applications bothered with modifying their programs to work with U3.

Now there's an open source (aka free like Linux) option called Portable Apps (<http://portableapps.com/>). It provides a similar environment as U3, but has better support, especially by open source applications.

So along with Portable Apps, you can have Open Office (*very compatible with Microsoft Office and free*), Firefox (quickly becoming my favorite web browser) with its bookmarks, Thunderbird (a good Outlook alternative), GIMP (a Photoshop alternative), Audacity (audio editing software)—in other words, everything you need to work. And all free. Even my tricked out collection of almost everything barely takes half of a 1 gigabyte flash drive.



Programs and data stay on the flash drive. You plug it in, do your work, and when you are done, remove it. All trace of your visit goes with you.

Are you sure you need to lug that notebook on every trip? Even a 2 pound Mac Air is heavy compared to a 1 ounce flash drive.

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