

Use Open Source Software

If you run a small-business, you (literally) can't afford to miss everything the wonderful world of [Open Source software](#) has to offer. Here's our favorite recommendations:

Desktop Software:

- a. [OpenOffice](http://www.openoffice.org) (<http://www.openoffice.org>): A complete office suite, compatible with MS Office. We haven't installed or used MS Office in over 3 years now since we started using Open Office. All our PDFs, spreadsheets, diagrams and presentations are created using Open Office.
- b. [Firefox](http://getfirefox.org) (<http://getfirefox.org>): Browse securely using a fully W3C compliant browser.
- c. [Inkscape](http://inkscape.org) (<http://inkscape.org>): Need to illustrate something? Inkscape is a very powerful drawing program. We like to use it for our charts and diagrams, but we also use it for more complex artistic design and illustration.
- d. [GIMP](http://www.gimp.org) (<http://www.gimp.org>): Need an easy way to touch up your photos? GIMP can do that and more. We use GIMP to make all our project's nifty favicons, and we even like it for specific types of layout.
- e. [Ubuntu](http://www.ubuntu.com) (<http://www.ubuntu.com>): Ubuntu is a Linux-based OS for everyone else. It comes with all the software we listed above. Easy to install and use, many PC sites like Gateway and Dell will offer to install configure Ubuntu for you instead of Windows, saving you the cost of the Windows license on your new machine. We recommend you **try it out first** and make sure it's for you, it's easy to demo off the installation CD, you can take a full tour on the site.

Website Platforms and Frameworks:

- a. [WordPress](http://wordpress.org) (<http://wordpress.org>): It's the most popular web publishing platform we offer services for. WordPress is so much more than a blog. Talk to us about how it can help your site and project.
- b. [Drupal](http://drupal.org) (<http://drupal.org>): A robust portal publishing platform. If you've got a large organization with a site that has to wear many different hats, Drupal may be for you.
- c. [Joomla!](http://joomla.org) (<http://joomla.org>): Like Drupal, Joomla! works best for larger sites and organizations.
- d. [CakePHP](http://cakephp.org) (<http://cakephp.org>): A PHP framework that can help speed the development of custom web applications.
- e. [CodeIgniter](http://codeigniter.com) (<http://codeigniter.com>): Similar to CakePHP, another PHP framework, much lighter and works well for most small business application needs.
- f. [Pure MVC](http://puremvc.org) (<http://puremvc.org>): A framework originally for ActionScript. It's what we use for all our [Flash](#) and [AIR](#) projects. Pure MVC has been ported out to lots of other scripting languages including PHP, Python, Ruby and Java.
- g. [Django](http://www.djangoproject.com) (<http://www.djangoproject.com>): A framework for Python. Why use Python instead of PHP? There are a few good reasons depending on your situation. Talk to us about which framework is right for your web site application.

Open Source: It's free, but it's not "free software". Contribute.

We use a host of Open Source software and tools and we also consult clients on how to get the most from their Open Source solutions. This saves us and our clients money. It still takes time and resources to develop these products and that means community participation and contribution.

hyper3media contributes a portion of their income to each Open Source project they consult or develop for. Tessa writes books about Open Source web platforms for [Packt Publishing](#) and likes how Packt contributes proceeds from book sales to those projects. You might find you'll want to do the same. After all, if you just saved yourself and your business \$500 dollars on software, putting a portion of toward the software you use to keep it going and supported is money well spent.

Contributions to these organizations doesn't have to be financial. Feedback, and other types of participation in the community is also welcome and needed.