

27 Tools That Help You Get [BLEEP] Done

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Hammers for Your Nails

In addition to putting heavy-duty hours into running your business, I'm guessing you also spend a slug of time thinking of ways to attract more customers.

You have ideas for how to grow your business. Good ideas. Lots of them. The question is how to *execute* them.

This list of tools helps you do that: it helps you do some of the stuff you've wanted or needed to do as part of your plan to grow your business—but that you *haven't* done because you're not sure how, or because you haven't yet found the right tool for the job.

As the title suggests, this collection of tools isn't specifically meant to help you get locally visible in Google Places. Sure, some of the tools will help with that, but many of them help you more broadly—by **saving you time, money, or both**.

I know this because these 27 tools have saved *me* precious time and money—without which growing *my* business would have been a whole lot harder.

Some of these tools I'd rank right up there with the cotton gin, the light bulb, penicillin, and TiVo, whereas others have been just the right tool at just the right time. By the way, I'm **not an affiliate** of or in any way trying to sell any of these tools; I'm just a big fan.

Even though this is a crackerjack “best-of” list, I don't rank the tools in any particular order. It's a diverse list, too; some people may go so far as to call it random and ragtag.

The first 12 on the list are completely free, the next 6 have free trials (with good or full functionality), and the last 9 cost a few bucks but are more than worth it.

Enjoy!

Totally Free Tools:

VideoSpin

What It Is: Video editor

Sick of banging your head against the wall with Windows Movie Maker? If you want to edit your video footage, add transitions, fade-outs—all that good stuff—you'll find VideoSpin a breeze. Very simple, very robust.

Where to Find It: www.VideoSpin.com

WinFF

What It Is: Video converter

Need to convert your video files to a YouTube-friendly format? WinFF is a simple, fast, stripped-down converter that just works the way it's supposed to.

Where to Find It: www.WinFF.org

PDFEscape.com

What It Is: PDF editor, reader, designer, and form-filler

A free, online way to edit PDF documents. No downloading necessary. Super handy.

Where to Find It: www.PDFEscape.com

FreePDFConvert.com

What It Is: PDF converter

As the name suggests, this instantly converts your files into PDFs for free.

Where to Find It: www.FreePDFConvert.com

ZoneAlarm

What It Is: Antivirus and firewall tool

What's great about ZoneAlarm is it doesn't slow down your system AT ALL. There's a paid version with some good bells and whistles, but the free version is more than enough to keep you out of trouble and your system virus-free.

Where to Find It: www.ZoneAlarm.com

Wayback Machine

What It Is: A tool that shows you archived pages of websites—the way they looked in the past

For example, if you want to find out what a competitor's site looked like a year ago, versus 5 years ago, versus maybe even 10-15 years ago, this will show you saved versions of the webpages exactly as they used to appear on the Web.

Where to Find It: www.Archive.org/web/web.php

Instant Eyedropper

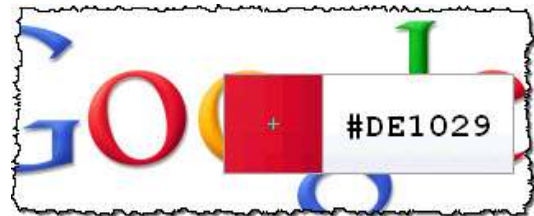
What It Is: Color-identifier tool

Have you ever been on a website and saw a color that you liked—like a nice light-gray background, or a paragraph of text that's a shade of blue you just can't pinpoint?

Something that you'd like to incorporate

into the color scheme of your website—if only you could find out what that color is? (Maybe I'm the only one who gets this OCD about color schemes!) With the Instant Eyedropper, all you have to do is drag your mouse over any part of any webpage, and it will tell you the 6-digit HTML color code for the color you're looking at. Perfect for if you see a color you like and want to incorporate it into your site.

Where to Find It: www.Instant-Eyedropper.com



Dead-Links.com

What It Is: Scans your site for broken links

Accurate and easy to use. Instantly tells you which links need fixing.

Where to Find It: www.Dead-Links.com

AlleyCode

What It Is: HTML editor

A great HTML-editing program. Completely free, too. Some people like DreamWeaver, but I like AlleyCode because it doesn't wrap the lines of code in weird-looking patterns, the way DreamWeaver does.

Where to Find It: www.Alleycode.com/download.htm

Google Chrome

What It Is: Fast, efficient browser

You've heard of Chrome. You probably already use a browser that you like. But if you feel like your current browser is a bit slow and has a few too many bells and whistles, you might like the speed of Chrome. It's stripped down, but you can also get any number of plug-ins for it.

Where to Find It: www.Google.com/chrome

Google Alerts

What It Is: Automatic notifications for published Web content

You can get Google to send you email notifications whenever content that contains certain search terms—search terms that you specify—is published anywhere on the Web. A great way to keep tabs on what's being written online about you, your competitors, and your local market in general. You don't even need a Google account!

Where to Find It: www.Google.com/alerts

SEOQuake

What It Is: Browser plug-in that gives you SEO info about the websites you see ranked in Google

A great (free) plug-in for FireFox and Google Chrome that shows you SEO/ranking details on every website you see on Google's SERPs. Quick to install, easy to use, and unobtrusive.

Where to Find It: www.SEOQuake.com

Tools with Free Trials or Partial Functionality

SnagIt

What It Is: Screenshot and photo-editing tool

Sure, your computer has the print-screen button (“PrtSc”) for taking screenshots, but SnagIt allows you to capture scrolling webpages, and much more. The included photo-editing tool (SnagIt Editor) beats the pants off of Photoshop, in terms of allowing you to edit your photos easily—without your having to hunt through a billion buttons, menus, and help forums just to do simple tasks. By the way, SnagIt is what I used to create all the visuals in my Local Visibility System. I highly suggest buying the full version: it was some of the very best money (\$75) I ever spent, and I’m certain you’ll feel the same way.

Where to Find It: www.Techsmith.com/snagit/default.asp

YouSendIt

What It Is: File-sending service

A no-hassle, completely secure way to send big files (like pictures and videos) to people. No more sitting and staring at the progress bar while your email system tries to upload and send a huge file. No more wondering if the recipient actually received the files.

Where to Find It: www.YouSendIt.com

Creately

What It Is: Diagramming tool

Makes graphs, pie charts, Venn diagrams—pretty much any infographic you can think of. For free.

Where to Find It: www.Creately.com

UltraEdit

What It Is: HTML editor

It’s a very solid editor in general, but the best part is its “Ultra Compare” feature, which compares two or more files head-to-head and tells you the exact

differences between them. This is incredibly handy when you have some problem with your webpages and you're trying to figure out exactly what's going on.

Where to Find It: www.UltraEdit.com

CuteFTP

What It Is: FTP client

An FTP system is for uploading files to your website (as you may know). Easy to use. Extremely solid and reliable.

Where to Find It: www.GlobalScape.com/downloads

Keyword Spy

What It Is: Keyword-research tool for pay-per-click

A great competitive-intel tool if you use Google AdWords. It's pretty well-known. It tells you which keywords your competitors bid on, how much their bids are, and other important stats that help you get or maintain your edge in pay-per-click.

Where to Find It: www.KeywordSpy.com

Camtasia

What It Is: Screen-recorder/video producer

Made by the same people who make SnagIt. You use it to shoot a video in which you're showing the viewer what's happening on your screen—just like a screenshot, except it's a video recording. Obviously, you can include audio, and it allows you to add all kinds of useful video pyrotechnics to your video.

Where to Find It: www.Techsmith.com/download/camtasia/

Paid Tools

InfoSelect

What It Is: Info organizer (for notes, logins/passwords, contacts, etc.)

What Info Select excels at is allowing you to find the information you're looking for *quickly*, and at making it nearly impossible to misplace your info. For instance, if you're trying to find someone's email address from a few years back, and all you remember is that it's a Comcast address, Info Select can instantly find the note where you wrote down the address. It's an offline tool: a piece of software. It's been around for about 20 years, and the interface isn't much to look at, but it's a workhorse and does its job excellently.

Where to Find It: www.MicLog.com/software

JungleDisk

What It Is: File-backup system

Dirt-cheap (\$2/month!) file-backup solution by Amazon. It doesn't slow down your system at all: the initial backup of your files takes a few hours, but after that you don't even know that the backups go on. It's stripped-down and highly efficient because JungleDisk only backs up the files you tell it to, and, of those, only backs up the ones that you've modified or created since the last backup—the result being that it usually only backs up a dozen or two files on any given day. You don't even have to mess around with databases: Amazon just stores your files in a cloud, so that all you have to do to retrieve your files from any computer is log in to your JungleDisk account.

Where to Find It: www.JungleDisk.com/personal

Kunaki

What It Is: CD-production service

Have a video and want to produce a ton of audio or video CDs for cheap? A Japanese service called Kunaki can do it for you. It's kind of a weird system: somehow, Kunaki is run almost completely by computers, with maybe one guy on the other end whose job it is to take thousands of CDs to the post office.

Anyway, the way it works is if you've already burned your video onto a CD of your own, you simply go to Kunaki.com, pop in the CD, and wait for your files to upload to the site. Then you're asked how many copies of the CD you want, where you want them shipped, what you'd like printed on the CD, and how you'd like the jewel case to look. They'll even do fulfillment for you (if for some reason you need it). The price-grading is a little backwards: the more you order, the more it costs per CD. I've found that ordering in batches of 10 is pretty economical.

Where to Find It: www.Kunaki.com

PayPal shopping-cart buttons

What It Is: Pay-per-transaction checkout buttons

Super-easy way to get a shopping cart on your site—fast. The huge advantage PayPal has over other payment methods is people trust PayPal, and the interface is easy and not confusing—which means less cart abandonment. There are no monthly fees: PayPal only takes a small cut when you sell something. It's easy and lightning-fast to set up (provided that you already have a PayPal account), and only gets complicated if you want to do fancier things—like setting up automatic redirects to hidden download pages.



Where to Find It: Go to www.PayPal.com. Click on the “Business” tab. Under the “Products & Services” tab, select “Website Payments Standard.”

Fiverr.com

What It Is: A site where you can hire people to do simple tasks for \$5

Need a tiny odd-job performed—like for someone to edit one photo in a particular way in Photoshop? You may be able to pay someone \$5 to do it. Fiverr.com is kind of like Elance.com on a micro scale. Not necessarily the place to go for big, important stuff—like getting great sales copy written—but it's a great resource if you need some weird little task performed and don't want to “hire” somebody.

Where to Find It: www.Fiverr.com

Microsoft Publisher

What It Is: Publication-design tool

Isn't Word *lousy* for formatting printed materials? It's tough to get your document looking just right—if you're able to get it looking right at all. But Publisher is tailor-made for getting your printed materials looking just the way you'd like.

Where to Find It: <http://Office.Microsoft.com/en-us/publisher/>

Microsoft Visio Standard

What It Is: Diagramming tool

A great way to sketch a flowchart and other kinds of infographic. Intuitive to use, but allows you to create visuals of all shapes and sizes. Not cheap: \$249.

Where to Find It: <http://Office.Microsoft.com/en-us/visio>

Aweber

What It Is: Email-marketing/name-capture system

Too few business owners have a way to capture the names and email addresses of the people who visit their site. A solid name-capture mechanism is gold: it's how you can turn visitors who are already warm to you and your services into (eventually) paying customers.

There are many great email services that let you do this. A great one is Aweber, which I've used for years. It has its drawbacks, but it's easy to set up and it gets your emails delivered. You can try it out for \$1, and then it's free until you have over 100 subscribers (and after that it's only \$20/month).

Where to Find It: www.Aweber.com

A Few Quick Notes

If you've found these tools to be handy—or if you haven't used them yet but think they'll prove useful—feel free to share this list with a fellow business owner or a friend who you think might benefit.

Of course, I'd be eager to hear about any tools that have come in handy for you and that you'd recommend.

I hope the above suggestions help save you frustration, money, and time—and make business a little better and life a little easier.

To Your Success, Locally and Everywhere!

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P.S. Speaking of making life easier...have you checked out the “Guerilla Guide”? (The full title of the report is the “10-Point Guerilla Guide to Using Your Competitors to Boost Your Local Visibility to Customers.”)

It's a down-and-dirty guide that guide shows you how to get more visible in Google Places by ripping a page out of your competitors' books. It consists of 10 easy-to-apply techniques for pinpointing the specific advantages your local competitors have in Google, and then turning their ranking advantages into yours.

I'll even give you the first section—the 1st technique of 10—for free as a PDF. Simply visit www.localvisibilitysystem.com/guerilla-guide to get the free stuff and to see what else the “Guerilla Guide” will do for your local visibility and business.

P.P.S. I'd love to hear any feedback you have about this “27 Tools” report—or about any of my other materials, for that matter.

You can email me at phil@localvisibilitysystem.com if you have any questions—and of course I'd always appreciate your giving www.localvisibilitysystem.com a “Google +1”, a Tweet, or your simply telling a friend who runs a business to check it out.