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By **ED SCHWARTZ** / THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

Q: What should the average user's PC maintenance and recovery toolbox consist of? Also, what other tools and utilities do you suggest?

A: Some of these tools have been written about before but not in one convenient place. Many of these tools are free and some are not. If they are not free, be sure to look for a trial version before purchasing. Here's what I keep handy for maintenance and disaster recovery:



Antivirus program – Microsoft Security Essentials
– free at bit.ly/freetantivirus2

Disk cleanup – Cleaner – free
at piriform.com/ccleaner

Malware remover –Malwarebytes - free at malwarebytes.org/

Malware remover - Super Antispyware – free at superantispyware.com/

File recovery – Recuva – free at video-buzz.com/

Disk imaging – Acronis True Image - \$49.99 at acronis.com/

Data backup – Genie Backup - \$49.95 at bit.ly/geniebackup8

Disk defragmenter - MyDefrag – free at mydefrag.com/index.html

Program startup manager – WhatinStartup – free at bit.ly/startupmgr

Here are other tools that I use regularly:

CD/DVD burning - CD Burner XP – free at cdburnerxp.se/en/home works with all versions of Windows

Screen capture – SnagIt - \$49 at techsmith.com/snagit/

Media manager and player – MediaMonkey – free at mediamonkey.com

Portable browser - Firefox Portable Browser – free at bit.ly/firefoxportable

Password manager – RoboForm Desktop - \$29.95 at roboform.com

Disk cataloger – Advanced File Organizer – \$29.95 at softprime.com/

Address book – Handy Address Book - \$29.95 at beiley.com/habook/

Online backup – SugarSync - \$4.99 per month for 30 GB at sugarsync.com or a free 5 GB plan at sugarsync.com/free

File manager – Free Commander – free at freecommander.com

Photo manager – Zoner Photo Studio – free at zoner.com

Slide show creator – Proshow Gold - \$69.95 at photodex.com.

There are free alternatives to most of these programs and can be located by using your favorite search engine. I realize that this is a long list, but you might find some of these handy.

These have all been reviewed against the competition, and I have found them to be among the best available. If you have any other suggestions or questions about any of them, contact me through my website.

Ed Schwartz is a member of the North Orange County Computer Club. To send in a question, go to edwardns.com and click the Contact Me menu. Archives of previous columns are also on the website.
