



# Jack Bicer's List of Productivity Tools

*by Jack Bicer*

Have you ever used a really good application that made a difference in your effectiveness? Well written software, does its job well, usually free or low cost. We become avid supporters and tell our friends how great the tool is in the hopes of helping others. Best form of viral marketing.

As I am a big fan of evaluating productivity tools, I have been asked to put together my list of favorite software. The tools I use personally. I'm sharing them in the hope that you may find something that improves the way you do things.

**Reqall.com or Jott.com:** *Capturing Thoughts/Ideas*

Category: **Must Have**

Do you get ideas or things to do while you're driving or when it is hard to write down an idea? If you sign up for the free Reqall.com service you can call and speak your thoughts, which gets transcribed and sent to you in an email, with your voice recording attached. Reqall also has a great Blackberry app, you don't even have to make a phone call to capture your thoughts. Jott.com offers a similar service, but also allows you to send tasks to others. Usable service starts form \$3.95/month. I use Reqall 5-6 times daily.

**Doodle.com or TimeBridge.com:** Meeting Time Finder

Category: **Must Have**

If you ever need to setup a meeting involving more than two people, and don't have access to their calendars, you'll appreciate these tools. Just select a few potential meeting times and have everyone pick what works for them.

**.com:** Conference Bridge

Category: **Must Have**

Free telephone conference bridge, works great every time. If you have repeating meetings, the templates make your life very easy.

**DimDim.com:** Free Webex replacement

Category: **Must Have**

Want to share your screen or invite up to 10 people for an online presentation or webinar? This is your tool. All flash based, DimDim does not require people to install additional software on their computers.

**SugarSync.com:** Online Backup

Category: **Must Have**

Most of us need to supplement our backups with an online tool, just in case we loose our backups in a natural disaster. SugarSync gives you 10GB backup for \$25/yr, and allows you share that space with multiple computers. The Magic Briefcase feature gives you the ability to synchronize information across computers. You also get remote access to your files.

---

**Photoshop.com:** Free PhotoShop Category: **Must Have**

Just want to edit a few pictures, no need to buy PhotoShop. Here is a free online version from Adobe.

---

**Google Apps and Google Blackberry Sync:** Free Email/Calendar/Apps Category: **Should Have**

If you do not have an Exchange email/calendar account, syncing your calendar and contact list with Google will give you over the air synchronization capability. Signing up for the free Google Apps ([www.google.com/a/cpanel/domain/new](http://www.google.com/a/cpanel/domain/new)) also provides email, shared calendars and contact lists, browser based Word, Excel, PowerPoint capability and collaboration all under your own domain name. Google is updating this capability on an ongoing basis, if you are interested, there is more under the hood, including integration with commercial applications like Salesforce.com.

---

**buzzword.Acrobat.com:** Slickest Online Word Processor Category: **Nice to Have**

Great use of Flash technology for your simple word processing needs. Free.

---

**OpenOffice.org and PortableApps.com:** Free Office Applications Category: **Should Have**

Free Microsoft Office compatible word processor, spreadsheet and presentation tools. The new Version 3.x is more usable than ever. If you're used to Word or Excel, you'll feel at home with these tools. You can also get a version from PortableApps.com which does not require installation, so that you can run it from a tiny USB drive. Also check out the **Firefox** browser and **ThunderBird** email tool to give you a portable office, that can run on any Windows computer you attach to. If you work with websites, you'll also appreciate the free **Filezilla** for FTP, and **Kompozer** for editing web pages in WYSIWYG format.

---

**SugarCRM.com:** Online CRM Category: **Should Have**

For people involved in sales, this free CRM is best of breed open software. If you don't have a server to run it on, get SugarCRM hosting from [www.tmdhosting.com](http://www.tmdhosting.com) for \$72/yr. (or \$9/mo) which includes a purchase of a new domain name, email and various open source apps.

---

**AceProject.com:** Project Management Category: **Must Have**

Free online project manager, up to 5 users. One of the best I have seen, great for issue tracking.

---

**LogMeIn.com:** Free GotoMyPC capability Category: **Must Have**

Free access to your computer, when you're not there. Also great for providing remote support for technically challenged family members. I manage over 10 computers with one free LogMeIn account.

---

**GetDropBox.com:** Free shared storage to store your files Category: **Must Have**

How about a free 2GB folder that is automatically synchronized across computers? If you make a change in any of the files in your DropBox directory, all other computers are updated within seconds. Works across Windows, Mac and Linux.

---

**RememberTheMilk.com:** Free Online TO-DO List Manager Category: **Nice to Have**

Ever need to access a simple to-do list online, so that you can add items and see what's on your list anywhere? Not for high-power task management like GTD.

---

**Pandora.com:** Free Internet Radio Category: **Should Have**

Wouldn't it be nice if a radio station played all your favorites? You get to tell Pandora what you like and it plays your music. Fun and free. Great for making late night work more enjoyable.

---

**Sigalert.com:** Free Traffic Report Category: **Must Have**

To avoid congestions, make sure you check the traffic before hitting the freeways.

---

**Speakeasy.net/speedtest:** How Fast is Your Internet Connection? Category: **Must Have**

Do you know how fast is your internet connection? Or are you experiencing crawling internet speeds? Always nice to have an independent validation of your speed when you need to know.

---

**Skype.com:** Free/Low Cost International Calls Category: **Must Have**

Skype has been maintaining a fairly good quality for free or low cost international calling. Even offers a new phone number for about \$24/yr. and unlimited North America calling at \$3/mo.

---

**Froogle.com:** Internet Shopping Category: **Must Have**

Want to find out what other stores are selling the item you're interested in purchasing? Great free tool from Google to find the best price online.

---

**BofA/Citibank:** 1-Time Use Credit Card Number Category: **Must Have**

If you already have a credit card from Bank of America, you can use ShopSafe feature or Citibank's Virtual Account Number feature to purchase online. These one time use credit card numbers also have amount and time limits. Great protection at no cost. No need to do anything else, the charges show up on your regular statement.

---

**mobile.fandango.com:** Movie Times Category: **Should Have**

For movie goers, this lightweight mobile site works great on cell phones with limited browser capabilities. You can also search for the movie name, followed by your zip code at Google.com or Yahoo.com, you'll get a list of theatres and show times for the movie you'd like to see.

**About the author:**



Jack Bicer is the CEO & CTO of Septium Corp., a *hybrid* offshore custom web software development company, combining offshore cost savings with US management expertise. Prior to Septium, Jack held several CTO roles in Internet companies since the early days of the Internet and as a turnaround CTO, enjoyed the sale of 1GlobalPlace to VeriSign. A 29-year software industry veteran, Jack is an industry expert in SaaS/web software, new product development, off-shoring, technology strategy and management. Known as the "*Father of Uninstall*", he invented the uninstall concept and wrote the first uninstaller. He is also credited with inventing the "*Automated Software Updates*". In 2003, Jack founded TechBiz Connection, a non-profit technology management association in Southern California, and currently serves as its Chairman and President. Jack can be reached at [jbicer@septium.com](mailto:jbicer@septium.com).