Software

Sometimes abbreviated as **SW** and **S/W**, **software** is a collection of instructions that enable the user to interact with a computer, its hardware, or perform tasks. Without software, most computers would be useless. For example, without your Internet browser software, you could not surf the Internet or read this page. Without an operating system, the browser could not run on your computer. The picture shows a Microsoft Excel box, an example of a spreadsheet software program.

Examples and types of software

Below is a list of the different kinds of software a computer may have installed with examples of related programs. Click any of the links below for additional information.

Although application software is thought of as a program, it can be anything that runs on a computer. The table below also includes a program column to clarify any software that is not a program.

Software	Examples
Antivirus	AVG, Housecall, McAfee, and Norton.
Audio / Music program	iTunes and WinAmp.
Communication	Discord, Skype, and Ventrilo
Database	Access, MySQL, and SQL.
Device drivers	Computer drivers.
E-mail	Outlook and Thunderbird.
Game	Madden NFL football, Quake, and World of Warcraft.
Internet browser	Firefox, Google Chrome, and Internet Explorer.
Movie player	VLC and Windows Media Player.
Operating system	Android, iOS, Linux, macOS, and Windows.
Photo / Graphics program	Adobe Photoshop and CorelDRAW.
Presentation	PowerPoint
Programming language	C++, HTML, Java, Perl, PHP, Python, and Visual Basic.
Simulation	Flight simulator and SimCity.
Spreadsheet	Excel
Utility	Compression, Disk Cleanup, encryption, registry cleaner, and saver.
Word processor	Microsoft Word

How do you get software?

Software can be purchased at a retail computer store or online and come in a box containing all the disks (floppy diskette, CD, DVD, or Blu-ray), manuals, warranty, and other documentation.

Software can also be downloaded to a computer over the Internet. Once downloaded, setup files are run to start the installation process on your computer.

Free software

There are also a lot of free software programs available that are separated into different categories.

- Shareware or trial software is software that gives you a few days to try the software before you have to buy the program. After the trial time expires, you'll be asked to enter a code or register the product before you can continue to use it.
- Freeware is completely free software that never requires payment, as long as it is not modified.
- Open source software is similar to freeware. Not only is the program free, but the source code is also available to everyone.

Installing and uninstalling software

- How to install software.
- How to uninstall software in Windows.

How do you use computer software?

Once the software is installed on the computer hard drive, the program can be used at any time. On a Windows computer, a program icon is added to the Start menu or Start screen, depending on your version of Windows.

How to maintain software

After the software is installed on your computer, it may need to be updated to fix any found errors. Updating a program can be done using software patches. Once updates are installed, any problems that may have been experienced in the program will no longer occur.

How is software created and how does it work?

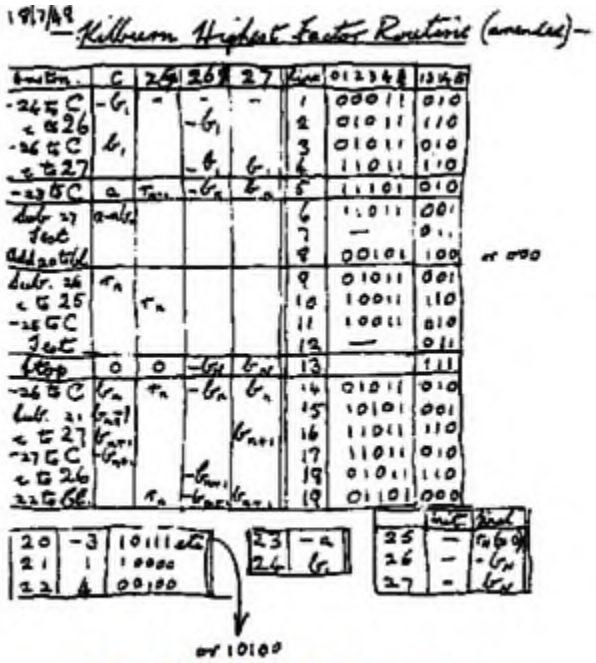
A computer programmer (or several computer programmers) write the instructions using a programming language, defining how the software should operate on structured data. The program may then be interpreted, or compiled into machine code.

- How do I create a computer program?

When I save a document, is that file also considered software?

When you create or edit a file using software — a Microsoft Word document, for instance, or a Photoshop image — that file is considered a software "resource" or "asset." However, the file itself is not considered "software" even though it is an essential part of what your software is doing.

What was the first piece of computer software?



The SSEM's first program.

The first software program that was held in electronic memory was written by Tom Kilburn. The program calculated the highest factor of the integer 2^{18} = 262,144, and was successfully executed on June 21, 1948, at the University of Manchester, England. The computer that held that program was called the SSEM (Small Scale Experimental Machine), otherwise known as the "Manchester Baby." This event is widely celebrated as the birth of software.