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# Activist Toolkit

**ONE/Northwest's Activist Toolkit is an online reference with brief, jargon-free articles that will help you use technology in your work to protect the environment.**

Hundreds of environmental groups in the Pacific Northwest utilize our Activist Toolkit to get every possible advantage from technology. Try one of the following categories or use the search form at the bottom of the page to get what you need.

**Hardware and Software** - Choose the right hardware and software for your environmental group and learn to use it most effectively.

**Networking and the Internet** - Basic information on networking your machines and getting your staff up and running online.

**Strategy** - Think about the big picture of how your environmental group uses technology

**Email** - Compose, respond to, and send email effectively and efficiently

**Web** - Make the Web work for your activism and advocacy efforts

**Databases** - Use databases to manage your organization's relationships

**Viruses and Security** - Information on keeping your computers safe and secure.



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## **Hardware and Software**

### Computer Recommendations

This document provides purchase recommendations for new Windows and Macintosh computers.

### Obtaining Donated Software

Information on obtaining donated software from Microsoft, Adobe, FileMaker and others.

### Memory Upgrades

This document provides basic information on upgrading your computer's memory

### Buying a New Monitor

This document provides basic information on purchasing a new monitor. For typical users, we recommend a 15" LCD flat-panel display such as the Samsung SyncMaster 151S.

### Getting Good Deals - How To Bargain For Hardware

In this article, "master bargainer" Will Horts shares powerful tips for bargaining effectively on computer hardware. If you're contemplating a major technology purchase for your organization, this article is a must read -- it can save you hundreds of dollars.

### Internet software Recommendations

Recommended Internet software (email, Web, etc.)

### Alternatives to Adobe UPDATED

Adobe is no longer donating software to environmental organizations. This article describes alternatives to major Adobe products.

### Backing up your data

This document outlines the hardware, software and procedures necessary to effectively and efficiently back up the key data from your computers. It includes backup best practices, advice on backup hardware and software, and sample backup scenarios for different size organizations.

### Using Retrospect to Backup Effectively

Backing up mid-sized networks -- from 5-20 computers -- is challenging. This article offers some general advice on creating a solid backup routine, and some specific hints and tips for performing regular, automatic backups using Retrospect Workgroup Backup.

### Computer Recycling

Information on reusing and recycling computer hardware in the Northwest and beyond.

### GoBack allows you to take your computer back in time

GoBack is a software utility that allows you to literally take your



computer back in time, to a time and place when it was functioning normally. It will also recover files that you accidentally deleted or thought were changed forever. Below is our review and some tips for use.

### **Digital camera reviews and recommendations**

Information on buying digital still cameras and digital video cameras

### **Scanners**

Advice on scanners for images and documents.

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## Obtaining Donated Software

**This document contains information about nonprofit software donation programs of interest to Northwest environmental organizations.**

Having up-to-date software is essential to getting the most out of your computer. Fortunately, many Internet applications are free or open-source. However, many major application programs such as Microsoft Office and Adobe PageMaker are not Retail prices can run several hundred dollars per copy. However, many major software manufacturers have corporate philanthropy programs through which they give away software to nonprofit organizations, either at no cost or for a relatively small shipping and handling fee.

### Quick Links:

[Microsoft](#)
[Macromedia](#)
[Adobe](#)
[Symantec](#)
[FileMaker](#)
[Other Resources](#)

## Microsoft

In March 2003, Microsoft expanded its U.S. software donation program, which it runs through DiscountTech, a project of CompuMentor, a San Francisco-based nonprofit tech assistance provider. DiscountTech is now the primary source for Microsoft software donations for U.S. nonprofits.

The complete details on DiscountTech's Microsoft software donation program are available at: <[http://www.techsoup.org/DiscountTech/ms\\_program\\_faq.asp](http://www.techsoup.org/DiscountTech/ms_program_faq.asp)>

Please take the time to read and digest these rules -- they're generous, but a little complex and extremely important.

The most important features of the new DiscountTech/Microsoft program are:

- Most major Microsoft products are now available -- including high-end server software.
- Every item carries an administrative fee -- most are pretty nominal (\$6-25) but some server software can cost over \$100.
- Groups can request up to six products and 50 licenses per product. Server products and server licenses will count as two separate titles toward the six title maximum.
- Every item includes "Software Assurance" for two years, which basically means that all product upgrades are included for free. E.g. if a group gets a donated copy of Office XP now, they will receive a free upgrade to Office 2003 when it comes out later



this year.

- Estimated delivery time is 4-6 weeks. Actual performance is still unclear, since the program is new.

Now here's the kicker:

- **A group can only go to DiscountTech for Microsoft software ONCE PER YEAR.**

Once your groups uses its DiscountTech opportunity, you will have to purchase any additional software through the Charity Open License (COL) retail program, which typically means a cost of \$40-60 per copy.

Thus, it is very important for your organization to think thorough your software needs before making a request. Here's what we recommend for groups that need Microsoft software:

If you need more than one or two copies of a product, then by all means go to DiscountTech. But be sure to think ahead and request ALL of the products that you need or MIGHT NEED in the next year. Don't forget to account for any potential growth in the number of computers and/or staff, including those that work remotely.

If you have already used up your DiscountTech allocation, then there are two choices:

- 1) Purchase additional items through the Charity Open License (COL) program -- DiscountTech automatically sets up a COL account for your group with a major software retailer. Expect to pay \$40-60 per copy of Windows or Office, more for server software.
- 2) Identify Microsoft employees (or ex-employees) among your organization's "friends" and ask them to purchase discounted software from the Microsoft Company Store for you. (Obviously, this is more feasible for folks in Seattle.)

If you need some help with planning your software request, check out our free Infrastructure Planning service -- it can help you make smart choices.

## Considerations for Canadian Organizations

The consolidation of Microsoft's software donation program at DiscountTech leaves Canadian groups in something of a limbo. Currently, DiscountTech does not provide Microsoft software to Canadian groups -- but may be able to in the future.

Canadian groups can request low-cost Microsoft software through Gifts-In-Kind International, but GIK requires groups to register for US\$50/year before even letting you look at their catalog and pricing information. (We've emailed them to request information, but our inquiries have gone unanswered thus far.)  
[<http://www.giftsinkind.org>](http://www.giftsinkind.org)

In addition, Canadian groups can purchase software through the Charity Open License program -- cost is about \$40-60 per license for Office or Windows, more for server products. You can purchase Charity Open License from most authorized software retailers. For more information on the Charity Open License program, see <http://www.microsoft.com/canada/>

## Macromedia

Macromedia produces an excellent line of Web and graphics editing products, including Dreamweaver and Contribute Web editing software, Fireworks, Flash, and ColdFusion. Macromedia has been very generous with nonprofit donations, and many of their products are solid [alternatives to competing Adobe products](#).

Macromedia makes many of its products available to nonprofits at a cost of about \$20-80 per program (\$5/additional license). Macromedia now runs its software donation program through CompuMentor's ever-expanding DiscountTech software donation program. More information is at <<http://www.techsoup.org/discounttech.cfm?id=547>>.

## Adobe

Adobe processes all donation requests through Gifts in Kind. For more information see [Adobe's Web Site](#).

However, as of Spring 2003, Adobe no longer appears to be donating products to environmental organizations. While we still think it's worth a try, you may want to consider alternative products. The choices (and there are many) are summarized in our article "[Alternatives to Adobe](#)."

## Symantec

Symantec has recently shifted their software donation program to the Gifts-in-Kind model. While the main thrust of their donation program is on social services and education, they do appear willing to accept donation requests from environmental organizations as well.

See the [Symantec Web site](#) for more information.

Expect to pay \$15-25 per program.

[DiscountTech](#) offers discount rates on Norton AntiVirus Corporate Edition. Costs range from \$20 for a 1-user version to \$355 for a 100-user version.

## FileMaker

If your organization purchases a copy of FileMaker Pro, you can receive additional licenses through Gifts In Kind. (You need multiple licenses in order to have multiple simultaneous users of ebase!).

Complete donation information can be found at [Gifts In Kind](#). Note that you must be [registered](#) with Gifts In Kind (\$125/year) to receive donated FileMaker software. Expect to pay an additional \$15/license.

Nonprofits can also take advantage of FileMaker's new Nonprofit Volume License Agreement Program. If you buy 10 or more licenses of FileMaker Pro, you can get up to 40% off retail price. See [FileMaker's Web site](#) for more information.

Slightly discounted (\$750 instead of \$900) copies of FileMaker Server are available through [DiscountTech](#).

## Other Resources

**DiscountTech**

<http://www.discounttech.org>

**Gifts In Kind**

<http://www.giftsinkind.org>

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## Strategy

### An Activists' Strategy for Effective Online Networking

Our basic strategy article, this document outline the three basic steps to effective online activism: getting online, establishing email lists and creating a basic web site.

### Seven Characteristics of an Online Organization **UPDATED**

Is your organization taking full advantage of the power of the online communication? This article outlines seven key indicators of an environmental group that's being effective with technology.

### Funding Sources

Links to funders of conservation activities in our region.

### Finding Technology Funding

Tips on seeking funding for technology initiatives.

### Strategic Technology Planing (resources from Summit

#### Collaborative

Our friends at Summit Collaborative have developed an excellent framework and materials around the idea of Strategic Technology Planning. If you're trying to chart a course towards more strategic use of technology, this is a good place to start.

### Green Media Toolshed

Need powerful resources for building and working with media contact lists? Check out Green Media Toolshed -- tools for environmental communication professionals

### Case Study: Foothills Open Space Initiative

TechRocks has prepared this excellent case study that explains how the Initiative used databases and online technology to win an issue-based political campaign. It provides an example of how tried and tested organizing methods are amplified by modern technology. The study provides discussion points on what did and did not work (in hindsight).

### Online Organizers Manual

TechRocks publishes this outstanding in-depth manual for successful online organizing efforts that draws on their experience running national-scale online environmental campaigns



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## Email

### A Strategy for Using Email Lists

Is your organization using email lists as well as it could? Read on to find out how we think EVERY Northwest environmental group should use email lists every day.

### Contacting Your Elected Officials

How to get in touch with your elected representatives electronically.

### Gathering Email Addresses from Your Members

Gathering the email addresses of your members is one of the most important steps you can take to begin using electronic communications more effectively in your organization.

### Guidelines for Participating in Email Lists

A short article on email list etiquette. Great for new email list owners and participants.

### Archiving old email

Why and how you should use Outlook's AutoArchive feature to prevent old email from cluttering up your computer.

### Ten Tips for Writing Effective Action Alerts

How to write online action alerts that get read and get results.

### Tips for Facilitating an Environmental Email List

This article provides tips for facilitating environmental email discussion lists. It covers the "soft" skills of email list facilitation, including encouraging relevant discussion, curtailing excess wordiness, and evening out the flow of discussion. It also addresses some of the technical issues involved in email list facilitation.

### Sample Guidelines for a Large Email Discussion List

A detailed set of sample guidelines for running an effective email discussion list.

### Today Messages

Today messages -- short daily status updates -- are an effective and innovative way to improve small group collaboration.

### Avoiding the Dark Side of Email by Jim Britell

Email is a powerful tool with unique advantages over speech and other forms of writing, but can cause problems not found in those other forms of communication. This in-depth article includes many hints and suggestions for email's predictable yet avoidable problems.

### How to Deal with Spam

Practical tips for dealing avoiding, filtering and responding to spam.

### How to Set Up "Out of Office" Messages



This article explains how to set up "out of office" messages for common email server configurations, why NOT to set up an automatic response in your email client, and how to create an effective out of office message.

### **Fixing Poorly-Formatted Email**

Finding that your emails have ragged line breaks and junk characters? This article describes how to fix these problems, and prevent them from occurring.

### **How to organize your email in Outlook using rules**

Is your Inbox clutter driving you nuts? Are listservs getting in the way? This article will help you to use rules or filters to help you manage your email.

### **Sending and Receiving Email Attachments**

Email attachments are a powerful but often-confusing aspect of email. Here's how to work effectively with email attachments.

### **Sending Effective Email**

Ten tips that will help you send more effective email. A great article if you're new to email.

### **Mail Merges to Email Using Outlook**

Instruction for creating personalized form letter emails in Outlook 2000.

### **Encrypting your Email with PGP**

Pretty Good Privacy (PGP) brings secure, routine email encryption within reach of the average user.

### **Eudora Tutorials**

In-depth tutorials on Eudora 5, direct from Eudora Tech Support

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## Web

### Twelve Principles for Effective Online Communications Planning

The Web is a great tool on its own, but combine it with email outreach and a well designed database and watch what happens! 80% of this article is about Web planning, but it's that last 20% that will put your online communications over the top.

### Why you should write news stories, not press releases

Here's a great anecdote that illustrates the power of publishing your own news stories as news stories, instead of writing press releases and hoping that someone else will turn them into news.

### Online donations: sorting out the chaos **UPDATED**

How to accept credit card donations online on your website.

### Why the Web Matters

So you know the Web is important and everyone should have a Web site. But what makes the Web so special and why should you devote time to developing and maintaining your Web presence?

### Writing For The Web

The Web is an all new medium and there are a number of things to keep in mind when writing content for your Web site.

### Database Driven Web Sites

If you want to make your Web site more interactive it will most likely involve using a database. Here are the basic of what's involved and some suggestions of what can be done with a database on the Web.

### Web, email and domain name hosting recommendations

This article provides information on the web, email and domain name hosting providers that ONE/Northwest recommends to environmental nonprofits.

### Search Engine Strategies

Ever wonder why your organization's name doesn't rank high in Web searches? If you know how to play the search engine game, you'll come up closer to the top and get a big boost in Web traffic. It can be tricky to understand how search engines categorize information, but in this article search engine specialist Gary McAvoy from GetToTheTop.com gives some clues about boosting your online profile.

### Add Your Website to the Zeal Directory and Get Listed by MSN

Learn to provide accurate website descriptions that help search engines categorize your website. Plus, increase potential public exposure to your mission and organization.

### Working with a Web Consultant

Quick tips on finding and working with Web consultants to create and update your Web site. relationship with them that will give your



organization the Web site it wants at a cost it can afford.

### **Recommended Web Editing Software**

Recommended programs for creating and editing basic Web pages.

### **Recommended Web Browsers**

It's important to have an up-to-date web browser in order to get the most out of the web. Here are ONE/Northwest's current recommended programs, and links to web sites to download them.

### **Using Search Engines Effectively**

A brief tutorial on using search engines to find information on the web.

### **Adding a search engine to your site**

A simple, free way to add a search feature to your Web site using Atomz.com

### **Options for Online Collaboration**

Sometimes you need online collaboration capabilities that go beyond what a simple email list can offer. This article provides an overview of the what and why of online collaboration, and reviews six of the leading solutions.

### **Customizing Internet Explorer 6 to make searching easier**

Provides tips on customizing Internet Explorer 6 to make it easier to search the Web effectively.

### **Model Privacy Statements For Your Web Site**

A great set of model privacy statements for you to edit/revise. From TRUSTe.

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## Databases

### **Five benchmarks for an effective database**

Five benchmarks that will help you consider how you're using your database, and help you begin to identify ways to improve your database.

### **Choosing a relationship database that works for you**

This article helps you think through the options for creating a membership and relationship management database that works for you.

### **Comparing ebase v1 and ebase v2**

Information to help groups decide which version of ebase to use, and whether to upgrade from ebase v1 to ebase v2

### **Databases and Nonprofits: Voices from the Field**

From the "Adopting Technology" series at TechSoup, this article brings together nine fantastic articles about databases from some of the leading nonprofit technology assistance providers, including ONE/Northwest's own Andrew Gianni



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## **Viruses and Security**

### **Protecting your computers from viruses**

Basic background on computer viruses, plus tips for keeping your computers virus-free

### **CNET's CatchUp**

CatchUp provides a free and easy-to-use tool for keeping all the software on your PC up-to-date

### **Microsoft Windows Update**

Keep Windows up-to-date with the latest security patches and bug fixes by visiting Microsoft's special updates site

### **Avoiding and repairing the Klez virus**

Infected by Klez? Here's how to fix it. And more importantly, here's how to AVOID getting hit by this extremely deceptive virus.

### **Security**

This document discusses practical ways to ensure maximum privacy when using the Internet. It covers four major areas: email security, email list security, Web security and password security.



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