

Software To Design, Create, & Edit

A lot of this software is cross-platform. If it isn't, chances are there's an analog with a different name.

Some software has breakout pages for pro-tips and tutorials.

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Ableton Live	Audio editor and music composer - great for mixtapes
Adobe After Effects (AE)	VFX, Compositing, Motion Graphics
Adobe Audition (AU)	Audio Editing
Adobe Bridge (BR)	Local file management, batching, renaming
Adobe InDesign (ID)	Making decks, presentations, making books, making portfolios
Adobe Lightroom (LR)	Raw editing and photo library mgmt/ cloud services
Adobe Media Encoder (AME)	Export, watch-folders, transcode
Adobe Photoshop (PS)	Photo editing, still compositing
Adobe Premiere Pro (PR)	Video Editing, Titles, Color
Apple Keynote	Making decks and presentations, but you can use it for a lot of things
Apple Pages	Contemporary ClarisWorks. It's just like Office or Google Docs except you don't have to pay for it and your data isn't being tracked ☐☐
Avid	Video NLE Software I've never used it, and it's never been a requirement or a desired software for any company or project I've worked on. I've only seen it in the wild once or twice. That said: it is used for feature film and documentaries and sometimes tour dorks use it to edit their show before they throw it into Disguise ☐☐

BMD DaVinci / Resolve	<p>Great and free video NLE and color software, but I need ADLs (Adobe Dynamic Link) too much. My need to have things colored does not outweigh the need for me to easily speak with After Effects.</p> <p>EDLs (Edit Decision Lists) are a pain in the ass that should be done by the editor's assistant's assistants. Good luck verifying any speed ramps!! The BMD universe and Adobe CC interpret speed ramping differently. The solve is to either bake the ramp before an EDL, or do your color before your ramp!</p>
EXIFTOOL	<p>A command line file auditing tool.</p> <p>Very similar to FFPROBE, which is FFMPEG's auditing tool. Slightly different. I tend to use EXIF to pull metadata details from video files so I can remember what lens was on the camera, or what aperture, etc.</p>
FFMPEG / FFPROBE	<p>Command line/terminal transcode, packaging of audio and video files. Very powerful. Faster than AME but steep learning curve for non-code folks.</p>
Handbrake	<p>An FFMPEG top that's very very good. Been around forever.</p>
Immersive Designer Pro (IDP)	<p>A dongle locked x64 only projection engineering tool. It's pretty great, but it is Windows only and x64, so you can't run it on ARM or Apple Silicone (even using Parallels).</p> <p>Much of these tools can be manually rebuilt in Vectorworks with one massive piece missing: you can NDI or spout/syphon into IDP for real time previz and mapping tests. Very powerful. Every few months I try to run this on Parallels and it continues not to work (April 2023, last checked).</p>
iZotope RX Audio Editor	<p>Noise removal, steam creation, audio swiss army knife. Pricey but best in class utilities.</p>
Jokyo HAP Encoder	<p>A proprietary new version of the HAP encoder. It is an evolutionary version of the OG Vidvox HAP → Disguise HAP. Jokyo's encoder is much better with banding and noise within gradients and introduces a new HAP format as well (HAPr). The tweakable options with Jokyo are superior as well. Can recommend.</p>
Neat DeNoise	<p>A great video / photo denoise tool (plugin for AE/PR), get its own section in software because it's so good.</p>
Omnigraffle	<p>A paid drawing app that is great for flow charts, system diagrams, projector rasters, etc. Better than drawing manually in Vectorworks, but harder than drawing automatically in Vectorworks (using ConnectCAD).</p>
ShutterEncoder	<p>A front end GUI (or "top") for FFMPEG, FFPROBE, EXIFTOOL and more. Very good. Will do the trick for 90% of use cases. Thanks Melinda Sihalath for this one.</p>

Sketchup (SKP)	A simpler tool for CAD that was free for at least a decade before it was sold by Google to another company. Lots of Millennials know how to use it. There is a free “viewer” companion app.
Topaz Video Enhance AI	A+ video upscale and restoration tool
Vectorworks (VWX)	CAD for theatrical and event design (but also for architecture, landscaping things). There is a free “viewer” companion app. Really good for projection engineering even if you're doing it manually (the built-in projector tools are not so thorough)

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