

# 90s apps still have a place on the Windows desktop today

Many softwares that were born in the 1990s such as 7-Zip, PowerToys, Photoshop or Illustrator are still working strongly and are indispensable tools on modern Windows. Why are they still 'alive and well'?

Did you know that many of the computer software we use every day have been around since the 1990s or even earlier? I was surprised to find that some of the applications on my desktop are... older than me. You might also be surprised to learn that some of the familiar tools have been around since the 'late 1900s' — as the young people like to say.

## 7-Zip



Whenever I need to work with compressed files on Windows, my favorite application is still 7-Zip. Although Windows has a built-in compression tool, I only use it for very basic tasks. When I need to do something more complicated, 7-Zip is always the first choice.

7-Zip came out in 1999, right at the turn of the millennium. It specializes in compression—both compressing and decompressing—of a wide variety of file formats. For me, it's become almost indispensable when downloading documents or software.

What I like best is the interface that allows you to view and manipulate the contents of the ZIP file as if it were already unzipped. When it comes to exporting or compressing, all the important options are readily available and clear.

Every Windows machine I've used since the early 2000s has had 7-Zip. Windows' built-in compression tool is generally simple and adequate, but if you need to get more advanced with ZIP, 7Z, TAR, or other complex compression formats, 7-Zip is far superior. And it's free, so there's no reason not to install it.

Despite being released in the 90s, 7-Zip is still regularly updated and works very well on Windows 11 Pro. The interface looks a bit 'old-fashioned', but the functions are still powerful and modern.

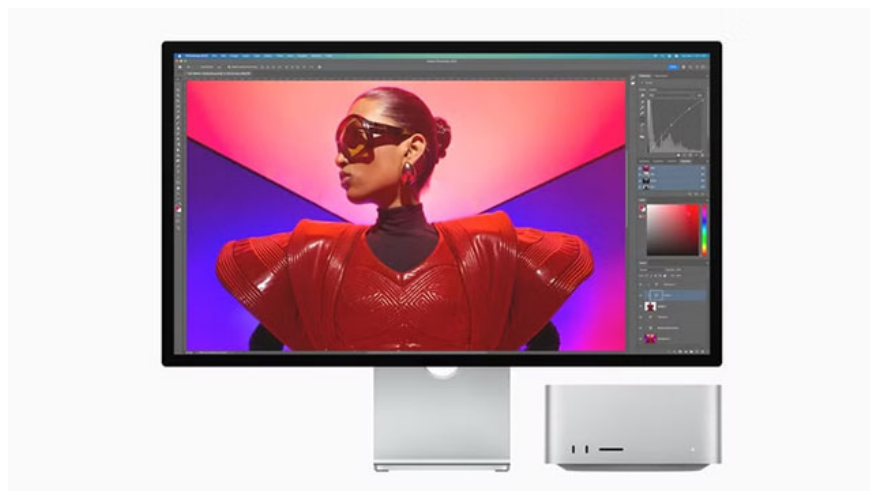
## Microsoft PowerToys



Microsoft's PowerToys is as old as IrfanView — it was released in 1996. It's a suite of utilities for Windows power users that adds a whole host of powerful tools: from image resizing and batch file renaming to extending the functionality of the Start Menu. I didn't even know it existed until a few years ago.

PowerToys is the newest name on this list, but it's not new at all. With PowerToys, I can rename hundreds of files with extreme precision—a feature I absolutely love. PowerToys also lets you preview SVG and STL files right in Explorer, quickly resize images, extract text from screenshots, and many other handy features.

## Photoshop

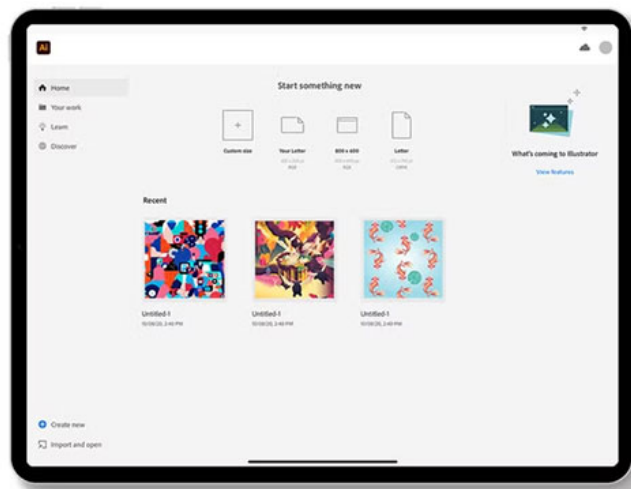


It's hard to imagine my life without Photoshop. Released in 1990, it has become a vital part of my workflow: editing, resizing, creating content, using AI... all thanks to Photoshop.

I started using Photoshop around 2011 and have found it nearly impossible to replace it. The interface, the shortcuts, and the way it works have become second nature. I even created my own shortcut macros for quick export operations.

Despite being a '90s generation', Photoshop is still constantly updated and extremely powerful in 2025. Compared to the original version, the current interface and user experience have changed so much that almost no one thinks this is a 35-year-old software.

## Illustrator



While this article focuses on 90s software, I want to go back in time a little further with Adobe Illustrator — Photoshop's older brother. Illustrator was released in 1987, making it three years older than Photoshop.

Over the decades of development, Illustrator has changed a lot. At its core, it is still a vector design tool, but the interface, AI features, and other improvements have turned it into the most modern graphics software today.

I don't use Illustrator as much as Photoshop, but when it comes to designing logos or vector products, it's still my tool of choice. I'm just not as familiar with Photoshop yet, so I don't use it often.

Despite being nearly 40 years old, Illustrator is still a powerful, useful, and modern software experience. If you don't pay attention, you'd never think it's about to reach the half-century mark.

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