

Ok, so we're not actually giving away nonprofit technology tools these days at Greenlights, but the headline grabbed you, right?

What you may not realize (until you read this blog, of course) is that one of the most valuable gifts we get as nonprofits (next to the very generous tax-free status our "friends" at the IRS provide) is the wealth of free technology tools made available to us. I decided to take a minute to offer you a short list of some of my favorite tools (all of which are free, either to nonprofits specifically or to anyone), and a little bit of info on how Greenlights uses them.

1. **Doodle** online meeting scheduler (www.doodle.com) – I HATE scheduling meetings, yet it seems I spend half of my day scheduling them, and the other half sitting in them. With so many staff, board members, donors, clients, and others we get to meet with, scheduling multi-participant meetings is so painful. Doodle is entirely free, and it allows you to invite your meeting participants to go online and indicate their availability for any number of meeting date/time options you provide. It has fancier features too, but we usually just stick with the basics.
2. **FreeConferenceCall.com** (www.freeconferencecall.com) – Never, ever pay for conference calling services again. Sign up for a free conference calling number and pin on their site, and the rest is cake. The call quality is great too. You won't likely get a local dial-in number, but with so much free long distance and cell phones these days, that is really no longer an issue.
3. **SurveyMonkey** web-based survey design and administration (www.surveymonkey.com) – Online surveys are da'bomb for us here at Greenlights. We use this tool (and there are others like it) almost weekly to gather input from our members, board members, clients, staff, etc. There is a pretty robust free account, but we do opt for a small monthly fee account which allows us to send more surveys, do more data analysis, etc., but the possibilities of enhanced information and metrics tracking for your nonprofit with a tool like this are practically endless.
4. **Emma** online email marketing tools (www.myemma.com) – Let me be blunt: if your nonprofit is still sending mass emails, e-newsletters, and other electronic communications without an online tool like Emma, you are way behind the times. Emma is the provider of choice for us here at Greenlights, though not for free. They do offer a free trial account and, for Greenlights members, they provide a free, custom designed studio stationery (valued at \$99) for your brand, and 20% off your monthly fees for the life of your account. Definitely worth checking out! If you need to go the free route, [MailChimp](#) has a free account option for those with less than 2,000 subscribers and sending less than 12,000 emails per month.
5. **Salesforce.com** constituent relationship management software – last year, Greenlights received a grant from Salesforce for free licenses of their industry-leading online client and constituent relationship management software (think: huge, powerful, online, customized database to store all of your donor, client and related info very easily), and most nonprofits are eligible to receive that same grant. This software has transformed our organization. The level of sophistication, customizability, free apps you can plug into it, etc. is truly beyond comprehension. It is free to nonprofits, but I will say that getting it set up and working correctly for you may require some investment in professional help. Plus, we also decided to purchase **Convio's Common Ground** product (which is pretty low-cost), which integrates seamlessly into Salesforce and essentially amps up its donor management capabilities. Check it out!
6. **TechSoup** free and low-cost software for nonprofits (www.techsoup.com) – Nonprofits should almost never have to pay full price for software these days thanks to generous corporate donation programs, especially most basic office management programs (Microsoft Office, Quickbooks, etc.). We have received lots of free software (and it is legal!) over the years, including free Adobe design and publishing, server management and Microsoft Exchange, Microsoft Office, Quickbooks, and more). Just register your nonprofit at TechSoup, browse their available software, and either download it or have CDs mailed. They even have free hardware available at times too.
7. **Google** apps (<http://www.google.com/apps/intl/en/nonprofit/index.html>) – we use several Google tools (and are looking at several more) to help us manage our business at Greenlights, and I don't need to tell you how popular, powerful and mostly free these tools are for nonprofits. Many new nonprofit-specific tools are now available to us as well.

Hope this is helpful!

<http://www.greenlights.org/blog/2011/03/29/free-nonprofit-technology-tools/>