

a curated list of 25–50 programs that still run well under FreeDOS or DOSBox.

Here's a curated list of **40 classic DOS applications that still run well in DOSBox, DOSBox-X, PCem, 86Box, or FreeDOS**. Most can be found on preservation sites such as WinWorldPC and Vetusware. Many remain surprisingly useful today for writing, spreadsheets, databases, programming, and personal information management. (winworldpc.net)

Word Processors

WordPerfect 5.1
WordPerfect 6.2
WordStar 4.0
WordStar 7.0
Microsoft Word 5.5 for DOS
Microsoft Word 6.0 for DOS
Sprint
XyWrite III Plus
PC-Write
Nota Bene

Spreadsheets

Lotus 1-2-3 Release 2.4
Lotus 1-2-3 Release 3.4
Quattro Pro 4.0
Quattro Pro 5.0

Microsoft Excel 2.1 for DOS
Microsoft Multiplan
VP-Planner
Twin

Database Systems

dBASE III Plus
dBASE IV
FoxBASE+
FoxPro 2.5
Clipper 5.2
Paradox 4.5
Q&A Database
DataEase
Alpha Four

Personal Information Managers

Lotus Organizer

SideKick Plus
InfoSelect
GrandView
Tornado Notes

Programming Tools

Turbo Pascal 7.0
Turbo C++ 3.1
QuickBASIC 4.5
PowerBASIC
Microsoft C 6.0
GW-BASIC

Communications & Utilities

Norton Commander
Telix

Word Processors

WordPerfect was the dominant DOS word processor for many years, while WordStar and XyWrite were favorites among writers. (winworldpc.net)

Spreadsheets

Lotus 1-2-3 was the spreadsheet that defined business computing during the 1980s. Later, Quattro Pro became a strong competitor. (winworldpc.net)

Database Systems

FoxPro became popular because it offered dBASE compatibility with significantly better performance. (appserv.winworldpc.com)

Personal Information Managers

These programs were the productivity apps of their day—combining notes, contacts, calendars, and task management before smartphones existed.

Programming Tools

Many hobbyists still use Turbo Pascal and QuickBASIC today because they start instantly and run well inside DOSBox.

Communications & Utilities

Norton Commander pioneered the two-pane file manager interface later copied by countless file managers.

Best "Still Useful" DOS Apps in 2026

If you only want the gems:

Category	Recommended
Word Processor	WordPerfect 5.1
Spreadsheet	Lotus 1-2-3 3.4
Database	FoxPro 2.5
File Manager	Norton Commander
Programming	Turbo Pascal 7.0
BASIC Programming	QuickBASIC 4.5
PIM	Lotus Organizer
Communications	Telix

GUI Applications for DOS

If you want applications with a **graphical interface** rather than text mode:

- GeoWorks Ensemble
- DESQview/X
- PC/GEOS
- Lotus Agenda
- Lotus Jazz
- Microsoft Works for DOS
- Borland Dashboard
- GEM Desktop
- OpenGEM
- Seal 2.0

These provide windows, icons, menus, and mouse support while still running on DOS.

Download Sources

- [WinWorldPC](#)
- [Vetusware](#)
- [FreeDOS Project](#)