

# Tools I regularly use, 2017

Justin D. Long, [www.justinlong.org](http://www.justinlong.org)

- 1. Gmail:** all of my email comes to Gmail. Can't beat its anti-spam and virus protection. After nearly a decade, Gmail is still my go-to spot, and retains the top slot on the 2017 list. I have used a variety of third-party clients on my computers and phone, all with varied degrees of success. I have used the Gmail client, Google Inbox, Outlook, EasilyDo, Spark, and Apple Mail. Right now, Apple Mail is what I primarily use on my iPhone, which is where I process nearly all of my mail. I don't really see a lot of difference these days between the various clients. They all work equally well for me.
- 2. Evercontact:** This is an indispensable pay service, but it's pretty cheap. It works with Gmail. It scans incoming email for contact information and automatically updates your Google Contacts list, bringing in things like email addresses, phone numbers, physical addresses, etc. It's a great time saver. Since my Google Contacts address is automatically synced to my phone, and becomes my phone address list, it's also helpful for updating the phone book on my phone. Now, the trick with this is, since I've started using Outlook, I have yet to figure out the best way to integrate Google's Contacts list with Outlooks. Evercontact has a variant that works with Outlook as well as one that works with Gmail, but the two aren't the same and don't sync.
- 3. Dropbox:** I abandoned Google Drive back in 2014 because I had so many files that they became problematic to find and organize without folders. (Google Drive's folders were always problematic for me, and I just didn't have time to mess around with it.) I tried Sync for a bit, but I've run into a lot of people who have problems with Sync, so I have reverted to Dropbox. I have a Pro account and this is where I store most of my files. As of 2017, I have nearly every file I own in a 1TB Dropbox, and right now wouldn't think of changing. (I also use it to store all of my photos.)
- 4. Twitter.** The center of my news world. I have several carefully curated lists which cover breaking news, top news sources, global thinkers and influencers, activists, mission agencies, and the like. I use Flipboard on the iPad to access this, as well as Tweetbot (and often Twitter on my desktop Mac).
- 5. Siteground** is where I host my website, JustinLong.org. **In a major change in 2017**, I have moved off Wordpress and on to hard-coded HTML files. A blog was driving me into a daily writing process that, in my analysis in 2017, I realized wasn't leading me to high-value long-form content. So I've shifted into using my website to curate resources and essays.

6. **Mailchimp**. This is my email newsletter manager of choice. I use it to send out all but my weekly letter to personal supporters (this last goes out via TinyLetter, which is owned by Mailchimp).

7. **Microsoft Excel**. Despite what most might believe, I'm presently simply using Excel sheets for virtually all my database work. I don't even use Access any more.

8. **Google Docs**. Nearly all of my documents start formal life in Google Docs. I've found it just so much easier to simply start a Google doc and share it with others. I don't use Google Sheets for my spreadsheets simply because most of my sheets are too big.

9. **Adobe Indesign + Illustrator + Photoshop**. This is what I use when I'm writing any reports or longer documents (e.g. the Outlook the Cluster Forecasts, etc). I have a subscription.

10. **Vsee**. Organizationally we use VSee as my primary VOIP application now, thanks to its better security model and low bandwidth footprint. For those who aren't on VSee, I do Skype.

11. **Kindle**: I love Amazon Kindle. I probably have 200 books/files in it. Apple's iBooks is nice, but at this point I have so much in my Kindle that I would be hard pressed to abandon it. I actually use my Kindle App on iPhone/iPad far more than I do my actual Kindle, at this point.

12. **Slack**: we use Slack for workgroup communications. I wish I could get more people to use this tool.

13. **Facebook**. I normally go here about once a day. Twitter dominates my social networking time. If you want to catch me online, <http://www.facebook.com/justindavidlong> is your best bet. In 2017 I'm starting to try and write a once-a-day-post; this is sort of replacing my "daily blogging." But I don't feel compelled.

14. **Camtasia Studio**. This is what I use for recording videos. I got it pretty cheap through a non-profit license via Techsoup. I have exclusively been using it building my Purposeful Social Media course, because it lets you record direct from a webcam (which Adobe Premiere, sadly, will not do--although in other ways Premiere is the better product).

15. **Tripit** maintains my travel calendar automatically. Anytime I purchase a flight, Tripit (which monitors my Gmail account) automatically sucks the flight data in and gives me a nice itinerary. It syncs to the iPhone/iPad app as well, so that's always up to date, and shares the itinerary with my wife, so she has quick access to my schedule. I was offered a cheap rate for the Pro account, and renewed.

16. **Paypal/Gumroad**. I have used both services. We are shifting away from Paypal at ActBeyond, but I still use it personally for some things. I use Gumroad to offer small files for

free/donation-based download. I've found Gumroad to be exceptionally easy to use and well integrated with Twitter.

17. **FileZilla**: this is my FTP transfer program of choice. I've tried a bunch (including CuteFTP Pro) but this is the one that's the simplest.

18. **Putty**: This is my SSH terminal of choice. I use it when I need to login to my host server and make minor changes or run programs on it.

19. **iTunes**: what I use to play and scan in music. I know, others find it kludgy. It works for me. Besides I pretty much need that because of the iPhone and iPad.

20. **Pandora**: what I use to play streaming music (radio); I've tuned some channels for instrumental music that plays during work. At this stage I have a pay account to Pandora, and a really nicely curated piano list.

21. **LastPass**: my password manager. My passwords are typically phrases (not crazy alphanumeric codes) but Lastpass is great for automatically logging me into sites so I don't have to remember all the passwords I've used. (Wish it worked with Safari.)

22. **Chrome/Safari**. Since moving to a primarily Mac client, I have switched to Safari. I wish Safari was available for Windows, but it's not, so on my Windows box at home I use Chrome.

*No longer using*

**Scrivener**. I rarely use Scrivener any more. Nearly everything is on Google Docs or in Indesign. Right now, I just don't have a use case for it.