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DriverGuide Toolkit

## [Enhanced Device Manager](#)

### *Hardware drivers listing*

A very disregarded and yet extremely important part of your computer is represented by drivers. Their purpose is that of controlling a particular type of device that is attached to your computer. The good thing is that you do not have to install the drivers for all hardware components installed on your computer as the operating system incorporates a large part of them. With the new OS from Microsoft, it has been awfully difficult to find matching drivers for your hardware components. It seemed as if manufacturers were taken by surprise and did not have the necessary time to adapt the software components for the hardware. Fortunately, things have settled and this problem is less and less of a thorn. Although not too many users care about having the latest drivers installed, renovating the list is quite beneficial for your computer as operating system features are taken advantage of and issues are being fixed. I generally forget to take care of this aspect and remember only when I need to install a device all over again. Windows will update the drivers that come bundled in it, but that is not enough as OS will not incorporate drivers for all hardware you want to install. Fortunately, there are specialized softwares that can take care of that. DriverGuide Toolkit is one of them. The application comes in several versions, each of them bringing access to wider functions. For an annual membership of \$19.95 the Toolkit offers access to more than 400,000 drivers from more than 3,000 manufactures and, according to their saying, 500 new drivers are added every day. The plus version brings more features for more money (\$29.95 a year). Besides the aforementioned advantages, you will also benefit from 20 downloads/week, privileged forum access, driver assistance, community support and personalization features. Users can also buy a two days access to these features for \$6.95. For \$49.95, the Pro edition of the software throws in 100 downloads/week and 3 DriverGuide Toolkit licenses besides what the Plus version has to offer. A free membership is a bit more modest in features as it lets you view installed drivers, provides detailed system information, identifies unknown devices and permits keyword search in the displayed list of the drivers. But unlike the three paid versions mentioned above, it will not look for updates on the Internet and will not backup your drivers to a user defined location, take you to the manufacturer's website or permit you to google it up. Considering all the restrictions imposed to the free version of the application, handling it is a cinch as there is little left to the user. The side panel in the interface contains four drop down menus populated with options for listing your drivers, accessing different system information, updating the software and managing remote connections. The moment the application is launched, it'll immediately start retrieving information on your system and display all the drivers and devices it detects. I have to say that the list is impressive and I could not find a driver on my computer that was not listed by the software. The choices in My Drives drop down menu allow viewing all the drivers detected on your computer and hiding/showing Microsoft drivers. The title of the menu will show the number of drivers detected on the computer. Unfortunately, the software takes its time when retrieving the list. In the lower part of driver list, there is the Device Information tab providing details on the selected item. You will be shown info about hardware ID, manufacturer, version number, driver size, date of driver release, class, device ID, location information etc. System Information tab provides details on BIOS, IDE Controller, Motherboard, Processor, System Cache and Temperature Probe. If Device Information tab is open, when clicking anywhere inside System Information window DriverGuide Toolkit will crash and close automatically. The issue is present both under Vista and XP. As DriverGuide Toolkit has network capabilities, you can use the application to connect and disconnect from remote computers and work with the program as

if Toolkit were installed remotely. However, this feature is not supported under Vista and XP Home Edition. Applied to XP Pro edition, the function allows you to retrieve all the information on both drivers and system as if it had the software installed. The free version of the application has limited functionality but it is an asset if all you need is retrieving a list of installed drivers and system information. There is no driver backup option available and updating is also restricted. **The Good** During our testing, the list of retrieved drivers was comprehensive enough and device details provide useful data regarding the hardware components on your computer. Driver list can be sent to the printer automatically. **The Bad** Backing up your drivers is restricted in this version as well as searching and finding updates or accessing the manufacturer's website directly from the interface. The only utility of the product is in listing all the drivers and computer information. The features of paid versions are available in the free version interface too, although they do not work. Theme changing is done an element at a time. **The Truth** If you are not looking for backing up your drivers, updating them or accessing the manufacturer's web page in an easy and comfortable manner, then DriveGuide Toolkit is worthwhile. The software is extremely easy to use, but we have to admit that all the limitations are a great contribution to this aspect. *Here are some snapshots of the application in action:*