# 0028: My Favs Part I: Chrome OS Applications

## Synopsis

[2019-07-07] The first in a new six-part series of episodes I'm calling, My Favs. In the first episode of this six part series, I share my favorite Chrome OS applications. These are apps that are the first to be installed (or restored) on my Pixelbook (and Chromebook). Because I install these apps on my Pixelbook, they follow me around on Chrome browser installs on other desktop computers such as Mac and Linux. In the Addendum segment, I share listener feedback and questions as well as talk about a new device I am excited to try.

**Series Links:**

- 0034: My Favs Part VI: Android Apps [2019-09-22]
- 0033: My Favs Part V: Chrome Browser Extensions [2019-09-08]
- 0032: My Favs Part IV: Chrome OS Flags [2019-08-25]
- 0030: My Favs Part III: Chrome for Android Flags [2019-08-05]
- 0029: My Favs Part II: Android Apps for Chrome OS [2019-07-21]
- 0028: My Favs Part I: Chrome OS Apps [2019-07-07]

**Show notes available at:**
https://www.pixelpowerpodcast.com/episodes/0028

## Opening

- Welcome
- Apps, not shortcuts
- Apps, built for Chrome OS
- Apps, that primarily work offline, unless online access is required

## My Favorite Chrome OS Apps

**History of Chrome OS applications (not just a web browser OS)**

- In 2011, Chrome OS was conceived of an operating system that simply hosted the Chrome browser.
- Everything was supposed to live in the cloud.
- In 2013, packaged apps, or Chrome Apps were released to help fill in the void for cloud based applications and provide a more traditional desktop experience with Chrome OS.

**Chrome Applications**

- These are not simple links to web apps that run in browser
- Traditional native application that runs outside the browser
- Are offline capable
- Unlike some Android apps that have not been optimized for the Chrome OS window manager, Chrome OS apps can be resized (drag to left or right to fill half the screen) and utilize full-screen so you can three-finger swipe on the touchpad to access all running apps
- At one point Chrome apps were available anywhere a desktop version of the Chrome browser could be installed as was the Chrome OS Apps Store since they use HTML5, Javascript, and CSS

- Can only install apps from a Chromebook now, but the apps do follow to the Chrome browser on other desktop machines if you choose to sync apps (I use them regularly on my Ubuntu Installs, especially Google Keep notes)
- When I have the option of native Chrome OS apps versus Android apps, I will ALWAYS choose the Chrome OS app
- I'll admit it is not easy to locate native Chrome OS applications in the Chrome Web Store so here's a tip: search the Chrome Web Store using the *Type: Chrome Apps* and *Features: Runs Offline* - that list native Chrome OS applications that you can easily install and try out.

**Default Chrome OS Apps**

- Files - where you create folder, copy, delete, and move files
- Annotation - when you capture a screenshot or locate an image file on your Pixelbook
- Settings - make modifications to system settings
- Calculator (was this installed, I don't remember) - self explanatory
- G Suite apps (Docs, Sheets, Slides, etc)

**The Apps I Use…**

**Caret**

A good text editor app is something that on every device and unfortunately is not included by default on Chrome OS. Caret is a free Chrome OS app that fits the bill. Like all good text editors Caret includes:

- Syntax highlighting
- Themes
- Command palette (CTRL+SHIFT+P)
- "Hackable" configuration (modify JSON files to tweak settings)
- Project browsing (folder access)
- Tabs
- Offline support
- Jump to anywhere (CTRL-P)
- Multiple cursors
- Experimental plugin API
- Word count
- Line sorting
- Macros
- Move lines
- Change case
- All a whole host of other options - I could do a whole show on this app alone

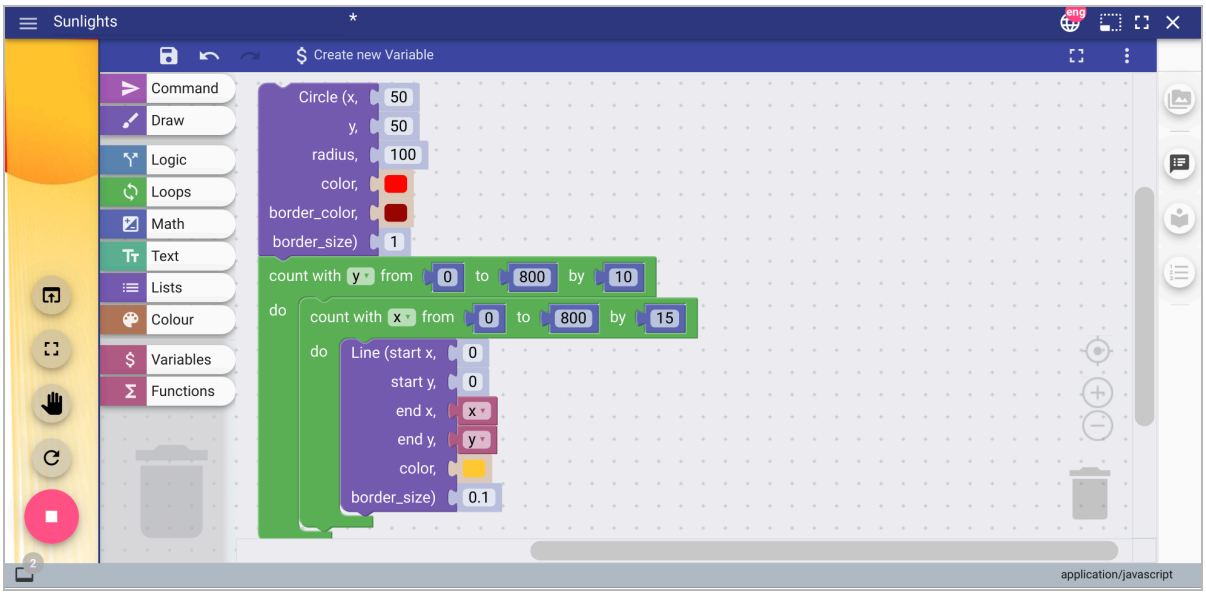
**TIP:** You can install from the Chrome OS Web Store or you can download the caret.crx file to install and update on the Caret beta channel. Drag and drop the caret.crx file into the chrome://extensions page.

Get Caret on the Chrome Web Store

## Coding with Chrome

This the latest app I've installed on my Pixelbook. If you want to experiment and/or learn how to program using your Pixelbook, this may be the app for your. Check out what Google has to say about their new app:

*"Coding with Chrome is a Google project to provide an easy-to-use educational coding environment (IDE) within the Chrome browser that even works offline. Currently, users are able to create programs using Blockly, Coffeescript, HTML, Javascript and Python with output to Logo Turtle and/or connected toys such as the Sphero, SPRK+, mBot and Lego Mindstorms, and more recently the AIY machine learning kits. Many examples, and even some new tutorials are included, but more to come!"*

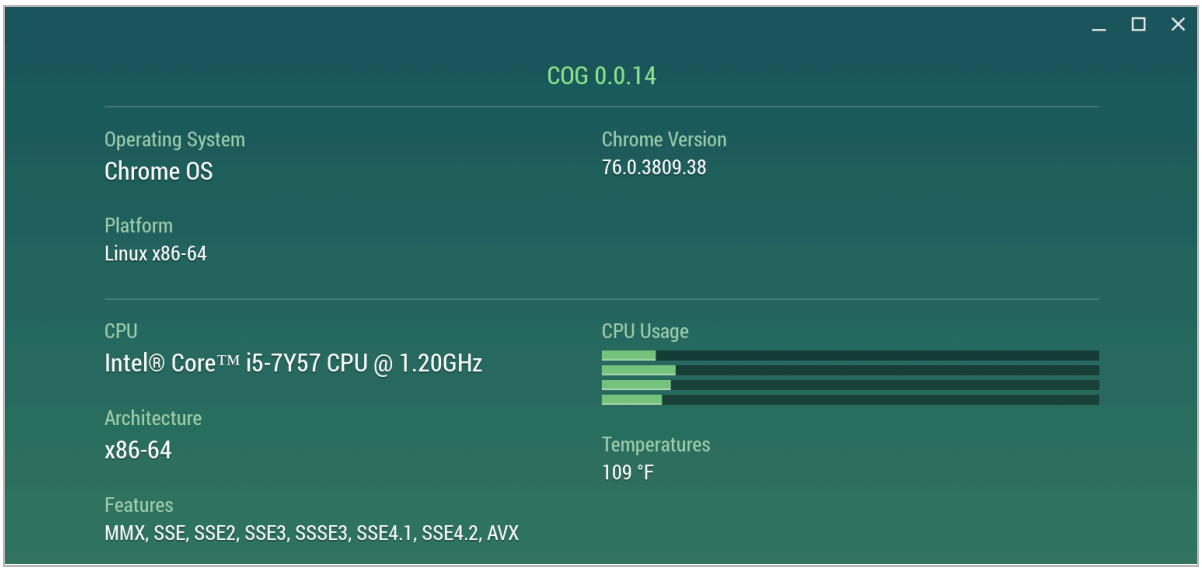



[Get Coding with Chrome on the Chrome Web Store]

## Cog

Install this system information viewer to learn more about your Pixelbook. Get information about:

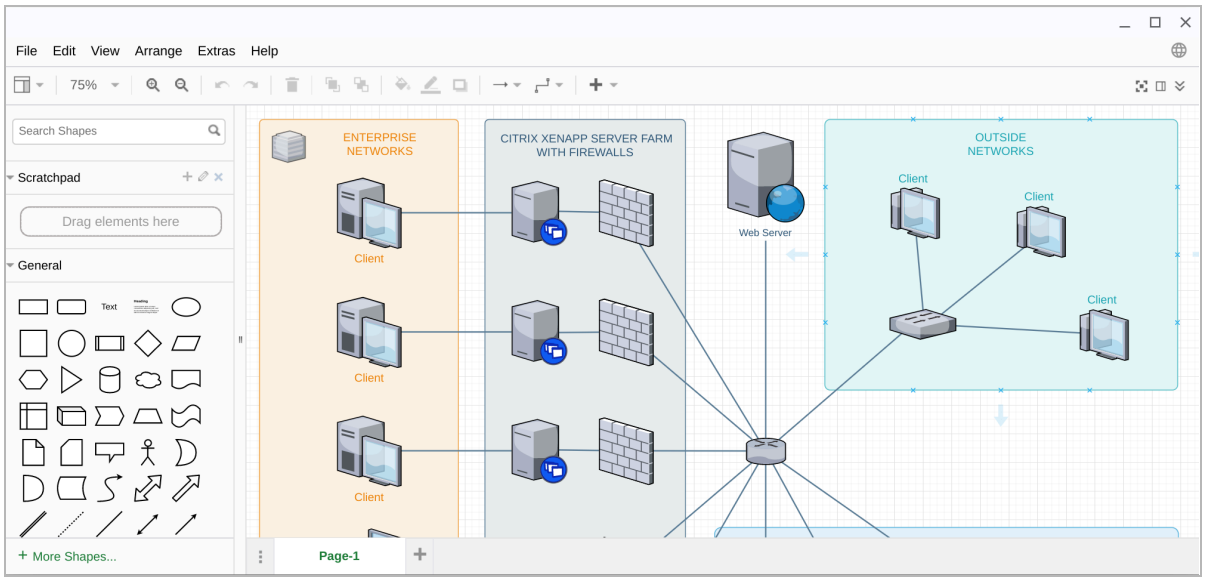
- OS version
- Platform
- CPUs, usage, and temperature
- Motherboard features
- Internal storage
- Memory
- Wi-Fi properties
- Battery charging status and level
- Display information
- Chrome OS plugins




[Get Cog on the Chrome Web Store]

### Draw.io

If you need to create a diagram, UI wireframe, org chart, network topology map, or any other type of technical graphic, this is the tool for you. Free (I don't know how they do it) and includes many additional shape libraries to choose from. Check out the [quick start video] to learn the basics.

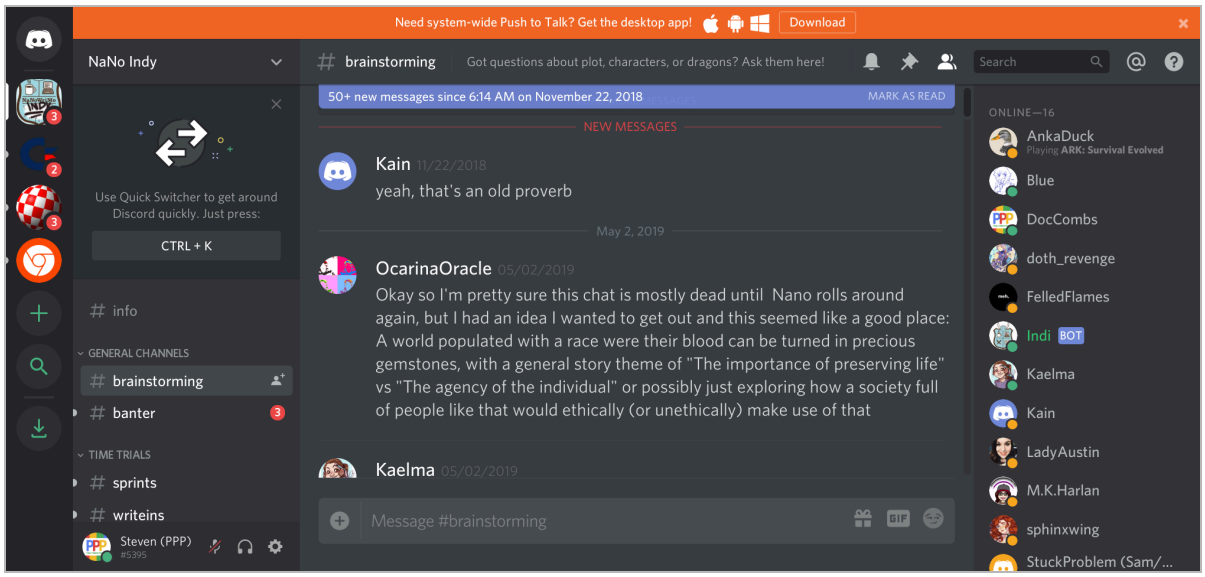



[Gliffy] is a close second in this space, but I think Draw.io is a bit more polished.

Get Draw.io on the Chrome W eb Store

## Discord

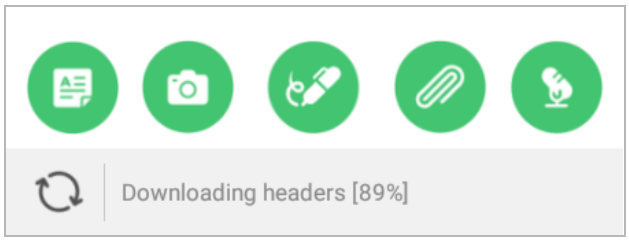
Discord provides official Chrome OS web app. Discord is used to connect gamers via voice and chat. It became my hangout when I was participating in NaNoWriMo 2017 and I still visit the NaNo Indy Discord when I find time to continue to work on my book.




[Get Discord on the Chrome Web Store]

## Evernote

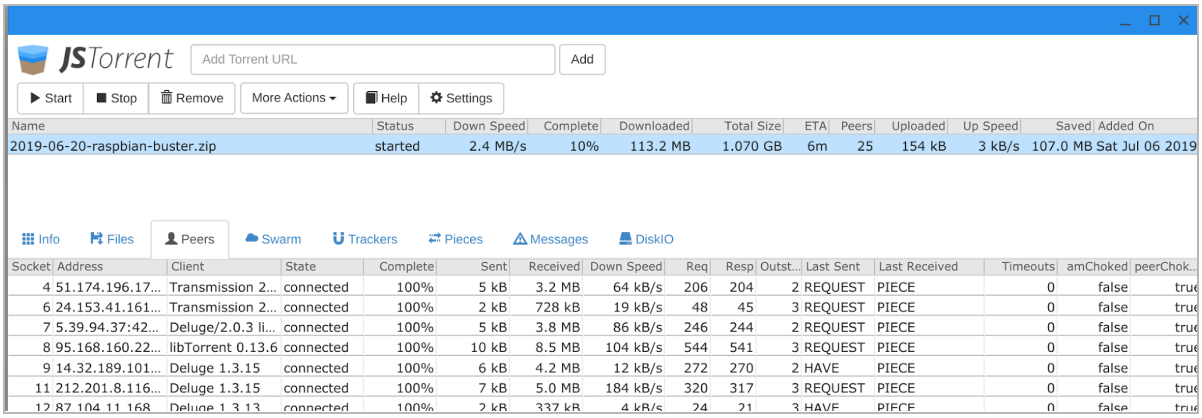
I stopped using Evernote once the price raised and I found I could create my own system using Google Keep and markdown files.




[Get Evernote on the Chrome Web Store]

## JSTorrent

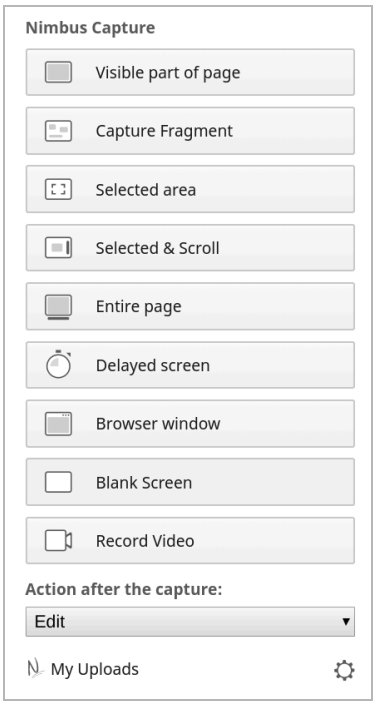
I know what you're thinking, is Steven pirating movies? Nope, I use JSTorrent to download Linux and Raspberry Pi distros and having the option on my Pixelbook extend's the device's making functionality for my numerous projects.




[Get JSTorrent on the Chrome Web Store]

### Nimbus Screenshot & Screen Video Recorder

Capture screenshot within the Chrome web browser (can't capture screenshots of other apps so use the built-in Chrome OS screenshot features) or create a screencast to show others how to use Chrome OS. Purchase a one-time license for $15 that allows you to:




- Upload screencasts to YouTube
- Upload screencasts and screenshots to Google Drive
- Upload screencasts and screenshots to Dropbox
- Export video as MP4
- Export video as GIF
- Add your watermark for branding

Screencast features include:

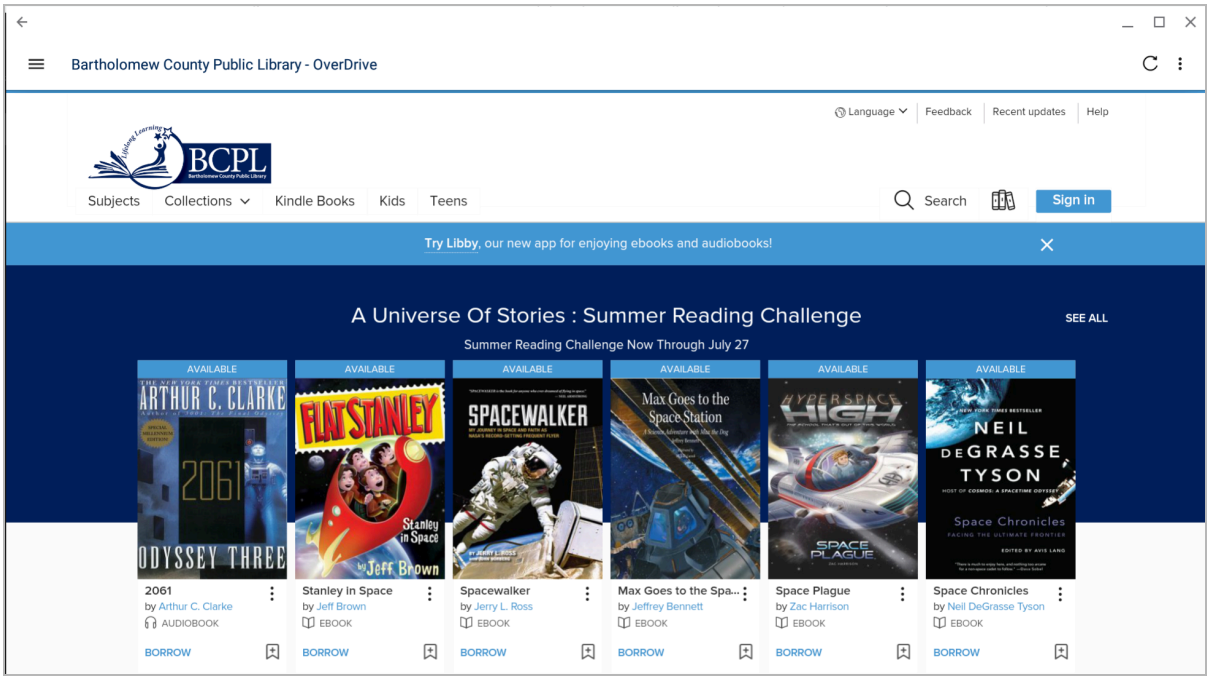
- Webcam capture
- Markup tools
- Basic video editing
- Watermark (premium only)
- Sound from microphone and web page

Screenshots and screencasts can be saved directly to Google Drive.

[Get Nimbus on the Chrome Web Store]

### Overdrive

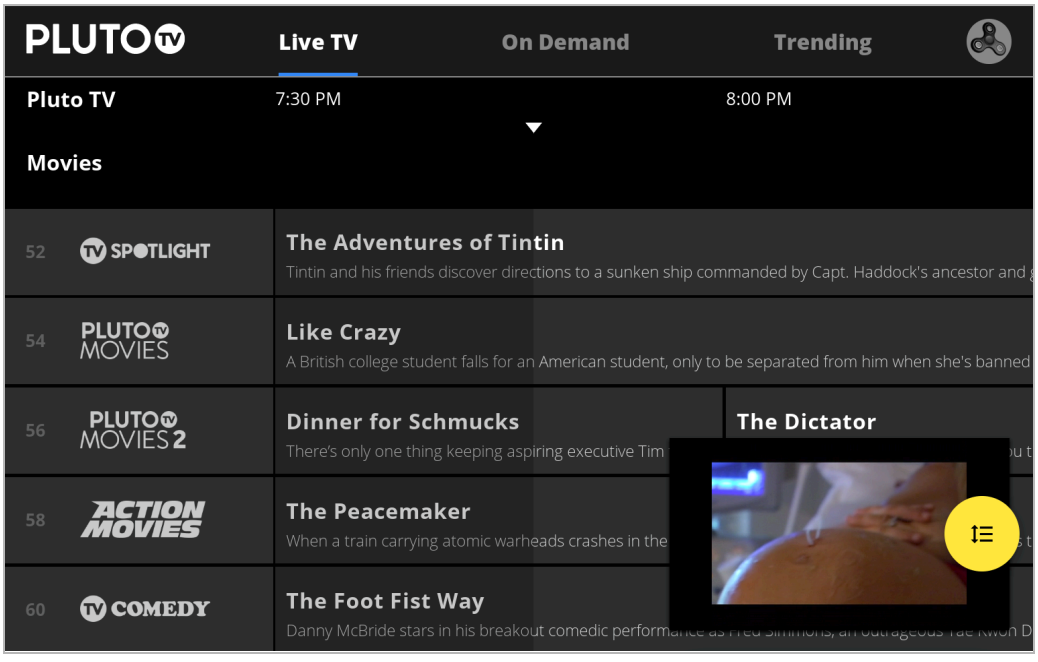
Grab your local library card and download e-books and audio books. It's a bit hinky, but it works in a pinch.




[Get Overdrive on the Chrome Web Store]

### Pluto TV

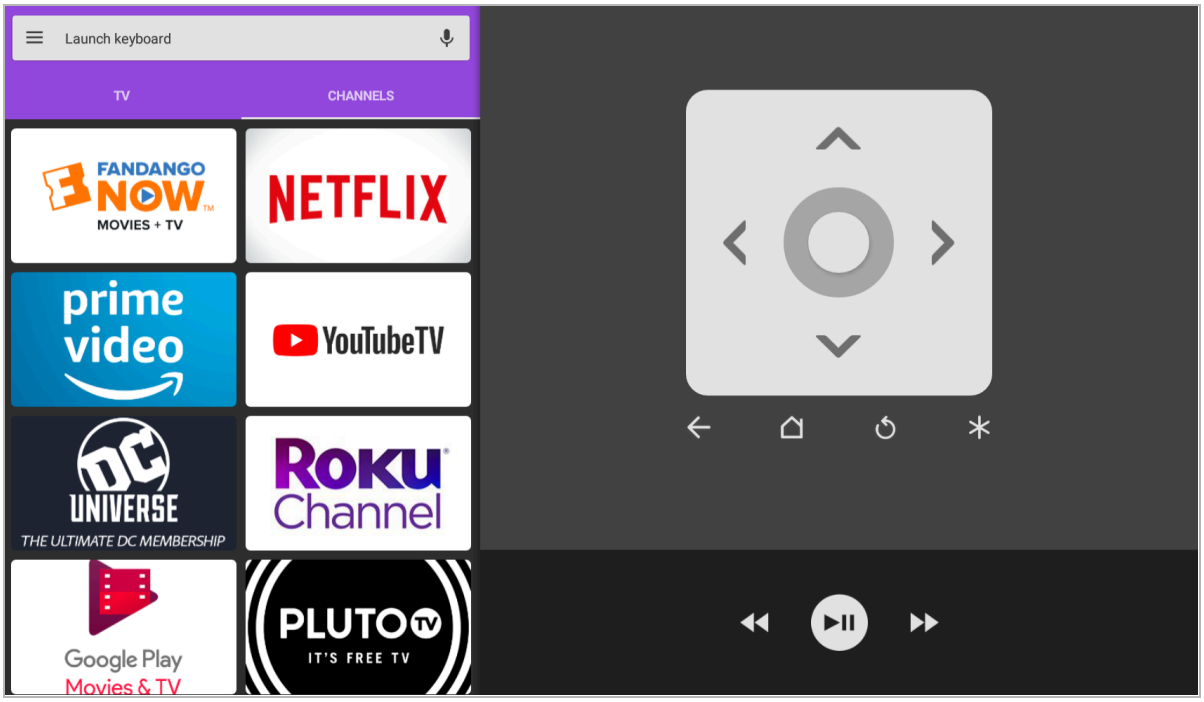
If you just want something on in the background or in another window, the free Pluto TV with it's umpteen number of channels fits the bill. Be sure to check out the many ad supported on-demand programs.




[Get PlutoTV on the Chrome Web Store]

### RoByte

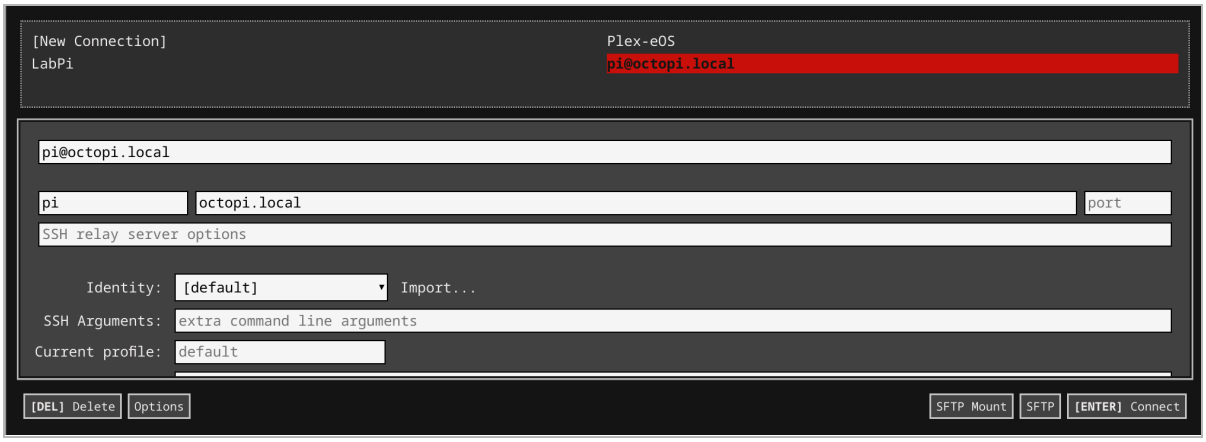
I recently discovered this app that control Roku devices. Not just remote control, but also shows you the apps installed on the device and by clicking, you can launch the app and then control using the controls (virtual remote buttons or touchpad) on the right-side of the window. Includes remote keyboard. Use your Pixelbook to type in those complicated login credentials.




[Get RoByte on the Chrome Web Store]

### Secure Shell App

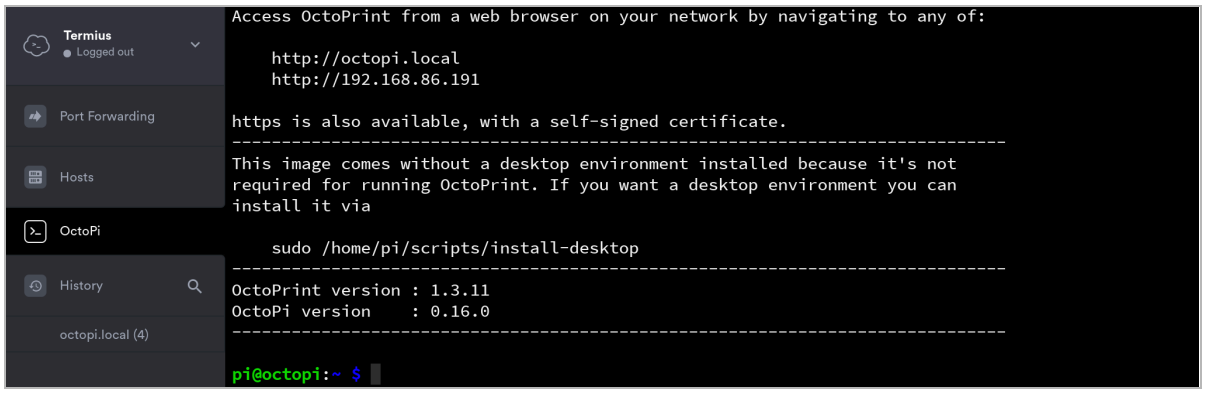
Connect to remote computers via SSH or SFTP. I use this to send file to various Raspberry Pi projects.




[Get Secure Shell App on the Chrome Web Store]

### Terminus

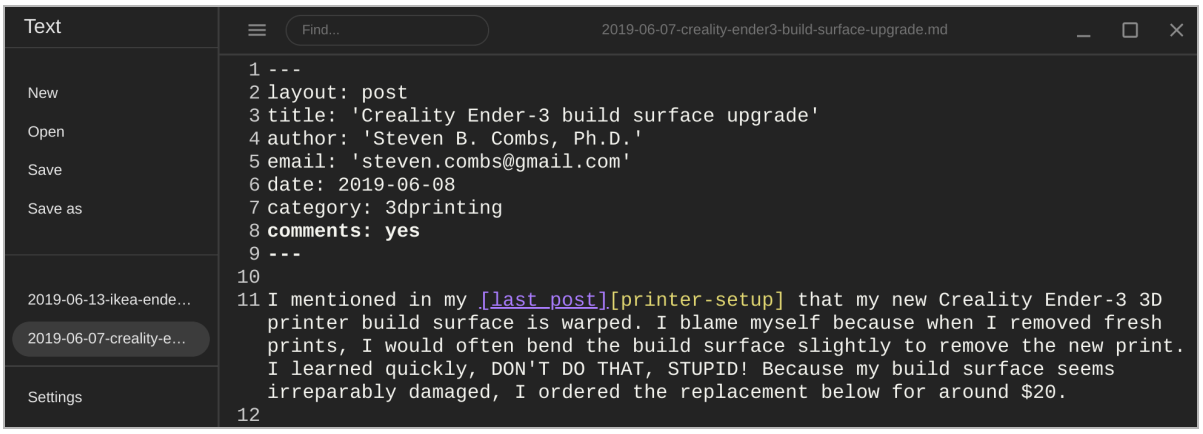
Connect via SSH (does not include SFTP) but floats in its own window and is more customizable than Secure Shell App above.




[Get Terminus on the Chrome Web Store]

### Text

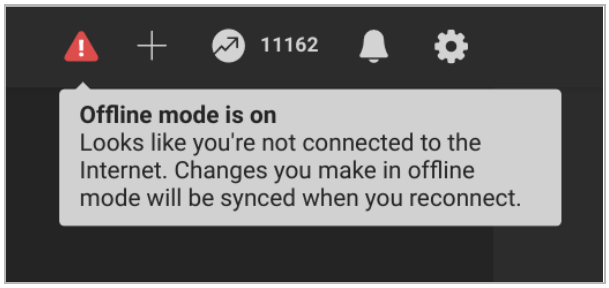
If Caret is too heavy on features and you just need a light-weight tool to edit text and markdown files, Text could be perfect. Great for distraction free writing.




[Get Text on the Chrome Web Store]

### Todoist

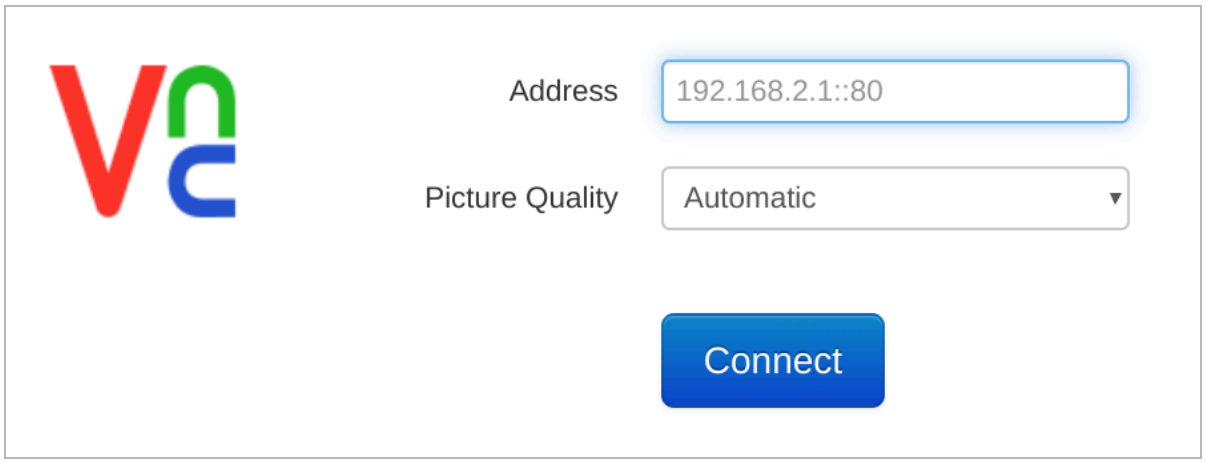
Todoist is my task management software of choice and I was pleased to learn that there was a Chrome OS app available. I talk all about Todoist in episode 0017 and share tips and tricks you can use to get the most out of the Chrome OS app as well as the Android app. Take a listen.




Get Todoist on the Chrome Web Store

**VNC**

If you need more than terminal access to another computer and want remote access via the host's native GUI, Virtual Network Computing, or VNC, is for you. Connect and control using VNC server (built into a Mac when using screen sharing).




Get VNC on the Chrome Web Store

What apps do you use that I missed? Learn how to connect below.

## Addendum

In this segment I share comments and corrections from past shows, observations from living the pixel-power life, and something completely unrelated.

**Feedback from Last Show**

- Google Groups member, Richard, posted a question about battery life with Android Q beta from after listening to my last episode. Here's my response. In a nutshell, no real issues, thankfully.
- Speaking of Google Groups, I posted a visual show schedule update
- Android Auto has been giving me fits. Can't get it to load. Likely Android Q beta 4 issues, but it worked once
- Listener jdlcb emailed and asked if I would supplement my Linux on Chrome OS coverage with two additional topics; VPN in the Linux VM and installing Linux apps from a .tar file

**Living the Pixel-Powered Life**

- Google Drive on the web is now allowing offline saving of all files
- Chrome OS version 76 dropped on the beta channel and a few things I like:
  - Clear notifications button at the top of the notifications area
  - I activated virtual desks using the #virtual-desks flag (it works, but is missing keyboard control) - looking forward to final roll out and we will discuss more once the feature is live on the stable channel (probably in about six weeks or so)
- Last week we lost a loved one in our family and trying to keep things organized was a primary focus as we made final arrangements. Google Keep became a key piece of that puzzle (shared notes and capturing information) as was the Adobe Scan app.

**And Now for Something Completely Different**

- There's a new Raspberry Pi in town, version 4, and it's a huge upgrade all around but especially with regard to RAM
- Give Ubuntu Mate 19.04 a try on an older machine - I am now a huge fan and very impressed (from the guy who changes Linux distros like most people change their underwear

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## Support the Podcast

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- Share an episode using #pixelpowerpodcast on your favorite social media platform
- Use the Anchor.fm support page (https://anchor.fm/pixelpowerpodcast/support) to make a small monthly contribution
- Send a one-time tip to my PayPal account (https://www.paypal.me/stevencombs)

All support helps me offset the cost of hosting the podcast and allows me to bring you even more pixel-powered content.

## Connect online at

I have social media account everywhere! Leave comments and get the latest news using one of the links below:

- Website: http://www.pixelpowerpodcast.com
- Episodes: http://www.pixelpowerpodcast.com/episodes/
- Email: steven@pixelpowerpodcast.com
- Interact on the Pixel Power Podcast Google Groups
- Follow the podcast on Twitter
- Follow the podcast on Instagram
- Follow the podcast on Facebook

## Leave Audio Feedback

If you want to be a part of the show, you can leave audio feedback using one of the methods below:

- Visit https://anchor.fm/pixelpowerpodcast/message and click the “Start recording now” button to leave a voice message
- Send audio feedback via .mp3 file via Google Docs (record, upload, and share the link via email)

## Thanks

- To each of you for being a listener
- To all those who send me feedback
- Thanks to artist Kevin MacLeod for the *Goodnightmare* loop that accompanies the last segment

## Notes on Notes

**WARNING:** If you see this warning, take heed as you are venturing into uncharted or dangerous areas.

**REMEMBER:** Remember to do this or that to get the most out of your device.

**NOTE:** Simple words of wisdom or addendum items to the regular notes.

**TIP:** A little something extra that you may not know or brings even more productivity to the table.