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5 GitHub Alternatives to Paid Tools

Five free, open-source projects that can replace apps you pay for every month, and what you take on when you switch.

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Independent guide. Siddhio.ai is not affiliated with the projects described.

The five at a glance

Open-source tool	Can replace	How you run it	Licence
Immich	Google Photos, iCloud Photos	Your own server (Docker) + phone apps	AGPL-3.0
Penpot	Figma	Browser: hosted, or self-hosted with Docker	MPL-2.0
AppFlowy	Notion	Desktop and mobile apps; optional self-hosting	AGPL-3.0
Jellyfin	Plex Pass, Emby Premiere	Your own server + client apps	Free software (GPL)
KeePassXC	1Password, LastPass	Desktop app; offline encrypted file	GPL-2 or GPL-3

“Free” means no licence fee. Self-hosted tools still need a computer or server to run on, and you become responsible for updates and backups.

1. Immich, instead of Google Photos

A self-hosted photo and video library with automatic phone backup, face recognition, albums, map and timeline views, and machine-learning search. You install the server with Docker Compose and the iOS or Android app uploads new photos in the background.

- **Start:** follow the official Docker Compose install at immich.app. Plan for at least 4 GB of RAM (8 GB if you use the machine-learning features) and enough disk for your library.
- **Moving over:** export your library with Google Takeout, then import it with the official Immich CLI (`npm install -g @immich/cli`).
- **Trade-off:** your photos are only as safe as your backups. Keep a second copy somewhere else.

2. Penpot, instead of Figma

An open-source design and prototyping tool that runs in the browser and stores designs as standard SVG. It has components and libraries, interactive prototypes, real-time collaboration and a CSS-ready inspect mode for developers.

- **Start:** sign up on penpot.app, or self-host with Docker using the official self-host guide. Self-hosting is free with unlimited users and files.
- **Trade-off:** Figma still has the larger plugin ecosystem and its FigJam whiteboard.

3. AppFlowy, instead of Notion

An open-source workspace for docs, wikis, databases, Kanban boards and calendars, with AI features and an offline mode. Your data stays on your device unless you choose a sync option.

- **Start:** download the desktop app for macOS, Windows or Linux from the project's GitHub releases, or get it from Flathub, Snapcraft, the App Store or Google Play.
- **Teams:** AppFlowy publishes a step-by-step self-hosting guide for running your own sync server.
- **Trade-off:** fewer ready-made integrations than Notion.

4. Jellyfin, instead of a paid media-server plan

A free software media server that organises your own movies, TV, music and photos and streams them to phones, TVs and browsers. Unlike Plex, no feature sits behind a paywall: hardware transcoding, live TV/DVR and offline downloads are included.

- **Start:** download the server for Windows, macOS or Linux from jellyfin.org, or run it in Docker, then open the web setup at port 8096.
- **Trade-off:** the interface is less polished than Plex, and it only streams media you already own.

5. KeePassXC, instead of a paid password manager

A cross-platform password manager that keeps everything in one encrypted file on your device: no cloud account, no ads, no subscription. It auto-types passwords into apps, generates strong passwords and TOTP codes, and works with YubiKey.

- **Start:** install from keepassxc.org, or on Linux with your package manager (`sudo apt install keepassxc`).
- **Syncing:** to use it on several devices, sync the database file yourself, for example with Syncthing or a cloud folder you already use.
- **Trade-off:** no official mobile app from the KeePassXC team; use a KeePass-compatible app on your phone.

How to choose

1. Start with the paid app that costs you the most each year.
2. Try the open-source version alongside it for two weeks before cancelling.
3. Set up backups on day one, not after something breaks.

Sources

- Immich (official site): https://immich.app

- Penpot self-hosting: https://penpot.app/self-host
- Penpot self-host pricing: https://penpot.app/pricing/self-host
- AppFlowy repository: https://github.com/AppFlowy-IO/AppFlowy
- Jellyfin documentation: https://jellyfin.org/docs/
- KeePassXC (official site): https://keepassxc.org/
- KeePassXC repository: https://github.com/keepassxreboot/keepassxc