

MagicRAR 8: The Next-Generation Archiver for Windows



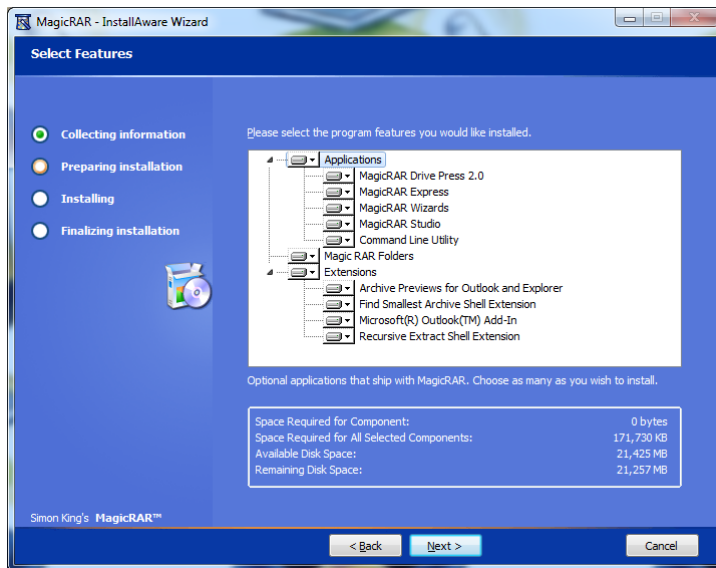
Introduction

If you review the list of unique benefits of MagicRAR 8.0 at <http://www.magicrar.com/features.html>, you will see that MagicRAR is claiming to have 11 unique benefits not found in other industry leading archive utilities. We put MagicRAR's claim to the test in this review, and check whether these unique benefits are really enough to make MagicRAR a viable upstart in the data compression space.

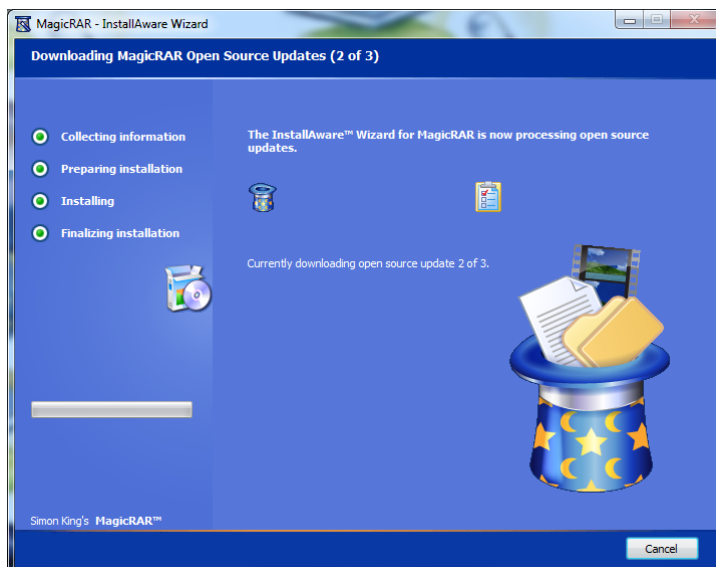
MagicRAR is produced by Simon King's Utilities Group Pty Ltd., a Microsoft BizSpark startup company.

The Installation

The installation offers a variety of tools that you can choose among:

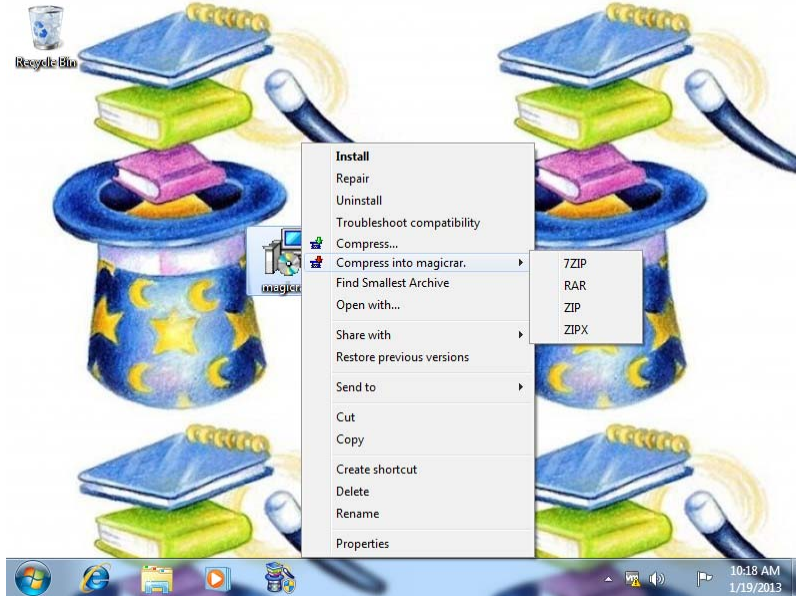


MagicRAR offers many tools not available in other archive management tools. These include MagicRAR Drive Press, a full disk compressor utility which I found extremely useful and have described in detail later in this review. In this dialog, I chose to install everything for the optimal MagicRAR experience.



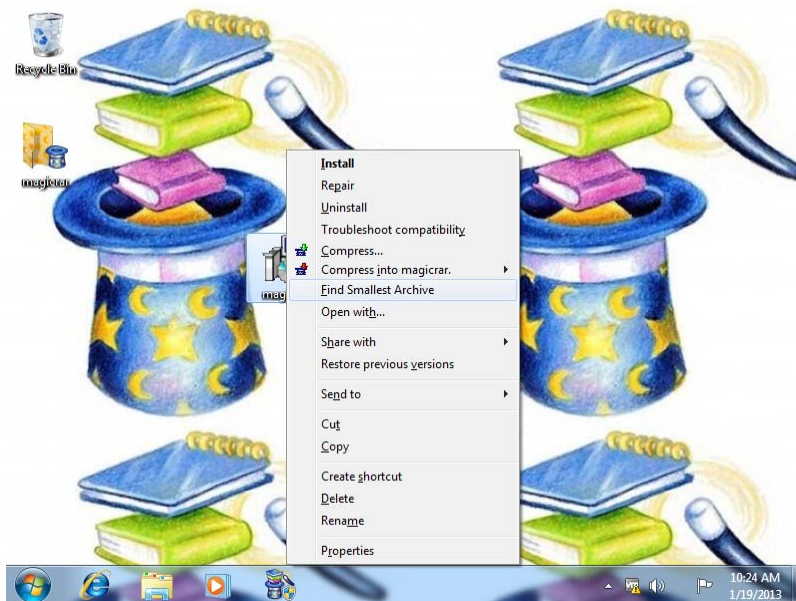
After the installation, the MagicRAR setup checks for online updates. These online updates are unique because they have been built by the MagicRAR open source community at <https://github.com/magicrar>. The open source updates let MagicRAR create RAR files, among adding support for other formats added by open source efforts.

Creating an Archive



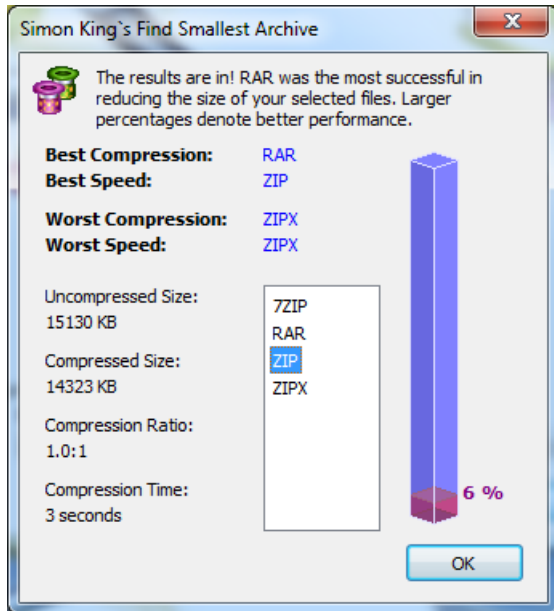
Pretty standard fare, you just right-click and that's it. One nice touch is that there is a full menu with all available formats listed for you to pick from in a single click. In my experience, 7ZIP is the best compressing format. There is a nice touch here, because MagicRAR takes the guesswork out of finding which archive format actually provides the best compression – answering for the first time a hot topic of debate amongst archiving enthusiasts.

Guaranteed Smallest Archives



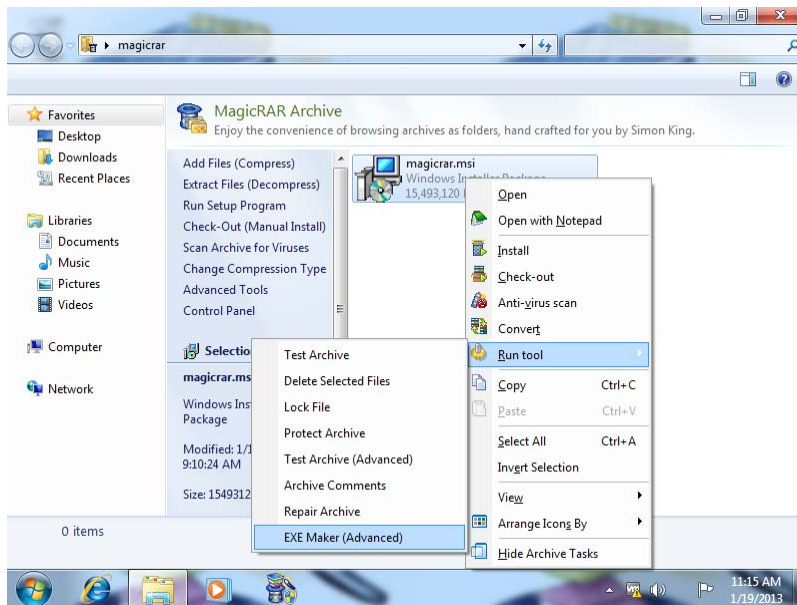
How can an archive utility guarantee to produce the smallest files possible, when each algorithm is optimized for different sets of data? MagicRAR leverages its extensible plug-in architecture with an

Explorer right-click menu option called “Find Smallest Archive”. This option creates archives using each compression format known to MagicRAR through its plug-ins.



As you can see above, there is no guesswork left because MagicRAR's Find Smallest Archive tool has done all the legwork on all of the files and folders selected for compression, producing definitive, scientific results on the best archive type available for the live user selection of data.

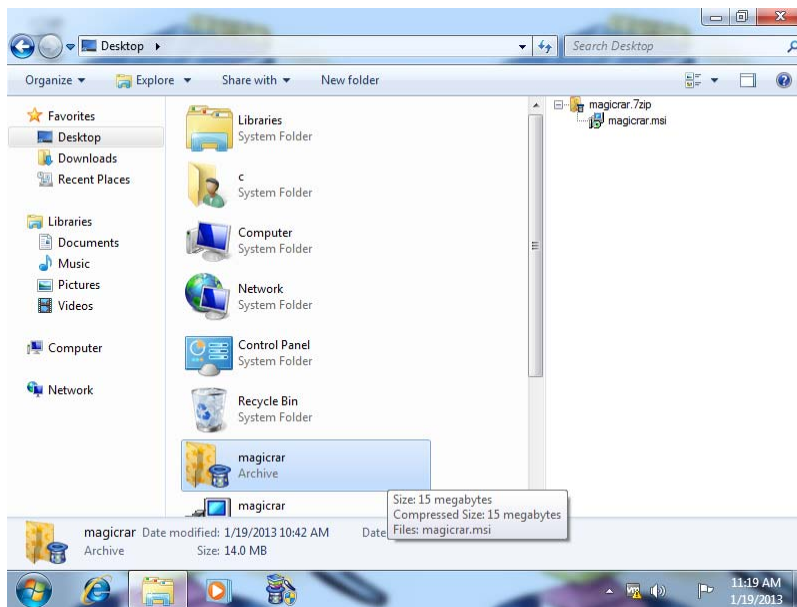
Browsing Archives



MagicRAR's plug-in architecture is really flexible. But where the magic lies is in the ease of browsing archive files. Third party, stand-alone archive user interfaces are a thing of the past with MagicRAR's Archive Folders for currently 61 archive formats. MagicRAR's Archive Folders integrate directly into

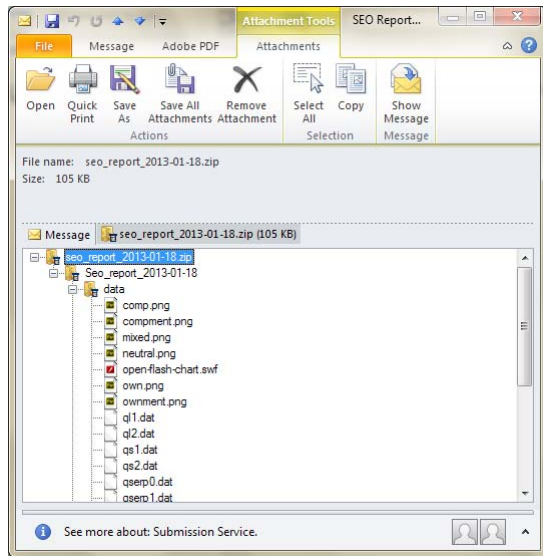
Explorer and you can browse inside all of your archives as if they were ordinary file system folders. Common shortcuts like drag-drop and copy-paste work inside MagicRAR's Archive Folders just as they would on a real folder. All compression/extraction happens transparently. Best of all, double-clicking a document launches it with its real owner application; and when you save your changes, MagicRAR's Archive Folders asks you if you want to update the original archive. And, unlike Windows's built-in ZIPFolders, all archive management tasks are available directly inside Explorer. You can convert archive formats, check-out archive contents directly to disk and create shortcuts to them, delete files inside archives, lock archives, add protection data, make self-extractor EXE files, and so forth.

Archive Previews



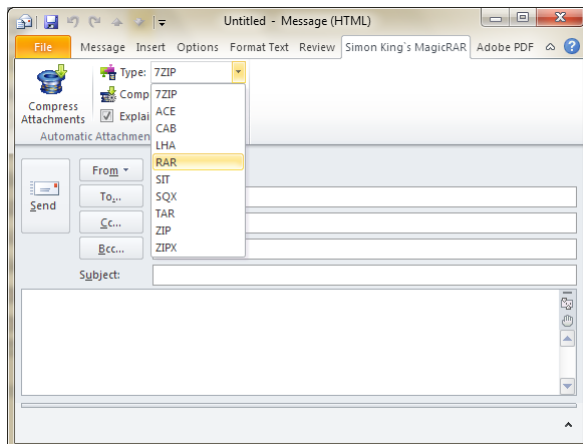
Sometimes you want to just take a brief look at archive contents, instead of use a full-fledged archive management application (that's kind of what MagicRAR's Archive Folders really feels like). You get two sneak peeks in Explorer: When you float your cursor over an archive, a helpful tooltip displays. When you click the archive, the Explorer Preview pane displays full archive contents in an accessible, legible preview.

Outlook Previews



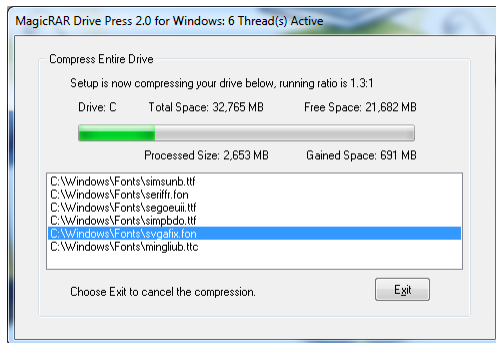
The Find Smallest Archive and Archive Folders features were enough to make me a convert, but MagicRAR is also the only archiver I have found where archive previews are available in Microsoft Outlook for compressed file attachments to emails. It is a very spiffy feature, considering you can open any file inside the archive with its associated owner directly from the preview!

Outlook Attachment Compression

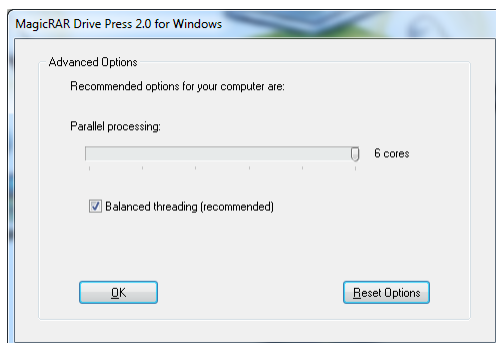


Another Outlook feature ideal for corporate environments, attachments can be transparently compressed, with easy target format selection or turning off the compression feature altogether, through a handy menu in the Outlook ribbon for each individual email recipient.

MagicRAR Drive Press

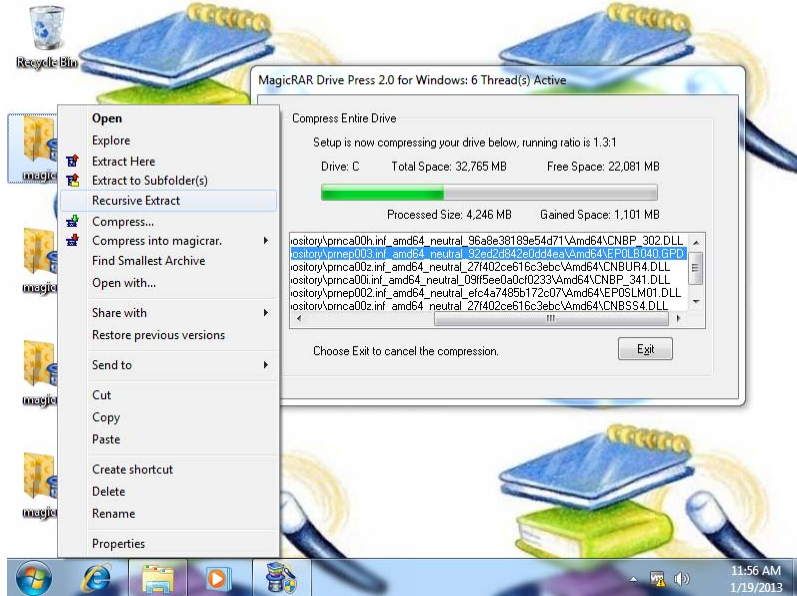


I fell in love with MagicRAR Drive Press. The days of full disk compression are back! And only MagicRAR Drive Press offers a solution for this long neglected area of data compression on Windows. MagicRAR Drive Press is not an archive creator; it does not pack files into a single archive of an opaque format to the operating system and applications. MagicRAR Drive Press directly compresses your disk using NTFS compression, and all your applications and files remain fully accessible as before. MagicRAR Drive Press retains full system security on Windows Vista and newer operating systems while tripling space savings compared to default Windows NTFS compression. The results are simply mind-blowing!



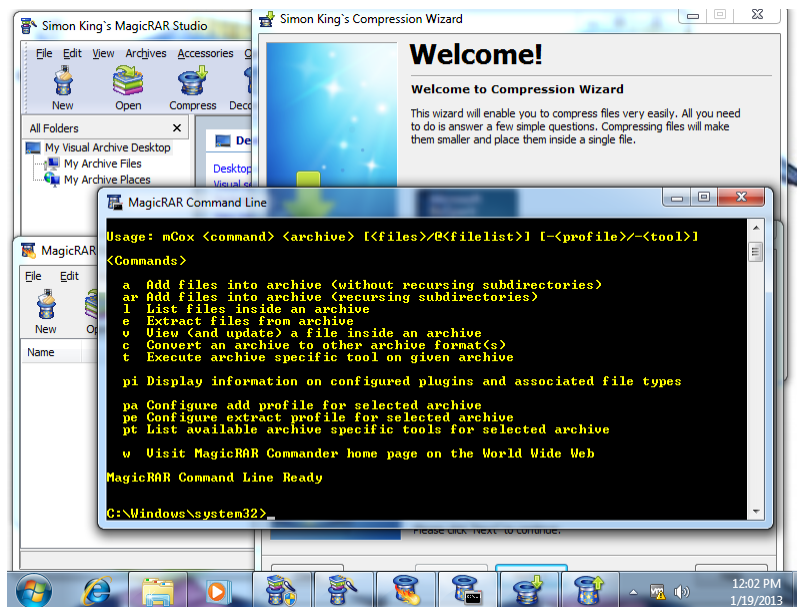
MagicRAR Drive Press converts your entire drive in a fraction of the time it ordinarily takes Windows, and is ideal especially for SSDs which provide lightning fast drive compression speeds when paired with multi-core CPUs.

Shine and Polish

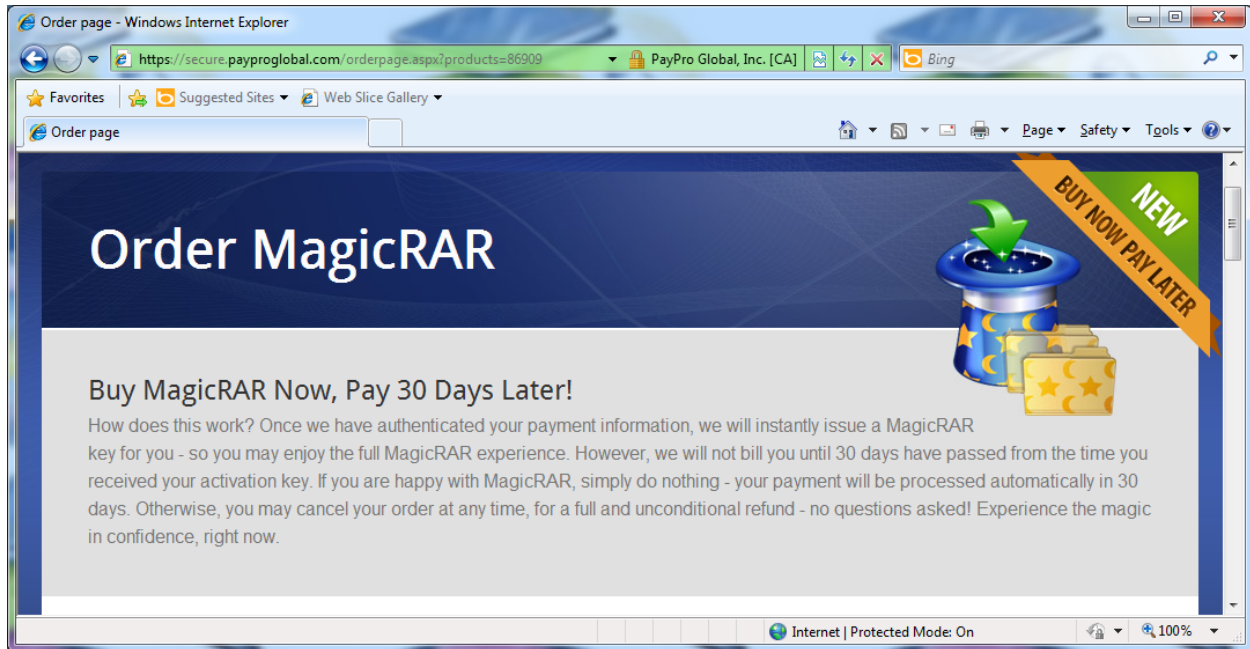


MagicRAR offers many other conveniences I noticed over time, like “Extract to Subfolders” not creating double top-level folders, and other nice details that seemed like minor things but really made the difference to me in my day-to-day work with archives. Ditto the Recursive Extract right-click menu item in Explorer for automatically sifting through all those nested archives – often of different formats too, at that – without having to manually extract each one contained within other folders or archives.

Stand Alone Applications



Also available are stand-alone archive management applications, wizards, and such – although I did not find it necessary to evaluate them, because all my needs were completely and conveniently met by the MagicRAR Archive Folders feature.



Buy Now, Pay Later, or Cancel

MagicRAR also offers a very innovative approach to pricing. You can place an order online at <http://www.magicrar.com/purchase.asp> and you will instantly receive your unlock key. But, your card will not be charged for the first 30 days! Per the money back guarantee, you are free to cancel anytime, but you still get to enjoy a full MagicRAR experience without nag screens in the meanwhile.

Conclusion

MagicRAR packs a terrific punch thanks to its extremely complete and mature, well integrated suite of products, including all-time firsts in the data compression industry. Priced at only \$24.95, MagicRAR is a bargain.

Usability: 10/10

Innovation: 10/10

Performance: 9/10

Toolset: 10/10

Price: 10/10