

# 7 Best Free Flowchart Tools for Windows

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Flowcharts aren't just for engineers, programmers, and managers. *Everyone* can benefit from learning how to make flowcharts, most notably as a way to streamline your work and life, but even to break free from bad habits.

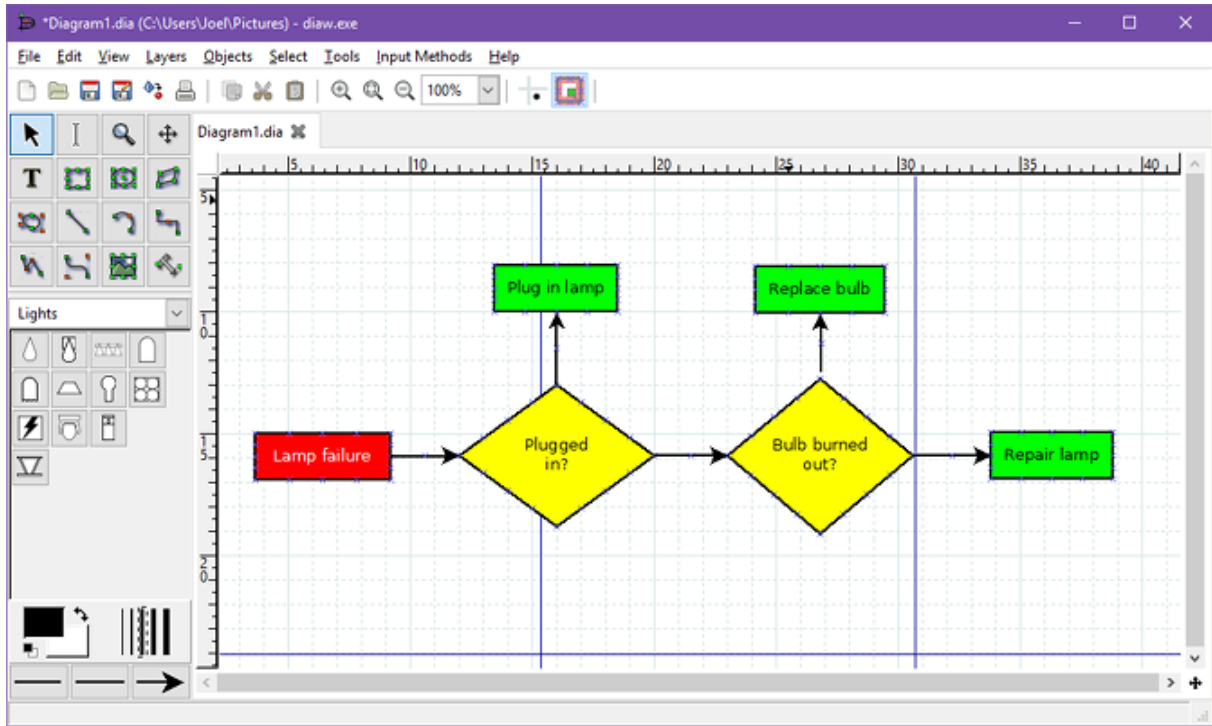
**The only problem is, what's the best way to make a flowchart?**

Plenty of top-notch flowcharting apps exist, but they can get pricey. Microsoft Visio, the most popular option, is \$300 (standalone) or \$13 per month (on top of Office 365). ConceptDraw Pro is \$200. Edraw Max is \$180. MyDraw is \$70. Is it really necessary to spend so much on a flowcharting tool?

No! There are plenty of free options that are more than good enough, especially for non-business uses. You can either learn to create stunning flowcharts in Microsoft Word [How to Create Stunning Flowcharts With Microsoft Word](#) [How to Create Stunning Flowcharts With Microsoft Word](#) Used with imagination, flowcharts can simplify both your work or life. Why not try out a few flowcharts with one of the easiest tools on hand - Microsoft Word. [Read More](#) if you already have it or use one of the following free Windows apps. Web-based apps have been intentionally excluded.

## 1. Dia

Dia is a free and full-featured flowchart app. It's also entirely open source under the GPLv2 license, which is great if you adhere to open source philosophy. It's powerful, extensible, and easy to use.



If you're looking for the best free alternative to Microsoft Visio A Free Open Source Alternative to Microsoft Visio A Free Open Source Alternative to Microsoft Visio Need to create diagrams, flowcharts, circuits, or other kinds of entity-relationship models? Microsoft Visio is the best software for that, but it's expensive. We will show you two free open source alternatives. Read More , then Dia is as close as you're going to get.

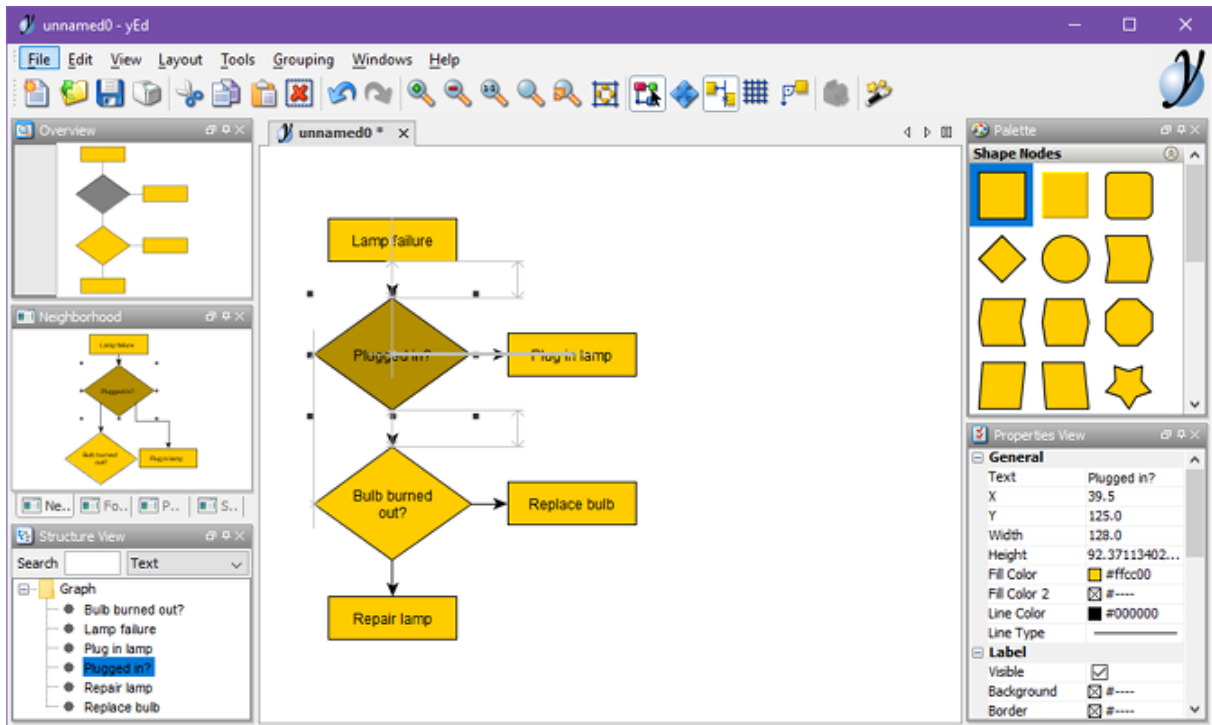
Key features and highlights:

- Simple and intuitive interface.
- Dozens of standard shapes, including UML, circuit, and database.
- Add custom shapes using XML and SVG.
- Colorize shapes and text with standard or custom colors.

**Download** — Dia (Free)

## 2. yEd Graph Editor

yEd Graph Editor is an excellent, up-to-date tool for flowcharts, diagrams, trees, network graphs, and more. You can download the app as a JAR file (which requires Java on your system) or an EXE (which includes a Java installer). It's powerful and versatile, but the trade-off is an ugly, Swing-based interface.



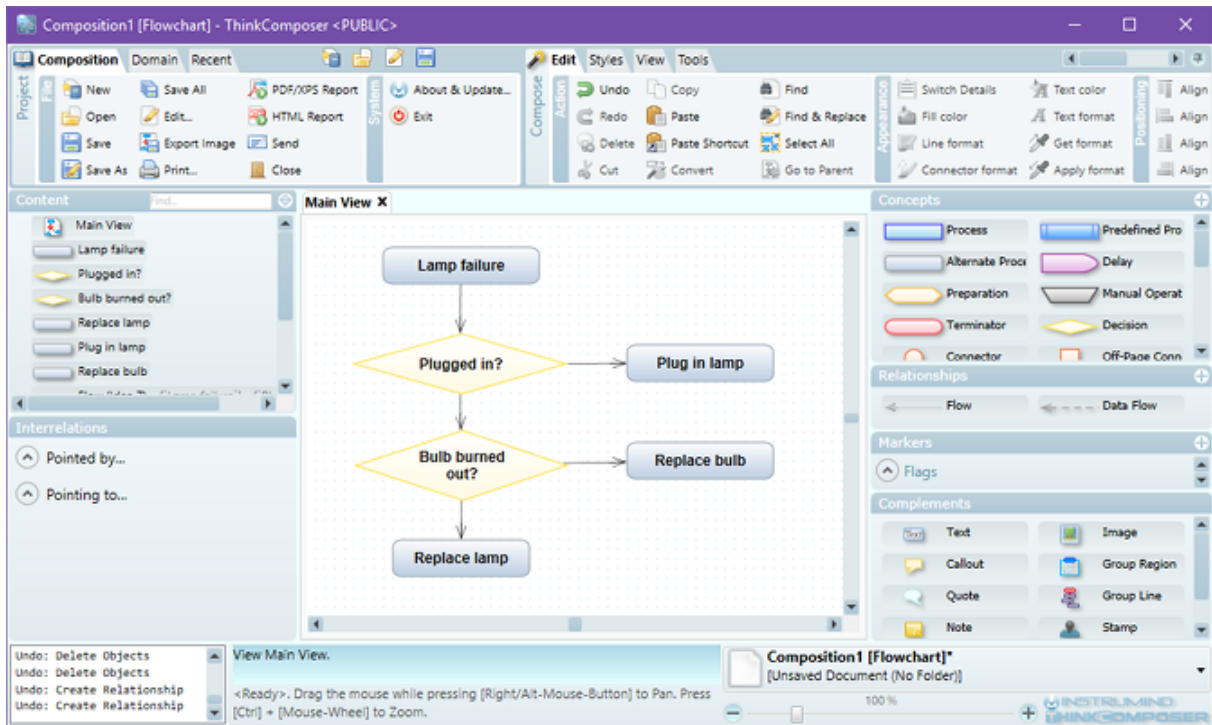
Key features and highlights:

- Very little effort for professional-quality charts.
- Auto-arrange flowchart elements from messy to clean.
- Organic and orthogonal edge routing for connections.
- Several export options, including PNG, JPG, SVG, and PDF.

**Download** — yEd Graph Editor (Free)

### 3. ThinkComposer

ThinkComposer is a tool for professionals. In addition to flowcharts, it can handle business models, class diagrams, genealogy trees, timelines, use case diagrams, and more. It's a bit overkill for one or two charts every so often, but a smart choice if you deal with flowcharts on a daily or weekly basis.



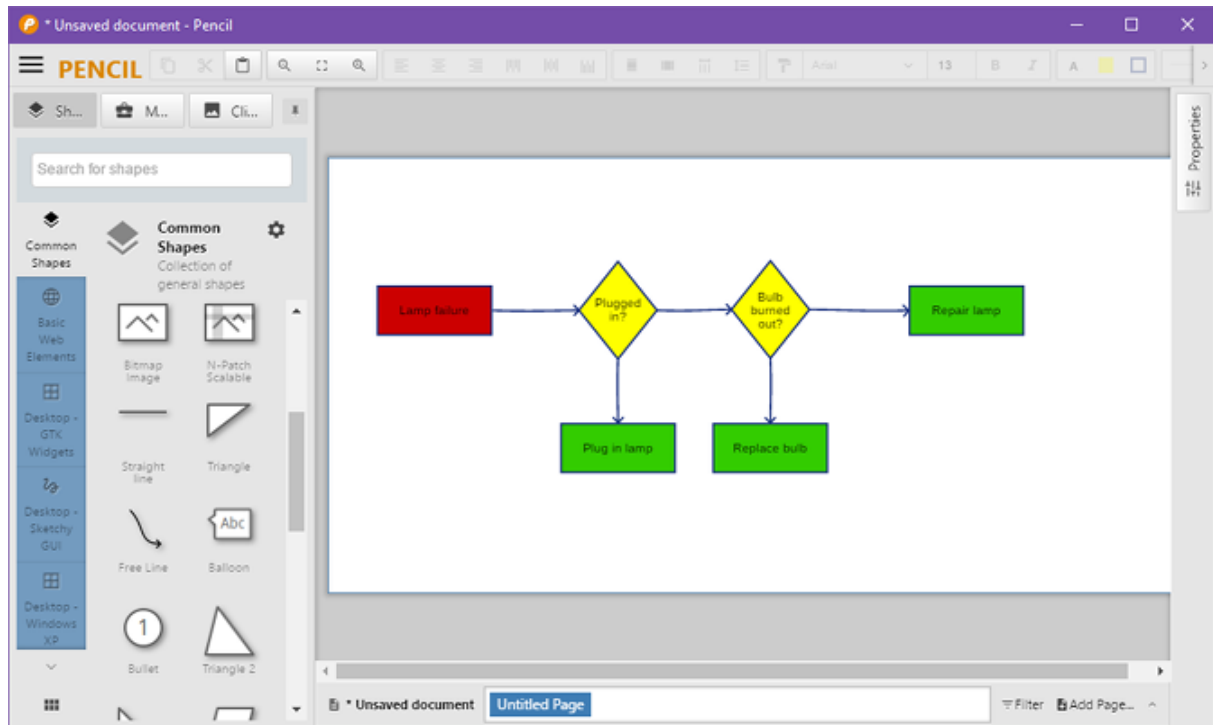
Key features and highlights:

- Create custom, reusable nodes and connections.
- Deep, multi-level diagrams for full visual expression of ideas.
- Compositions can combine many different charts and graphs.
- Generate PDF, XPS, or HTML reports based on your data.
- Open source and extensible with plugins.

**Download** — ThinkComposer (Free)

## 4. Pencil Project

Pencil Project is an old app that fell out of favor due to a long development hiatus, but things picked back up in 2015 and version 3.0.0 was released in 2017. Everything is now modern and up-to-date, making it an excellent choice for anyone who needs fast, simple diagramming with a minimal learning curve.



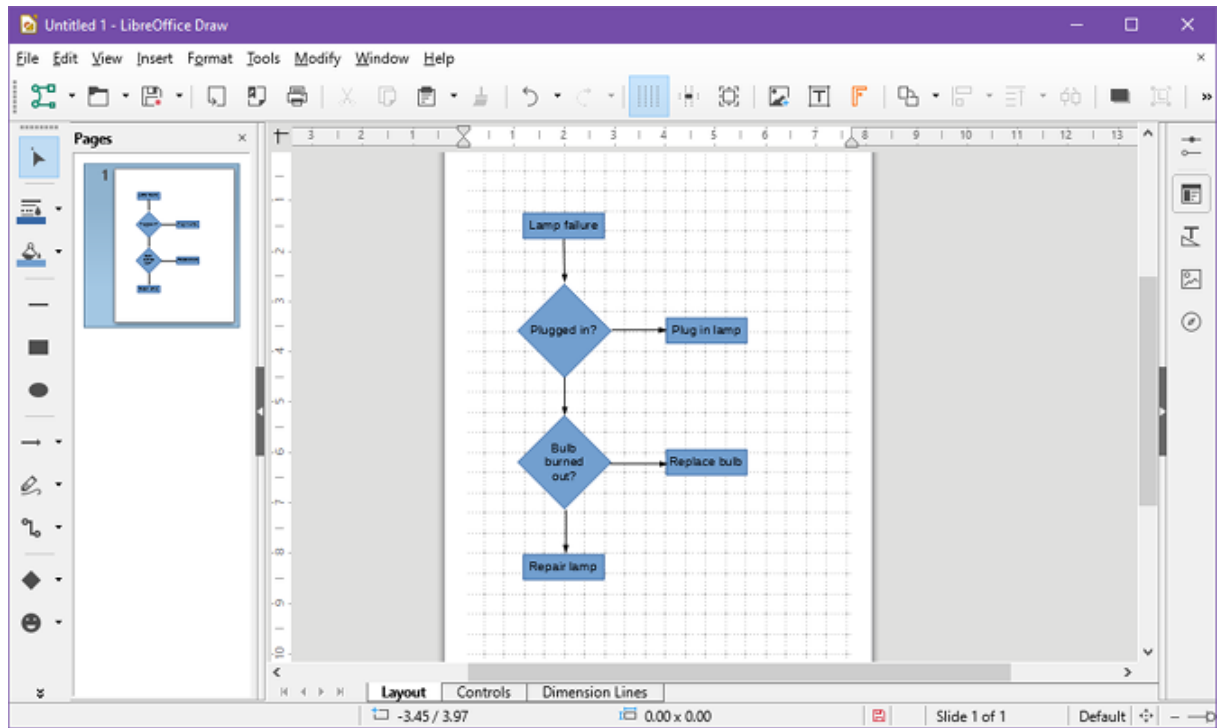
Key features and highlights:

- Tons of built-in shapes for all types of charts and interfaces.
- Create your own shapes or install collections made by others.
- Several export options, including PNG, SVG, PDF, and HTML.
- Import art from OpenClipart.org for use in charts and diagrams.

**Download** — Pencil Project (Free)

## 5. LibreOffice Draw

LibreOffice is arguably the best alternative to Microsoft Office for word processing, spreadsheets, presentations, and even visual diagrams. With LibreOffice Draw, you can easily add shapes, symbols, lines, connections, text, images, and more. It isn't perfect, but it's certainly flexible.



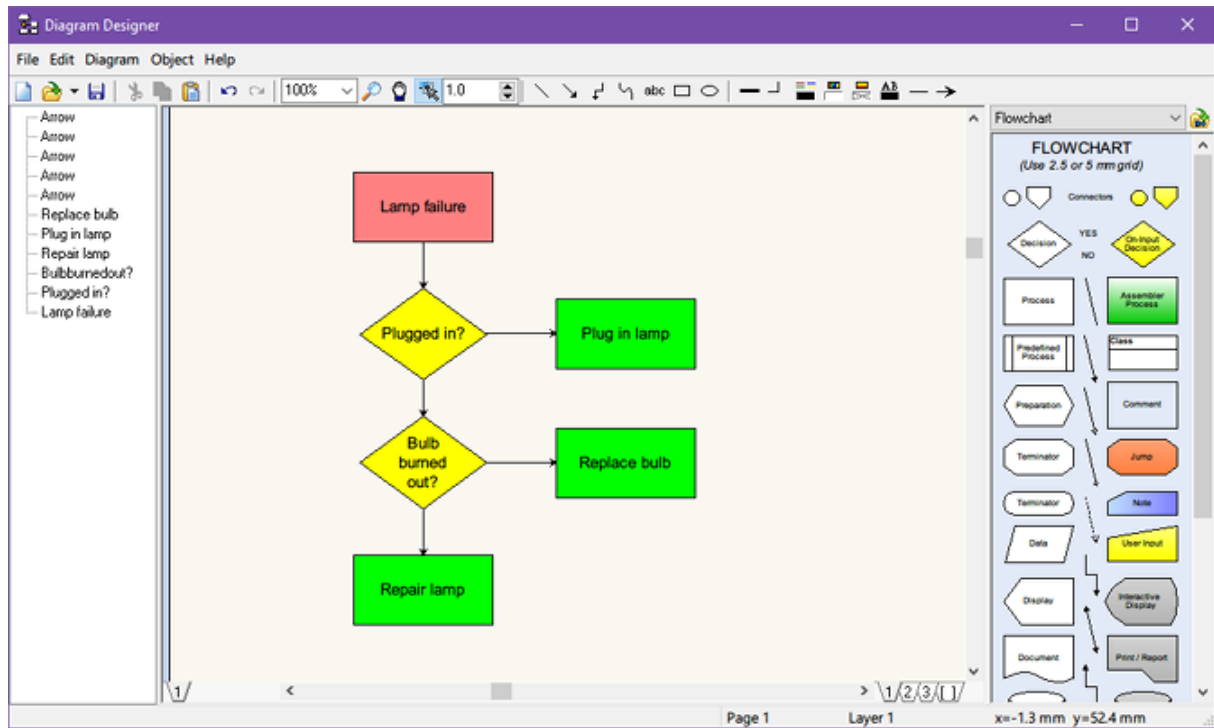
Key features and highlights:

- Custom page sizes, great for all kinds of chart types.
- Page map makes it easy to work on multiple charts.
- Advanced object manipulations, including 3D controller.
- Can open (but not save to) Microsoft Visio format.

**Download** — LibreOffice (Free)

## 6. Diagram Designer

Diagram Designer is somewhat primitive, and that's partly because it hasn't been updated since 2015. But don't let that turn you away! It runs fine on my Windows 10 setup, and it's more than effective for creating flowcharts that look nice. Could it be better? Of course. But for personal use, it's great.



Key features and highlights:

- Easy-to-use drag-and-drop interface.
- No unnecessary features that steepen the learning curve.
- Import and export PNG, JPG, BMP, GIF, ICO, and more.

**Download** — Diagram Designer (Free)

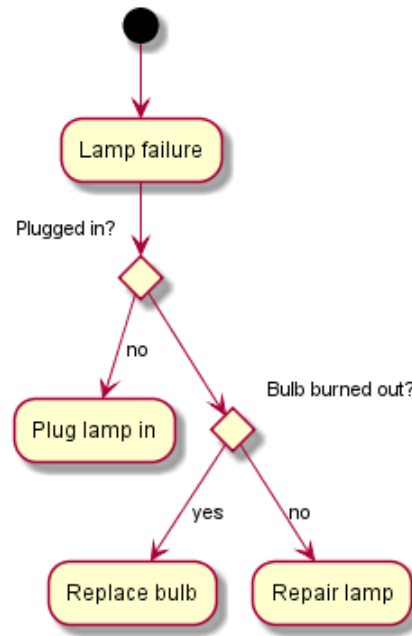
## 7. PlantUML

PlantUML is unlike all the other apps in this list. Instead of a graphical interface, you create your diagrams using PlantUML's scripting language. This is an excellent tool for programmers who don't like mouse-based drag-and-drop. PlantUML requires Java on your system.

```

1 @startuml
2 (*) --> "Lamp failure"
3
4 if "Plugged in?" then
5   -->[no]"Plug lamp in"
6 else
7   if "Bulb burned out?" then
8     -->[yes]"Replace bulb"
9   else
10    -->[no]"Repair lamp"
11   endif
12 endif
13
14 @enduml

```



Key features and highlights:

- Define objects and relationships using PlantUML's scripting language.
- Supports many diagram types: sequence, usecase, class, Gantt, etc.
- Export diagrams as PNG, SVG, or LaTeX.

**Download** — PlantUML (Free)

## What Kind of Flowcharts Do You Make?

While flowcharts are easiest to create and manage on a PC, it's not the most travel-friendly solution. If portability is a key concern, you may actually fare better with one of these mobile diagramming apps [8 Diagramming Apps for Better Brainstorming on the Go](#) [8 Diagramming Apps for Better Brainstorming on the Go](#) Life can be busy and chaotic. These mind mapping and brainstorming apps can help you keep track of your inspirations and ideas for a better thought process. All just a screen tap away. [Read More](#) instead.

We also recommend learning how to create mind maps, which are similar to flowcharts but better for exploring ideas and brainstorming. Check out these free mind mapping tools [8 Free Mind Map Tools & How to Best Use Them](#) [8 Free Mind Map Tools & How to Best Use Them](#) For an office worker, a mind map can be a solo brainstorming tool or a collaborative idea collection. In the right hands, a simple mind map can help make better decisions. [Read More](#) to get started or learn how to



build awesome mind maps right within Microsoft Word [How to Build a Mind Map in Microsoft Word](#) [How to Build a Mind Map in Microsoft Word](#) The average person has thousands of thoughts each day. Our brainstorming is rarely strategic. A Mind Map helps you capture a mess of thoughts and bring them in order. We show you how. [Read More](#) .

**What kind of flowcharts and diagrams do you deal with most? Which of these tools do you like best? How do you feel about mind maps? Share your thoughts with us in the comments below!**