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Toon Boom Studio For OS X

WARNING! This product is not for the faint-hearted. It's a high-performance Web-based 2D animation software package that might blow your mind. Your imagination will soar and your drawings will take on a life of their own. Keep away from bores.



Visit Toon Boom Studio on the Web and discover some great animations. You can order online too!

Who says you can't make a great, 'killer app' for OS X? Well, you can...and I got the chance to review a new 'killer app' for OS X this week. It called Toon Boom Studio and man it is awesome.

Toon Boom Technologies, world-leading supplier of 2D animation software for major film (Rug Rats in Paris) and television studios like Warner Bros. is the creator of USAnimation and USAnimation Web Edition as well as Toon Boom Studio. And man, is this application a joy to work with!

If you're into 2D animation and are currently working in Flash then you need to look at Toon Boom. Toon Boom offers 100% vector-based, Macromedia Flash capabilities and 2D animation for all media platforms in a 3D world. But there's more to it than that, Toon Boom is just plain fun to use.

Although Toon Boom targets the animators, graphic artists and cartoonists working on the web and advertising, and well as music video production and gaming, anyone with a desire to offer some cool animations for their personal or business web site will enjoy using it. It's fast, high performance tools gives you more time to create and more control over what you create than Flash does now.

You can draw directly into the software or import bitmap and vector formats, and use Toon Boom to edit and create your animation. You have the choice of outputting your work in SWF or QuickTime. And everything you create is completely compatible with both Flash 4 and 5.

Toon Boom has 3D Scene Building mode that you use to layout your 2D drawings in a 3D setting. This way, you can see the relationship of the objects you import in 3D space, making it much easier to see how they will react to each other once you animate them. And since you are viewing your images in this 3D mode you have precise control of where you place your objects and precise control to where they wind up. By using different Camera Views and you see what you are making in various ways. Never before have you had this kind of control over your animations. You can view from the Top, Side, and Camera angles. The Camera view shows you the Camera's perspective. the

Top view shows you the relationship between the objects as they would be viewed from the top and the side view shows you what your scene looks like from the side angle.

With more and more people hopping on the high bandwidth bandwagon more and more people are capable of seeing and enjoying more complex media through their Browser. So the demand for richer content is building and artists need to fill the demand and I can see no better or more exciting way then to add animation to the mix.

Working in the world of Vector graphics means being able to create smaller files with richer content, and when you add sound to the mix you add file size, but with higher bandwidth and the nature of vector based animations your site's visitors can handle the richer content. Toon Boom's sound editor easily syncs sounds to specific frames, making it easy even to lip sync your animations...try that with Flash!

Look, let me break it down for you so it's easy to visualize what I'm talking about. You launch Toon Boom and you get all your tools sets up and running along with your main Camera View scene, you're Top and Side Angles views and the timeline. (The timeline is the easiest to understand of all the applications I use that have a timeline feature).

Ok, next, you need your set your Wacom tablet up. Yes, I said Wacom tablet. But wait you say! You can't use your Wacom tablet with OS X.... well, yes you can because Wacom has supplied Toon Boom with a driver for your tablet that works just fine, thank you. But anyway, you need a tablet to do any drawing, if you have ever tried to draw with a mouse you know it just can't be done well enough.

Next, you can either use Toon Boom's draw tools or import your vector or bitmap images that you've created in other programs. If you really want small file sizes always use vector graphics, but hey, if it's bitmap you need then it's bitmap you can have.

After that, you just create. Either by drawing everything into the software or importing. You set up you animations the way you want using all the cool tools at your disposal, including the 3D mode. As you create you can play your animations and tweak them until you get them just right.

Once you are happy with your animation you choose to output to SWF or QuickTime, and then use it on your web site or in a CD creation through QuickTime.

You can do small animations that last a few seconds to large cartoons with plot, dialog, and a traditional beginning, middle, and ending to your cartoon movie. I'm already planning a new section of MacNETv2 using Toon Boom. I'm going to create monthly 'Shorts' for the site with reoccurring characters and plot lines...Hey, with Toon Boom I've become a Web animator!

When you receive your box of goodies you'll see a couple of tutorials. I advise you to take the time to do them; they are perfect to show you how to work your 2D animations in a 3D world. I know the word 3D frightens a lot of 2D artists, but the tutorial goes a long way to make it look easy...and it is easy.

Bottom line is this. Is Toon Boom for you? Well, if you want to venture into cool web animations for your own site or to enhance your resume than by all means get this software and see just how easy it is to create animations. Even if drawing isn't your thing, you can use Toon Boom for very cool effects for things you've done in other programs as well, like PhotoShop or FreeHand.

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There are plenty of graphic artists working out there that can't draw a straight line but can create some great looking graphics with the right tools, like FreeHand and Illustrator. Now, with Toon Boom they can import these graphics and animate them with ease.

If you are already doing animations with Flash and you're proficient in drawing then you won't believe the control you have with Toon Boom and the freedom it gives you to create. Toon Boom for Web Artists is Freedom. Freedom to create whatever their imagination takes them. That's the magic of Toon Boom. And it's for OS X!! If you needed a reason to migrate to OS X Toon Boom is enough reason.

If I had to criticize it I'd have to tell you that it's also for PC users and not just for OS X.

So, that's it. For cool animations, for tight sound syncing, and incredible lip syncing, and for precise control over exactly what your animations will do, Toon Boom does it better than anything I've used, and I've used Flash a lot.

Toon Boom is a winner, no doubt about it.

I told myself I wouldn't mention this but I have too. My reviewers kit has to be the best kit I have ever received from a company. I've reviewed over 500 products in the last 5 years and this is one great package. Sometimes it's worth noting the marketing company behind the promotion. They do a lot to see that people like me are provided with the right tools and the right information to write a proper review. This company has done the best job I've ever seen, which tells me they know they have a winner for a client.



You can always go back to the home page by clicking this little guy...

See for yourself. Go to Toon Booms web site and download a trial version. And don't worry; it comes with a Wacom OS X Driver.

<http://www.toonboomstudio.com>

Toon Boom will be shipping soon. You can purchase it on their web site or through the Apple Retail Store or Apple's Online Store on their web site.