

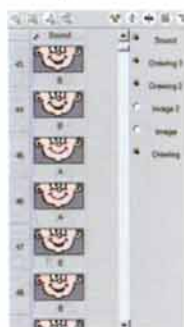
# toon BOOM

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# Studio 1.0



Drawing Mode  
with Onionskin.



Toon Boom Studio's  
automated Lip Sync.

I first heard about Toon Boom Studio when it was in its public beta stage. The package is regularly compared to Macromedia Flash, with the general consensus that because Flash is older, it must be better. This seems unfair, as with the release of Toon Boom Studio 1, it becomes evident with Toon Boom has a better integrated workflow system and its drawing capabilities are on par with Flash.

It is a completely different product in many respects. Featuring the look and feel of a traditional animation production set-up, with terms such as 'Cel', 'Exposure Sheet', 'Light Table' and 'Onionskin', it welcomes traditional animators as well as new media specialists.

There are two modes to work in Toon Boom Studio: Drawing and Sceneplanning. The Drawing mode within Toon Boom is pretty straight forward, especially if you are familiar with programs such as Photoshop and Flash. It has the regular tools such as Paintbrush and Pencil, Paint Bucket, Eraser and Cutter (although it would be nice to see some more brush variants for different looks).

The editing of all drawings can be manipulated with the Contour Editor, which gives Bezier-style handles to push around in different areas of strokes and lines. I found this tool to be very handy, especially if you're not using a graphics tablet. The paint fill tool is also quite handy as it has extra tools such as Un-paint and Paint Unpainted, although having more paint options rather than just liner and gradient would help provide more variation to artwork.

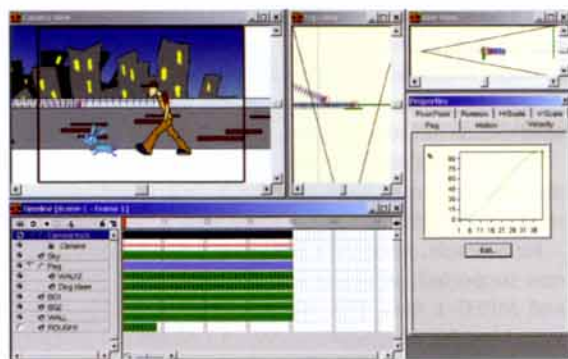
Additional tools for Drawing mode such as Onionskin and Automatic Light Table offer inexhaustible features for animation, drawing and rotoscoping. Many different files can be imported to Toon Boom Studio, such as Flash, TIFF and TGA for alpha channels, Adobe Illustrator, plus the regular bitmap files.

## Exposure Sheet

The Exposure Sheet within the Drawing mode is a great tool that provides a layering system for Elements and shows all information concerning each Element. Different Elements can be added to the Exposure Sheet, such as Media Files (Flash), Sound, Images (Bitmaps) and Drawings.

These Elements can be constantly added to. Depending on the size of the project, you can have many hundreds of layers. Animation also takes place in the Exposure Sheet as each Element's layer can be given an 'exposure' time (frame length). With the ease of copying and pasting cels, animations can be quickly created.

Audio plays an important role in animation and Toon Boom Studio has incorporated tools to handle this side of things well. One of the audio tools available is the Sound Element Editor, which allows basic changes like playback range and audio frame starting and stopping to synchronise with action. Lip Syncing in Toon Boom Studio is also very simple, which is usually not the case in other programs or in traditional animation. Analysing the contents of a Sound Element, Toon



Sceneplanning mode interface with 3D Layout and Timeline.

Boom Studio allocates lip positions to imitate the sound, which makes life much easier. The Sceneplanning Mode is where you lay out all the Elements created in the Drawing Mode. The coolest part is the 3D layout system that gives x, y, z co-ordinates for positioning and rotating. This means that all Elements have real distance between them. Rotation and scale can also be manipulated in that 3D space. The view ports for the 3D layout are Camera, Top View and Side View. It is easy to create compositions by grabbing and dragging Elements in the view ports. Choosing Background, Foreground or Normal for an Element is also an option.

The Timeline is where each Element is imported from Drawing Mode. Here, Elements as well as Cameras can be further manipulated with Pegs. Pegs are attached to the Elements and then create realistic motion and other effects over time that incorporate tweening.

The camera also has many options, such as the changing of FOV, Zooming in and out, Pan and Truck motion plus the advantage of multiple cameras for enhanced cinematography effects. After all Drawings and Sceneplanning are completed, animations can be previewed in the Playback Window in realtime and then output to either Flash or QuickTime format.

As Toon Boom Studio is only at version 1, there is much room to improve and expand. Improvements should include: a greater brush library with more variants, stronger painting abilities and perhaps some more interactivity, especially if the Web is the target medium. Basic text features are lacking, which means that you will need to exit to another program to create elements such as end credits, blurbs, etc. ■

## SUMMARY

### TOON BOOM STUDIO

**PLATFORM** > Mac OS X with 10.0.4 update, Wacom Tablet (recommended) or Windows XP, 2000, 98 or ME, 24-bit colour display, 1024x768 resolution, Wacom

**CONTACT** > [www.adimex.com.au](http://www.adimex.com.au)

**PRICE** > \$962.50 (inc.GST), Academic \$330 (inc.GST)

**VERDICT** > I think Toon Boom Studio is fun to work with and could easily be added to any animator's tool kit, whether traditional or digital. There are many powerful features in this first release and it also has a great price but there is room for improvements that will let users grow with the product.