

If it's not for Mac, it's not here.

Toon Boom Studio

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Toon Boom Studio 1.0 for Mac OS X is a professional grade package designed for the creators of cel-based web cartoons. It combines traditional cartooning work with advanced features to create an interesting application that should appeal to both amateur and professional cartoonists alike.



Toon Boom Studio really should be used in conjunction with a Wacom tablet; using it to draw images would be much easier than using your typical one or two button mouse. [Ed. Note: Toon Boom requirements do include a Wacom Tablet.] I would prefer to have a bound edition user guide, because referring to a PDF is tedious, and printing it on an inkjet is, well, a pain.

Amateurs such as myself will find Toon Boom daunting at first, with its many palettes. Familiarity with other illustration applications will help you figure out how each tool and palette works.

To create a cartoon, Toon Boom Studio employs two modes of creation, drawing and scene planning. The drawing mode consists of vector-based tools to create your characters and other objects, and the ability to import 32-bit images, Flash movies and even those old standbys, the Adobe Illustrator file. This is quite handy for the novice animator.

The drawing mode also has several tools to help you along with your animation, like the onion skin mode (a favorite of old-time traditional animators) and the light table mode. The onion skin mode lets you view the previous three frames of your animation while working on the fourth frame, and the light table mode lets you view your layers underneath the current one you are working on.

The scene-planning mode employs some feature that will be familiar to everyone who has used either Adobe's LiveMotion or Macromedia's Flash, the timeline. If you are at all familiar with those

Toon Boom Studio seems to be aimed at the professional cartoonist. Anyone wanting to make web-based cartoons should use this application because it makes creating cartoons much easier than if it was created in Flash or LiveMotion. Web Designers should stay with LiveMotion and Flash for standard web splash pages, GUIs and other uses for the standard SWF file. Toon Boom Studio can export either SWF or QuickTime files.

Toon Boom Studio is a sturdy, professional grade animation tool that makes cartoon creation for the web an easy, enjoyable pursuit. Its runs great on my G4 500 MHz with 1 Gig of ram, and also ran smoothly on an iMac DV SE 500.

System requirements:

Power Macintosh G3 or G4, Mac OS X with 10.0.1 update or later 128 MB of system RAM, 100 MB of available hard disk space, 24 bits color display capable of 1024x768 resolution, Wacom Tablet

two apps, you should be able to grasp the basics of Toon Boom Studio quite quickly. The timeline is intertwined with the camera view, side view and top view windows, all of which let the animator place his/her characters and elements in a 3D environment. This helps when using the camera to tilt, pan and zoom to make animations sizzle!

Toon Boom also has one outstanding feature that is sure to make some heads turn - a lip-synch tool that will take a look at a voice track, analyze it and make suggestions for mouth movements. You can then apply these movements to your characters.

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\$374 boxed, \$349 download, free trial evaluation.

Toon Boom Technologies, Inc.

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