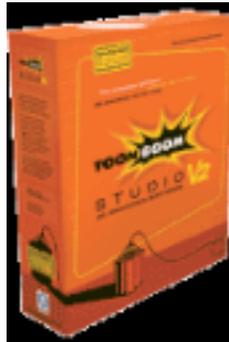




Real People Reviews by Daniel M. East
Toon Boom Studio 2.5 by Toon Boom Animation
MSRP: \$429.00

MIN. SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS: Power Mac G5, G4; OS X 10.3x or later; 512 Mb RAM recommended/256 Mb minimum; 100Mb available hard disk space; 24-bit color display with 64Mb or 8Mb (min) video RAM; 1024X768 screen resolution; Wacom Tablet (recommended)



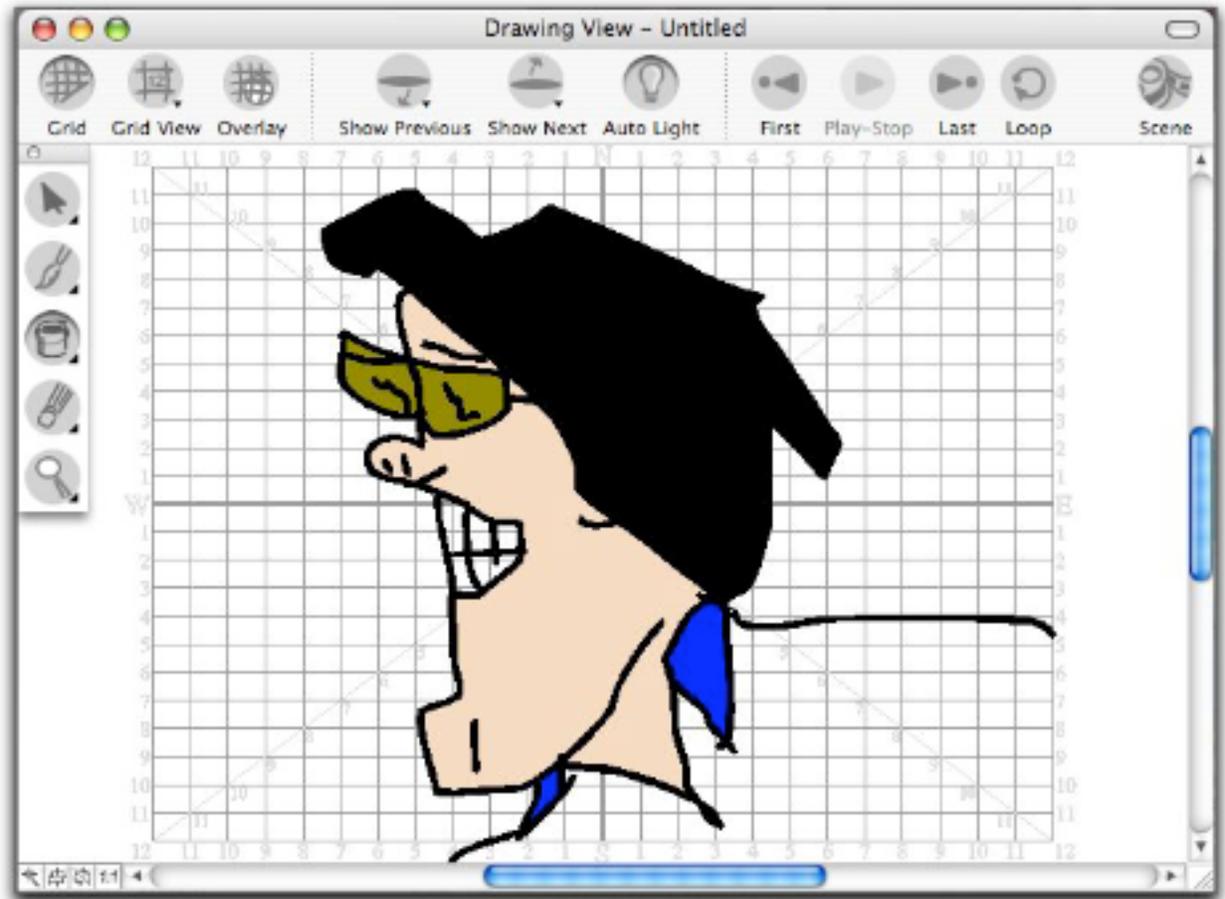
Review date: August 11, 2004

PULL QUOTE: “you want to play with it and continue to improve the quality of each creation”

Toon Boom Studio is a great introduction to creating animations for nearly any application with a wide range of export options. Build all of the elements for your “cartoon” with familiar tools and using the well designed interface, but there is a learning curve. While Toon Boom Studio exports Flash media, Quicktime and SVG, it may take some time to find your way around this outstanding application for advanced consumers and professional artists.

It was a pleasure to find a well thought out application where I was easily able to translate my concepts for an animation easily. The palettes are dynamic and allow for real-time viewing and, even as it took me a little while to feel comfortable with the scope of the power of Toon Boom Studio, slowly but surely, the cartoon light bulb over my own head was on. Once you draw, position, adjust and further create your backgrounds, elements and audio, exporting to a variety of supported file types is a

snap. It is a step-by-step process with all of the tools at your fingertips. One of the nice features missing in other animation tools at this level is how well the audio synchronization works and is easily adjusted. The output can be imported (via Quicktime) into a variety of video editing applications (like Final Cut Pro) or exported for the web (Quicktime or Flash) easily.



This is not an application for beginners or even advanced beginners. This is, and appropriately so, a tool for creative students, professionals and/or advanced hobbyists. While Toon Boom Studio is powerful and fluid, it requires a certain prowess with Wacom tablets and at least some sense of animation. One little pet peeve of mine emerges here with the requirement to purchase the manual at a cost of \$55.00. Not a good thing, but you may find this to be more of an essentials guide rather than a manual as such.

Given the price point of \$429 (and promotional pricing is often available - check the Toon Boom Studio web site) compared to Macromedia Flash MX at \$699.00, it is important to remember that these are very different tools. There is also a "fun factor" in Toon Boom Studio that makes you want to play with it and continue to improve the quality of each creation. If you are interested in animation, but don't want to make the investment yet, an "Express" version is offered with some limitations for \$169.00. Again, visit Toon Boom online for special offers and pricing.

OVERALL RATING: 4.5 out of 5 stars EXCELLENT

Daniel East is the founder and president of The Mid-Atlantic Macintosh User Groups Team (MaMUGs); co-host of "PC Talk Radio;" a live speaker/presenter and a freelance columnist for several Mac publications.

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