

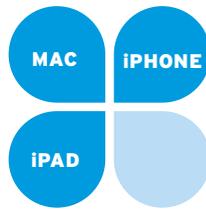
PRESENTED BY  
**MacLife**

# THE ULTIMATE APP GUIDE FOR APPLE USERS

**2016**  
EDITION

Discover powerful apps to help you get more from your iPhone, iPad, Mac, , and 

# Mac|Life



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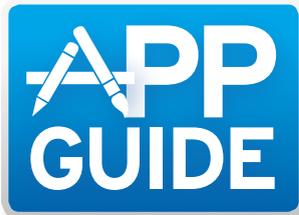
# Welcome

From productivity apps to creative tools to fun diversions - do more with your Apple devices

**W**HEN YOU BUY a new Apple device, it always comes with some basic apps built-in to get you started. But when it comes to the depth of what you can do with a Mac, iPhone, or iPad, these are barely ripples on the surface. There are apps that let you do anything, whether that's working on office files, creating artistic masterpieces, tweaking how your system works, managing your finances, learning something new, planning a project... whatever your areas of interest, or whatever you're looking to get into, there's a great option.

In this guide, we've collected over 180 of the best apps available on iOS, Mac, and Apple's newest devices: the Apple Watch and Apple TV. These all come highly recommended from our team of experts, who've tested them thoroughly, to let you know why they're such great options. We look at everything from functionality to design, picking only the apps that are up to the standard you expect for your Apple product. Some are paid, some are free, but every one will help you to get more from your device. We hope you enjoy them!





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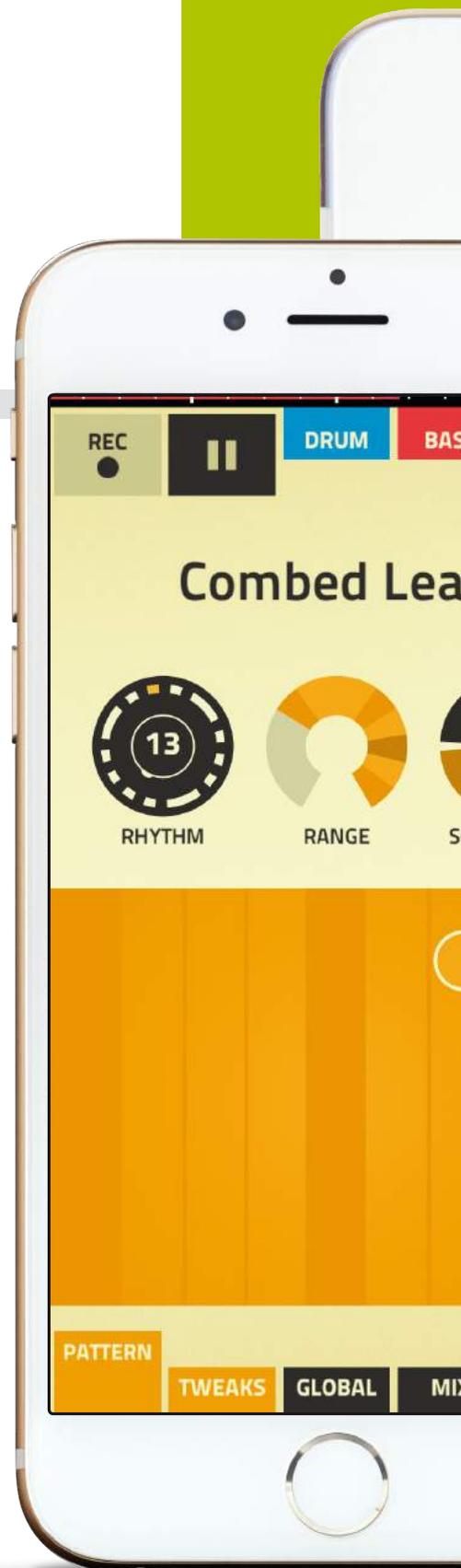
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# The best free apps

Do more with your devices with these fantastic free apps for iPhone, iPad, Apple Watch, and Apple TV



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**THE TINY PROBLEM** in splashing out on a shiny new piece of Apple gear is that it might leave your bank account gasping for breath. If that's the case, immediately buying dozens of apps is probably not the best next move to make. Fortunately, getting great apps on your Apple Watch, iPhone, iPad or iPad Pro needn't cost a cent.

Whether through sheer generosity or companies creating apps to support hardware products or Mac software, there's plenty of choice when it comes to apps that cost nothing at all.

There's arguably too much choice. The App Store now has well over 1.5 million apps – plenty of them free, though quite a lot of them aren't great. That's why this feature focuses on a small selection of first-rate apps for each of your devices, all of which we've used and enjoyed. Note that some of them offer In-App Purchases (IAPs), and we outline what features they give you. However, to make our list, the vanilla experience of every app had to be superb. So get reading, and then get downloading!



# Best apps for iPhone

Learn, exercise, work, and be entertained with these apps



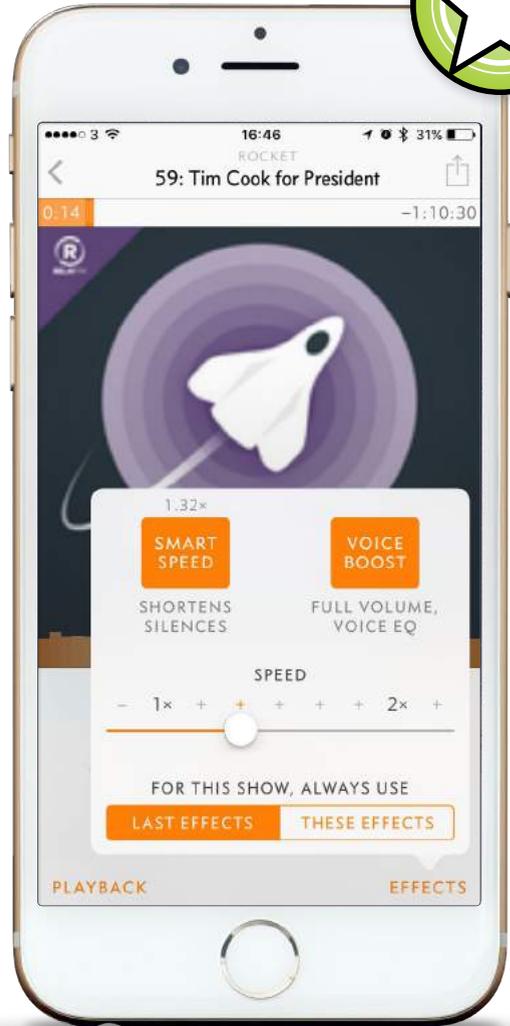
## DUOLINGO

> Learning languages can be tricky, so this app transforms the process into a bite-sized game. Select a language from over 20, then work your way through exercises that test recognition of words and phrases. Before long, you'll favor extending your learning streak over wasting time on Facebook or Candy Crush.



## FORECAST

> A weather app for people who like the look of Dark Sky, just not its cost, Forecast is about hyperlocal forecasting. You get fast access to current conditions, imminent rainfall, and predictions for the next week. It's a web app - the sole one included here - so visit [forecast.io](http://forecast.io) in Safari and add it to your Home screen.



## OVERCAST

> Overcast is worth grabbing as an alternative to Apple's Podcasts because it's packed full of features designed to make listening more pleasurable and save you a bit of time. Smart filters and per-podcast priorities get you to favorite shows first. During playback, there's a lot of magic going on. Adjust the speed and things remain audible. Better, if you're listening to a show that has loads of gaps, turn on "smart speed" to intelligently cut them out — not great for comedy, but perfect for technology shows.



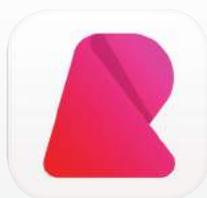
**RUNTASTIC**

> Technology has a reputation for encouraging a level of exercise that might power up your tapping finger and little else, yet the iPhone is a superb means of getting fitter. This app uses the phone's GPS to log activity and give you exciting charts to peruse. IAPs add motivational stories and training programmes.



**GOOGLE MAPS**

> Apple Maps has improved considerably since its debut, but it's still inferior to Google Maps in many ways. Google's app is far better for finding points of interest, includes substantially more public transport information, and enables you to save portions of maps for offline viewing. Many places are also covered by Street View – useful for a close-up look at a built-up destination you've got to navigate, like New York, or a quick virtual wander around one of the photographed special sites of interest, such as the Grand Canyon.



**REPLAY**

> If you've got loads of home videos rattling around your iPhone but don't fancy editing them into something, try Replay. Select some videos and stills, choose a theme, and the app creates out a beautiful movie, ready to share online.



**SPLICE**

> Should you not fancy automated video editing yet demand elegant simplicity, Slice is your app. Import clips, drag to rearrange, then export. You can also trim clips, select transitions, add text overlays, and play with slow motion.



**ANIMATIC**

> There's nothing in Animatic that will worry Pixar, but it's nonetheless a superb means of creating quick animations. It's essentially a kind of digital flip-book, and you work frame-by-frame on a scribbly masterpiece to later export as a video or GIF.



**SCANBOT**

> Your iPhone is great for quick scans. This app detects edges in documents you photograph, enhances the image, and you can share the result. An IAP adds character recognition and editing tools. Look at Evernote Scannable for business cards.



**EVERNOTE**

> With iOS 9, Apple beefed up Notes considerably, but Evernote still has the edge in terms of being an online repository for pretty much anything.

The interface can be a touch messy, but get past that niggle and you'll find an app brimming with features and scope for dumping all your thoughts online, so your brain doesn't have to remember them. Notes can include lists, images, annotations, and even audio recordings. Note, though, that access requires you to be online, unless you pay for a subscription.



**SLEEP CYCLE**

> Wake up at the wrong time and your brain gets all annoyed and spends the rest of the day taking it out on you. Sleep Cycle uses your device's microphone or accelerometer to analyze sleep patterns and rouse you at an optimal moment. You also get a bunch of statistics and graphs to peruse over your morning coffee.



**BRUSHES REDUX**

> The original Brushes convinced people iPhones could be used creatively, when Jorge Colombo used it to paint a *New Yorker* cover. The app's now free; the simple interface and excellent brush editor ensure it's perfect for painting on the go.



**FIGURE**

> The idea of making music appeals to many, but most music apps have a kind of complexity that makes them daunting to newcomers. Figure is different. Although based on synths found in classic electronic music software, Figure has an interface that makes it a cinch to quickly build loops from drums, bass, and lead instruments. Recent updates have welded social junk on, but it remains a fun toy for beginners, while also having the power and features to make it an essential freebie for musicians on the go.



## SKYPE

> FaceTime has wormed its way into the entire Apple ecosystem, but it never went any further. If you want to video chat with or send messages to friends who use Android or Windows, for free, Skype's your best bet. The service is handy for making low-cost calls to mobiles/landlines around the world.



## YOUSICIAN

> Learning to play guitar or piano should be fun, but educational apps can be dull. Yousician abhors boredom, and rethinks tutoring by appropriating Guitar Hero gaming mechanics, using your device's mic to track your abilities and timing when plucking strings, strumming like a master, and tinkling ivories (or, more likely, plastic black and white keys). For free, daily play time is limited, but otherwise this app's ideal to get you learning and keep you interested.



## 1PASSWORD

> iCloud Keychain stores login and payment details across Mac and iOS devices, but 1Password goes further. It's free for iOS, with a single "pro" IAP if you want to unlock Apple Watch support.



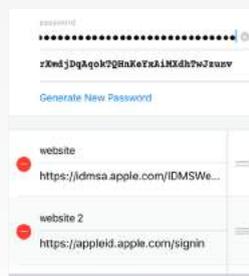
### 1 USE IT WITH SAFARI

To use a stored login, tap the Share button, and select 1Password (tap More if it's not visible, then turn it on). Select the details to use. The app allows you to store multiple logins for sites.



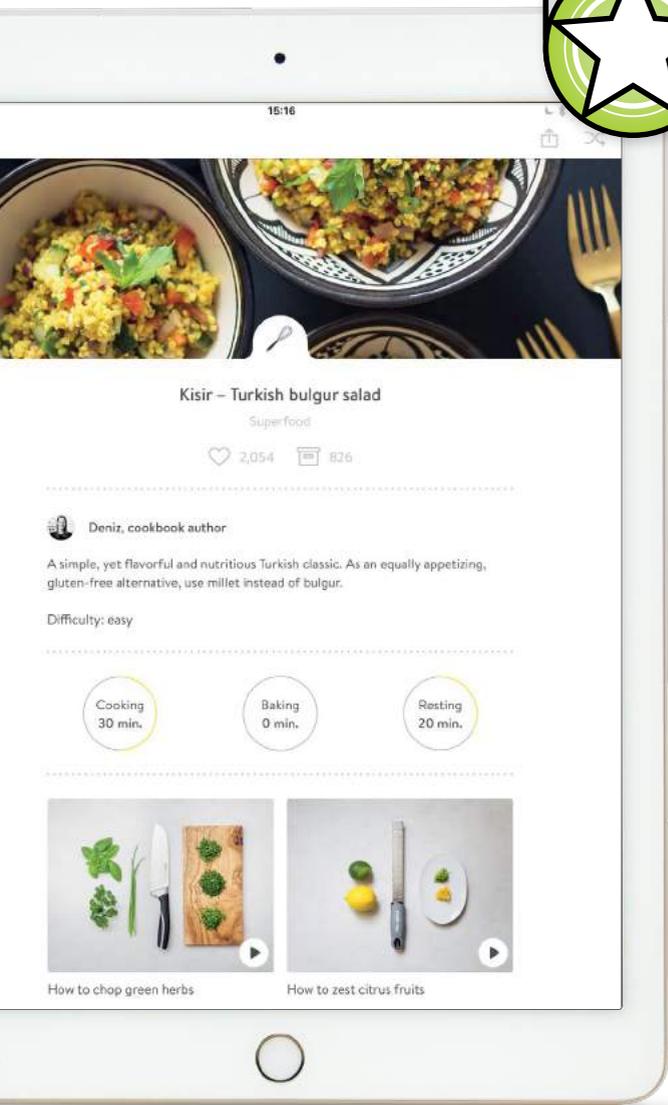
### 2 SECURE NOTES

In the 1Password app, tap Categories and then +. You'll see a list of the many things you can store securely in it. Tap Secure Notes. You can now create a basic text note outside of Apple Notes.



### 3 LOGIN DETAILS

To edit a login in the 1Password app, tap the item to open it and then tap Edit. 1Password provides you with greater control than iCloud Keychain when generating complex passwords.



# Best apps for iPad

For work and play, there are great free apps for your iPad



## CHUNKY

> There are loads of comic apps for iPad, but most are little more than awkward readers for storefronts. Chunky is a standalone app for reading DRM-free content. We love the app for its excellent feature set, which includes support for a wide range of storage services, smart upscaling of lower-res content, optional contrast and tint fixes for faded pages, and the means to disable the page-turn transitions.

## NOVATION LAUNCHPAD

> If you recoil in horror on seeing a piano roll or hearing the word "MIDI," you can still create music on your iPad. This app has you select from eight free genres and then play - and, if you like, record - a mix by tapping on a grid to combine loops, sounds and effects. It's so simple a six-month-old can use it (we checked!), and it has scope for pros in its \$6.99 IAP to import loops and sounds.



## KITCHEN STORIES

> The snag with many cookery apps and books is they don't recognize the fact that not all of us are natural chefs in the kitchen. A black and white set of instructions just isn't enough. Kitchen Stories is a better bet. Every step has a photograph, and recipes include videos of important techniques and methods. The app also adds a handful of magazine-style articles, a guide to kitchen tips, and an automated shopping list for putting together ingredients from meals you like the look of when browsing the app.



**MICROSOFT  
WORD**

> It's heartening to see the care and effort Microsoft's made with its iPad apps, which marry desktop-level power with a touch-optimized interface. For free, Word for iPad and iPad mini is a capable word processor, with built-in templates and PDF export. iPad Pro users, however, only get a reader for free.



**MICROSOFT  
EXCEL**

> You might swear by Numbers or Sheets, but the reality is Excel remains spreadsheet king. The free version for iPad and iPad mini is surprisingly feature-rich – including templates, and export to XLSX or PDF – mostly only blocking access to aesthetic niceties. Again, iPad Pro users only get a viewer.



**STOREHOUSE**

> Sharing experiences through photos and videos can be done using iCloud Photo Sharing, yet Storehouse provides scope for something a little more exciting... Import a selection of up to 50 visual treats (from Camera Roll, Instagram, Flickr and Dropbox), tweak the layout and add some text. Your media is then transformed into a photo storyboard that can be sent to friends by message or email. Alternatively, you can create a collaborative “space” in Storehouse to work on a story with other people.



**SNAPSEED**

> Apple's iPad App of the Year from 2011 remains a first-rate photo editor. The basics involve selecting a tool or filter, then dragging across your image to select a property and adjust its value. The result is precise and tactile. The app recently added the concept of Stacks: smart layers that enable editing or removal of existing filters – impressive for a free offering.



**INFUSE**

> Even the priciest iPads only have 128GB of storage, so Infuse is a good bet for video lovers. The app streams from local drives, converting formats as necessary. It looks great, too – cover art and details are automatically applied to files.



**INSTAPAPER**

> By stripping clutter from web articles and storing them offline, Instapaper vastly improves reading internet content. The optimized reading view can be customized to suit, and you can sort your list by length if you're short on time.

# Best apps for iPad Pro

For Apple's giant tablet, productivity is the goal



## TOUCHCAST STUDIO

> This app makes videos people can touch. Pick your content - web pages, photos, moving footage - then add annotations and use studio features, such as the built-in teleprompter and green-screen effect. Shared videos can be explored and interacted with. The app's simple to use, and the iPad Pro's large screen is great for editing.



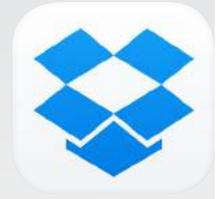
## PIGMENT

> A coloring app for iPad Pro might seem odd, but Pigment's great when you need to unwind. Particularly with an Apple Pencil, the tools feel great and look the part, mixing tactile realism with digital efficiency - you can, optionally, select sections of artwork so you don't go over the lines!



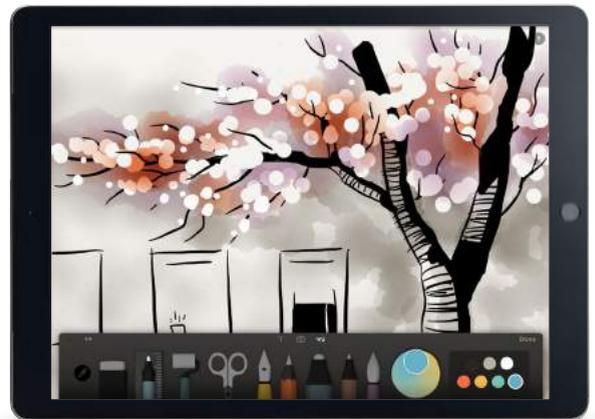
## ADOBE COMP CC

> This app is all about wireframing layouts for print, web and mobile. Shapes, placeholders, images and text frames can be manipulated on the canvas, and Pencil doodles are automatically tidied. When done, send the lot to a desktop Adobe CC app.



## DROPBOX

> With iCloud Drive, Apple brought a traditional document filing system to iPad, but Dropbox has been there all along, and we often prefer it. It has excellent app integration, and you can share files as links, rather than emailing huge documents.



## PAPER

> Paper began life as a virtual notebook to doodle on. In the recent revamp, the sketching tools remain, but you can now add text, lists, photos and precise lines. Hipsters may sob at notebooks being replaced by piles of virtual sticky notes that explode into a grid when tapped, but this boosts productivity: they're easily browsed, rearranged, and exported to presentations. As you'd expect on the iPad Pro, Paper works very nicely with Apple Pencil - or the developer's own stylus, also called Pencil!



### LIQUID TEXT

> A benefit of iOS is being able to directly manipulate content. PDF app LiquidText, lets you drag text excerpts to a sidebar. These can have additional notes applied and be attached to one another. Documents can be collapsed to view annotations side-by-side, and notes exported.



### STATUS BOARD

> When your iPad's idle, have it do something useful with this app's drag-and-drop widgets, which can be configured to display all kinds of data. You get calendars, weather, clocks, email, Twitter, and news feeds. There's even a widescreen mode for output to a TV for office signage.



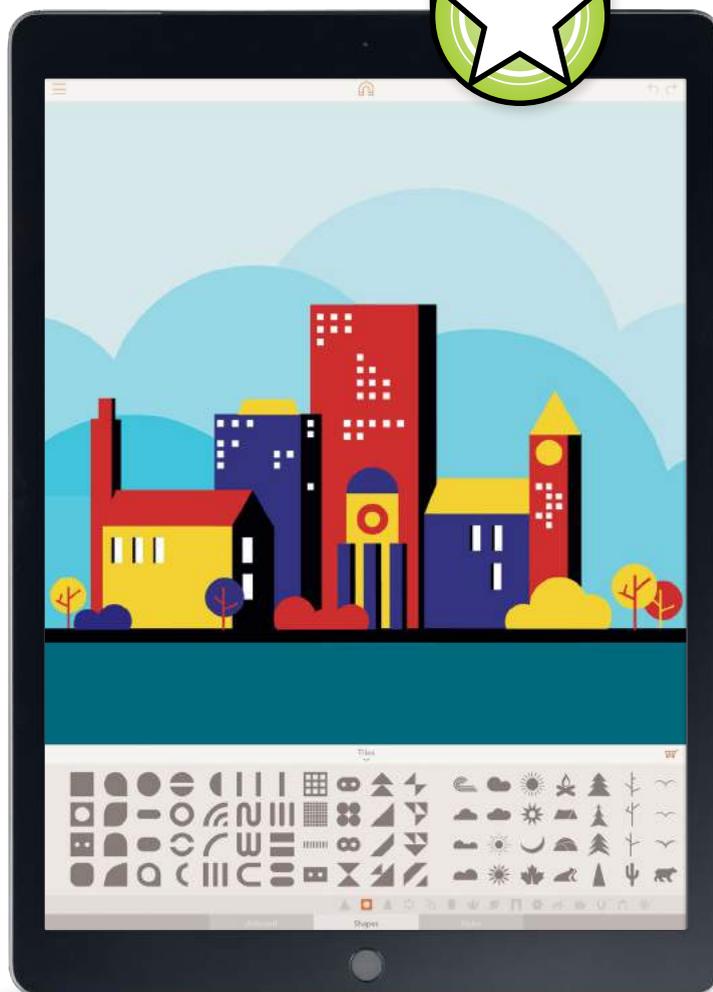
### SLACK

> This real-time messaging tool works well enough in single-column mode on an iPhone; with the iPad Pro's acres of space, you can run it in Split View to talk to colleagues about work while doing something else on the rest of the display. It's optimized for fullscreen use for when you really need to focus on it.



### CONCEPTS

> With its infinite canvas and rich toolset, Concepts helps designers, illustrators and architects quickly get ideas down. It looks clean and elegant, and offers a range of papers, including standard and isometric grids. The free version supports five layers, loads of brushes, and the Apple Pencil.



### ASSEMBLY

> The thinking behind Assembly is that anyone can create vector art, given some inspiration and suitably intuitive tools. In use, the app comes across a bit like a digital take on Fuzzy-Felt pieces you might have played with as a child. Pre-defined shapes are dragged to a canvas, whereupon they snap together. This might sound reductive, but Assembly is one of those apps likely to appeal to beginners and veterans alike. Newcomers can revel in remixing demo images, while old-hands can enjoy a different way of designing – one that's surprisingly versatile once you delve into the various transformation and effects tools on offer. One of those simple yet almost limitless apps.



**CLICKER**

> We keep hearing that Apple Watch should have a “killer app” – an amazing, advanced, futuristic product to set it apart from other devices. And

then we use Clicker and remember Apple Watch is about simple things done well. With this app, you tap to count something: laps; days; people; sheep. Haptic feedback means you needn’t stare at the screen; if you make a mistake, Force Touch brings up a menu to reduce or clear the counter. And there’s a complication to see your number whenever you check the time.

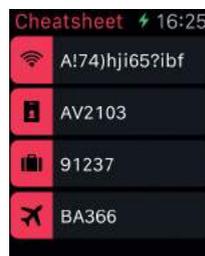
# Best apps for Apple Watch

Getting what you need right on your wrist



**CHEATSHEET**

> Rather than jotting down important but short notes – Wi-Fi passwords, new luggage lock combinations, and so on – on scraps of paper, use Cheatsheet. A list is created on your iPhone – or directly on Apple Watch, using dictation – and looks great in the app or glance view, with large icons helping your eyes find every factual morsel.



**PCALC LITE**

> This calculator Watch app may send you into Casio-drenched nostalgic bliss. It betters any plasticky forebear with its smart, responsive interface, in which a tip calculator is available from the blue button; tip percentage and number of guests are elegantly set from the Digital Crown. PCalc is \$9.99, yet the Lite version generously includes the Watch app!





**CURRENCY**

> Plenty of currency conversion apps exist for Apple Watch, but this one makes our list due to its efficiency. Select currencies on your iPhone and they appear on your wrist; changes come across instantly. Tap any currency to use it (and a specific value) as your new base – really useful.



**FIND NEAR ME**

> It's an oddball on the iPhone, but Find Near Me is great on Apple Watch for locating amenities. There are loads of categories, including superstores and, oddly, zoos; you can search using built-in or dictated terms, and the app can display contact details, reviews and directions.



**SLEEP++**

> This app utilizes your Watch's motion-tracking capabilities to monitor sleep duration and quality. Accuracy will vary, but you're likely to get at least basic insight into sleep patterns. Its visualizations are straightforward, and it includes a Complication for getting at details from the watch face.



**STREAKS**

> Streaks is about forming good habits, from walking 10,000 steps to reading for half an hour a day. It has tons of presets, and you can add tasks. Tasks are immediately available on your Watch, which shows what's next in a Complication. You only get six tasks at a time, which is good for focus.



**CITYMAPPER**

> When you find yourself in one of its supported cities, CityMapper will give you a fighting chance at not getting lost and reaching wherever you need to be. It'll locate nearby public transport, and quickly build journeys to "home" and "favorite" locations, which you define in its iPhone app. Even on the tiny Apple Watch display, you get loads of well presented information, such as scrolling lists of upcoming buses, trains and tubes, along with diagrams of the current line that helpfully point out your location.

# Best apps for Apple TV

We go beyond Hulu and the like to find great apps for your TV

GO FOR MORE APPLE TV APPS, SEE P58



## TOUCHPRESS

> There's an air of old-school CD-ROM about this semi-interactive classical music app. Watch a "beat map" and "note fall" alongside a performance, revealing the secrets behind the music. Shared videos can be explored and interacted with.



## PLEX

> Although previous Apple TVs enabled streaming from network storage via a convoluted mix of iPhone apps and AirPlay, you can now enjoy native PLEX on Apple's latest hardware. Set-up is simple, and the app looks superb on your TV, with added artwork for all your movies and TV shows.



## FLICKR

> Bringing photos to life on the big screen has long been part of Apple TV, whether through the screensaver or the Flickr app. On the new Apple TV, this revamped Flickr enables you to view your uploads, turn any album into a slideshow or screensaver, and browse the countless amazing images generously shared by the Flickr community. On your other devices, Flickr is an essential install, too. With your account, you get a colossal 1TB of free storage, which at the very least you can use as a free additional means of backing up your photos for safe keeping.



## TED

> Food for the mind, TED is all about fascinating talks from the world's great thinkers. The Apple TV app's elegant interface makes it easy to browse the video library, and it offers suggestions based on the kind of talk – funny; inspiring; courageous – you'd like to see.



## myTUNER RADIO

> The Radio app on the old Apple TV was really poor, and so it's great to see developers providing something better. myTuner Radio is a superb free app, enabling you to quickly search thousands of stations and over a million podcasts to find and play your favorite shows.

# techradar.



The home of technology

[techradar.com](http://techradar.com)

# Airmail

The impressive mail app goes mobile

**\$4.99 Developer** Bloop SRL, airmailapp.com

**Platform** Universal **Requirements** iOS 9 or later



We really like Airmail on the Mac, where it checks off nearly everything on our email client wish list (and then some). This mobile app brings the experience to iOS, so you can have a joined-up Airmail setup on all your Apple devices. Nearly everything we like about Airmail

The iPhone version of Airmail delivers the same great unified inbox from Mac, complete with custom avatars for your contacts.

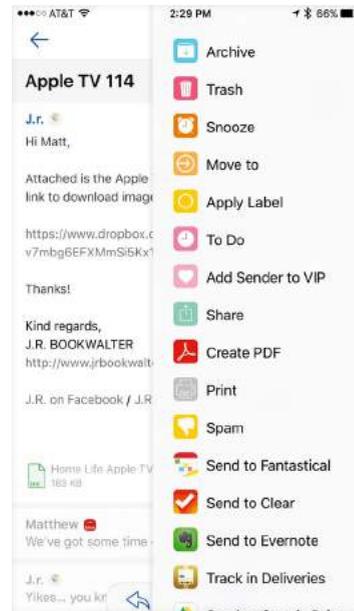
for Mac is present on iPhone, including message snooze capabilities and bulk editing. There are also plenty of nice touches, such as the ability to attach files from popular cloud services or send details to other excellent apps, including favorites such as Deliveries, Evernote, and Fantastical 2.

If you're already using Airmail for Mac, getting started on iPhone is a snap with iCloud sync. Accounts previously set up on the desktop can be imported with a tap, although those protected by two-factor authentication require an extra step; signatures, actions, and a long list of other preferences can also be synced.

Like Apple Mail, Handoff allows users to start composing a message on iPhone, but finish up on Airmail for Mac (or vice versa), another convenience of using the app on both platforms. The app excels at composing emails, with rich text formatting options that appear in a row above the keyboard.

Our hands-down favorite is the ability to customize which actions appear with incoming push notifications. While other email apps offer a few choices, Airmail goes above and beyond with less-common options like Spam – at long last, those of us plagued with frequent junk mail can banish such messages to the Junk folder without ever needing to open them!

Airmail works natively on Apple Watch, where users can



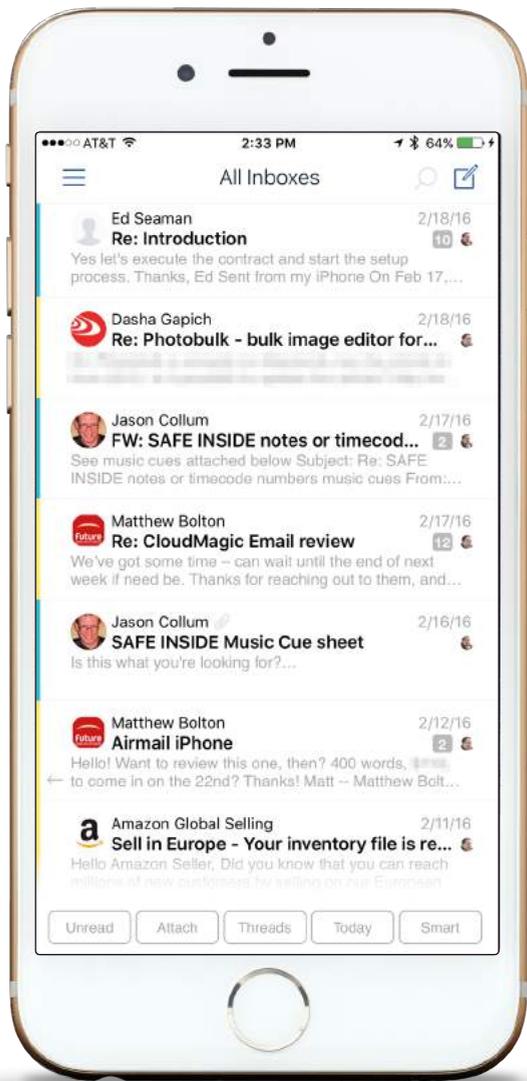
There is a huge number of ways to configure and share with Airmail.

read full messages and act upon them with many of the app's great options, while the iPhone remains in your pocket.

In terms of customization, Airmail has no equal – almost every nook and cranny of the app can be tweaked and tailored to your specific taste. One exception is the overall look and feel of the app with its white background, although each account can have a custom color assigned, which appears along the left edge.

On the iPad, you get some great features especially for the big screen, including iOS 9 multitasking support, so you can compose emails on one side of the screen and look something up in Safari on the other. You can also sketch messages to send using the Apple Pencil.

**THE BOTTOM LINE.** Airmail's iPhone and iPad version doesn't disappoint: it's a capable, slick, attractive app that gives you a huge range of email organization tools to work with. One of our favorite iOS apps!



## ROUNDUP

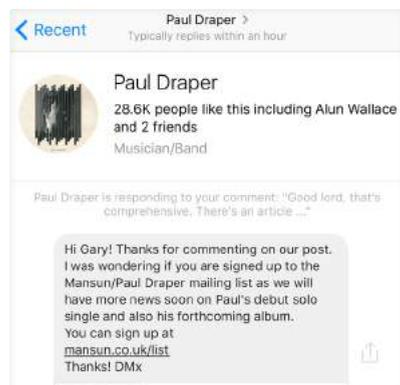
# The best iOS apps for messaging

From teams at work to friends having fun, everyone likes to get chatty

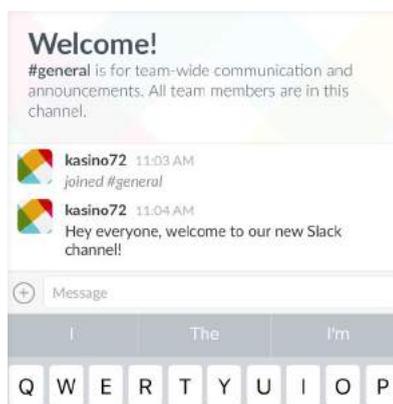
Remember when we used to telephone buildings and hope that somebody was there? Crazy times. These days messaging apps enable us to chat in real time no matter where we are or what we're doing. Every iPhone and iPad ships with Messages and FaceTime, of course, but third-party apps offer all kinds of additional goodies – not least the ability to chat with people who aren't using Apple gear.

In the business world, **SLACK** (Free, Universal) is becoming a very big deal. It's rather like a private Facebook for the world of work, with teams messaging one another individually and in groups, sharing files, tracking projects and updating their expenses. There's a great Apple Watch app too.

If your work is more like Jason Bourne's, you might like **TELEGRAM MESSANGER** (Free, Universal). Like Slack it's available on the web, iOS and the Apple Watch, but unlike Slack it offers messages, photos and videos that can self-destruct after a



Like it or loathe it, you need Facebook Messenger because your friends use it.



Slack is a private social network for teams. It almost makes work fun again. Almost.

set time. Messages are heavily encrypted, and Telegram is currently delivering 15 billion of them every day. Telegram is both fee-free and ad-free thanks to a "generous donation" from Russian-born entrepreneur Pavel Durov; Telegram says that if it runs out of money it'll sell premium extras.

For most of us, messaging apps aren't about work, they're about fun. And the most fun messaging app of all may well be **WECHAT** (Free, Universal), which is currently used by more than half a billion people around the world. It delivers free SMS/MMS texts, voice and video calls, photo sharing and even games, and it's packed with hundreds of stickers you can use in messages.

If you think half a billion users is impressive, **WHATSAPP** (Free, Universal) has twice that amount. It was bought by Facebook in 2014 but so far Facebook hasn't messed anything up: it's dropped the \$1 initial fee and it's about to do away with BlackBerry users, but WhatsApp

itself continues to offer chat, voice and video calls, voice messaging and photo, video, and location sharing.

If you know any young people, there's a good chance WhatsApp is how they stay in touch with their friends – and if they don't use that, then their favorite app is probably **SNAPCHAT** (Free, Universal). Snapchat became (in)famous for its self-destructing photo messages, which hormone-crazed teens put to predictable use, but it's useful for much more than that. The ephemeral nature of Snapchat messages means it's a great way of communicating what you're doing, thinking or looking at right now.

What to say about **FACEBOOK MESSENGER** (Free, Universal) which has slowly become detached from Facebook itself? Only that you need it because your Facebook friends use it. It's just as well that Messenger is a really good app, with third-party extensions, the ubiquitous stickers, video calling and games. You might as well install it...



WhatsApp is incredibly popular: most of our contacts seem to be on it already.

# Day One

Make a date with this diary

**\$9.99 Developer** Bloom Built, dayoneapp.com

**Platform** Universal **Requirements** iOS 9 or later

Writing a diary may seem like a quaint concept from a bygone era, but there's still something satisfying about jotting down personal memories for your eyes only, with the option to instantly share select entries with others when the mood strikes.

Day One has always been the best iOS app for this task, but the original version (still being published under the Day One Classic moniker) now looks woefully underpowered compared to its far superior sequel. Version 2 has been completely rebuilt with two marquee features that dispel any reservations we might have had about using this app daily. The first is support for multiple,

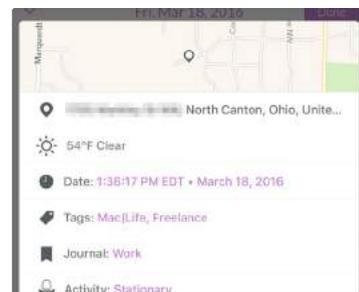
color-coded journals – memoirs are no longer confined to a single diary. Users can create separate journals for family, work, trips, or to catalog specific hobbies or interests, while retaining the ability to view everything at once by selecting All Entries. This comes in particularly handy with the excellent new IFTTT integration, which we use to log entries from Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Foursquare to a Social Networking journal.

Equally welcome is the ability to add up to 10 images per entry instead of a single one, making the app a far better travel companion for vacationers who want to document excursions in words as well as pictures. The app also introduces filters for sorting and searching by star,

Navigation is easier than ever, thanks to tabs for List, Photo, Map, and Calendar.



Journal entries can now include up to 10 photos, rather than just one.



Entries can have a bunch of useful metadata attached to search for.

tags, or years, tabbed navigation views (List, Photo, Map, Calendar), time zones, and iPhone motion activity.

Although these features are absolutely worth the cost for upgraders (Day One 2 is a completely new app), there are a few noteworthy omissions. The initial release temporarily removes the ability to publish entries to a website, while iCloud and Dropbox sync have been entirely kicked to the curb in favor of Day One Sync, a free service. (App data continues to be backed up via iCloud.)

Sync between iOS devices and the companion Mac app (sold separately) certainly felt faster to us, although new entries made on Apple Watch wouldn't sync until the iPhone app was opened, and we did experience issues with image thumbnails vanishing occasionally.

**THE BOTTOM LINE.** Day One is king of the mobile journaling apps – a great way to record life.



## ROUNDUP

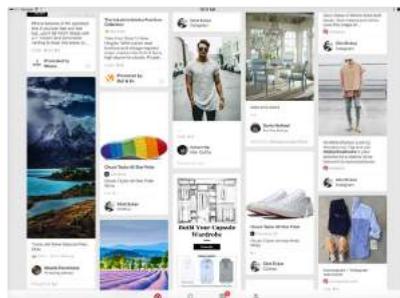
# The best apps for sharing the things you love

If you're "into" something, get your thoughts out there and dare to share

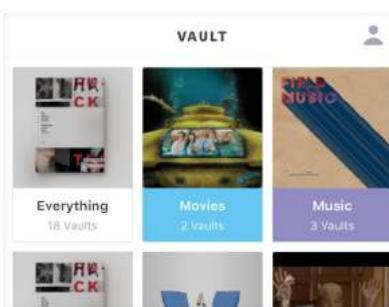
If you're reading this, there's a good chance you're taking a break from checking out what people are sharing online. If you too are itching to share what you love with the world, there are plenty of great ways to do it. We've rounded up the best of them to help you choose where to share.

You could think of **PINTEREST** (Free, Universal) as a public scrapbook, or scrapbooks. As one of the top 50 most-visited sites in the world, it's where hundreds of millions of users go to find, pin (save), and share everything from recipes, to inspirational quotes, to home improvement ideas, to fashion gotta-haves. You can create multiple "boards" to organize "pins" however you like, and the whole thing is free and supported by advertising.

With aspirations to become the world's largest retailer, **AMAZON APP** (Free, Universal) either already has a category, or will soon, for just about every product. Naturally, it also includes a wishlist feature for saving the things you want to buy, or gift list ideas for friends. If you need to save things from elsewhere on the web, Amazon's desktop browser



Pin what you like to your board in Pinterest. It's great for creating a mood board.



REX has organized "vaults" for showing off your taste in various categories.

extensions and iOS app extension can save items not found on its shelves. Lists can be public or private, and they're free to use even if you don't buy anything there.

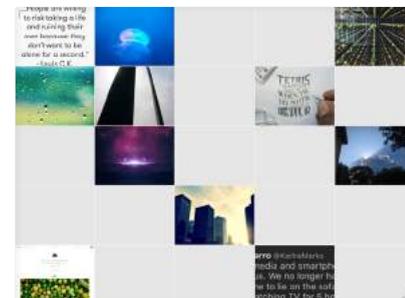
If Pinterest and Twitter joined forces, the resulting product might look like **REX** (Free, iPhone). A new service for recommending things (get it? "Rec's?"), it has a variety of preset categories you can use to show off your favorite books, movies, articles, apps, places, and more. You can follow friends to see their recommendations in a newsfeed-like stream and check someone's "Vault" to get a view on what they're into.

Some people you share with might prefer something they can hold, in which case **MOSAIC PHOTO BOOKS** (Free, Universal) is a great option. It's a free photo collage app that enables you to arrange up to 20 photos in a unique collage, print it as a high-quality book, and ship it to a lucky recipient. The app is free to use and doesn't even require an account. Books cost \$30 – \$25 for the book, \$5 for shipping.

One of the internet's best ways to share what you love is by blogging,

where everyone can stumble on and see it, and we don't think there's a better or faster service for sharing than **TUMBLR** (Free, Universal). It has an iOS app extension that lets you share whatever photo, product, or pretty much anything else you're looking at in just two taps. Of course, you can always add commentary, your own media, or full-on blog posts. Tumblr is free to use, even if you hook it up to your own domain. Most blog themes are free, though a few higher-quality options are available starting at \$20.

Sharing what you love might not mean "with the entire world," just with a few specific lucky individuals. In that case, **CURATOR** (Free, Universal) might be a great option. With a grid-based visual layout similar to Pinterest, Curator is part modern-day scrapbook, part office pinboard. You can save text, images, and links into multiple boards, rearrange their layout, and even present them. The app is free to use, but a Premium account (\$5/month or \$20/year) unlocks larger boards, group collaboration, PDF exporting, sync between devices, and more.



Curator is a visual treat - before you've even added anything! This is smart scrapbooking.

# Coda Game

Stop playing! Start creating... and then playing

**\$3.99 Developer** Codarica, codarica.com

**Platform** Universal **Requirements** iOS 8 or later



Worried about your kids playing too many games and not learning anything? Well, why not let them combine the two? That's the aim of Coda Game. Codarica, developer of the CodaQuest website building app for kids, has realized that kids love simple, repetitive action games and that they are relatively easy to "self code" given the right tools.

Developed with children aged 6-12 in mind, the app aims to teach kids about "computational thinking, problem solving, creativity and logic" - the fundamentals of programming. In actual fact, there isn't a great deal of programming, but kids

are introduced to placing game elements and then discovering what effect they have.

There are several game modes, including block breaking, side scrolling, air hockey and more. The options within each are impressively varied, and there are plenty of modifications.

There is a basic introduction but it's pretty light. The icons are easy to interpret, with clear visuals and a brief explanation when tapped, though it's not always easy to predict what they'll actually do when used in your game.

Fortunately, kids pick it all up more easily than many adults and the visuals are so appealing they're happy to keep



Change your character, background, weapons, enemy, and more... There are plenty of

experimenting. Once you get the hang of what you're doing and have the base of your game in place, it's great fun to play with all the different possibilities - and it's easy to remove any unwanted actions.

A nice touch is that once a game is made, children can share it with other Coda Game kids.

**THE BOTTOM LINE.** The appealing visuals and abundance of options draw children into the world of game design, and it's great that they can show off their creations in a safe environment.

# FreeSpeech

If a picture paints a thousand words...

**\$9.99 Developer** Avaz Inc, freespeechapp.com

**Platform** Universal **Requirements** iOS 9 or later

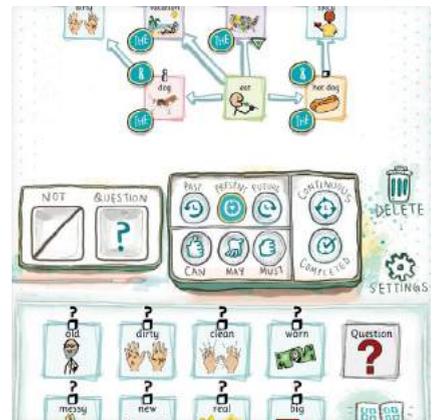


What if there were a way to use visual imagery to assist with the development of language? That's the aim of FreeSpeech, a progressive new app designed to help students learn about the structure of the English language.

Starting from a range of typical pronouns, you then choose from a range of common verbs. At any time, you can hit More Words to find an extensive list of categories, such as Most Used, Actions, People, Food and Drink, Places... the list goes on. The app then creates a kind of "mind map" of a sentence, placing words and images you choose in the correct

position and suggesting what other elements are required to make a complete sentence, such as asking "when," "how," or "who," and also flagging up tense changes.

One 10-year-old tester quickly came across a bit of a flaw - the ability to really sense check. We managed to create this sentence: "The dirty dog and the true and good team cat eat the spicy and worn and messy hot dog in the messy state during the kid's different game vacation." Strictly speaking, this sentence is grammatically correct, but in a real-world classroom situation, a child would be encouraged to both break up the sentence and also think about how much sense they were making.



The range of categories, and listings within, is nothing if not extensive.

That said, this is an easy app for any age or ability to understand and use, and it's also well-suited to learning English as a second language.

**THE BOTTOM LINE.** The visual representation of words makes this a very accessible language-learning app for a range of ages and abilities.

## ROUNDUP

# The best apps for learning something new

Use your iOS device to improve your mind

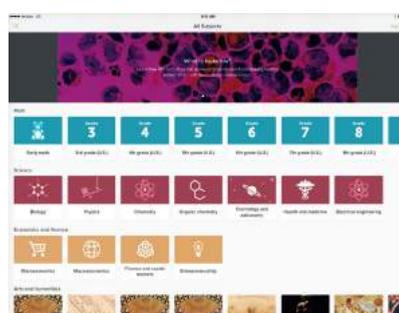
Whether you've had your fill of refreshing Facebook or helping disgruntled birds right the wrongs in their lives, it's time to put your iOS devices to work by helping you learn something new. Here are some of the App Store's best apps for gaining new knowledge and skills.

Whether you're looking to further your current career, work your way into a new one, or dive into a hobby, **UDEMY** (Free with IAPs, Universal) has over 32,000 courses for learning everything from programming in various languages to yoga, and photography to business development. There are even courses for personal development and learning languages, and many start at \$10. All courses can be downloaded for offline use, and you can even message instructors for help.

If you're looking for an academic topic to get into, try **KHAN ACADEMY** (Free, Universal). Khan Academy is supported through donations from a variety of philanthropic



Learn How To Draw Everything... or at least your favorite animated character.



Khan Academy: it's like an Amazon for educational topics and learning.

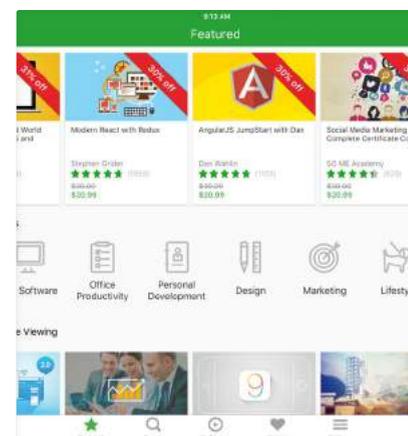
organizations ranging from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to Google and others. You'll find over 10,000 videos across math, science, economics, history, and more, including 150,000 interactive, Common-Core-aligned math exercises, and it's all free.

Of course a language app has to make this list, and **DUOLINGO** (Free, Universal) has a unique approach. Through a series of mini-games and tests, you'll learn any of 10 languages in an engaging environment that practically game-ifies the process. In fact, you earn points as you progress so you can quantify how far you've come, and you can compete with friends to keep each other motivated. All classes are free, with some In-App Purchases for minor perks.

**ITUNES U** (Free, Universal) contains a wealth of free knowledge and interactive courses from some of the greatest institutions and organizations around the world. Apple boasts over 1 million downloadable lectures, videos, and other educational content from greats such as Stanford, Oxford, MIT, and Smithsonian Libraries.

No list about resources for learning new skills is complete without **YOUTUBE** (Free, Universal). Sure, it's home to cat videos, but it's also the world's largest people-powered platform for teaching and learning how to do virtually anything. From makeup tutorials to video game walkthroughs, home improvement to tutorial videos about how to make tutorial videos... Of course, YouTube is free, though it recently launched a YouTube Red subscription – for \$10 per month you can get rid of ads, easily download videos for offline playback, and play videos in the background on iPhone and iPad.

As the name suggests, **HOW TO DRAW EVERYTHING** (Free, Universal) has simple step-by-step tutorials for learning how to draw a variety of things ranging from fruit, to anime characters, to band logos. It isn't the best-designed app, but the sheer volume of tutorials is at least a great place to start.



The courses available through Udemy aren't free, but they are extremely well curated.

# Proud

The productivity app with “Superpowers!”

**\$4.99 Developer** Peter Szwach, useproud.com

**Platform** Universal **Requirements** iOS 9 or later



Everyone could use more time in their day, but most productivity apps feel like they weren't designed for people.

Proud takes a more flexible approach, encouraging downtime to catch your breath when there's too much to do.

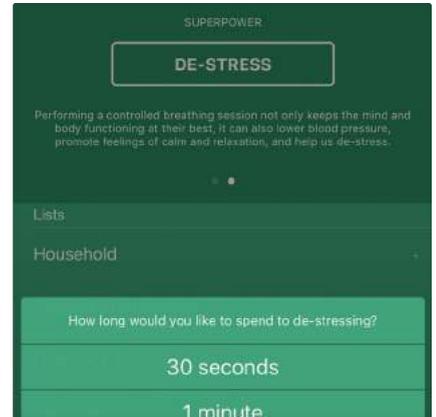
That's not to say Proud doesn't work like traditional to-do apps, but here lists and tasks work the same. Tasks can include unlimited sub-tasks, so busy users can pile on as much as they want and trust Proud will have their back.

Proud offers three views: Lists, Reminders, and History. The first shows a complete picture of what needs to get done,

the second focuses only on what's coming, the third shows everything accomplished so far. New tasks are added with a swipe down, and the app offers similarly convenient gestures acting on items as well.

What really makes Proud unique are “Superpowers,” little productivity boosters tucked away beneath each view. In Lists, Destress provides a bit of breathing room; under Reminders, users can move upcoming tasks to make room for last-minute obligations; and History provides a “time machine” to reflect on what's done.

Proud has a learning curve coming from traditional to-do apps, although fans of Clear will feel right at home. The app



The Destress “Superpower” provides users with a brief but welcome break whenever needed.

doesn't sync with iOS Reminders, but there's iCloud sync with other iOS devices and Apple Watch support; a Mac version is currently in beta.

**THE BOTTOM LINE.** Proud is the first task management app made with the user in mind, encouraging productivity as well as peace of mind.

# Project Office Pro

Taking the hard work out of hard work

**\$24.99 Developer** DK Consulting, productivity-code.com

**Platform** iPad **Requirements** iOS 9 or later



When it comes to serious scheduling, Gantt charts are widely considered the gold standard for business projects.

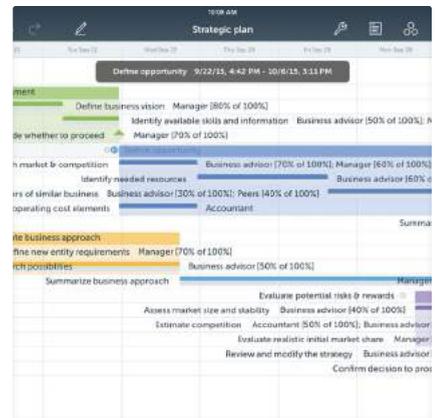
This bar-chart-style breakdown packs a lot of data into a compact space, making it ideal for devices like the iPad - but most of the existing apps to create them are overpriced, underpowered, or plain clunky.

Project Office is none of these things. Featuring a more elegant, intuitive user interface than competing apps, it's also more affordable than popular alternatives such as OmniPlan. Built for speed, Project Office Pro makes it easy to juggle multiple projects, assign contacts or materials, track

any remaining work to be done, and head off potential bottlenecks at a glance.

Up to three copies of each project can be backed up via iCloud, although this has to be initiated manually. Project Office Pro lacks any comprehensive way to collaborate on a project with others, although projects can be sent via email or saved in PDF format; more traditional HTML task or resource reports can also be generated or shared with other apps.

Those already proficient with the Gantt method will feel right at home, but Project Office Pro lacks a tutorial to help novices get up to speed (there is basic in-app help, however). It's iPad-only for now, but an



Create Gantt charts like a pro with this app's friendly, intuitive user interface and features.

update with iPhone support should be available by the time you read this; the app is optimized for iPad Pro and works great with the larger screen of that model.

**THE BOTTOM LINE.** If your work life revolves around Gantt charts, Project Office Pro is a cost-effective, full-featured solution for iPad scheduling.

## ROUNDUP

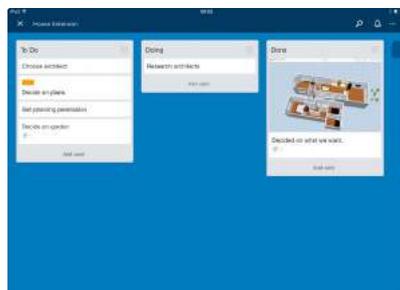
# The best project management apps

Whether your project is for school, work or the home, these apps will help you complete tasks on time and on budget

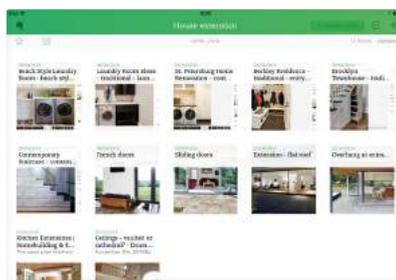
For everything from big work projects involving several people, to just re-decorating the spare room, planning is crucial – and picking the right app to help you will make things much easier. Once you get to the execution stage, the same thing applies – choose the best apps for the job in hand and the project will be much simpler.

We've picked out six apps that cover all the stages in running a project, from researching to planning to execution. Between them they allow you to gather research notes, map out ideas, plan the stages of the project, and capture specific tasks to be carried out by you or a colleague.

**TRELLO** (Free, Universal) uses a system of boards and cards. You create lists on boards using cards, and each card can contain text, images, labels, attachments, and more. You can add members to a board to collaborate on a project, and you can drag and drop cards within a list. The key to Trello is that you can see everything related to a project at one glance. Trello syncs across devices and, as well



Trello's board and card system makes it easy to see how a project is progressing.



Evernote has many uses - it's particularly good for gathering research notes and ideas.

as the iOS app, there are apps for the desktop, Android devices, and Kindle Fire so whatever your colleagues use, they can access Trello.

**ASANA** (Free, Universal) is designed to allow teams to work together on projects without the need for an endless stream of email correspondence. As such, it acts as a means of communication, but also allows team members to create tasks, reminders, and lists. Tasks can be assigned and work requests made, and different views allow you to see the status of work as well as your tasks for the day. Asana also works across desktop, iOS and Android.

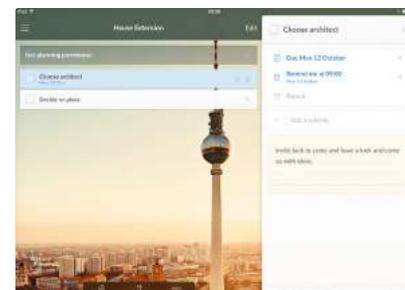
Mind mapping isn't always essential to a project, but it's a very good way of planning and visualizing how the various elements fit together, and **MINDNODE** (\$9.99, Universal) is the best app for it. Once you've mapped out the project, with all its various stages, you can see which tasks are reliant on others and plan accordingly. Mindnode is very easy to use, too – even if you're new to mind mapping.

Lists are a critical part of any project and few apps handle them

better than **WUNDERLIST** (Free, Universal). Use it to create a daily to-do list for yourself or to allocate tasks to colleagues. Lists can be shared and viewed in a web browser, so anyone can access them, but there's also a free Mac app. Lists sync immediately across all versions of the service linked to your account.

**EVERNOTE** (Free, Universal) is a must for any project, whether you use it to store ideas, add webpages you've discovered during research, or scan receipts of purchases made. Like Wunderlist, it syncs with desktop and web versions, and allows you to share notebooks with team members.

Every project needs a way to monitor and control costs and **NUMBERS** (\$9.99 or free with new devices, Universal) is perfect for the job. There are templates for lots of different types of project, and it's compatible with Excel documents for those working with colleagues who use Office. Best of all, however, are the forms, linked to tables, which make it very easy to add data from your iPhone.



There are few better task-management apps than Wunderlist on any platform.

# Ulysses Mobile

If you like words, you'll love this app

**\$24.99 Developer** The Soulmen, ulyssesapp.com

**Platform** Universal **Requirements** iOS 9 or later



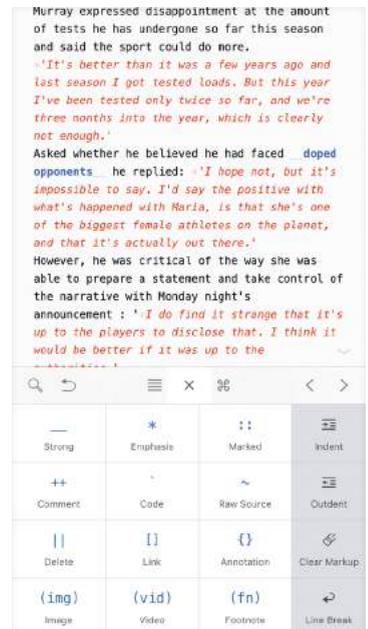
Ulysses is one of our favorite Mac writing apps for all kinds of work: reviews, features, novels, broadcast scripts... you get the idea. It's a very fast and flexible text editor based around Markdown, which enables you to format documents or add links and other code with a few simple keystrokes. It started off on the Mac, made its way to the iPad and now it's on the iPhone too.

Nobody's going to pick the iPhone over a Mac for prolonged writing, but Ulysses makes it as pleasant as possible. Your formatting and code options are just a tap away from the keyboard, and it's equally easy to access tags, file attachments, notes and writing goals. It's

much more fun on the iPad, but the iPhone app makes good use of the space – and if you have an iPhone 6s, of the bigger screen.

Ulysses' file management feels more like Mail than Finder: you create folders and subfolders, and then your documents are "sheets." Those sheets can be dragged around from folder to folder, and they automatically sync over iCloud as you work on them.

The sheets you've created can be exported as text, PDF, ePub, HTML, DOCX files or email attachments, and you can copy to the clipboard in those formats – copying in HTML is a boon for anybody who needs to write for a web content system based around HTML tags. If you're exporting in PDF, ePub or DOCX



Ulysses makes full use of the iPhone 6s and iPad Pro's larger displays.

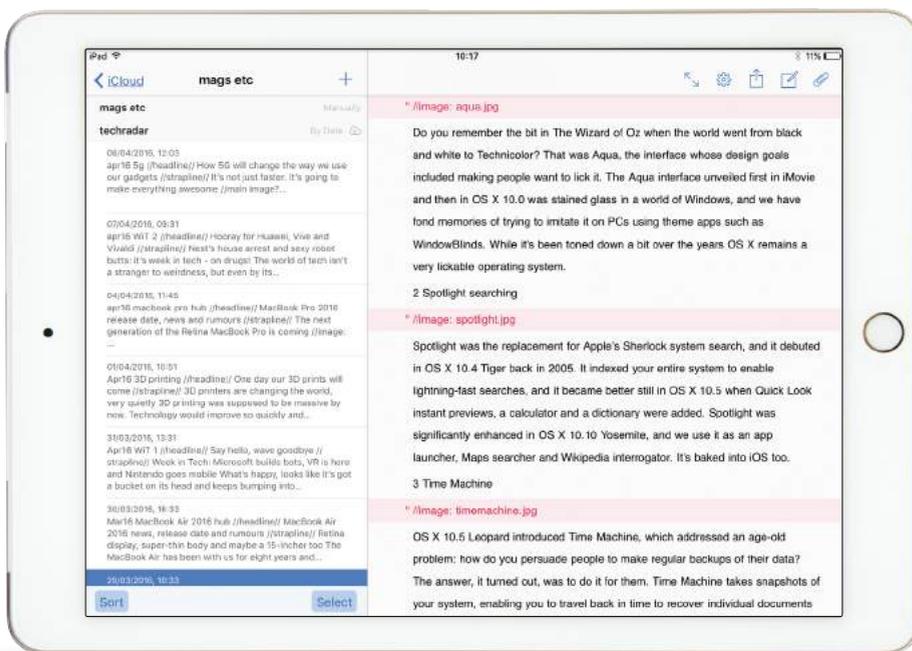
you can also choose from different templates.

Writing in Markdown takes a bit of getting used to, but it's worth it; it's much faster than working in HTML and the ability to write in one simple way and then export in whatever format the client or destination app/CMS wants is exceptionally useful. You can customize the markup on the desktop app and have that customization available on mobile. For example, if you'd rather not have Ulysses interpret square brackets as a hyperlink you can change the shortcut in the desktop app and the change will be applied to your iPad or iPhone too.

The closest equivalent to Ulysses we can think of is Scrivener, but Ulysses does things in a more minimalist way. There are lots of apps we like, but Ulysses is an app we love.

**THE BOTTOM LINE.** Ulysses is superb for everything from novels and journalism to scripts, blogs, and note-taking.

Ulysses is particularly good on iPads, where it has even more room to breathe.



# Interact

Once you can interact with the app, there's a lot on offer

**\$4.99 Developer** Agile Tortoise, [agiletortoise.com](http://agiletortoise.com)

**Platform** Universal **Requirements** OS 9.1 or later



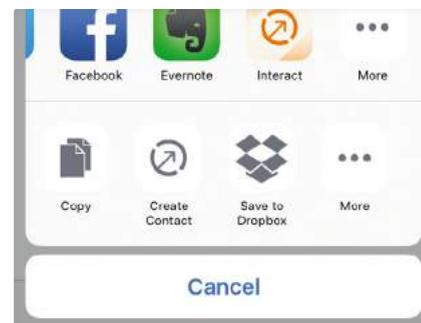
Once you've found your way round, this app offers some of the key features sadly missing from Apple's built-in Contacts app. It just takes a bit of getting used to.

For example, one of the app's standout facilities is Scratchpad, which enables you to copy text from email signatures, websites and other apps and paste them in to add to or create a new contact. Brilliant - you just need to learn where it is. Once you know it's the stick figure with lines, you just select details from your chosen source and hit Create Contact. From then on, it's easy and useful, and worked every time. One of the biggest omissions in the Contacts app is the

fact you can't create a group. Well, in Interact you can. Again, finding it is a bit tricky - you have to select the contacts, then the "Interact" symbol to create a group. But adding further contacts to the group is different again! Again, once you get where these things are, you'll love them.

There are Message and Mail icons, and an additional Text option. This is a bit like a draft facility: type your text in on a clean screen, then if you want to add an image or a file, the app will create a "combo" message or mail with the elements chosen. It's a good system, especially for groups.

Basically, all that the app has to offer is very good, you just need to have faith in it



Interact's Scratchpad option is great - select from your source and just hit Create Contact.

- although you can get guidance from within the app or from the website. The app works best for contacts stored on your iPhone or in iCloud, however, it supports contacts synced with Google and other services, and is compatible with a number of third-party apps.

**THE BOTTOM LINE.** Initial navigational issues aside, there are some really useful features here - features that should come as standard on iOS!

# Launch Center Pro

Save time on complex actions

**\$2.99 Developer** Contrast, [contrast.co](http://contrast.co)

**Platform** Universal **Requirements** iOS 8 or later

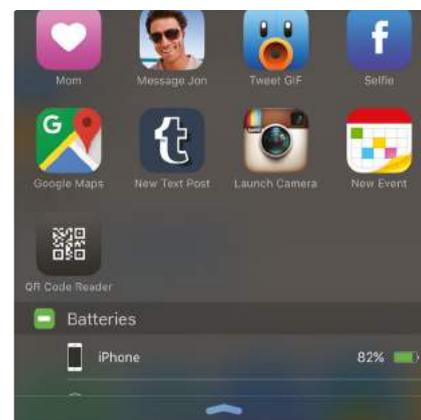


This app has a funny history of being both embraced and shunned by Apple. It's currently being embraced, so make the most of it now! Basically, it lets you create your own shortcuts for doing things on iOS - it can simply launch apps for you, but it can also perform complex actions within those apps, queueing up common tasks for you, effectively. You can access these shortcuts either within the app itself in a grid, or through its Today view widget, or through 3D Touch on compatible phones (though some can also be activated by location or through other triggers). It's also massively expandable thanks to

integration with IFTTT. Basically, it's there to make certain tasks easier to do on iOS.

Launch Center Pro can be very daunting - you might have an action in mind you want it to do, but finding the right options isn't easy. There's a huge number of possible actions, and the categorization used is only helpful half the time. You also don't build complex tasks in easy to follow workflows, but rather just choose from a list and see a URL that represents it build up, which could be clearer.

Still, the possibilities are huge - but it's great even for something a little smaller. We were able to add a button to get directions back home in Maps right to the Today



Launch Center Pro is not immediately intuitive, but it's a real time-saver when you're proficient.

widget, along with a button to lock the brightness to 100% for correctly exposing video when recording. Both are helpful, and took seconds.

**THE BOTTOM LINE.** It could do with being friendlier (though there are guides available), but most people find this app invaluable once they get started with it.

# Daytime

Make your schedule as clear as day

**\$9.99 Developer** DK Consulting, dk-daytime.weebly.com

**Platform** iPad **Requirements** iOS 8 or later



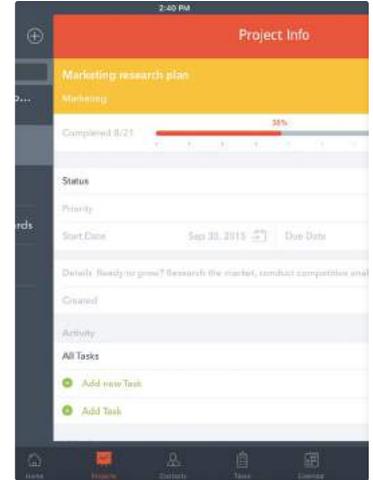
Whether you're managing a busy schedule at work, at home, at a freelance business, or even for an entire office staff, staying on top of projects and appointments has become one of the most crucial roles of the smartphone and tablet. This app has a very good handle on helping get things done, but it's strictly for the iPad crowd right now.

Daytime offers a no-nonsense user interface with separate tabs for Projects, Contacts, Task, and Calendar entries across the bottom of the screen, plus a fifth Home button focused strictly on what needs to be addressed today and in the next seven days. From here, you can tackle the most

current tasks in a color-coded timeline, quickly making sense of even the busiest of weeks.

The design is well thought-out, and those new to Daytime can first browse a sample fully populated with data to help get up to speed quickly. There's even one-tap access to an extensive user guide. Daytime syncs with iOS and OS X Reminders, but also ties directly into contacts (including public or private groups) and projects, to give a broader scope of what's ahead.

The Tasks tab features an Inbox for quickly adding entries without having to know exactly how they'll fit into your overall schedule first. Tasks can also be attached to projects, with a progress bar showing what



Projects connect to other Daytime data, offering a useful progress bar.

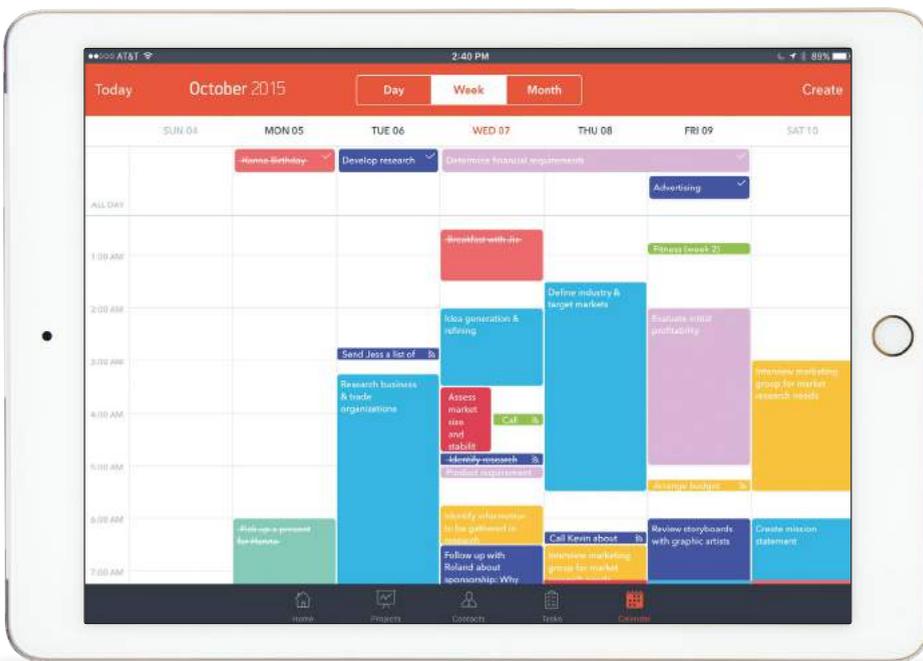
percentage of that work is already completed, and what has been delegated to specific users or companies from the full-featured address book.

Tapping an email address allows sending new messages without having to exit Daytime, and Calendar events can be dragged and dropped to change start or due dates with a tap and hold. It's a comprehensive package, but missing one or two pieces of the puzzle – namely, companion apps for iPhone and Mac, which the developer says are already in progress.

Considering the wealth of available features, Daytime is worthy of a look for those dissatisfied with their current GTD (“get things done”) solution. There's also a free Lite version available, although it doesn't actually do anything aside from run the sample data, so is more of a features demo.

**THE BOTTOM LINE.** Daytime is a comprehensive app for efficiently tackling even the most challenging schedules. While it works great on iPad, you'll have to rely on other tools for getting things done on iPhone or Mac for the time being.

No matter how packed your schedule may be, Daytime's Calendar view manages it with simplicity.



## ROUNDUP

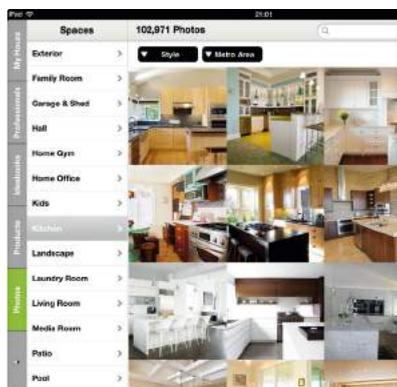
# The best iOS apps for home improvements

From apartments to mansions, transform any home with these great apps

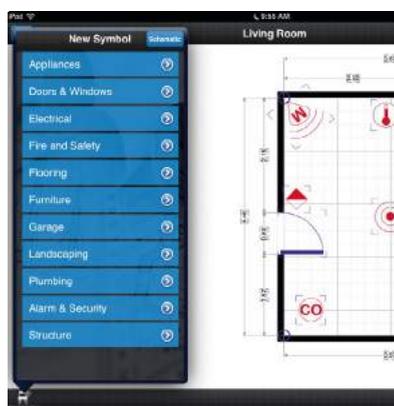
From the smallest apartment to the biggest mansion, every home can do with a bit of TLC. A few little changes can make an enormous difference to your home, and a few little apps can make an enormous difference to how much fun you'll have doing it.

**HOZZ** (Free, Universal) is a good place to start. It's packed with design ideas ranging from the sensible to the spectacularly unrealistic, and you can use it to scrapbook your favorites and find products that'll look just great. It's a fantastic app for finding design inspiration.

If you've ever ordered furniture only to discover that it was too big to fit in or just looked plain weird with the rest of your furnishings, you'll appreciate the value of the excellent **HOMESTYLER INTERIOR DESIGNER** (Free, Universal) from Autodesk. The app enables you to take a photo of your room and then digitally remove existing items and/or add 3D models of real furniture items to see how they'll look. It's not just about furniture, either. The app



Looking for inspiration? Houzz has several million images to give you great ideas.



Floor plans without measuring? MagicPlan uses your phone's camera to make its maps.

enables you to try out light fittings, rugs and mirrors too.

One of the best ways to ensure everything fits is to draw up a floor plan, but of course that can be a real pain involving endless measuring and scribbling. Use **MAGIC PLAN** (Free, Universal) instead: it enables you to create your plan by taking a bunch of photos and letting the app piece them all together. Once the plan's done you can use it in the app or export it in a range of standard file formats for use in desktop apps or online.

Now for some color. **TAPPAINTE** (\$2.99, Universal) is one of the most user-friendly ways to find colors, enabling you to take a photo of your space and try out different ideas without going anywhere near a paintbrush. It has various paint firms' color swatches to help you find the right colors for your room, but we'd suggest using it as a guide rather than an oracle, especially if you're on iOS 9.3: iOS's Night Shift changes the color gamma of your

screen so it's more blue in the daytime and more yellow in the evening, and of course that will affect the way colors appear on your screen – as will artificial lighting or dark days. It's still worth getting a tester pot when you've found the colors you want.

So that's the interior covered. Let's move outside... Do you want to improve your garden? **ISCAPE** (\$9.99, Universal) enables you to visualize the perfect garden. Its library includes not just plants and trees but features such as swimming pools, lighting and even yard art. You can start your design from scratch or overlay items on a photo of your existing space.

Once you've decided what you want inside or out, the next step is to actually do it – and there's an app for that too. Sadly, **SNAPGUIDE** (Free, Universal) doesn't actually do the work for you, but it offers the next best thing: user-created how-to guides for DIY projects and home improvement tasks.



Try colors without reaching for a paint brush: TapPainter can "redecorate" in virtual vision.

# Musiclock 2

Apple loves this music app. You will too

**\$4.99 Developer** Perttu Pölönen, mymusiclock.com

**Platform** Universal **Requirements** iOS 7.1 or later



If you've ever learned, or tried to learn, a musical instrument, you'll know that it's often frustrating or even boring:

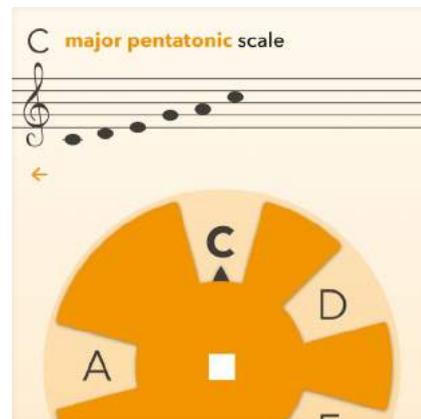
behind every impressive improvisation, stunning solo or semi-competent strum, there are hours and hours of trying to find what notes work where. Musiclock changes that, and it's a fun tool for expert players and songwriters too.

Musiclock helps you learn scales in a very easy way. Pick the scale you want - Major Pentatonic, say, or Blues - and then choose a backing track. You can then choose the key, start the track and play along, either with your own instrument or

with the on-screen piano. That latter option highlights the notes that fit in your chosen key, so if you stick with them you'll never play a bum note.

If you want to transpose the track to a different key, just spin the wheel. You can also switch to a view for guitarists (on iOS 8 or later), which replaces the on-screen piano with tablature charts showing where to stick your fingers.

The range of backing tracks is impressively vast, encompassing everything from chilled electronica to bebop, Scandinavian metal, and alt rock, and playing along never feels like work. It's a handy tool for songwriters, too: messing



There are two modes, one with on-screen piano and one with guitar tab charts.

around with the available options and playing over the top is a great way to come up with new melodies for your own compositions.

**THE BOTTOM LINE.** Musiclock is great for beginners and plenty of fun for more experienced musicians too - it's an ideal learning tool.

# Songhub

For the players... (and the songwriters)

**\$6.99 Developer** Simon Tocknell, songhubapp.com

**Platform** Universal **Requirements** iOS 7 or later



If you've ever forgotten a melody because you didn't have a recorder handy, or lost a lyric for want of a scrap of paper, you'll love Songhub: its mission is

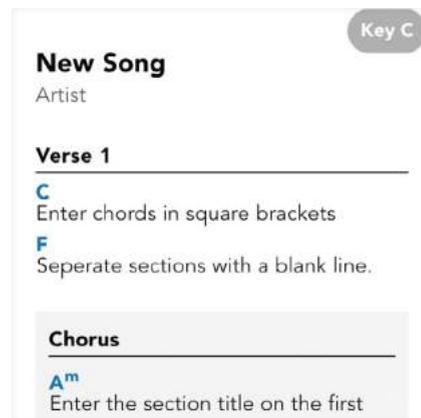
to make songwriters' and musicians' lives easier by keeping their melodies, lyrics, chords and even sheet music in one place.

The app caters for two kinds of songs: songs you're writing, and songs you're performing. If you're writing a song, you create a songbook detailing your chords and lyrics and recording the melody; if you're performing, you create setlists and then assign songs from your library, or import chord charts, sheet music or

Word docs via iTunes File Sharing. It's all synced online so you can use it across iPhone, iPad, and iPod touch, and a Mac version of the app is also available, with your songs synced automatically.

The app is packed with some really nice touches. There's an adjustable autoscroll you can use to see your song without having to take your hands off your instrument; there's the ability to set the tempo, key and even the location of a guitar capo.

You get 1,000 chord diagrams for guitar, bass, ukulele, banjo, and mandolin (although remember: the definition of a gentleman is somebody who can play the



It's really easy to put together music and lyrics in Songhub when inspiration strikes.

banjo, but doesn't) plus the ability to add your own; and there's a no-chords mode for singers. It's well thought out, nice to look at, easy to use and genuinely useful for writers and musicians alike.

**THE BOTTOM LINE.** Songhub is a fantastic little app for both songwriters and performers alike.

## ROUNDUP

# The best iPad apps for better music making

Go beyond GarageBand with these amazing apps for recording songs

The iPad has gained a reputation as a very capable and powerful music-creation tool. GarageBand is a great place to start, but taking the next step can be difficult when faced with an overwhelming number of creative options. Don't worry: we'll point you toward the very best beat-making apps out there.

There are some basic apps you'll need in order to use your iPad as a pro-level recording and music tool, starting with your main DAW (Digital Audio Workstation) software.

**CUBASIS** (\$49.99, iPad) is the most powerful, full-featured iOS DAW platform. It boasts an extensive set of MIDI recording and editing tools, integrated sampled audio tracks, a nice set of basic audio-processing tools, and total support for external synths and effects via Apple's Inter-App Audio framework – for passing sound between apps – as well as Audiobus, a third-party system to do the same. The automation potential of all key



The Cubasis multi-touch sequencer is a great choice for recording, editing and mixing.



Korg Gadget offers mixing and sequencing using an array of synth and drum Gadgets.

parameters sets this program apart, and is a key aspect of the professional pedigree of the app.

**KORG GADGET** (\$39.99, iPad) is a fully featured synth recording studio with tons of built-in synths. It doesn't directly support a dedicated sampled-audio track, but it offers workarounds by loading sampled sounds via its sampler instruments.

There are so many iOS synths and drum machines that sorting through them all can be a headache, but **THUMBJAM** (\$8.99, Universal) stands out. The app offers realistic, real-world instruments with extreme playability, an extensive set of included sounds, really cool accelerometer support (tilting your iPad adds realistic note bends to the electric guitar patch), a vast library of predefined musical scales (ensuring that you'll only play a wrong note if you want to), and much more.

On to the newest straight synthesizer on the block.

**SYNTHMASTER PLAYER** (Free with IAPs, iPad) offers 100 patches right out of the gate, with plenty more aural options available via In-App Purchases. It's a no-brainer for electronic music, with loads of really useful sounds.

For laying down percussion, it's hard to beat the **DM1** (\$4.99, iPad) drum machine app. It has an exceedingly straightforward interface, a long list of sound options, and an excellent selection of integrated effects. It's really easy to get some cool beats going within moments of opening the app for the first time.

**AUDIOBUS** (\$4.99, Universal) is the glue that connects most important iOS music apps, providing a realtime pipeline between them. It lets you use synthesizers, drum machines, effects, processors, and recording software together in a logical, powerful production chain. Audiobus will tax the RAM and CPU of even the most powerful iPad.



Audiobus supports over 600 music apps, linking them together in perfect harmony!

# Bez

Vector drawing for iPad

**Free (\$7.99 for all features)** Developer JuicyBits, juicybitssoftware.com/bez

**Platform** iPad **Requirements** iOS 9 or later



This vector-drawing app – named after Bézier curves – provides all the tools you’d expect in a basic desktop app, and does a very neat job.

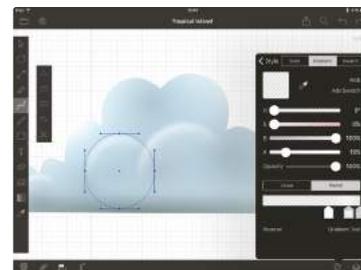
The Bézier pen tool worked as expected for creating perfect curves, but it can be tricky to hit the first point on a path again to complete a closed shape. There’s a reason why vector artists use a mouse or a graphics tablet, not a touchpad. Apple Pencil support makes this easier, but there’s no support for third-party active styluses on older iPads. If you’re not too familiar with Béziers and prefer to draw freehand, you can – a pop-up control lets you

smooth out wobbly paths, and you can auto-convert approximations of shapes such as circles to clean vectors.

There’s no Direct Selection tool (the white arrow in Adobe Illustrator), and no way to temporarily invoke its Selection tool, which left us floundering with some edits, especially minor corrections to paths.

We couldn’t find an equivalent of the Shift key modifier to constrain shapes or build selections. Smart Guides are available to help position objects, though, and you can display a graph-paper grid and snap to it; a very useful starting point. The essential combine and

Dragging sliders by touch can be imprecise, so you can enter values numerically too.



You can do a lot with the basic vector tools, plus simple strokes and fills.



All of the objects in your drawing are listed in the Layers panel.

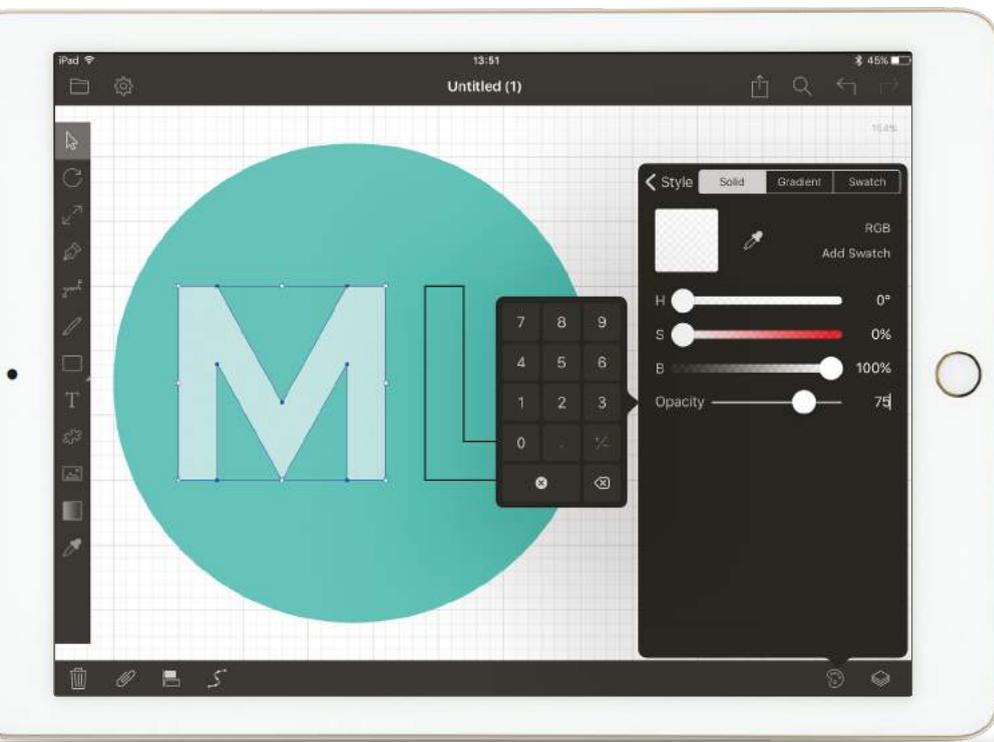
align operations are included. A Layers panel works like Illustrator’s, listing every object in your drawing in a tree structure. You can adjust each item’s visibility, clipping, and opacity here, and change its stacking order, but you can’t select it by tapping its name.

On the artwork itself, you can tap an item repeatedly to select items below, but the ability to edit grouped objects is limited. You can also quickly undo and redo by tapping with two or three fingers, which is useful.

Fills are limited to solid colors and simple gradients, but those will get you a long way with transparency and blending, as the example files illustrate. Text formatting is very basic, though.

A single In-App Purchase adds vector export (to iCloud Drive, Dropbox or Microsoft OneDrive), albeit in SVG format.

**THE BOTTOM LINE.** A great choice for no-nonsense vector drawing on your iPad.



## ROUNDUP

# The best iOS apps for making movies

Make an indie masterpiece (or just better home videos) with these apps

The camera in your iPhone is capable of capturing stunning video – in fact, one of the breakout films of the 2015 Sundance film festival, *Tangerine*, was shot entirely on an iPhone 5. Okay, that was done by professionals with great film-making skill, but with the apps we've picked out here, you can make something cinema-quality using nothing but your iPhone and iPad.

If you're planning a movie with a story, you need to get your shots planned out. **CINEMEK STORYBOARD COMPOSER HD** (\$29.99, Universal) enables you to create storyboards for a film from drawings or photos. You can add notes, and put in arrows and annotations to indicate movement and camera changes. It's an easy way to help solidify your vision, though is in need of an update.

**FILMIC PRO** (\$9.99, Universal) is the essential app for anyone who wants to shoot great videos. It offers unparalleled control – from fine-

grained options over focus, exposure and more, to allowing you to choose different frame rates, and even increase the video quality well beyond iOS's default levels. It supports external microphones, 4K in the iPhone 6s/Plus, and is one of our favorite apps ever.

Once you've got your footage, you need to polish your film's look.

**VIDEOGRADE** (\$5.99, Universal) is the best way to tweak your video, enabling you to alter its colors to give it a certain mood, or apply effects such as a vignette. You can even use it to make rough video look better with tools such as simple white balance adjustment. It offers easy controls for basic looks, but you can dive into its finer options to get perfect results.

Once your footage is ready, it's time to get editing! **IMOVIE** (\$4.99, Universal) is free for people who buy a new iOS device, and is the easiest option – you can choose the right

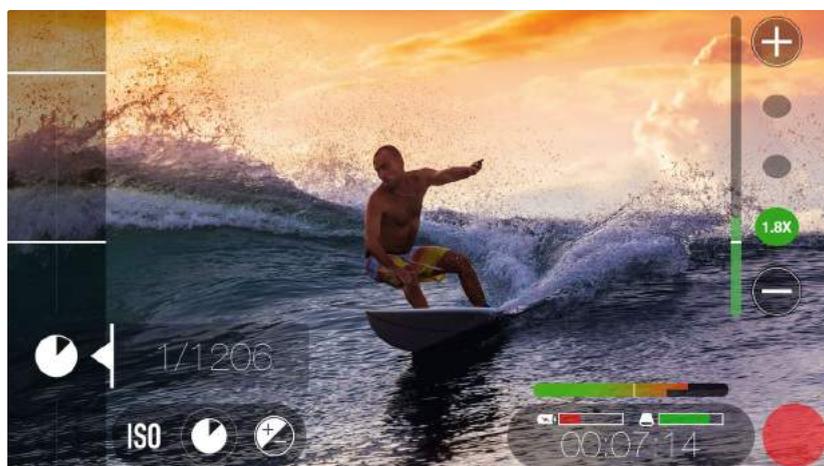


VideoGrade is all about the finish. Correct colors and make tweaks to polish your video.

parts of your videos and put together a quick movie in no time at all. It comes with sound effects and a few transitions, but is relatively limited for tools overall. For more control over how you edit your movie, take a look at **CUTE CUT PRO** (\$5.99, Universal) – it's not the prettiest app, but it's good for serious video editing. You can do some brilliant tricks with its flexible tools.

If you've been shooting something on multiple cameras, **FLY VIDEO EDITOR** (Free, Universal) has an interface that's ideal for getting all the video in one place, then switching deftly between different views – great if you and your friends were all recording an event. You can put together cool, kinetic videos from different angles in seconds.

Finally, your movie needs a soundtrack. You can make your own in **GARAGEBAND** (\$4.99, Universal), which is free when you buy a new iOS device. Its virtual instruments can do everything from classical, emotive strings to rock or electronic – even if you know nothing about music!



FiLMiC Pro represents great value for money – for under 10 bucks, you get pretty much pro-level filming options, with regular updates improving features all the time.

# Videorama - Video Editor & Movie Maker

A fast, fun video editor that simplifies complex features and effects

**Free (with IAPs)** Developer Apperto Ltd, [apperto.com/videorama](http://apperto.com/videorama)

**Platform** Universal **Requirements** iOS 9 or later



Videorama is one of the latest contenders in the video-editing market, with a focus on combining clips and photos with complex effects. Videorama sits in a clever space between a

Videorama's tools are accessible, yet powerful

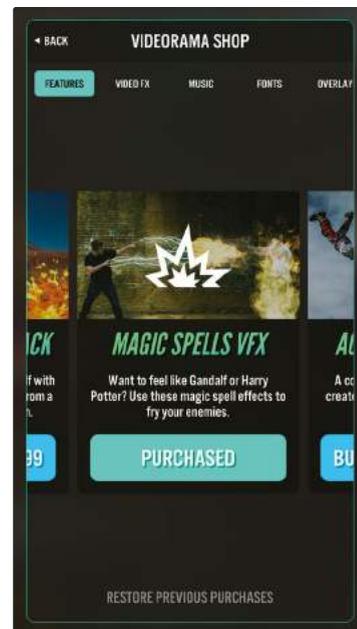
simple, fast editor and an effects powerhouse, happily charging only for what you need.

Videorama excels by keeping its feature set fairly simple and focused, in most cases for the better, but occasionally to a fault.

For example, even though you can create projects in landscape, portrait, or a 1:1 square, both the iPhone and iPad version are locked to running only in portrait.

That said, it's easy to get started and add clips. Videorama does a good job of holding your hand in the beginning, then it gets out of the way. Adding things like text labels (animated, optionally), sound effects, and filters is instantaneous, and the timeline makes it clear where those elements begin and end. Videorama's simplicity stumbles, however, in that some effects feel a little rigid. For example, if you want to add visual lightning from a friend's hands, they must be moving horizontally; you can scale the size of visual effects, but you can't rotate them.

Videorama's developers profess that you can make videos as long as you want. While we didn't attempt to give Peter Jackson a run for his money, the app handled five HD video clips just fine, most being several minutes in



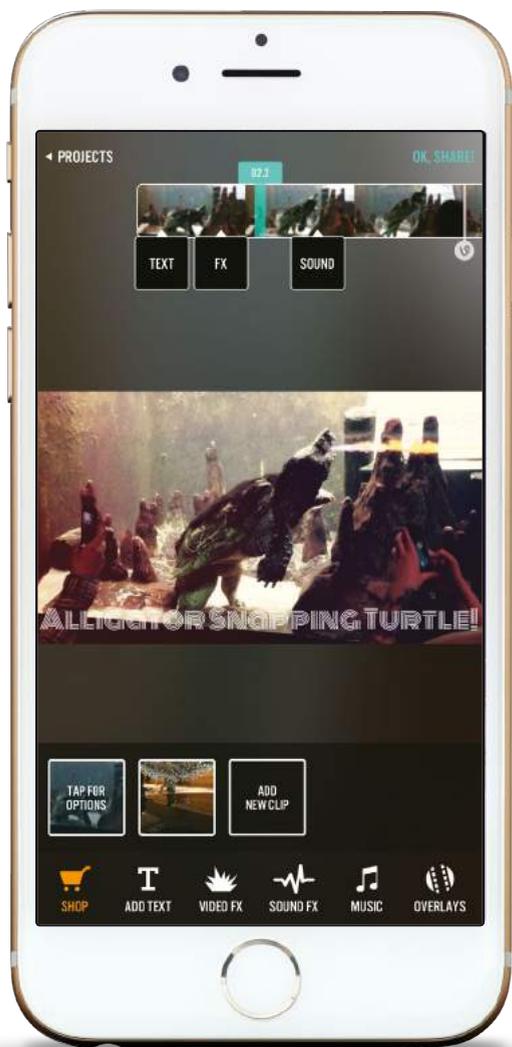
You can buy just the features you need, so you're not wasting money or space.

length. One of the standout features are the small badges along the timeline that denote how much footage you can use for various social media sites with strict video lengths. Twitter's Vine, for example, allows only six seconds, while Instagram is up to 60 seconds.

Videorama is free and, even though it can apply a number of complex video and audio effects – including explosions, magic spells, and applause – it's small. It only downloads an effect when you choose to use it (typically requiring an In-App Purchase of just 99¢), which means it won't eat up previous space on your device for effects you don't need.

Overall, Videorama offers a great deal of flexibility, and is worth having on your device for various different projects.

**THE BOTTOM LINE.** Videorama is a simple, focused editor which rarely stumbles and makes adding complex effects to your videos easy and fun.



# Flow • Fast and Slow Motion

Take more control of slow-motion videos

**\$1.99 Developer** Interactive Universe, [flowspeedcontrol.com](http://flowspeedcontrol.com)

**Platform** Universal **Requirements** iOS 7 or later



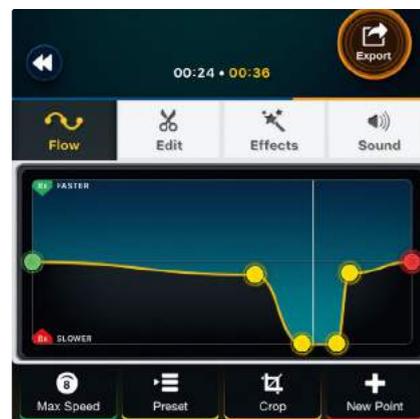
Slow-motion video on the iPhone is great, but if you want to create movies with multiple speeds, Apple doesn't offer that much control - while iMovie can handle different speeds, there's no graduation between them. Flow fixes that.

Import your slo-mo videos into Flow and you'll see a graph at the bottom, which is a representation of the speed of the video throughout its duration. You can raise or lower points on the line to speed up or slow down the video, so you can change speed many times over a single movie. Crucially, it adds smooth changes between speeds, making for a much more professional look.

Adding new points is easy (tap and hold), though the whole control scheme was a little awkward on an iPhone 6s - the buttons are tiny! They're perfectly usable, and you'll find there's an impressive set of options and presets for as you get more comfortable, but it definitely requires precision.

Other than size, though, it's all fairly intuitive and smooth. The preview section at the top makes it easy to play back what you've done, and the app shows you starting frames when you're moving a keyframe on the graph. It's extremely well thought-out all around.

You can also add filters (though we weren't fans of that many of them) and



Flow adds smooth curves to your speed changes, so they look slicker in the final videos.

add music from your collection, though we wish you could fade this in and out. We had a failed video export when testing the app, but a retry worked fine (though we couldn't see a way to delete stored videos, oddly).

**THE BOTTOM LINE.** There are minor missteps, but you like slo-mo videos, get this app - it's that simple.

# ProCam 3

A huge collection of shooting and editing tools

**\$4.99 Developer** Samer Azzam, [procamapp.com](http://procamapp.com)

**Platform** Universal **Requirements** iOS 8.0 or later



This collection of tools for taking and editing photos and videos with your iPhone or iPad lacks a little bit of polish, but it contains some great options.

Like many other "pro" camera apps, ProCam lets you set exposure, shutter, ISO, focus, and white balance manually - in a slightly fiddly but usable manner - as well as changing the aspect ratio and showing a range of grids (including golden ratio) to help compose dynamic shots. You can save in TIFF rather than JPEG, turn geotagging on/off, and burn copyright and/or location info into the picture itself. Some features miss the mark for pros; the histogram is

coarse and only shows overall light, not per-channel levels, and the focus peaking (highlighting in-focus areas with an outline), while useful, needs conscious interpretation rather than being a super-quick shortcut when focusing manually. But there's loads of useful stuff bundled here that you might otherwise be spending money on dedicated apps for. There's a slow shutter mode, with presets for motion blur and light trails, the option to reduce the shooting resolution of video (4K unlockable via In-App Purchase), the ability to add background music when editing video, and frame extraction.

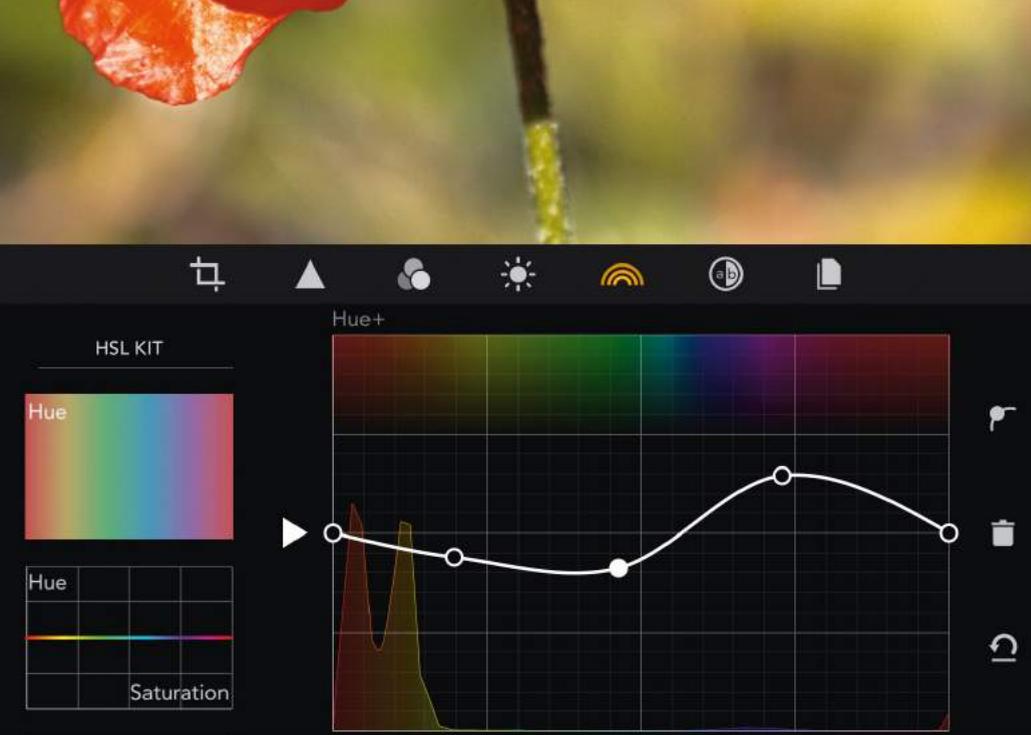
Some of the options and filters seem a bit pointless, but there are useful tools,



There's a great deal on offer, from correcting distortion to geotagging to copyrighting.

such as perspective distortion correction. We wish the app looked a little more stylish, and there are some feature and interface missteps, but there's a lot on offer.

**THE BOTTOM LINE.** This gives you a broad collection of tools to take better photos, including some you won't find anywhere else.



Adding and moving points is easy, although easier on an iPad's big screen than an iPhone.

# MaxCurve

If you like histograms, you'll love MaxCurve

**\$3.99** Developer Wanman, maxcurve.net

**Platform** Universal **Requirements** iOS 7 or later

 Editing an image using the Curves palette in Photoshop is the sort of thing that can put people off doing it again. In MaxCurve, however, almost everything is a curve, so you'd better get used to them. Curves let you tweak how images

look across a range (from blacks to highlights, say) by raising or lowering sections of a line – literally adding curves.

The app can open images from your photo library, access the camera, or even take images from desktop Photoshop, via Adobe's little-used Remote Connections option, if your desktop and iOS devices are on the same network.

The first two tools are cropping and sharpness/grain/vignetting, which are pretty standard. After these, the adjustments come in "kits." The familiar color curve adjustment is referred to as an "RGB kit" and this is complemented by a Lightness Kit for exposure, gamma and color temperature adjustments, an HSL Kit for color saturation, and a LAB Kit for edits in that color space. The kits are further broken down into

channels, and each has its own histogram and tone curve, with real-time previewing of your changes. It's impressive, especially for an iOS app, and the layout means you'll never cover the image with your hand while editing. However, the developers must have had the iPad in mind rather than the iPhone, since turning the screen to landscape mode to maximize the histograms leaves the image trapped in a narrow box above it.

MaxCurve is a well designed app, albeit with some mangled English in its tutorial tips. It offers functionality that goes beyond that of Photos (though it does offer an extension), and the link to desktop Photoshop is nice, although you could do it with cloud storage, too.

This level of image editing is great to have on an iOS device, and on an iPad screen the Curves graph is large enough that shifting points with your finger doesn't become frustrating, and if you're using an iPad Pro, you're doing it with excellent color accuracy – though it is uncalibrated, so pros may want to fine-tune the image in a desktop app anyway.

**THE BOTTOM LINE.** A strong color editing tool that can dig deep into images, provided you're comfortable with curves!



Exporting your image to Photoshop or social network sites is a cinch.

## ROUNDUP

# The best apps for doing more with your photos

From adding text to creating collages, these apps let you do more with your images

Using filters to add that certain look to your photos is just the tip of the fun editing iceberg. The App Store is full of great photo tools that can do everything from add text overlays to combine multiple photos into impressive works of art.

**OVER** (Free, Universal) is a simple yet powerful tool for turning photos into everything from backdrops for inspiring quotes, to greeting cards, to event promotions. It's free and comes with a core set of tools to enhance photos with text, filters, graphics, and so on – but things get even more interesting with the add-ons (from 99¢), which add more advanced tools, stock photo directories, and a world of fonts.

When a single photo won't do, **MIXGRAM** (Free, Universal) is a popular collage and layout app. It has a ton of templates for combining photos in just about any way you can imagine, as well as a respectable array of filters, fonts for text overlays, and stickers. Mixgram is



Editing images and playing with layouts is easy with Mixgram – as is sharing your work.



Give your images the “kapow” factor and use Halftone to bring a little comic fun to shots.

a free download, and you can disable ads and start adding tools and content for just 99¢.

For fans of blurring the lines between photography and abstract art, **TANGENT** (\$1.99, Universal) is packed with a bunch of unique filters, 3D objects, and blending tools, allowing you to turn your photos into otherworldly landscapes and inspiring vistas. You get a lot with the \$2 price, and more packs and styles can be had for just 99¢.

If you've ever wanted to create that effect where a wilderness scene appears in the silhouette of a person or a cityscape, **FUZED** (Free, Universal) is the app for easily combining two photos in interesting ways. The free version has a bunch of blending modes and tools, and a variety of textures and photo packs can be unlocked starting at 99¢.

If your life sometimes seems straight out of a comic book, or maybe you just wish it was, **HALFTONE 2** (\$2.99, Universal) is the

answer. It has a bunch of comic-book-like layouts, filters, and BAM! POW! BONK! text and stamp tools. If you're feeling ambitious, it can even handle video. Halftone 2 includes all tools and content for its price.

If word art is more your thing, **WORDFOTO** (\$1.99, Universal) is worth a look. With a few simple color and text tools, you can overlay sentences or entire bodies of text onto your photos to create something unique and perhaps inspirational. There are no In-App Purchases – you get all the tools with the app.

Part Over and part Tangent, **PHOTO CANDY** (Free, Universal) has great tools for adding text, quotes, and filters, as well as a modest selection of art and abstract objects. Each item you add is on a separate layer with its own individual adjustments, allowing for a powerful level of control. The free version has plenty of tools and art to get started with, and has a handful of add-on packs available at 99¢ each.



If you've found blending images too tricky before, try Fuzed, the “double exposure” app.

EASY  
**PRO**  
**PHOTO**  
**EDITING**  
ON iOS

# Improve your photos with these brilliant extensions

**R**EGARDLESS OF whether you take photos on your iPhone or on a professional-level DSLR, the camera isn't psychic, and it can't always produce exactly what you had in mind – so there are times when you need to do a little editing. There are also times when you need to fix errors such as a sloping horizon, or to brighten a shot that's too dark. Or perhaps you want to get a bit more creative, turn the image black and white and boost the contrast to inject a little atmosphere? There are plenty of really great apps for doing the job, with some offering one-click fix-all or a selection of retro-style filters, and others that allow you to take manual control and make carefully measured adjustments.

A problem with many tools, however, is that you have to check the shot in Photos and decide

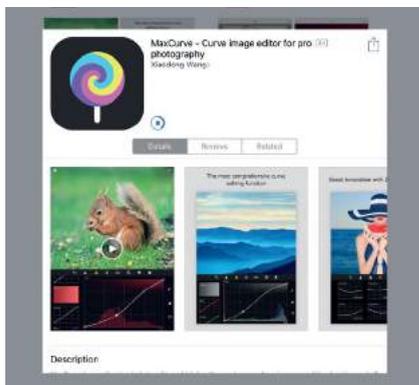
what you want to do with it, then close it and track down the appropriate app before locating the image again and making the edits. If you use apps that offer iOS Photos extensions, you can access their tools within Photos and start editing straight away, making it easier to use them, or mix their effects. Read on to discover more.

## > LIST OF APPS

Here are the six extension apps we're using in this guide...

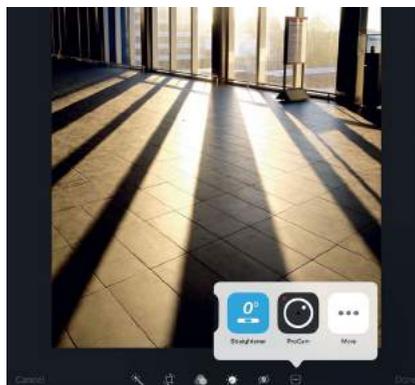
> Fotoroom	<b>FREE</b>
> LUCiD by Perfectly Clear	<b>\$2.99</b>
> MaxCurve - Curve image editor	<b>\$3.99</b>
> ProCam 3 - Manual Camera and Photo Editor	<b>\$4.99</b>
> Quick Mask - Easy Blurring [sic]	<b>FREE</b>
> SKEW	<b>\$1.99</b>

## HOW TO | USE EXTENSIONS IN THE PHOTOS APP



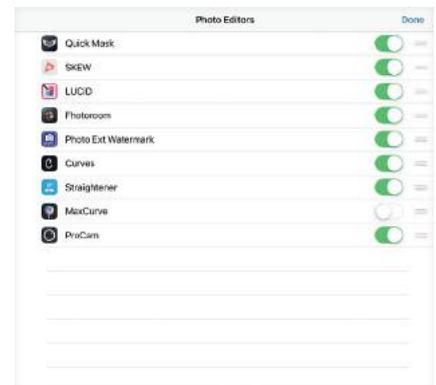
### 1 DOWNLOAD THE APP

First, grab the app you're going to use from the App Store. Once you've downloaded a particular app, you may need to open it and allow it to connect to Photos. Then, if Photos is open, you'll need to close it (double-press the Home button and swipe up on the Photos thumbnail) and reopen it before you can access the new extension.



### 2 YOU WANT MORE?

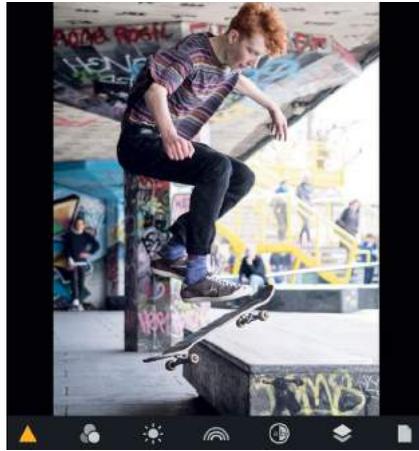
In Photos, locate and select the photo that you want to adjust, then tap the edit option in the top-right corner of the screen. Once you're in the editing view, tap the icon in the that looks like three dots in a circle (in the lower-right corner) to reveal and select any activated extensions. Tap the "More" icon on the right end of the list.



### 3 SWITCH 'EM ON

You can now see the list of installed apps that offer extensions. Simply scroll down, switching on any that you want to be able to access from the list in the previous step. Drag the three-line icon on the right of one to reorder it in the list, to reach your favorite ones quickly. Tap any of the editors to access their controls.

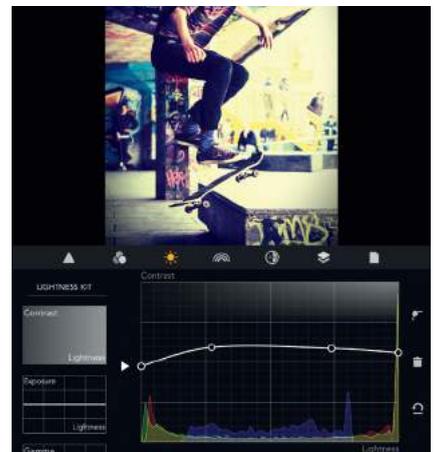
## HOW TO | CUSTOMIZE A CROSS-PROCESSED LOOK WITH MAXCURVE



**1 CROSS WHAT?**  
 1 At one point it was popular to process print film as if it was slide film, and slide film like it was print film, to give images an alternative appearance. These days it's easy to recreate the same effect digitally by manipulating an image's color curves. In Photos, you can achieve this with the MaxCurve extension.

**2 USE THE CURVES**  
 2 Tap the overlapping circles icon to access the RGB Kit, then select the Red graph. The histogram under the curve represents the brightness of the pixels that make up the image, with the brightest at the right end and the darkest at left. If you add a point on the curve and drag it up, you increase the amount of red in the image.

**3 WORK THE REDS**  
 3 Tap the curve near the top and drag it to the very top so the brightest areas go white and the highlights have a pink note. Then drag the point at the bottom of the curve up a little, injecting a little red to the darkest areas. Now add a couple of points in between the end points and drag them in opposite directions to create a shallow "S."

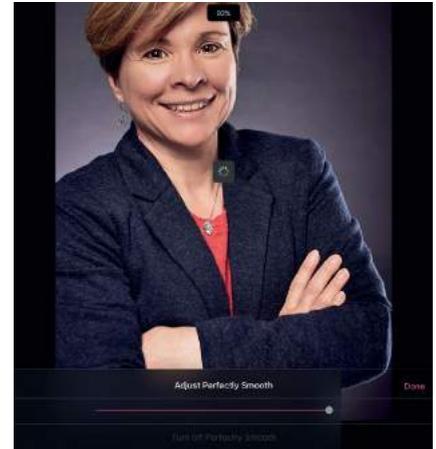
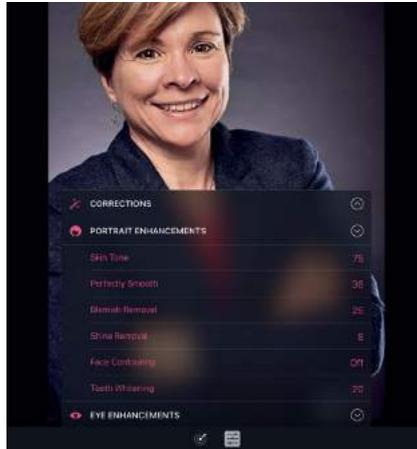


**4 GET THE BLUES**  
 4 Find the Blue graph and tap to select it. Then drag the point at the far right of the curve down a little to take some blue out of the highlights. Doing this also injects some yellow into the highlights, because yellow is opposite blue in the spectrum. Now drag the point at the other end of the curve up to put some blue in the shadows.

**5 ADJUST THE GREENS**  
 5 Next select the Green graph and add a few points to drag up and down to create a shallow "S" shape, similar to the one you created for the reds. Dragging up will increase the amount of green in pixels of that brightness, while dragging down removes green and adds magenta. Revisit each of the color graphs in turn and tweak.

**6 FINALIZE THE CONTRAST**  
 6 As a final touch, tap the sun icon to access the Lightness Kit and select the Contrast graph. Add points to the curve and drag them up to increase contrast and give the image a punchier appearance. Experiment with different points until you find a look that you like - this is your creation, after all!

## HOW TO | USE LUCID TO CREATE PERFECT PORTRAITS



### 1 TWEAK THE BASICS

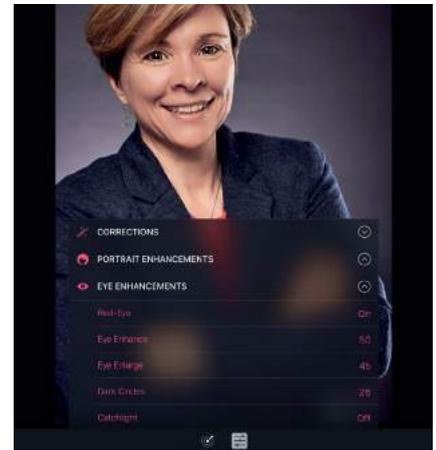
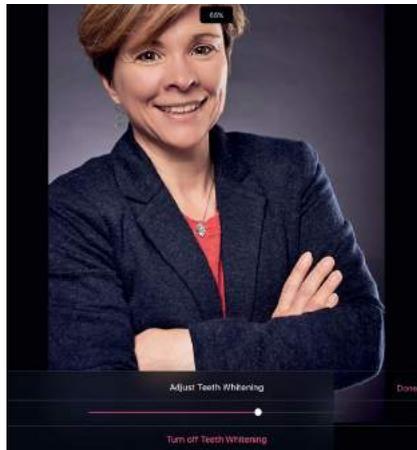
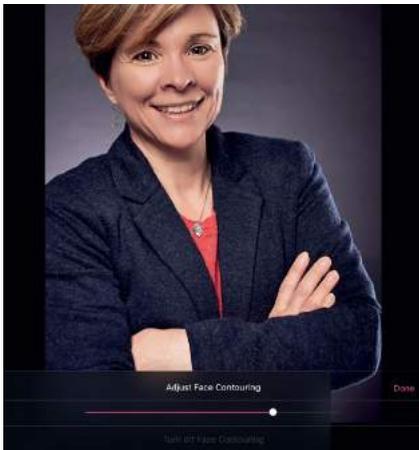
Open LUCID's extension. Before you adjust specific parts of the image, get the general exposure, contrast and saturation looking good. The easy way is to tap the Fix! icon to apply automatic adjustments, but to take more control, select the Control icon at the bottom right of the screen and then select Corrections to access the options.

### 2 TAKE A LOOK

We all want to look good in photographs, but it's best to be subtle with adjustments to avoid making skin look artificial. Take a good look at the photo and decide which areas need work. If necessary, tap the Beautify button to reveal the Control icon, then tap this to access the Portrait Enhancements panel.

### 3 SMOOTHLY DOES IT

LUCID detects subject "flaws" and adjusts them automatically, but it's worth tweaking each of the settings individually. The key controls for getting skin looking good are Perfectly Smooth, Blemish Removal and Shine Removal. Wrinkles and laughter lines becomes softer and skin starts to glow. Don't overdo it, though.



### 4 ADJUSTING SHAPE

The Face Contouring control can make your subject look slimmer by morphing the sides of their face inwards to make the cheekbones more defined. Adjust the slider to give the level of effect that you want. It can be helpful to tap the option at the bottom of the screen to turn the effect off so you can see the scale of the impact.

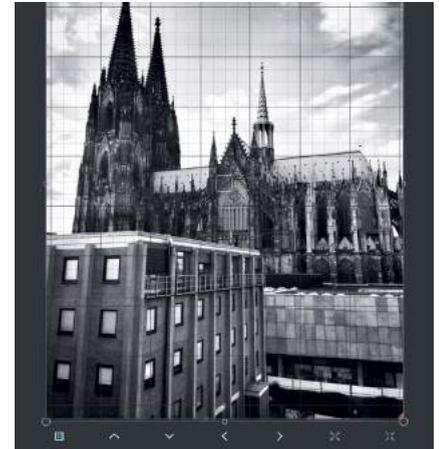
### 5 MAKE TEETH GLEAM

Now to save a fortune in dentist fees and use the Teeth Whitening feature. Adjust the sliding control until the teeth look good. Frustratingly, tooth-detection is automatic, so it won't always apply the effect where you want it. When it does detect teeth, take care not to push the slider too far and create teeth that glow unnaturally.

### 6 THE EYES HAVE IT

The Eye enhancements are fairly self-explanatory. Take particular care with the Eye Enlarge option to avoid making your subject look like Gollum. The Catchlights control gives eyes a little sparkle that can really lift a portrait, while the Dark Circles feature brightens the area under the eyes.

## HOW TO | USE SKEW TO BANISH DISTORTION & STRAIGHTEN BUILDINGS



### 1 WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

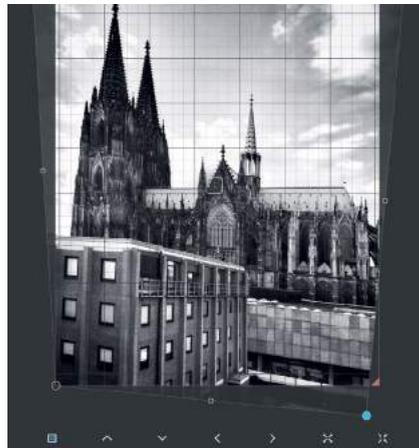
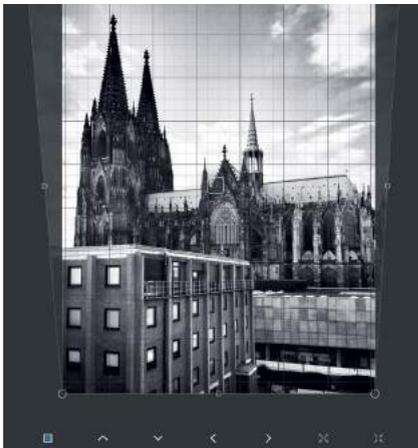
When a camera is held at an angle to a building - tipped up or down, rather than perfectly straight-on - a phenomenon known as "converging verticals" occurs in the image. This is where the top of the building looks smaller than the bottom. Unless you're using it for effect, images look better when it's corrected.

### 2 REACH FOR THE SKEW

Although it can't work in full-resolution mode as an extension, SKEW is useful for correcting converging verticals, flipping images, leveling horizons and so on. To stop a building looking like it's toppling over, the first step after opening SKEW's tools is to tap the icon third from the right at the bottom of the screen.

### 3 SELECT THE CORNERS

Your image will now be surrounded by a frame with dots at the corners. The dot at the top-left corner will be blue to indicate it's selected. Simply tap another corner once to select it. To select an edge, tap the small box at the center of the edge line. Tapping the box at the center of the image selects all four corners together.



### 4 AND... STRETCH

To correct converging verticals, select the top corners one at a time and drag them outwards so that the top of the building looks the correct size relative to the bottom. In many cases you'll want to move the corners out without moving them up or down, so it can be useful to use the arrows at the bottom of the screen.

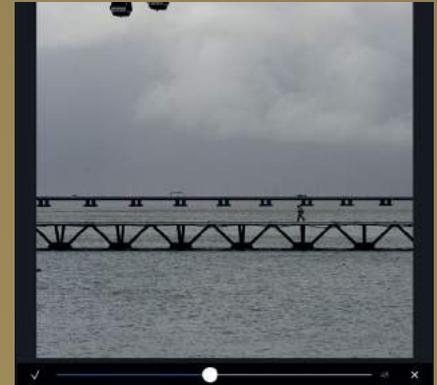
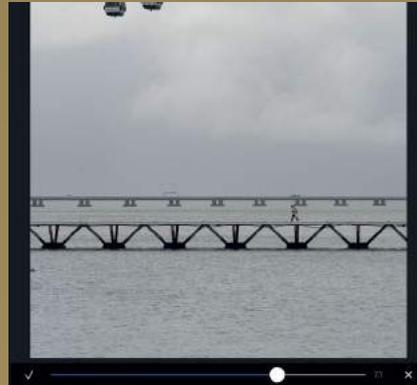
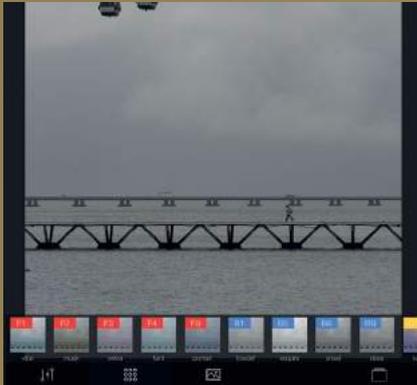
### 5 DRAG IT INTO SHAPE

You may want to select the side edges and drag them up or down to correct other issues. Here we've made the roof of the cathedral level by dragging the right side down - this couldn't be achieved satisfactorily with the level tool, because it rotates the whole image. Once you're happy, tap the green check mark at the top right.

### 6 CROP TO FINISH

Tap done (top right) to confirm the adjustments and then use Photos' Crop tool to crop out any blank areas at the edge of the image. Drag the corners or the edges of the Crop selection box to exclude the blank spaces and create a composition that you like. Tapping the box in the corner reveals a selection of aspect ratios that can be used.

## HOW TO | ADD PUNCH BY BOOSTING IMAGE CONTRAST IN FOTOROOM



**1 EVERYTHING IS FLAT AND DULL**  
Sometimes images look dull and washed out because they lack contrast and the areas that should be black or white are actually gray. This can be improved dramatically using Fotoroom to set black and white points and boost contrast. Open its extension, and tap the icon in the bottom-left corner.

**2 CREATE SOME WHITE**  
Swipe the controls left to reach Whitepoint and tap to open the sliding control. By default the value is set to 100; slide the dot left to reduce the value and lighten the image until the brightest areas are white. Then tap the check mark to reveal the main controls and tap the Blackpoint icon.

**3 MAKE SOME BLACKS**  
This time the default setting is zero and as you slide the control dot to the right the image will get darker. If you want you can tap the check mark to apply the edit and open the Whitepoint control again to give it another tweak, going back to the Blackpoint again if necessary. Soon, your image will be full of depth and contrast.

## HOW TO | MAKE WHITES WHITE AND COLORS RIGHT IN PROCAM 3

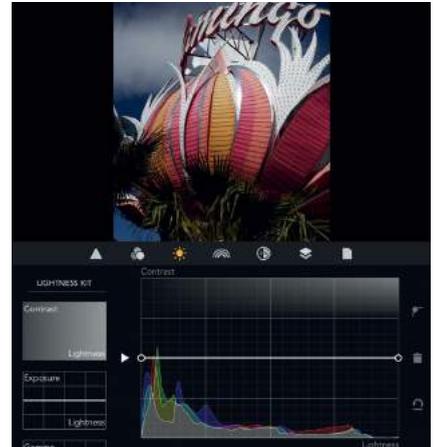


**1 WHITE BALANCE**  
Some lighting conditions create a color cast, which can be corrected using the White Balance controls in ProCam 3. Open its extension, and tap the Control icon at the bottom left of the screen. WB denotes White Balance while the droplet icon accesses Color Balance, which is useful for more dramatic changes.

**2 DRAG TO ADJUST**  
With the White Balance option selected, drag right on the scale to apply a negative value and make the image look cooler, or drag left to apply a positive number and make the image look warmer. As soon as you make an adjustment, a circular undo icon appears in place of the White Balance icon.

**3 COLOR ADJUSTMENTS**  
When Color Balance is selected, tapping on the red, green or blue dots allows you to adjust the color channels. A positive number for any of those colors increases their visibility in the image while a negative number increases the amount of their opposite colors: cyan, magenta and yellow respectively.

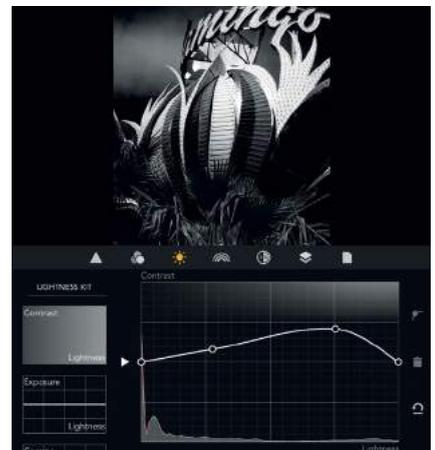
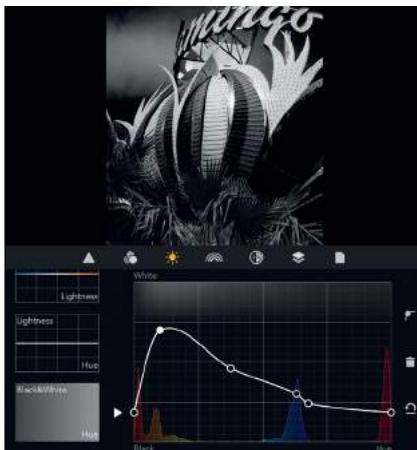
## HOW TO | MAKE PRO-LOOKING BLACK AND WHITE IN MAXCURVE



**1 MAKE A DUPLICATE**  
Although you can undo edits in Photos by tapping Edit followed by Revert, it's a good idea to create a duplicate before making dramatic changes to an image. To do this, select the image in Photos and tap the Share icon at the top of the screen before tapping the duplicate option at the bottom of the screen.

**2 WHY USE A CURVE?**  
There are lots of apps that convert a color image to monochrome, but few give you any control over how the conversion is made. MaxCurve gives you the type of control that professional photographers demand, allowing you to adjust the brightness and mix of the colors that make up the scene.

**3 MAKE IT MONO**  
After opening MaxCurve, tap the sun icon to access the "Lightness Kit." Scroll down to the bottom of the column of graphs on the left and tap on the Black&White graph to make a basic conversion and turn the shot monochrome. The larger graph will now show colored peaks that represent the colors that make up the original scene.

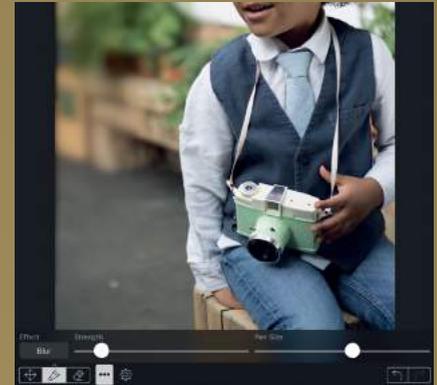


**4 BEND THE LINE**  
You now have control over the brightness of the areas of each color. To darken the reds as we have here, just tap the line near the red peak in the histogram and drag it down. Areas in cyan (red's opposite color) will stay at their original brightness but areas in-between will be adjusted a little.

**5 SHAPE THE CURVE**  
Wherever you tap on the line (aka curve) of the graph, you create a new control point that you can drag up to brighten corresponding colors, or down to darken them. Experiment with adding and dragging them. To delete a point, tap it and hit the Trash icon. Use the Undo button to cancel unwanted adjustments.

**6 TWEAK THE CONTRAST**  
If the image needs an adjustment to the contrast, scroll up in the graph column (on iPhone, tap the grid icon for the graph list) and select Contrast. Unlike most contrast controls, this lets you target areas of specific brightness. Raising the right end of the curve increases the contrast of the highlights; the left end increases shadows.

## HOW TO | SOFTEN MESSY BACKGROUNDS WITH QUICK MASK



### 1 DESELECT ANY FACES

Busy backgrounds can be very distracting in an image, but you can make them less obvious by applying blur using Quick Mask. As it opens, Quick Mask automatically detects and selects faces in an image – this is shown as a red square around the face. Simply tap the Deselect All option followed by Next.

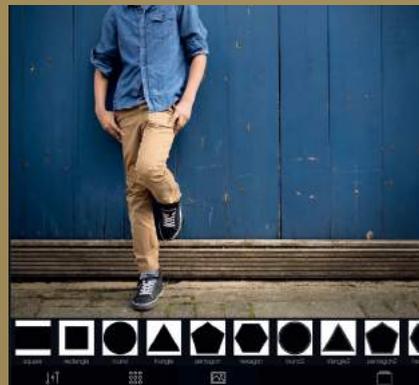
### 2 PAINT IN YOUR SELECTION

With the Blur effect selected, paint in the areas you want to blur using your finger on the screen. Don't go too close to your main subject – vary the brush size using the slider as necessary to avoid this. Increase the strength of the blur until it becomes visible just before the edge of the effect's quick mask.

### 3 SAVE AND REPEAT

Hit Done. Quick Mask saves a copy of the image with the effect applied. If you want to apply more blur, open the new image and edit again, concentrating on the areas further away from the subject. Repeated treatments allow you to build up the blur without having a harsh leading edge where the mask ends.

## HOW TO | MAKE YOUR SUBJECT STAND OUT WITH PHOTOROOM



### 1 FLAWS CAN BE GOOD

Technically, vignetting – also known as corner shading – is created by a flaw in lenses and it's often corrected automatically, but it can also be very attractive, helping to draw attention to your subject. After opening Fhotoroom, tap the control icon in the bottom left of the screen to see the available options.

### 2 DARKEN THE CORNERS

Tap Vignette to open the control and drag the slider right to darken the corners of the image. The amount you need to apply depends upon the image and the location of the subject, if it's over to one side you'll probably need to apply a little less than if it's in the center. Hit the check mark to apply.

### 3 NOW ADD A FRAME

Tap the frame icon at the bottom of the screen to see the options available. There are lots of different shapes on offer, but it's usually best to keep things simple and go for a rectangle. Choose whether to create a white or black border and drag the slider right to increase the size until you are happy.

# Apple Watch apps

Essential apps that work brilliantly on Apple's wearable

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**52** Streets 3

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**53** Cardiogram

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**53** Crafty Family Recorder

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**54** The Hit List

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**55** Return

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**55** TimeTill

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**56** iTranslate 10

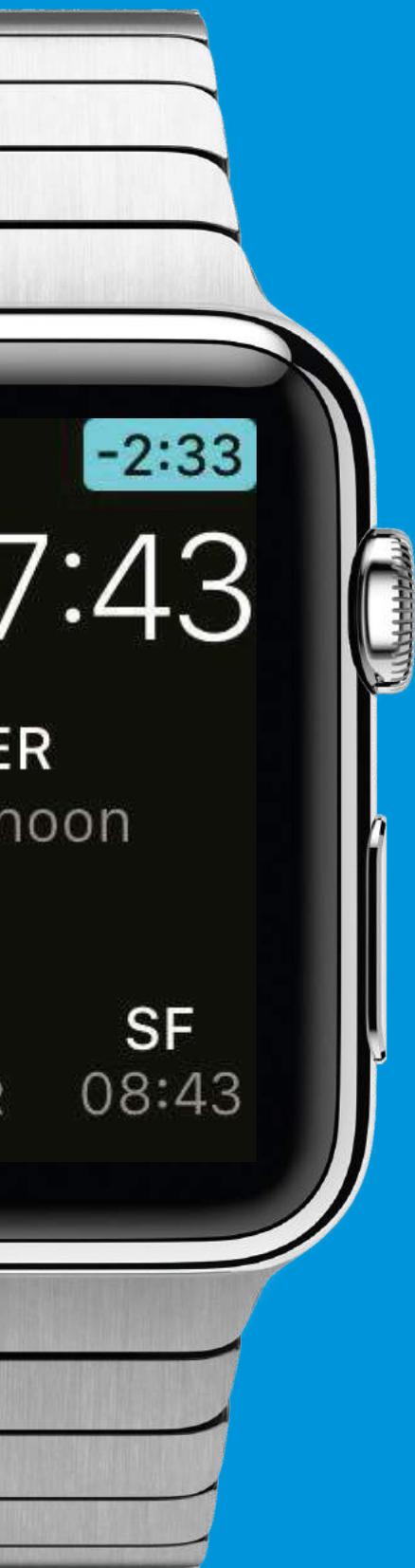
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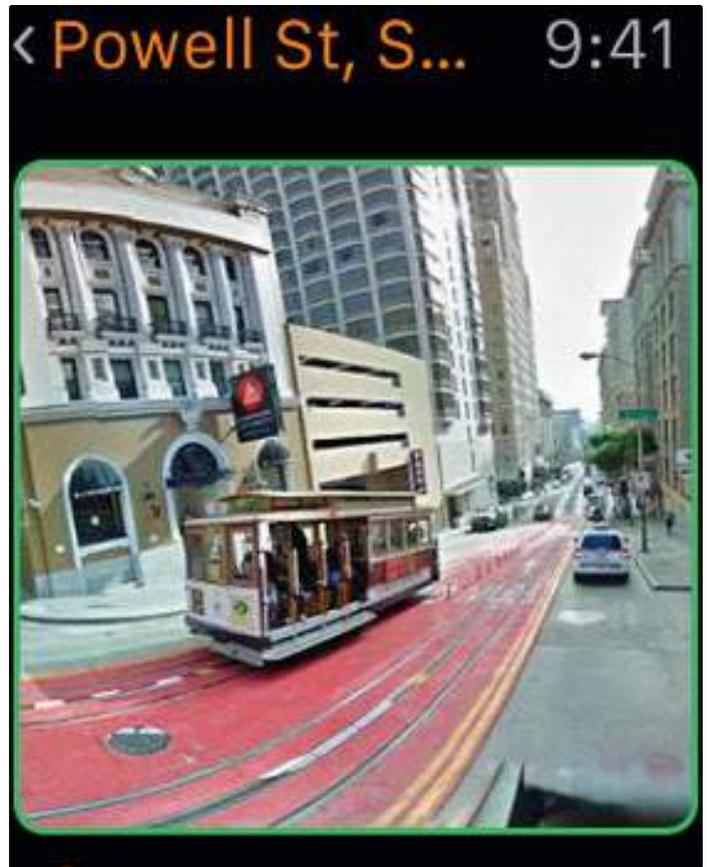
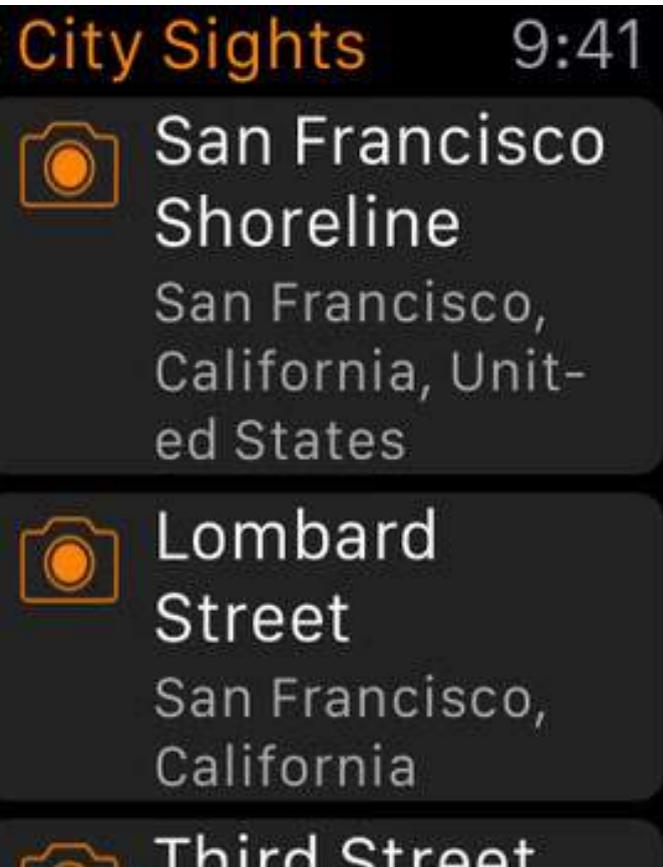
**57** Mapstr

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**57** Episodes







## Streets 3

Bringing the streets to life

**\$1.99** Developer FutureTap, futuretap.com

**Platform** Universal, watchOS **Requirements** iOS 8.3 or later

If the idea of displaying 360-degree Street View panoramas on a wristwatch sounds like some kind of crazy fever dream, guess again. Streets 3 is the only app to date that has risen to the challenge, but it sets the bar so high, it's hard to imagine future contenders doing it much better.

Naturally, the first hurdle for developer FutureTap is convincing folks to pay good money for something they can already get free with Google Maps – but even ignoring Apple

Watch support, Streets 3 is well worth the money, because it's dedicated entirely to Street View.

For starters, on iPhone, iPad, or iPod touch, Streets 3 can be summoned directly from Apple Maps by tapping Share > Routing Apps, then selecting the Streets app. This is great for those who miss the days when Google's service powered the default version of iOS's Maps, and want Street View back.

You can also search, view detailed information, save favorites, and select from more

than 1,000 hand-picked Gallery Places, including airports, city sights, entertainment and nature venues, monuments, museums, parks and gardens, science and technology, sports arenas, zoos, and more.

The Watch version of Streets 3 is exceptionally well thought-out, with easy access to Search, Favorites, Recents, and Gallery. Select a location, and its Street View loads in seconds, filling as much of the Watch face as possible. Best of all, you can tap on the thumbnail, then turn the Digital Crown to turn left or right across the panoramic view without needing an iPhone.

**THE BOTTOM LINE.** Against all the odds, Streets 3 impressively delivers Street View – most of it, anyway – to Apple Watch in a very useful package.

# Cardiogram

Get up to speed with your heartbeat

**Free Developer** Cardiogram, cardiogr.am

**Platform** iPhone, watchOS **Requirements** iOS 9 or later

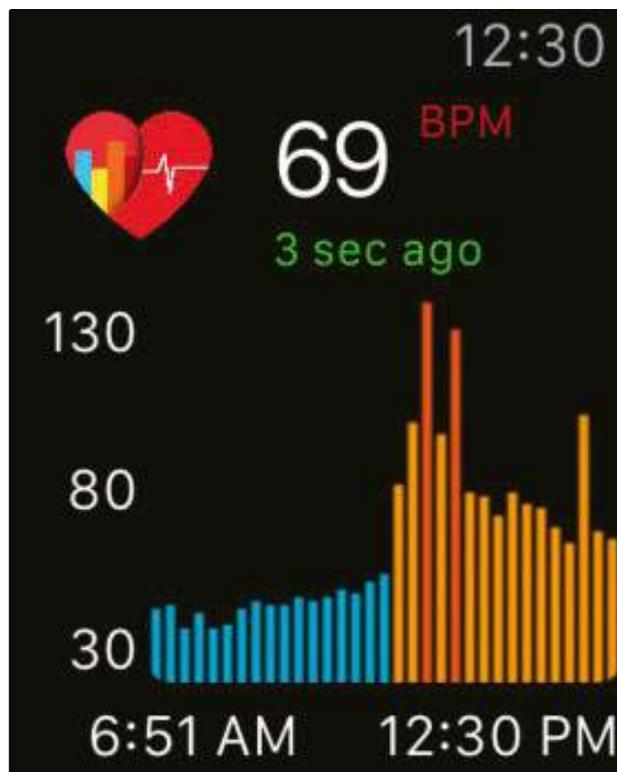
Living with a heart condition is a bit like driving with a blindfold - you don't know you're in trouble until it's too late. A new iPhone app called Cardiogram helps pull back the shroud of mystery about what's going on inside your chest, turning the Apple Watch into a mobile heart-rate monitor.

With Cardiogram, it's easy to visualize how your heart reacts to intense workouts, and compare your resting heart rate against a trio of scenarios (average runner, average biker, and couch potato). Resting heart rate is used as a

key indicator of cardiac health, so being able to record data automatically throughout the day helps illuminate potential problems before they arise.

From the Apple Watch app, Cardiogram provides a real-time look at current and past heart activity. There's also the option to enable a complication that displays beats per minute (BPM) on any compatible watch face; tapping the screen switches to the app's full heart-rate chart.

**THE BOTTOM LINE.** A useful heart-rate checker.



# Crafty Family Recorder

For cute baby moments or secret missions

**\$2.99 Developer** CraftyApps, apps.dinglich.net

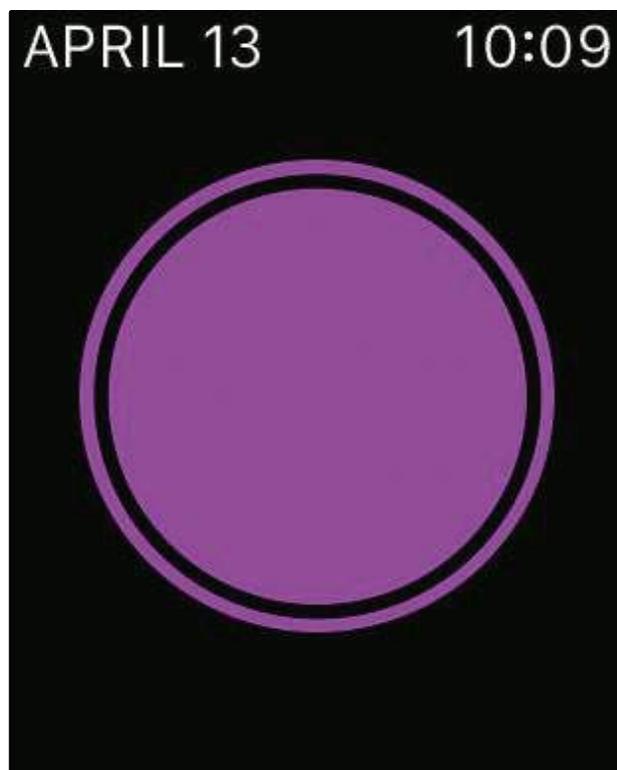
**Platform** Universal, watchOS **Requirements** iOS 8 or later

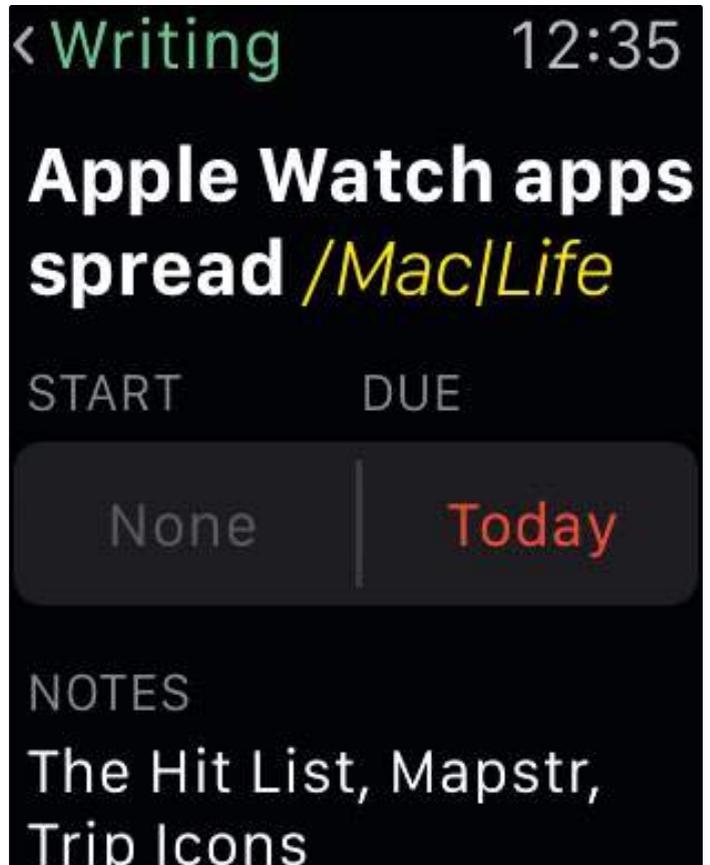
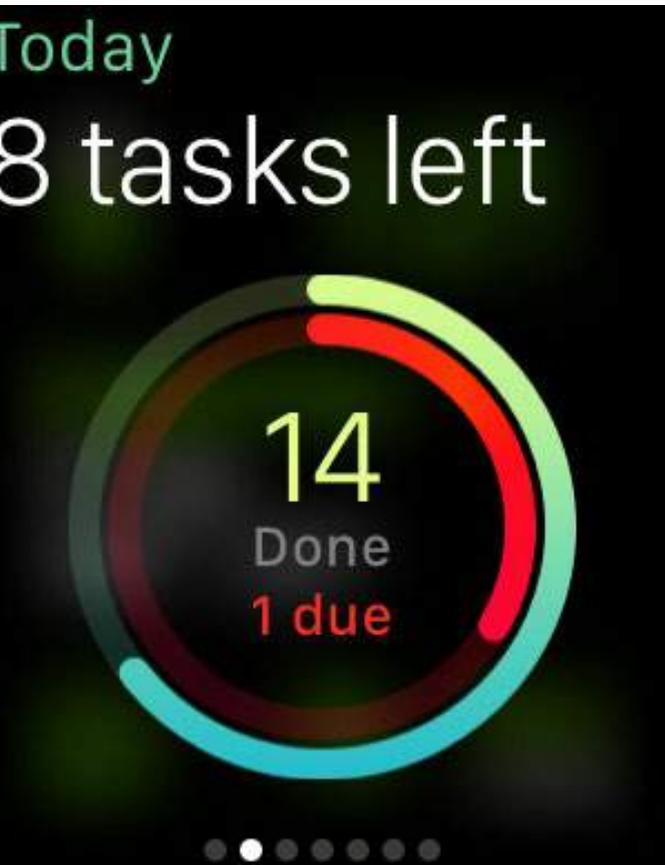
Kids say the darndest things, but it's not always easy to whip out the iPhone or grab an iPad to record them. That's where Crafty Family Recorder comes in - it's like Apple's built-in Voice Memos app, but designed with convenience and sharing in mind.

You can record and play files back right on Apple Watch - even when an iPhone isn't connected. Or use the Watch as a remote control to initiate recording on the iPhone, so there's no need to fumble in your pocket and miss baby's first words.

Back on the iPhone or iPad, you'll be able to rename and trim all of your recordings, view timestamp information, and share directly via AirDrop, email, Dropbox, or other apps installed on the same device. Just be sure to open the iPhone app and do a quick test recording after downloading, otherwise the Apple Watch app will crash since you haven't given the app permission to use the microphone yet.

**THE BOTTOM LINE.** Voice memos receive a slick Apple Watch upgrade.





## The Hit List

To-do: praise this powerful, smart, useful app

**\$19.99 Developer** Karelia Software, [karelia.com](http://karelia.com)

**Platform** Universal, watchOS **Requirements** iOS 9.1 or later

To-do apps are everywhere, but since this one costs significantly more than most others, and especially since the App Store is stuffed with apps like the powerful, free Wunderlist, it had better be pretty special. Happily, it is.

A quick overview of the iPhone app first. You can have multiple lists, grouped into folders, jobs can be tagged (as you go, or by assigning them to tag trees you've already built), and you can view jobs by tags. Set due dates and start dates

and your tasks that need actioning now will show up in a Today view, while others will be in Upcoming. Usefully, tasks can have sub-tasks assigned to them (and they can have sub-tasks assigned to them, and so on) – though the fact that ticking off all sub-tasks marks the main task as done *automatically* might not always be welcome. It syncs with the Mac equivalent too.

On the Watch, you get more than just some dumb, check-off-able list of tasks. Launching

it shows you Today, and tapping one task lets you mark it as completed, push it to tomorrow, or get more information. This screen shows you notes, sub-tasks, and a clever, finger-friendly system for changing the start and due dates.

New events can be added using dictation, though only to the Inbox; you can set dates afterwards on the Watch, but not assign to tags or lists. You have to switch to iPhone for these. There's a Glance, which shows progress through to-dos in Activity-style rings (a bit of coarse approach, granted, but it may well work for some). Annoyingly though, there's no Complication – yet.

**THE BOTTOM LINE.** A great way to keep up with your tasks right from your Apple Watch.

# Return

Dude, where's my car?

**Free Developer** Benjamin Giboudaud, facebook.com/returnapp

**Platform** iPhone, watchOS **Requirements** iOS 9 or later

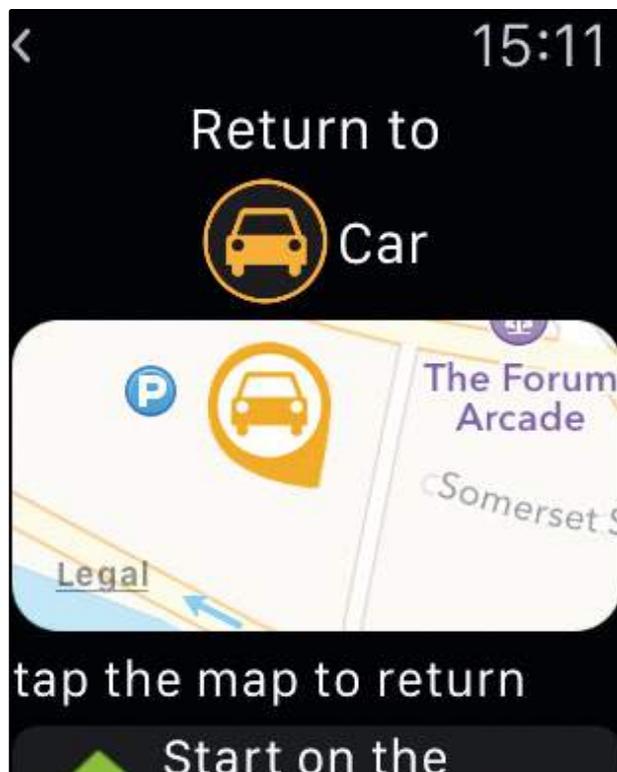
This app does that simple thing of dropping a virtual pin in a location and then giving you turn-by-turn directions back to it using the standard Maps interface - so you get driving/walking/transit options and the Watch wrist-taps, plus the directions also push back to your iPhone. So far, so standard - you could access all that kind of stuff in Maps on your iPhone - but having it on your Watch is useful in more ways than one.

There's a Complication which does nothing more than launch

the app, but from there you can quickly tap a "+" to drop a new pin and assign it an icon; this quick access from the watch face is useful if you need to do this "breadcrumbs" type thing on a frequent basis.

We'd like a compass-like screen for directing us to a car in a big parking lot, say, but without a magnetometer in the Watch, that's impossible.

**THE BOTTOM LINE.** This is just the kind of thing a Watch app should be: simple, and something useful to have on your wrist.



# TimeTill

Drum your fingers with real purpose

**\$2.99 Developer** Film Hubble, rachelhigley.com

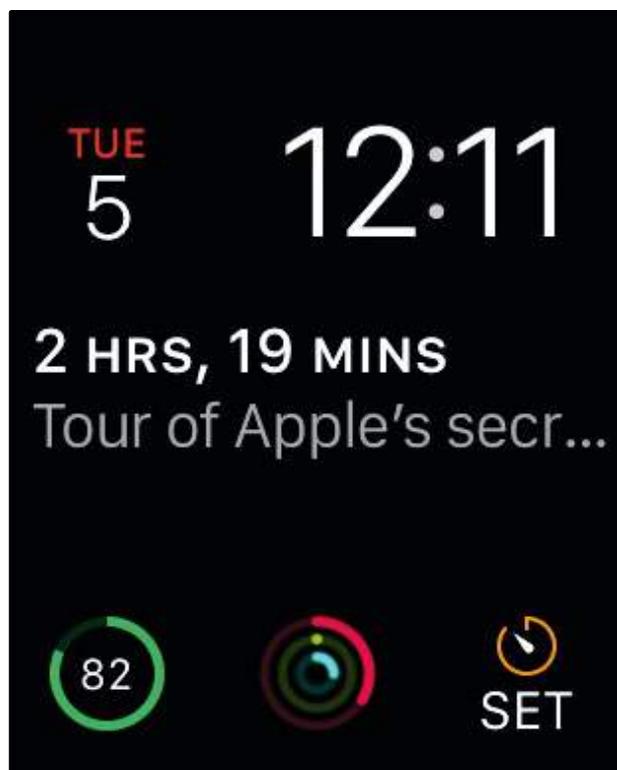
**Platform** iPhone and watchOS **Requirements** iOS 9 or later

Until we adopt a decimal clock system (and, given that the metric system never took off in the US, that doesn't feel likely), calculating how long there is between now and your next calendar event can sometimes be a bit tricky.

"Okay, it's 3:07 now, let's just call it a quarter after three, and my meeting is at 4:45, so that's 3:15, 4:15 - one hour - plus another 30 minutes; so, about an hour and a half, I guess? Oh, but minus the time it took me to work this out?"

This app, which is designed purely to run as a Complication, shows you how long until the next event on your calendar (you pick which calendars it pays attention to on your iPhone), as well as showing the name and location in the big space on the Modular face - though unfortunately the location didn't display for us.

**THE BOTTOM LINE.** Don't hang around - grab this one now. You'll find it very useful for working out what you can squeeze in before your next important appointment.





## iTranslate 10

Going away? Get iTranslate first

**Free Developer** Sonic, [itranslate.com](http://itranslate.com)

**Platform** Universal, watchOS **Requirements** iOS 8 or later

Many of you may have traveled through foreign countries during the dark days before smartphones, missing out on the convenience of having a translation app to communicate with locals. But no more: one of the best around is iTranslate, which recently released a big update that makes it easier to travel abroad, especially in regions where cellular data is spotty or unavailable.

We're talking about offline mode, which allows translations between the most popular

languages, no internet connection necessary. There's also a voice conversation mode available for over 40 languages, and the ability to translate websites using Safari or the in-app browser on iPhone.

But the coolest part is that you can initiate translations directly on Apple Watch, using voice dictation for text entry. Many translations can be played back in their native tongue, and there's even Time Travel support to scroll through previous entries from the watch face

complication, as well as saving recently used languages for faster access next time around.

While most of the features (including support for more than 90 languages) are free, it's worth noting iTranslate 10's coolest new stuff is only available with a paid, recurring Pro subscription (\$2.99 per month or \$19.99 annually). That's technically a step back for existing customers who invested in the previous version's Pro upgrade, although Sonic provides a seven-day trial, and you can always subscribe before heading overseas, then cancel once you arrive back home.

**THE BOTTOM LINE.** Offline, voice conversation, and website translation make iTranslate 10 a must-have, especially if going for the subscription option.

# Mapstr

Build a map of important locations

**Free Developer** Hulab, mapstr.com

**Platform** iPhone, watchOS **Requirements** iOS 7 or later

Building a list of locations and plotting them on a map - restaurants you want to try in your home town, spots you want to visit in the city you're vacationing at next month, client locations for work - is hardly an original idea, but Mapstr does it well. You can add locations on your iPhone by searching around you, by typing (or photographing!) an address, or importing from contacts, Foursquare or even CSV or KML files. Then, on your Watch, you can quickly pull them up and get

pictures and useful information (including opening times, where supported), and Maps-powered directions. Or, on the Watch, tap to save your current location; a little annoyingly, it won't just drop a pin - there *has* to be a point of interest nearby.

This and some other small irritations irk (we'd like to be able to switch between "sets" on the Watch, or tags) but overall it's a great app.

**THE BOTTOM LINE.** We really like Mapstr's approach to personalized mapping.



# Episodes

Let your Watch tell you when to watch

**Free (with IAPs) Developer** DivDev, divdev.se

**Platform** Universal, watchOS **Requirements** iOS 9 or later

It's kinda crazy that, in 2016, with such an explosion of on-demand TV distribution channels, we still frequently tune into broadcast channels to watch our favorite shows. But lots of us do, and if that includes you, Episodes makes it easier.

On your iPhone, search for the shows you love then mark them with a star. With the free version of the app, you can mark up to three; if you want more, you need to sign up for a \$4.99/year subscription. Now, on your Watch, you can either

launch the app to see the upcoming episodes, or if you're a diehard fan, give up the big central area of the Modular face to show details of the next episode (with the air time displayed in your local time zone). And, of course, you get notifications when an episode is about to air. It's powered by tvmaze.com, so it's worth checking the shows you care about are covered.

**THE BOTTOM LINE.** Simple and useful - and the three-show limit might be all you need.



# Apple TV apps

Great things to watch and do on your TV

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**60** Zinc

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**60** VHX

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**61** iHeartRadio

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**61** PhotoWall+

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**62** Sling TV

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**62** Binge

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**63** Underwater Webcam

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**63** Perfect Storm HD

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**64** MathBoard TV

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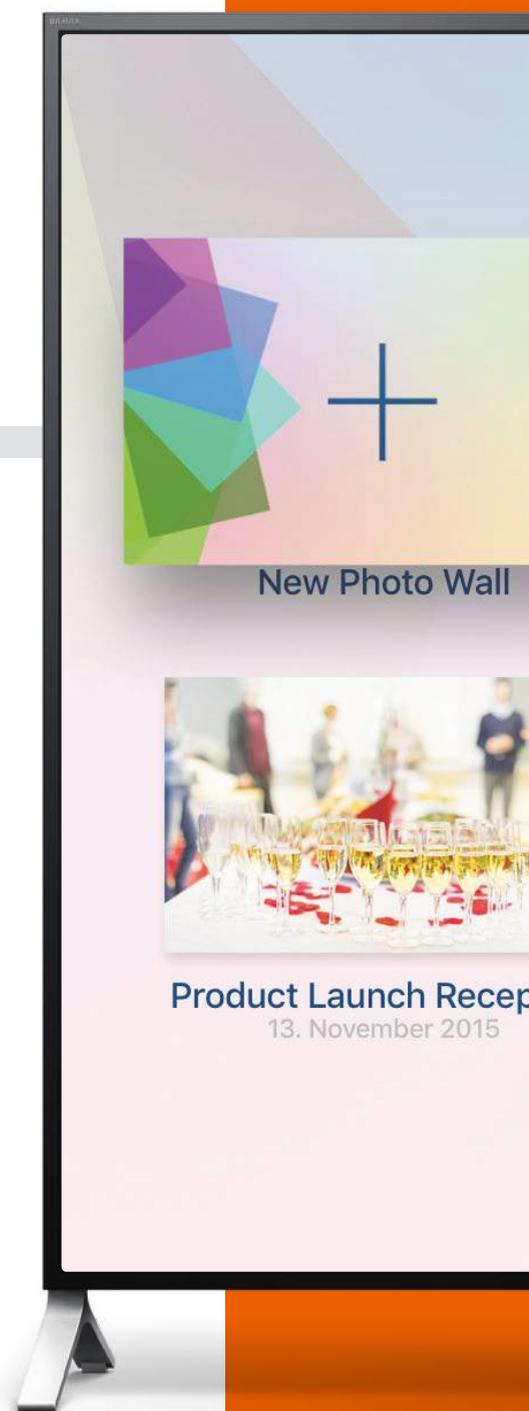
**64** NASA

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**65** Mr. Potato Head: School Rush

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**65** Play Doh Fun



# PhotoWall+

1.0 (1)



**MySchool Prom**  
13. November 2015



**Halloween Party**  
13. November 2015



**Class Progress**  
13. November 2015



**Office Party**  
13. November 2015

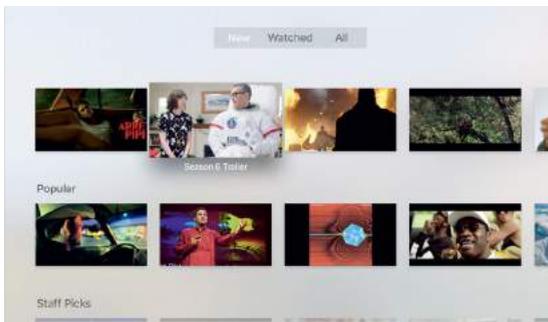
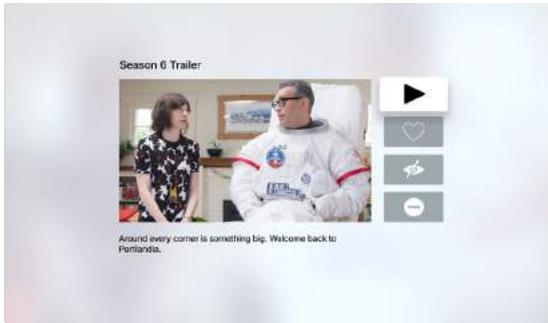


**Wedding Reception**  
13. November 2015



**Birthday Party**  
13. November 2015

SONY



Zinc brings ease and clarity to the cluttered world of video bombardment. Just bookmark a video, let Zinc categorize it

# Zinc

Bookmark videos, watch later

\$2.99

If watching online video is what you crave, Zinc makes it super-easy to bookmark content from all over the internet, then watch them from the comfort of your Apple TV. It's sort of like an Instapaper for videos – forget about saving YouTube links or trying to remember where you saw a funny video, because Zinc wants to become the only app you'll ever need to watch them all. There are a few different ways to bookmark videos: on your iPhone, use the sharing extension to add videos from Safari and other supported apps. There's also a Safari for Mac extension along with bookmarklets for Chrome and Firefox, making it easy to bookmark from whatever platform you happen to be using at the time.

Zinc automatically sorts videos into New, Watched, or All categories, making whatever you want to watch a snap. At any time, you can mark a video as a favorite or change the watched/unwatched status, and the iPhone app features a sharing extension for sending videos to friends.

# VHX

Video distribution for all

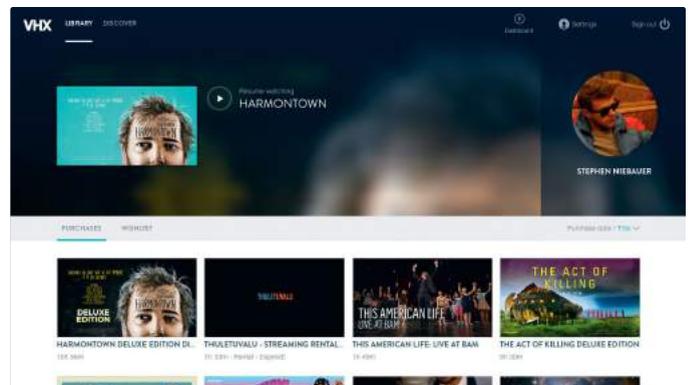
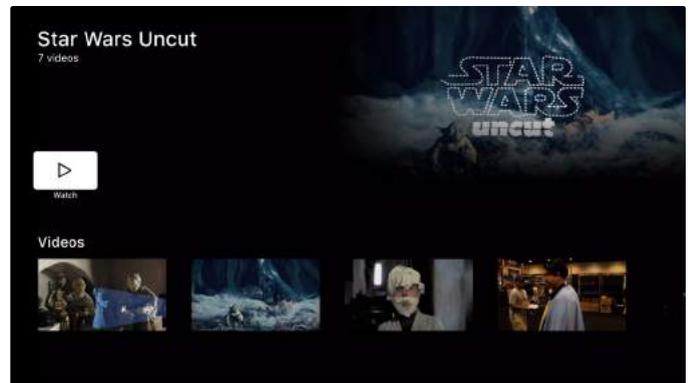
Free

All-you-can-eat subscription services such as Netflix and Amazon Prime are fine for most folks, but some of us have more specific (dare we say cultured) tastes. That's what makes outlets like VHX so interesting – it's a platform where video content providers can create their own Netflix, and rent or sell copies.

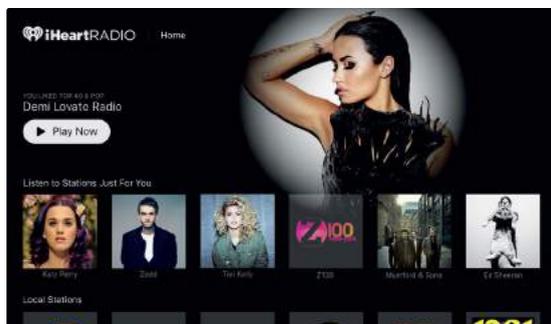
While VHX has had a player app for some time on the iPhone, the upstart company only recently upgraded it with native iPad support and now, at long

last, it's on Apple TV as well. There's not a whole lot to it – log in with your VHX account credentials and there's all of your library content, ready to stream – but for the more than 5,000 sellers and 1.25 million customers, it's a godsend.

VHX is really starting to heat up right now, having been recently acquired by Vimeo, another streaming service with its own self-published, on-demand content as well. There are some fantastic original shows, so download it and see what's out there!



VHX absolutely nails it on both concept and delivery: create your own customized video station.



All your favorites are here. Well, they're all *somebody's* favorites, presumably.

# iHeartRadio

Radio on the TV

Free



Although we still enjoy local radio, there's nothing like the convenience of being able to pull up favorite stations from anywhere – especially halfway across the country, where the signal can't follow. iHeartRadio has always been one of the best iOS apps for doing just that, and now it's landed on the App Store as a native Apple TV app as well.

Whether you prefer exclusive live music events, personalized station recommendations, on-demand podcasts, or My Favorites Radio (which gathers everything to which you've given a thumbs-up in one convenient place), you'll find what you're looking for on iHeartRadio, available direct from your Apple TV – no AirPlay required.

With a library of 20 million songs and 800,000 artists, iHeartRadio covers the entire musical spectrum, including Top 40, pop, country, R&B, news and talk, sports, comedy, alternative, and much more. Best of all, it's always free. If you, uh, heart music and radio, you've heart this.

# PhotoWall+

The party's on your TV

\$4.99



Next time you have guests coming over for a party, make sure they bring their iPhone, iPad, or iPod touch and let the fun begin. Together with a free iOS companion app (sorry, Android users), PhotoWall+ allows partygoers to capture photos of the event and throw them up on the big screen for all to enjoy.

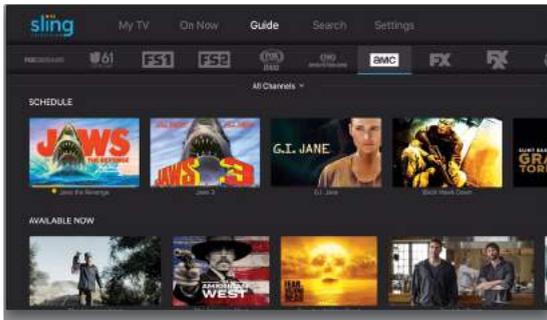
When guests aren't adding new pictures, PhotoWall+ automatically generates a slideshow of everything taken

thus far, complete with your choice of transition. New images get added as they're taken, but you can pause the slideshow at any time using the Siri Remote and manually browse photos at your own pace.

After everyone has gone home, simply log into a web app from any browser to download JPEG files of everything guests shared as a permanent archive of the evening's fun – all without having to worry about chasing them down and nagging them to share their photos with you. Easy and fun!



A really neat idea for Apple TV's coming of age party. Just be prepared for some "Oh no, quick, delete that one... please!"



Over 65 live television channels for your Apple TV. And your iPhone and your Mac. And there's a free trial to try it out, too.

## Sling TV

Live from your Apple TV

Free (subscription required)



Cord-cutters everywhere breathed a sigh of relief at WWDC 2016 when Apple's Eddy Cue announced Sling TV was finally winging its way to Apple TV – and with it, a dizzying array of more than 65 live television channels including ESPN, Disney, HGTV, AMC, TNT, and more.

Apple TV owners start with a seven-day free trial to see what the hype is about, with two different live television packages available priced at \$20 per month. Whether it's movies, news, sports, or kids' shows, Sling TV offers a robust line-up of the most popular channels – and best of all, you're not limited to watching in your living room, because the service also works from your iOS or Android devices, Roku, Amazon Fire TV, or Chromecast as well as Mac and PC.

Of course, not everything is available on Sling TV – there's still no ABC, CBS, or NBC, although an on-demand version of FOX is now included in the core multi-stream beta package.

## Binge

Binge on this Plex alternative

\$4.99



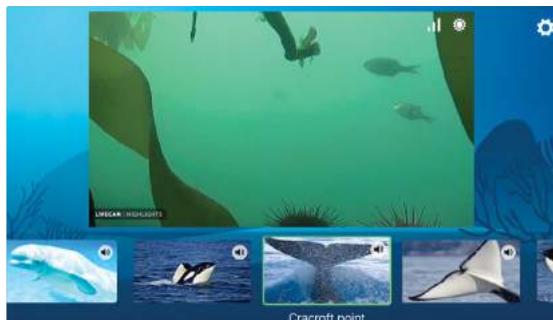
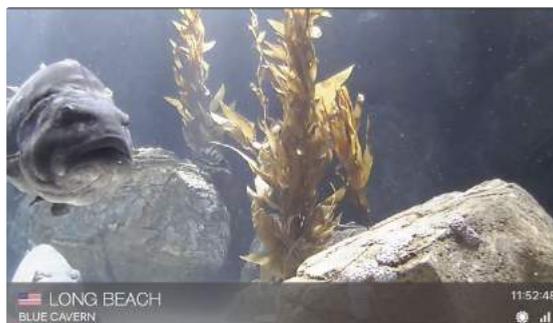
We're big fans of Plex, the home media server/client software that offers movie, TV shows, and music lovers the opportunity to build their own library of digital content free from the shackles of iTunes. While Plex offers its own native Apple TV client, a new app called Binge aims to do it one better by reducing the user interface to a simple list of content. While that may sound like a backwards approach to some viewers, some of us just want to dive in and start watching without all the

fancy cover art and glitz. That's not to say Binge doesn't offer this, but viewers have to scroll through the list of content on the right half of the screen first in order to preview a title.

For now, Binge is limited to only movies and TV shows, but the app can be configured to display only the libraries you want to watch. For TV junkies, there are even options to avoid potential spoilers by hiding episode summaries, along with displaying recently-aired shows at the top of the list. It's a great minimalist experience.



Binge goes big on TV and movies, but keeps things clear and simple. It's a minimalist approach that lets you get right to the content you want.



Just can't get enough of that aquatic action? There's a whole ocean-full to be had here.

## Underwater Webcam

Under the sea, under the sea...

\$1.99



Call us geeks, but we're fascinated with webcam apps that offer a view of something we might never see in real life. That's exactly what you'll get with Underwater Webcam, which explores the "enigmatic and uncharted world" that exists below sea level. Dolphins, jellyfish, coral reefs, and maybe even a shark or two are yours to view!

Now you can sit back and enjoy marine scenery all around the world from the comfort and safety of your living room with magnificent underwater views. Choose high-quality webcams to explore subaquatic worlds in the United States, Canada, Maldives, or France. There's no telling what's going to swim by next, so you'll have to keep watching and find out.

Developer Travel and Play has selected only cities with the best available webcams, allowing you to see what's happening in real time. The experience is strictly for Apple TV, where viewers can appreciate big-screen glory.

## Perfect Storm HD

It was a dark and stormy night...

99¢

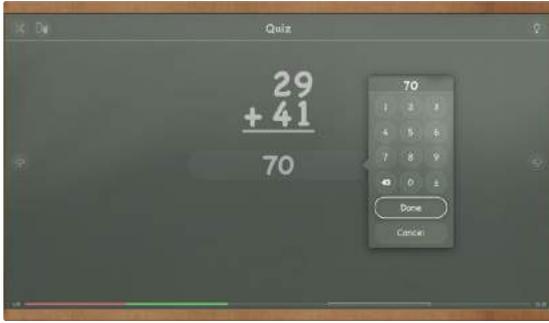


Apple TV is great for consuming cool video content, playing fun games, and even learning, but sometimes all you really want to do is vegetate on the couch and just... stare at something. That's pretty much exactly what Perfect Storm HD was designed for - a single dollar gets you all of the rough ocean, thunder, lightning, and rain visuals your eyeballs can take, accompanied by the requisite sound effects and cinematic, royalty-free background music score provided

by the folks at Incompetech.com. There are only two storm scenes to choose from with a swipe across the Siri Remote: being immersed right in the middle of a rough sea, or buffeted about in choppy waters with a lighthouse just off in the distance. Perfect Storm HD includes separate volume controls for sound effects and music, as well as a sleep timer for dozing off. So if you're getting tired of Apple's slow-moving drone screensavers, grab Perfect Storm HD to spice things up! Quick - somebody find the Dramamine!



The app that will either get you off to sleep or have you running to the medicine cabinet.



We got that last one wrong on purpose. Just for demo purposes, you understand. Yep.

# MathBoard TV

Problem-solving television

\$4.99



Here's an educational Apple TV app that actually grows with your children, starting with simple addition and subtraction problems in kindergarten, all the way through elementary school, where learning multiplication and division truly becomes a challenge.

Parents can configure the app to match the abilities of the individual student, and MathBoard encourages kids to actually solve problems, rather than simply guess at potential answers.

Should they get stuck on a particular math challenge, a handy Problem Solver is ready and waiting to offer assistance whenever the need arises, which walks students through the steps required to tackle addition, subtraction, multiplication, or division equations.

MathBoard could very well be the only homework aide your children ever need for their math work. The app also supports multiple student profiles, so sibling of different ages are catered for separately.

# NASA

Houston, there's no problem here

Free

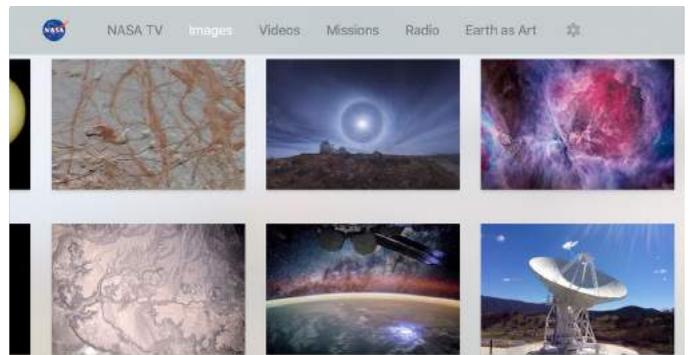


The National Aeronautics and Space

Administration (y'know... NASA) has had an iPhone app forever, but this year we get lovely Apple TV support. It was worth the wait - if you're the least bit interested in science or outer space, this deserves a prominent position on your Home screen. For starters, we have a beautiful live streaming view of Earth from the International Space Station, as well as NASA TV's public and media channels. There's also a library of on-demand videos with more than 10,000 different clips, another 14,000 high-res still

images (and counting), plus a special category called Earth as Art.

Although NASA missions may not be as thrilling now that the Space Shuttle has been decommissioned, enthusiasts can still keep tabs on current events with images, 3D views, and detailed information such as when they were launched. The app also notifies you about upcoming sightings of objects before they happen - perfect for when the ISS makes a pass by your location. Last but not least, chill out to Third Rock, an internet streaming radio channel with an interstellar angle.



If you haven't yet saved up enough to become a space tourist, see the stars for free in the comfort of your own living room with this TV app from NASA.



The rare game where losing body parts is actually okay for kids to view.

# Mr. Potato Head: School Rush

Adventure spud on a mission

\$3.99



If you thought Mr. Potato Head was just a plastic toy, think again! A new interactive storybook called Mr. Potato Head: School Rush brings the character to life as he attempts to get viewers to school on time with hilarious consequences. Mrs. Potato Head has also come along for the ride, adding to the on-screen mayhem with story-driven costume and part changes as kids try to keep both members of the potato family in one piece.

The app includes great cinematic animation and interactive moments, and features eight different locations including the Parts Emporium where the Potato Heads can grab a new hat or switch body parts before embarking on misadventures in the ocean, outer space, a junkyard, construction site, pirate ship, and more! A single purchase also delivers the fun to any iPhone, iPod touch, or iPad connected to your Apple ID.

# Play Doh Fun

By kids, for kids

Free



If your kids like to make stuff with Play-Doh, there's now a free Apple TV app that will keep them busy all summer long doing just that. The aptly-named Play Doh Fun isn't an officially sanctioned Hasbro app, but does offer plenty of ideas and instructional videos on how to turn everyone's favorite flour, water, salt, boric acid, and mineral oil-based modeling compound into all kinds of cool stuff, in a range of categories.

From assembling Play-Doh activity sets to dollcraft and fun

time do-it-yourself projects like a paint set, corn-on-the-cob, and rainbow with a pot-o-gold, the ideas are endless. There's even a video on how to create a smartphone out of Play-Doh, a Pac-Man complete with four ghosts (that was one of our favorites), and of course, a Minion from the popular films.

Many of the videos are hosted by Maria from HappyKids.tv, an exuberant youngster who guides your kids step-by-step through each new creation, and is a great kid-age host for this kind of fun messing around.



Kids can blast through tutorials, easily spending a day just honing their Play-Doh sculpture skills!

# Mac apps

Powerful and flexible apps for your Mac

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**68** Upgrade your Mac apps

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**82** Steward

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**83** Microsoft Office 2016 for Mac

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**84** Reeder 3

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**85** Launchey

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**85** iconStiX

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**86** Serif Affinity Photo

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**87** Adobe Premiere Elements 14

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**88** Paintstorm

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**89** RapidWeaver 7

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**90** Studies

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**91** Keyboard Maestro 7

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**91** Loopback

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**92** Chronicle 6

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**93** Home Inventory 3.5

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**94** Dragon for Mac

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**95** Paragon Hard Disk Manager

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**95** Gemini 2

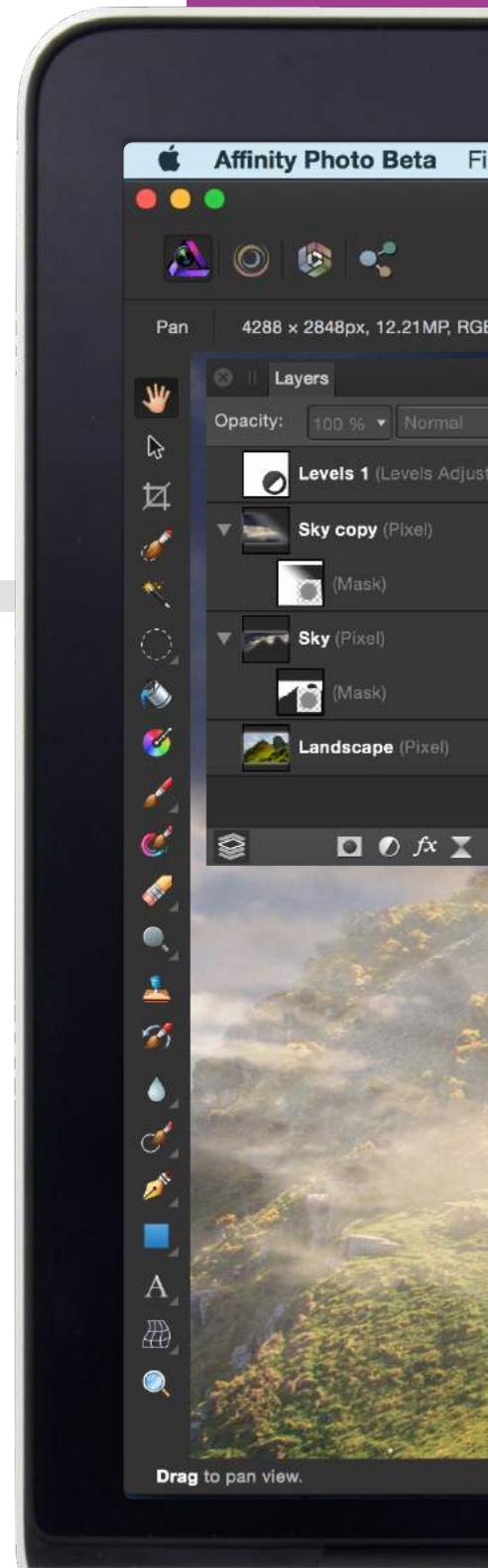
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**96** Hazel

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**96** MacScan 3

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File Edit Text Document Layer Select Arrange Filters View Window Help

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BA/8 - Adobe RGB (1998)

NIKON D300S (AF-S DX VR Zoom-Nikkor 18-105mm f/3.5-5.6G ED)

Units: Pixels

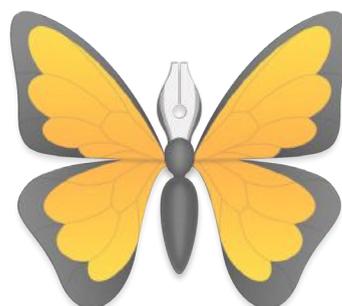




# UPGRADE



# MAC





# YOUR



# 22

# A-PPS



Get more from your Mac with these great alternatives to OS X's default apps

**E**ver wondered if there's something better than Apple's Mail, more capable than Calendar, or superior to Safari? This feature looks at the most-used Mac apps and shows you how to power up OS X with better third-party alternatives. Some are free, but we don't shy away from those

with a price; our choices are genuine enhancements for your Mac.

Preinstalled software has existed as long as there have been home computers, but the truth is many people today rarely venture further. That's not surprising when you think about it – after all, the modern Mac comes supplied with all the basics you need to perform all manner of tasks, from organizing your day to navigating files.

However, as much as Apple has improved its apps over the years through various updates

to OS X, developers have sought to plug gaps, fill niches, and try new things. Often, the result is software to thrill a dedicated few, but sometimes the end result is accessible and powerful enough to warrant serious consideration by anyone. Some aren't cheap, but as we'll show you, apps such as Fantastical are really worth it.

We'll explore apps to replace Calendar, Mail, Safari, Notes, Finder, TextEdit, and more. With them, you'll be able to work more efficiently, save time, and have a more fulfilling Mac experience.





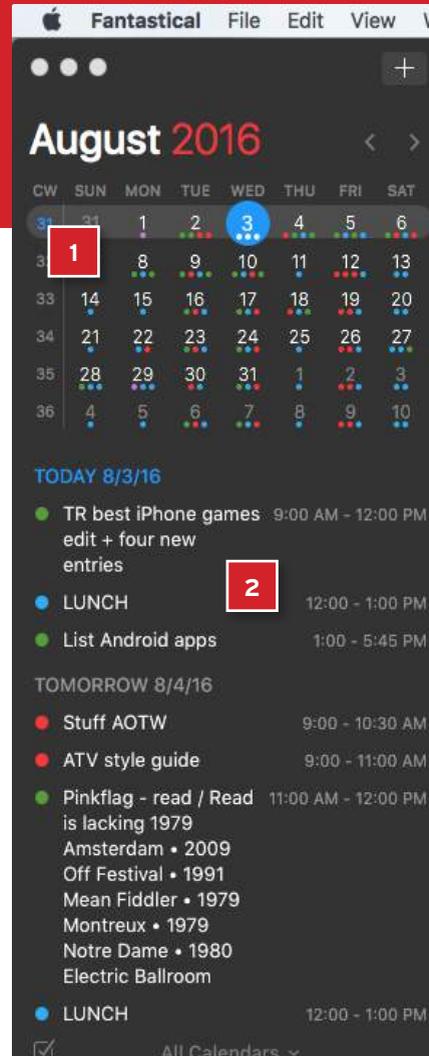
# Fantastical

Get a smarter calendar to help manage your busy schedule

**U**NLESS YOU have the memory of several elephants and are the most organized person around, it's likely that you make use of a digital calendar. Apple's own Calendar is a good app in this field. It's easy to use, has a design that marries clarity and elegance, and is mostly reliable. On that basis, you might wonder why you would need to upgrade to something else, but any doubts you have will

disappear as soon as you start using Fantastical.

The app started out differently from most of its rivals, which tend to be very traditional in nature. Instead, Fantastical lived in the menu bar and doubled down on natural language input. Rather than having you laboriously input details into various fields, Fantastical encourages you to type as if talking to an assistant, interpreting your words and extracting >>>



## 1 THE MONTH CALENDAR

>>> At the top of the sidebar is a small calendar. Unlike in Calendar, there's no way to see several of these at once, but you can use the arrows or swipe two fingers left or right when the pointer's over the mini-calendar to preview a different month. Colored dots under a date indicate events on it from specific calendars. Only three dots can be shown under a date, regardless of how many events are scheduled that day.



### CALENDAR

- + Comes free with your Mac
- + Clean, easy-to-use interface
- + Easy to toggle each calendar's visibility
- No list view of events
- Reliant on Notification Center for quick glances

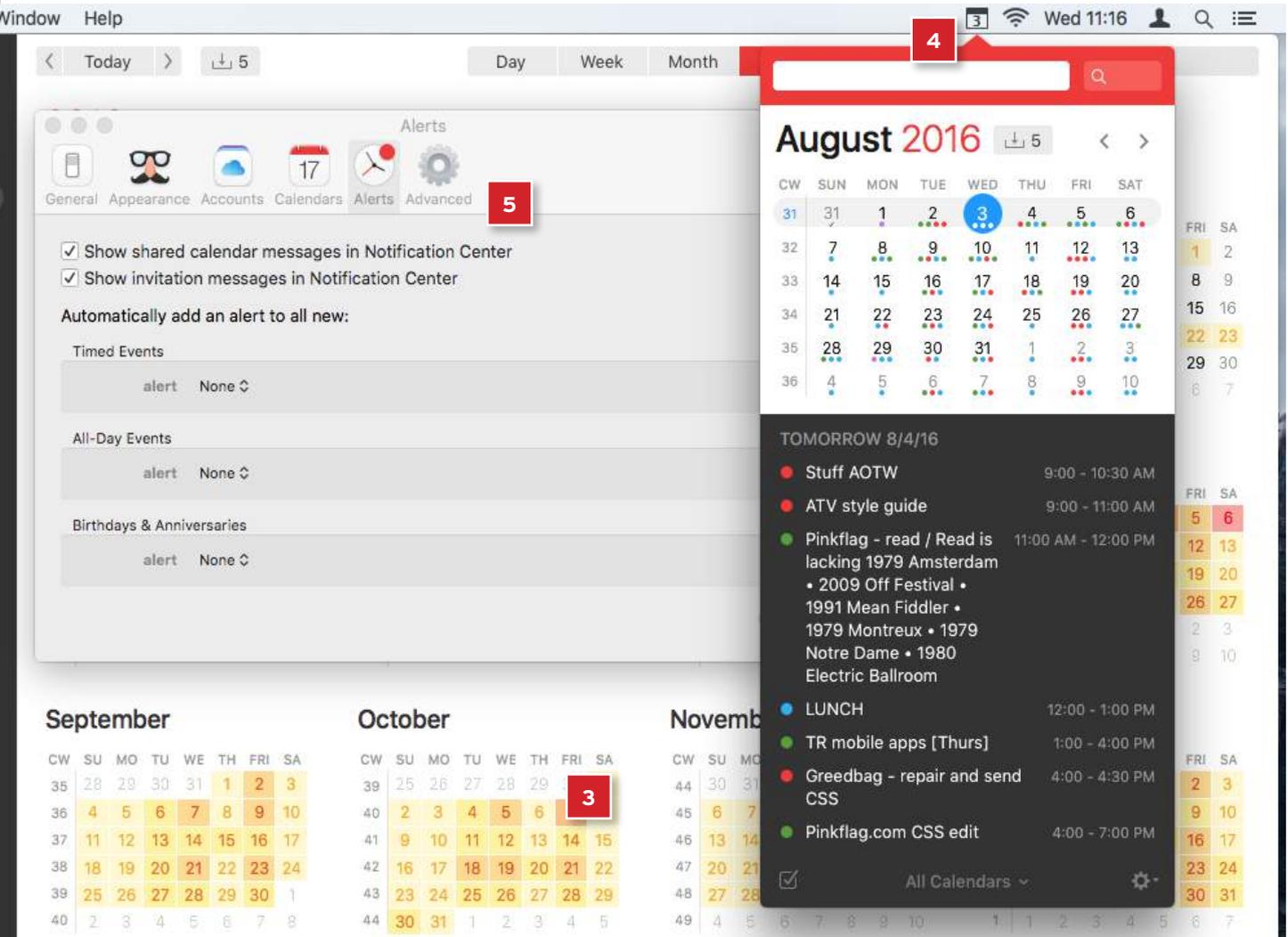
Calendar is preinstalled on every Mac. It's a smart, slick, modern-looking app, and it's usable too, providing several views of your schedule, and strong integration with Apple's iCloud service to sync data between all your devices.



### FANTASTICAL

- + Excellent natural language input for events
- + List view for quick browsing
- + Speedy access in menu bar
- Not cheap, and iOS version's a separate purchase
- No mini-calendars

Fantastical 2 is a true rival to the Calendar app, with plenty of innovations, such as displaying all your events in a sidebar, a menu bar icon to quickly find things, and calendar sets that can show or hide based on your location.



## 2 A LIST OF YOUR EVENTS

»» Fantastical's List view is an endlessly scrolling ticker that makes it far easier to see your day's events and those that are upcoming. It's linked to the main view on the right, so moving the Week view a couple of weeks into the future will update the list too. Similarly, scroll the list and the main view adjusts. You can set it to show only events from today or today and tomorrow in the app's Appearance preferences.

## 3 AN OVERVIEW OF THE YEAR

»» Like Calendar, Fantastical's Year view provides a heat map, intended to show at a glance how busy you're going to be on any given day. Light yellow days have few events. Those that are red should probably be investigated, in case you can reschedule something. Unlike Calendar, you don't have to click a date to see what's scheduled. Put the pointer over one to get a quick preview of events.

## 4 THE MINI WINDOW

»» The Mini Window starts life in the menu bar. Click Fantastical's icon there to gain insight into some upcoming events, a month calendar (which defaults to the current one), and the means to add a new event by double-clicking a date or search for an existing one by clicking and typing at the top. Click the cog icon (bottom right) and choose Detach Mini Window to make it float above other windows.

## 5 FANTASTICAL'S PREFERENCES

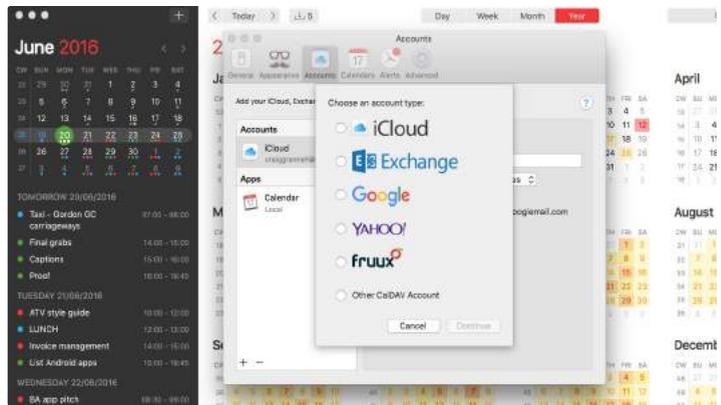
»» Fantastical's preferences contain many ways to tailor the app. In General, you can pick a default calendar and reminders list for new items. Under Calendars, you can create calendar sets to pick which are visible in one click, or when you arrive at or leave a location. In Alerts, pick which go to Notification Center, and set default times. In Advanced, you can adjust options relating to maps and time zones.

the details on your behalf. This level of convenience made it a must-buy for a large number of Mac users, many of whom had enjoyed its charms on iOS.

**A NEW LEASE OF LIFE**

With version 2, Fantastical grew up. Rather than being an accessory to Apple’s Calendar, the app’s developer decided it was instead time to replace it. Now, we have an app that betters Apple’s in almost every way. Fortunately, Fantastical hasn’t lost touch with its roots. Although it’s now a full app, Fantastical’s menu bar component remains, providing you with fast access to the month’s calendar and upcoming events, along with the ability to input details for a new event or search for an existing one.

Fantastical’s menu bar icon proves useful, too; it shows today’s date by default, but you can optionally add the weekday



Fantastical works with your existing iCloud calendar and reminders data, as well as other popular services.

or month, or set it to detail today’s remaining events or incomplete tasks. The menu can be invoked with a click, or by pressing **⌘+Alt+Spacebar**. (You can edit this shortcut in the app’s General preferences.)

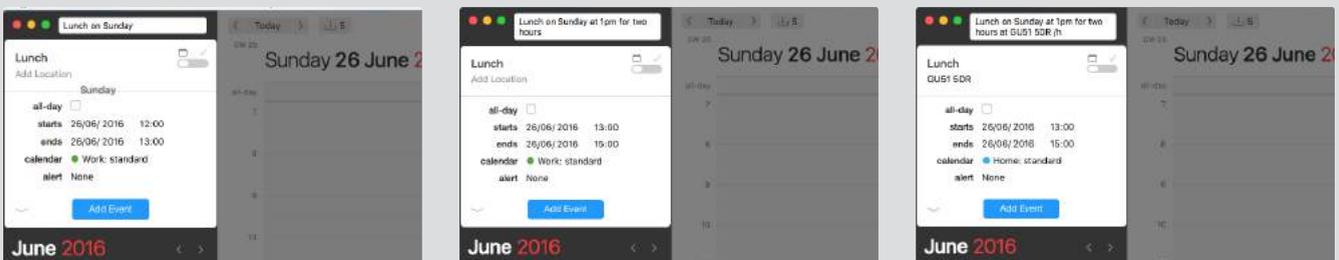
**THE BIG PICTURE**

Fantastical’s main window, is more like Apple’s app – with day, week, month, and year views – though with a large

sidebar on the left. The sidebar houses a small calendar that initially shows the current month, beneath which is a list that summarizes your events.

That list is the other big benefit over Calendar, since it gives you a very quick and easy way to scroll through upcoming events; this offers focus compared to scanning events across many days on a traditional calendar. However,

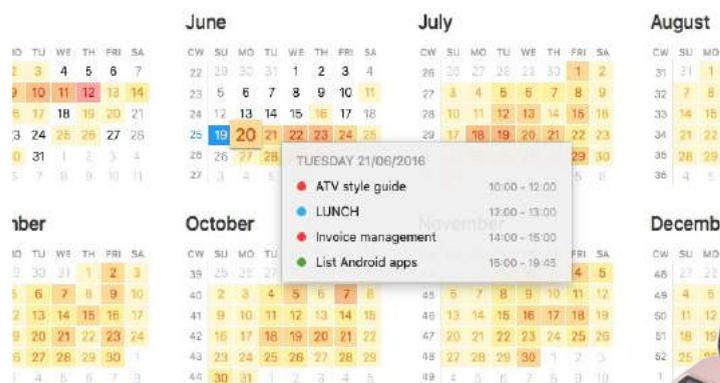
**HOW TO | ADD AN EVENT USING PLAIN LANGUAGE**



**1 CREATE A NEW EVENT**  
Set Fantastical to its Day view. Click the + above the sidebar to start a new event and type “Lunch on Sunday.” The main calendar dims and the event is highlighted there, updating as you type.

**2 ADD A TIME & DURATION**  
Next, add “at 1pm for two hours”. These details are automatically added to the “starts” and “ends” fields in the card below the input area, and the Lunch event on the main calendar adjusts too.

**3 REFINE IT FURTHER**  
Optionally, add a location and an alert, such as “alarm one hour before”. Assign the event to a calendar by typing a slash and the calendar’s name - one letter often works, such as “/h” for “home.”



In Fantastical's Year view, place the pointer over any date to get a preview of the events scheduled for it.

the sidebar and main view are linked to each other, so selecting something on one updates the other, ensuring both are zeroed in on the same event. Each view therefore actually reinforces the other, providing useful context.

### MAKE A DATE WITH DESTINY

You can add new events from either part of Fantastical's window – the process for doing so in the sidebar is outlined in the guide to the left. In short, you can often type a description of an event like you would say it out loud, and Fantastical will understand what you mean. Calendar makes a stab at doing this, too, but isn't as smart regarding nuance and details. For example, "Meet Christian at 11am at Starbucks for two hours on Friday, and set an alarm 30 minutes before" works perfectly in Fantastical. In Calendar, the meeting's duration is reduced to an hour and lacks the alarm, which you then have to set manually. This isn't to say Fantastical gets everything right every time, because it doesn't. But,

experiment a bit and, where necessary, learn its vocabulary and you'll find it's a great timesaver and far superior to Calendar for adding events using plain language.

### SET UP FOR SUCCESS

Another area in which Fantastical beats Apple's app is calendar management. To be fair, the latter is simpler, listing all your calendars in its sidebar, where you can show or hide them individually based on what you need to see.

With Fantastical, the process is more involved, but it can be automated in an interesting manner. In the Calendars section of the app's

preferences, you can turn on and off individual calendars, and you can also create calendar sets, which enable you to show or hide several at once. You can switch between sets manually in View > Calendar Sets, using the pop-up at the bottom of the sidebar (or using the keyboard shortcuts listed there), or automatically, based on your location. So, you can arrive at work and have your office calendars ready and waiting, go home and see your personal ones and, we guess, go on vacation and occasionally stare at a calendar that states "Vacation! Yay!" as an all-day event every day for your blissful time away.



The calendars you see can be activated based on your current location.



# Airmail

Use this Mail replacement to sort, compose, and manage email with ease

**A**LTHOUGH IT has plenty of options, Apple's Mail feels quite rigid in use. The main reason to switch to Airmail ([airmailapp.com](http://airmailapp.com)) is that it's so flexible and accounts for people with vastly different ways of working with email. Also, its wealth of options make it extremely efficient for blazing through bulging inboxes, throwing yourself with joyful abandon towards the great promised land of Inbox Zero.

It all starts with browsing your messages. This works in much the same way as in Mail, enabling you to sort your inbox by various criteria, such as sender, subject, or date;

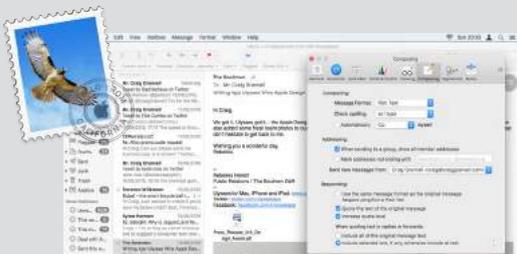
unlike Mail, keyboard shortcuts are already assigned for these, speeding things up a little. Airmail goes further, though, with a set of filters that make life a bit easier. For example, you can quickly hone the list to just messages with attachments (although, sadly, you can't just browse the attachments on a grid view – we really hope the developer will add this in a future version). It's also possible to show or select all of the emails in your inbox that are from the same sender.

When it comes to actually dealing with your messages, Airmail provides a wealth of tools. Actions can be assigned to gestures and inputs. There

are left and right swipes for quick gesture control of your messages, just like in Mail, but also four buttons that sit at the top of the Message Detail pane; a few keyboard shortcuts can have actions assigned to them as well. With a little setting up and development of muscle memory, you can quickly fire through your inbox unsubscribing from mailing lists, bouncing spam messages, archiving email, and uploading documents. (Airmail can be linked to cloud services, so you can send attachments directly to the likes of Dropbox or an FTP server, or even save entire messages to Evernote.)

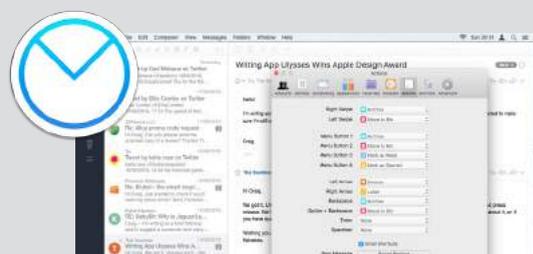
## COMPARISON OF APPLE MAIL AND AIRMAIL

### MAIL



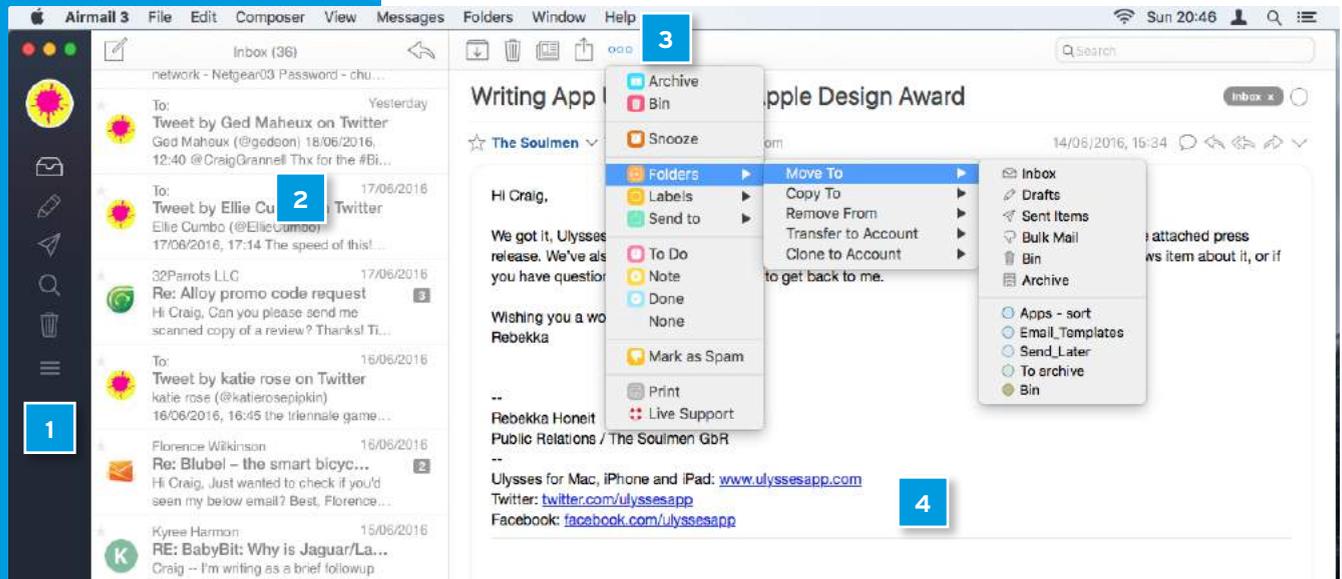
>>> Apple's Mail is a usable and somewhat customizable email client. You can add plugins to extend its functionality, and fiddle around with the interface to make it more suitable for you. It is, though, somewhat rigid in how you work with email.

### AIRMAIL



>>> Airmail feels like a more modern app than Apple's, partly due to its iOS-inspired design. Still, this is a proper Mac app, fully utilizing tools such as keyboard shortcuts, and with plenty of power and features if you want to do more than Mail allows.

## A QUICK TOUR OF AIRMAIL



**PLUG IN FOR PRODUCTIVITY**  
Airmail also has a task-based approach to email, although these features are optional. You can mark a message as a “to-do” (needs action), a “memo” (something to memorize or stash), or “done.” If you don’t have time to deal with something right now, but don’t want it in your face, the relevant message can be snoozed instead. Also, if you’re a fan of fully fledged task managers, you can send messages their way instead.

Airmail has plenty to offer above and beyond Apple’s app where composition is concerned, too. Although Mail gives you the capability to format messages (something Airmail broadly matches in terms of text styles and font access), Airmail interestingly lets you type in Markdown, with a

split-screen live preview of how your message will appear as you do so. This is a niche feature, of course, but it’s something that will be welcome if you’re one of those people who lives and breathes Markdown, and so find yourself adding a hash symbol before a heading in Mail before sadly realizing the app is not Markdown-aware.

**1** >>> The accounts (shown) and folders columns can be hidden entirely. When expanded, the latter shows your folders, or mailboxes. You can pick the icon that’s used for an account.

**2** >>> The inbox’s appearance is defined by the Theme option in the Appearance preferences. You can toggle whether emails are threaded by conversation, and apply filters to the list.

**3** >>> Up to four action buttons can be set up in this bar. Additional options are accessible by clicking the ellipsis (three dots) to the right of the four.

**4** >>> The message detail pane is optional. Message threads are collapsed by default, but you can alter this by turning on “Expand Conversations” in the app’s Appearance prefs.

```
# Super big title
## Writing email like it's a magazine article

Airmail enables you to write emails in Markdown, which is:
- Fab
- Groovy
- Really neat.

At least if you like writing in Markdown. The live preview's handy, too.
```

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Airmail enables you to style the text in your messages using Markdown syntax and see a live preview of it.

# Google Chrome

A better way to browse if you're not monogamous with Apple



**W**HICH WEB browser is best for you to some extent comes down to the type of person you are. Safari's a solid choice on the Mac – broadly dependable and well-integrated into the operating system. Also, if you're wedded to the Apple ecosystem, there's sense in sticking with it to share tabs and data across your Macs and iOS devices through iCloud.

However, not everyone has such a straightforward setup. Perhaps you also use an Android device, a Google Chromebook, or a Windows PC, in which case Chrome ([google.co.uk/chrome](http://google.co.uk/chrome)) is a smart choice for your Mac because it affords you a continuity of experience and data that you'd otherwise miss out on.

If you don't care at all about Google services, there are still two good reasons to consider Chrome. Historically it has been far superior than Safari when it comes to implementing cutting-edge web standards, meaning it's more likely to work with emerging technologies, such as advanced web games. In our experience, Safari works reasonably well with many such titles, but if something doesn't work, chances are it'll be just fine in Chrome – at which point you might well end up wondering if you should just use it full-time.

The other motivation to use Chrome is extensibility. Safari provides support for extensions, but the sheer range of them for Google's browser dwarfs what's available for Apple's. In part, this is due to Google's attempts to make Chrome a viable platform in and of itself. Regardless, a quick visit to the Chrome Web Store reveals all kinds of extensions

for working with popular web services, blogging, communicating with friends, downloading content, and tailoring the browser. Managing Chrome extensions is simple, and in many cases you can choose whether they work in the Incognito private browsing mode.

## EXTRA SPIT AND POLISH

There are smaller touches in Chrome that make it pleasant to use. It has long enabled you to mute a noisy tab quickly – something Safari only recently caught up with. It also has options to duplicate a tab and reload it in the background – useful, respectively, when shopping or wanting to keep several pages current.

There is one downside to Chrome that's worth noting, though, which is its tendency to be pretty resource-hungry. Quite often on MacBooks, you'll find Chrome lurking in the "Apps Using Significant Energy" sin bin when you click on the battery icon in the menu bar. However, quite how much Chrome will drain your battery will be down to your particular usage. So, if you fancy a browser that's more extensible than Safari, and that's well-integrated into Google's services, at least give Chrome a go – just keep an eye on your Mac's battery usage if you do!

## OTHER APPS

### **OPERA** [OPERA.COM](http://OPERA.COM)

>>> This web browser has doubled down on speed and privacy, with an ad blocker and VPN (virtual private network) in recent releases. It also aims to be kind on your MacBook's battery.

### **FIREFOX** [BIT.LY/FOX](http://BIT.LY/FOX)

>>> Mozilla's browser isn't especially Mac-like, but it is fast and customizable. You can quickly tailor its toolbar, or install any number of add-ons and themes.

### **TOR** [TORPROJECT.ORG](http://TORPROJECT.ORG)

>>> If you want the utmost privacy, Tor essentially bounces your communications around the world, preventing anyone learning your location and visited sites.

# Evernote

Take your notes further with improved access, search and OCR smarts

**W**ITH OS X El Capitan, Notes underwent some big changes. Rather than only offering text notes, the app acquired some enhanced formatting options, such as the ability to style text as headings or checklists, place images (including hand-drawn sketches on iOS), and add map and web links. Of course, it works nicely across Macs and iOS devices.

Evernote (evernote.com) goes a lot further, though. Like many alternatives here, it works on more platforms, and it can capture and store pretty much anything – even entire web pages.

Notes also pales by comparison when managing large collections. It lets you store notes in folders, but that's about it. In Evernote, individual items can be tagged to group related files across multiple notebooks. It lets you share notes for collaboration, as well as merge or assign reminders to them.

Evernote is clever with images too. You can annotate them, and the service attempts to read text in scanned docs. It's quite something to send a scan to Evernote and find it's fully searchable right away.

Evernote has other tricks too, but you'll need to pay to use some of them. Unlike

Apple's app, you don't get the entire thing without paying, otherwise your monthly uploads are restricted to 60MB, and you must be online to access notes on iOS (though not on the Mac). Evernote Plus (\$34.99 per year) gives you 1GB of uploads per month and the ability to add emails to notes. Premium (\$69.99 per year) can search within PDFs, scan business cards, and show previous versions of notes.

We think Evernote's worth the cost, not least due to its feature-richness. Even the relatively limited free version is worth a look, though a recent change limits you to using it on two devices.

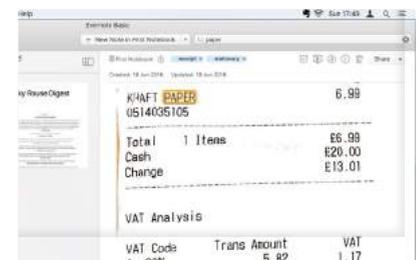
## HOW TO | STORE AND TAG RECEIPTS AND OTHER DOCUMENTS



**1** **UPLOAD AN IMAGE**  
Evernote examines each image you add to it, and enables you to search any text within them. Scan or photo a receipt, crop and save the image, then drag it on to Evernote's Dock icon.



**2** **ADD SOME INFO**  
Evernote should automatically recognize the image is a receipt. Even so, change the note's title to something suitable. Click in the Tags area and add terms you'll later use to find the receipt.



**3** **SEARCH IN EVERNOTE**  
Use Evernote's search field to search for your tags. Next, search for a word within the receipt's text – Evernote will often find it, showcasing its power to store snippets besides your typed words.



# Path Finder

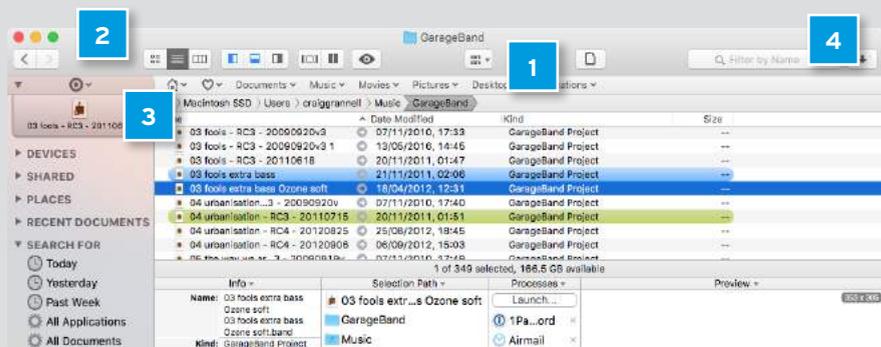
Increase your comfort when working with files and folders

**P**ATH FINDER'S website (cocoatech.com) neatly sums up the main reason to use it instead of Finder: "Path Finder's philosophy is to let you work how you want". This isn't the case with Apple's file browser. While Finder has improved in recent years with things like tabs, it isn't nearly as flexible as this third-party rival. At a glance, Path Finder doesn't look all that different

from Finder, but you'll immediately notice there are a lot more panes in its window. Whereas Finder has a sidebar and optional status and path bars, Path Finder has a bottom shelf with four configurable panels. If that's not enough, you can add four more to the right-hand side of every window, and a Cover Flow pane that sits above the Icon, List or Column view you've chosen for the main one. Because of this flexibility,

Path Finder has the potential to become confusing and cluttered; but with focus and care it can vastly speed up common tasks you would normally perform in Finder. Search filtering is extremely fast, the dual-pane mode is excellent for manually copying items between two folders, and its contextual menu can be customized to include only those options you need when you right-click or tap two fingers.

## FIND YOUR WAY AROUND PATH FINDER



**1** The Path Navigator and Bookmarks Bar provide fast access to folders but also enable you to navigate your Mac's file system. Just click the former or right-click the latter and venture into Contents.

**2** In Path Finder's application menu, you can opt to use the app's own desktop (so clicking there doesn't activate Finder), and, in a nod to old Mac hands, a desktop-based Trash icon!

**3** The Drop Stack at the top of the sidebar is a place you can use to temporarily store files while moving things between folders. The stack's contents can be compressed, emailed or moved as one.

**4** The Filter field works much like Finder's search. Use it to filter the current folder by name. Click the magnifying glass icon to switch criteria - to search your whole Mac, for example.

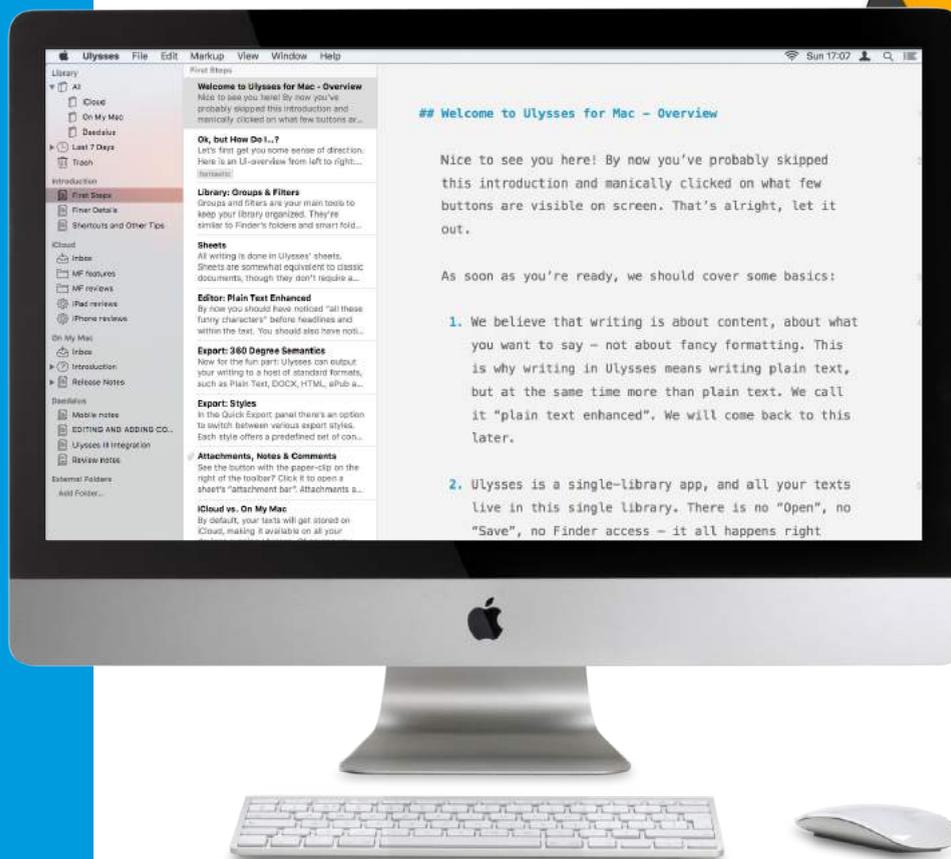
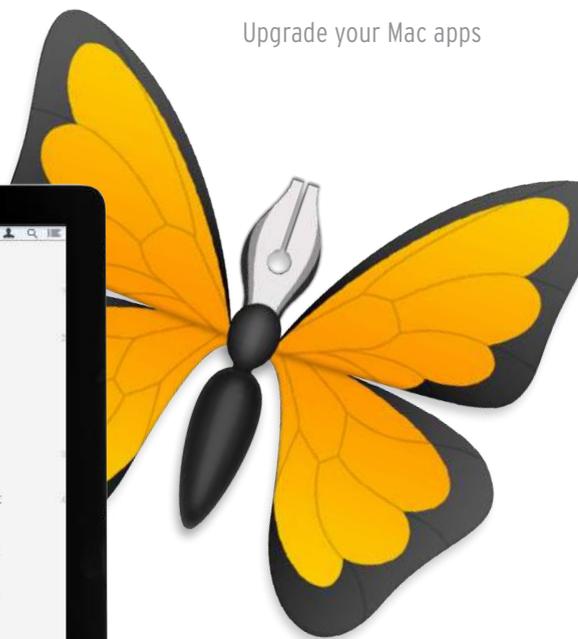
## PATH FINDER TIPS

### DUAL-PANE VIEW

Use this mode to more easily move files around. If you like to use keyboard shortcuts, press **[F1]** to open this mode, use **[F2]** or **[⇧]** to move the focus between panes, and use **[F5]**, **[F6]**, **[F7]**, or **[F8]** to copy, move, compress, or decompress items to the other pane, respectively.

### BATCH RENAME

Select two or more items, then choose **Commands > Batch Rename**. In the new window that opens you can use advanced options.



# Ulysses

A versatile and powerful replacement for TextEdit

**T**EXTEDIT IS an app with roots that go right back to the Mac's early days. Early versions of Mac OS bundled TeachText, which later evolved into SimpleText. TextEdit is the similarly straightforward successor on OS X – yet it's surprisingly versatile in many ways, boasting a text engine that's used throughout a large range of Mac apps. Notably, you get access to plenty of formatting

options, making for an experience akin to a stripped-back word processor. What you don't get is a great deal of help when it comes to writing and finding what you've previously written.

## POLES APART

Ulysses ([ulyssesapp.com](http://ulyssesapp.com)) is almost the polar opposite of TextEdit, and yet for many people who do a lot of writing, it's the perfect replacement. It lacks word-processor-style

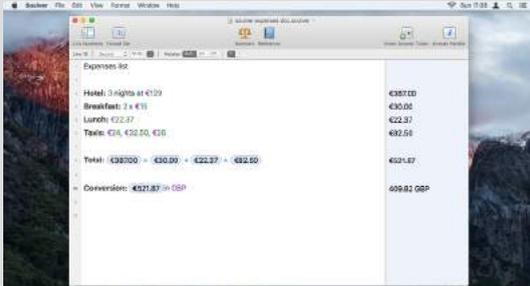
formatting, but the structure of your text can still be outlined using a markup syntax such as Markdown, in which a hash (#) signifies a heading and hyphens denote items in an unordered list.

More importantly, Ulysses boasts a library that houses everything you've ever written in the app. You can organize documents into folders, or create smart containers based on conditions relating to the content or creation date of files. You can also virtually or permanently merge a multiple-document selection in the library, or to export such selections to a range of different formats.

Along with powerful searching plus syncing your devices via iCloud, Ulysses proves itself to be one of the most capable tools around when it comes to writing. While it won't allow you to set a heading in 48pt Comic Sans and color it red, or add a ton of inline images from Photos, Ulysses provides a superb environment for crafting, saving, and later rediscovering your words.

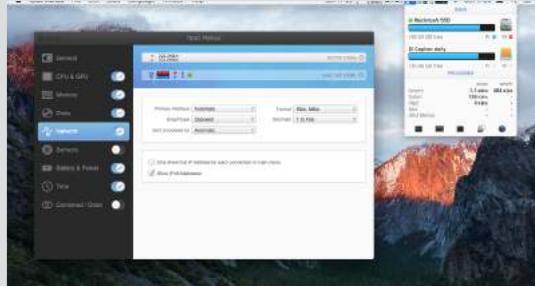
## MORE GREAT ALTERNATIVES

Replace Calculator, Activity Monitor, Preview, and Time Machine!



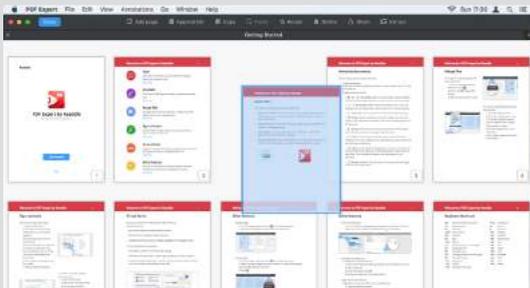
### SOULVER

Calculator's instantly recognizable interface is nice, but it limits flexibility for complex calculations. By contrast, Souler (acqualia.com) is weird at first but far superior once you grasp the basics. You enter calculations in plain language and it extracts the numbers and does the math. Line totals become tokens that can be used in later lines, everything updating as figures are changed. Calculations can be saved, or exported to other formats.



### ISTAT MENUS

If you run a lot of apps and background utilities, it pays to keep an eye on your Mac's resources. Apple's Activity Monitor takes up lots of space, so iStat Menus (bjango.com) puts resource monitoring in the menu bar, where tiny graphs detail how your Mac's doing; click one and a drop-down menu provides extra detail. It's also a great replacement for the menu bar clock, with a highly configurable world clock, sunrise/sunset times, and a world light map.



### PDF EXPERT

Preview is great for opening PDFs, adding annotations, and moving a few pages around. Spend some time with PDF Expert (readdle.com) though and you'll see it's like Preview Pro. If you regularly organize pages, PDF Expert's page thumbnail preview makes it a cinch to drag pages to reorder them. To merge PDFs together, just use the app's Merge Files command. With accessible annotation tools too, PDF Expert is a worthy replacement for Preview.



### SUPERDUPER

With Time Machine, Apple provides a way to safeguard data from disaster. Rather than just backing up data, though, SuperDuper (shirt-pocket.com) clones your drive, making a bootable backup that can be used to start your Mac and have you up and running again in minutes. SuperDuper's also useful for "archiving" an old Mac's final state. Still, since Time Machine backups are more regular, we recommend using it and SuperDuper together.

# Other great apps

More useful replacements for built-in options



**SKYPE** SKYPE.COM

>>> FaceTime's great when it works, but we find it can choke on poor connections. Also, it's only on Apple devices, but Skype's on every major platform, and can be used to call phones at cheap rates, making it a great substitute.



**SPOTIFY** SPOTIFY.COM

>>> iTunes is a bit bloated these days. Spotify is more svelte, doubling down on streaming in a manner that's more usable than Apple Music. Its weekly playlist is particularly great.



**DROPBOX** BIT.LY/MFDRI

>>> iCloud Drive gives you a place to store files online, providing you with access to them on various devices. However, Dropbox has a ton of app integration, superior sharing options, and works on more platforms.



**KINDLE** BIT.LY/MFKNDL

>>> This suggestion veers very much towards the practical. Objectively, Kindle isn't especially great, but it does give you access to Amazon's colossal bookstore, which works with far more devices than Apple's iBooks format.



**GOOGLE MAPS**  
MAPS.GOOGLE.CO.UK

>>> Okay, this isn't a Mac app - you access it in a browser - but Google's maps are better than Apple's for finding places, planning journeys, and checking out places with Street View.



**ALFRED** ALFREDAPP.COM

>>> If you feel Spotlight could and should do more, try Alfred. Its interface is akin to Spotlight's, but offers far more control over whatever file you select. The app's also extensible, so you can add functionality using plugins.



**DEFAULT FOLDER X**  
BIT.LY/MFDFX

>>> This replaces the regular Open and Save dialogs, speeding up tasks by giving you access to recent folders, open Finder windows, and more.



**VLC** VIDEOLAN.ORG

>>> It's a stretch to say this is a QuickTime replacement, as Apple's app works fine with many movie and audio files. Yet, VLC's a great option when you get files in strange formats.



**BETTERTOUCH TOOL**  
BOASTR.NET

>>> This add-on for your input devices enables everything from customizable key sequences to extra multi-touch gestures to get more from your Apple trackpad or Magic Mouse.

# Steward

Making an inventory is child's play, it turns out

**\$19.99 Developer** Digualu Studio, [stewarddatabase.com](http://stewarddatabase.com)

**Requirements** OS X 10.10 or later



Perfect for those looking for a Bento replacement, Steward is basic personal database software.

Before the mobile app craze kicked off in 2008 with the iOS App Store, personal database software was a popular cottage industry for Mac developers. After all, you couldn't just whip out an iPhone or iPad to pull up items from a home inventory, media collection, or virtual bookshelf as you can today.

That makes Steward something of a rare species these days: standalone database software aimed at average Mac users still looking to fill the sizeable void left by the departure of Bento more than two years ago. Like that popular Filemaker software, Steward is targeted at less tech-savvy users, but delivers a simpler, easy to follow user interface and large, almost child-like icons and buttons.

Steward includes more than a dozen templates – each with optional sample data – that make it easy to get started planning activities, cataloging a personal collection, or assembling a database (referred to as a “table” here) of contacts or other information.

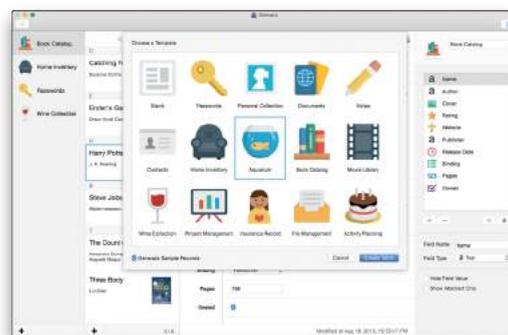
You can also choose to start from a blank slate, or with unique choices such as Passwords, Notes, or Documents; while this is handy for those not already using something like 1Password, it's worth noting there are no passcode or other security options available.

By default, Steward offers a four-column layout with a list of tables and records at left, with record details and an options panel on the right side. Buttons on either side can be used to collapse the table or option panels so the records list and detail view are the primary focus; in the case of the former, a handy menu automatically appears above the Search field for quickly jumping between tables instead.

Rounding out the minimalist feature set are nine different field types – text, number, image, date and time, attachment, rating, checkbox, choice, and website – the ability to import or export CSV or tab-delimited text, automatic or manual backup, and of course, printing.

While Steward is ideal for its core audience of novice users, the lack of customizable layouts, tables, and scripting will be enough for advanced users to take a pass. There's also no cloud sync or companion app for iOS, which would make it more appealing.

**THE BOTTOM LINE.** Steward is friendly database-creation software stripped back to basics, with a breezy, straightforward (if a little childish) interface.



It may look like an app for kids, but Steward provides more than a dozen templates that make it easy to get started.

# Office 2016 for Mac

A strong upgrade - but should Mac users still care?

From \$6.99/month with Office365, \$149 standalone Developer Microsoft, microsoft.com

Requirements OS X 10.10 or later

The latest release of Microsoft’s venerable Office suite really closes the gap with its Windows version, in terms not only of feature parity and compatibility, but also by harmonizing the interface across Mac, Windows and mobile – a boon to productivity if you regularly work across different platforms.

It mostly, if not entirely, succeeds in this, and moreover it looks and feels like a contemporary Mac citizen. However, while Microsoft has finally embraced some modern Mac developments – multi-touch gestures for zooming and panning, native fullscreen, and so on – there are more that it we’re waiting on.

Due to Apple’s restrictions, there’s no iCloud Drive integration (though this may change in the future). OS X’s Versions isn’t supported either; there is versioning available through OneDrive, but it’s clunkier. And despite close parity between the iOS Office apps and new Mac apps – and despite OneDrive already being baked into both to handle the back-end – there’s no support for Handoff between desktop and mobile. That’s hardly a giant failing, but it would have been a great addition.

Overall, Office 2016 still feels a little siloed from the broader Mac world – using its own dictionaries rather than OS X’s, say – but even if nothing else, it looks fantastic.



The latest version of Office looks the part on a modern Mac.

It’s simultaneously familiar to users on Windows but also thoroughly Mac in terms of the visuals – and the optional colored title bars help orient you in the suite’s apps. The redesigned Ribbon menu groups tasks logically and in the same way as the Windows version, and though there is still sometimes a confusing proliferation of ways to achieve the same things, most would agree it’s a good solution to making Office’s considerable complexity more palatable and generally usable.

Office 2016 for Mac feels modern again, and this shouldn’t be underestimated; it’s pleasant to use Office apps on a modern Mac system, even if most of them haven’t changed all that much.

**THE BOTTOM LINE** This is a superb office suite, full of capable tools that you often can’t do without (even with the free iWork apps), and with a modern Mac interface to back them up.



Excel has had a big catch-up with pro-level features that its Windows users have been using for a while.

# Reeder 3

Spelling may not be its strong point - but for reading, it's a winner

**\$9.99** **Manufacturer** Silvio Rizzi, reederapp.com

**Requirements** OS X 10.10 or later



MacBook owners who read in bed at night will love Reeder 3's new themes, including this black option.

RSS (Rich Site Summary) remains a viable format to receive news feeds from your favorite websites, but despite the abundance of native Mac clients, the technology hasn't quite flourished the same way Flipboard-style news readers have on smartphones and tablets.

Thankfully, one of the best reading applications around has finally received a much-needed desktop makeover that goes beyond RSS, and it's free for users of the previous version.

Reeder 3 isn't a reinvention of Silvio Rizzi's popular Mac client, but it doesn't need to be. The previous version has been our go-to reading app on desktop and mobile for years, and the third release manages to take what was already great and kick it up a notch, even in the absence of many marquee new features.

For starters, our favorite "read later" source, Instapaper, can now be configured as a sync service, turning Reeder into an unofficial desktop client for reading anything saved to your account. Reeder 2 introduced similar support for competitor Readability, so this is a fantastic addition for Instapaper lovers.

Saved articles are sorted by date with full access to archived stories and user folders, along with the option to plow through saved content from specific websites as well.

The user interface remains functionally the same as Reeder 2, with the most obvious change being a new default transparent title bar across the top, which seamlessly blends into the familiar three-panel design. (If you prefer the previous gray bar, it can be resurrected from the Themes menu.) Likewise, buttons for switching between Starred, Reading List, and All Items views have been reduced in size and made square instead of rounded for a more streamlined look.

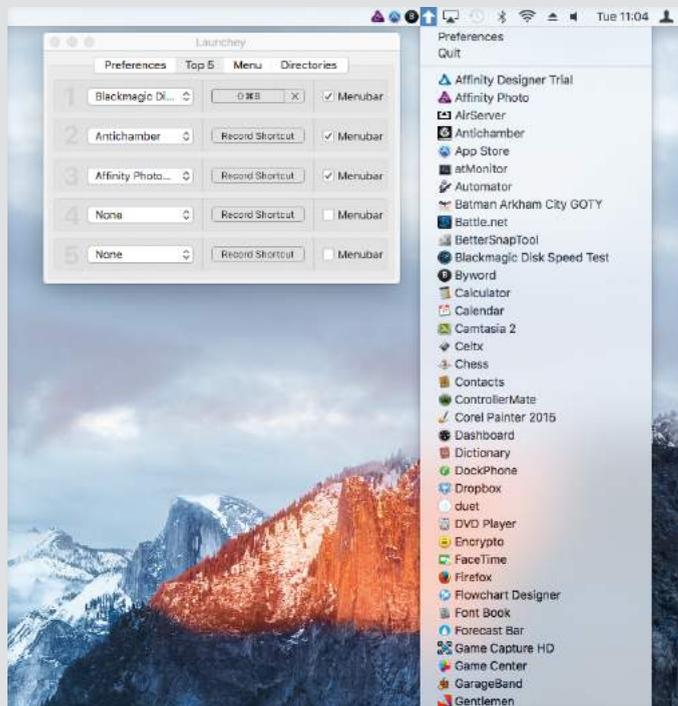
Reeder 3 also includes additional themes, including a completely pitch-black option for night owls who prefer to read in the dark with a MacBook in their lap. The update requires OS X Yosemite, but supports El Capitan features, such as Apple's new San Francisco font and fullscreen Split View.

Other nice little touches abound, including unread and starred counts for smart folders, support for private browsing, and the ability to hover over a link to display its URL in the status bar. Last but not least, individual sync services such as Feedly, Minimal Reader, and Inoreader now have the option to add tags, along with article deletion from Readability.

**THE BOTTOM LINE.** Reeder 3 feels more like Reeder 2.5, but we're really not too bothered. This is still the best Mac reader around, especially now that Instapaper can be added as a sync service.



One of Reeder 3's convenient improvements is the ability to see a full URL while hovering over links in the viewer.



# Launchey

Who needs the Dock?

**\$2.99 Developer** Nice Apps, [getniceapps.com](http://getniceapps.com)

**Requirements** OS X 10.10 or later

Launchey has a simple purpose: it enables you to launch apps on your Mac from the menu bar. And with a bit of setting up (and with the right frame of mind), you might find that a very useful addition to your Mac.

To start with, we found Launchey not that useful. You can click its icon to bring up a list of all the apps in your Application folder, in alphabetical order – not ideal if you have loads, like us. But you can change which folder it looks in for this list, so you could add a subfolder of only your most-used apps, and then have it only show those, which is much more useful. But the really nice bit is actually its “Top 5” feature.

This tab in Launchey’s preferences enables you to add icons for five apps directly to the menu bar, so you can launch them with single click. You can also easily assign them keyboard shortcuts, to launch them without clicking anything. If you mostly only use a few core apps, this is a cool way to be really minimal with your desktop – you could hide the Dock, and rely solely on the menu bar, or even hide that and rely on Launchey!

**THE BOTTOM LINE.** A smart and useful utility. It doesn’t totally remove the need for the Dock, but it lets you keep it hidden more.

# iconStiX

Make folders your own

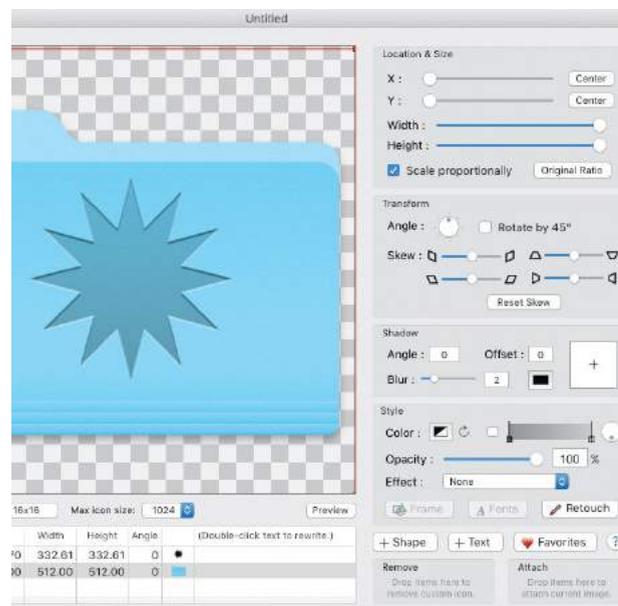
**\$8.99 Manufacturer** Trollin, [trollin.loos.li/iconStiX](http://trollin.loos.li/iconStiX)

**Requirements** OS X 10.10 or later

iconStiX aims to bring individuality to your desktop, by way of adding text, images, and shapes to icons. You drag items from Finder or select objects from a Favorites window (that oddly sits above every other app window until it’s closed). Elements can be tweaked, and icons are then exported or applied to existing items in Finder. Granted, the likes of Image2icon offer much the same (and in that case in a more friendly design). But what puts iconStiX into our recommendation pile is its flexibility. Although you can just drop a shape on a folder and add an effect, this app offers far more. There’s support for multiple layers and objects. You can adjust any item’s position, skew, angle, shadow, and style, along with its sort order in the stack. Text can be integrated, and photos cropped. Output can be previewed at various sizes in the edit window, which usefully temporarily displays a Mac desktop image.

iconStiX might be lacking in immediacy and a touch of polish, but it more than makes up for that with versatility, and in offering scope for creativity.

**THE BOTTOM LINE.** Not as straightforward as its rival Image2icon, but this custom icon tool rewards with smartly conceived features.



# Serif Affinity Photo

A photo editor with speed, power, and massive potential

**\$49.99** Developer Serif, [affinity.serif.com](http://affinity.serif.com)

**Requirements** OS X 10.7.5 or later, 64-bit processor, 2GB RAM



Affinity Photo runs incredibly fast and smoothly on even lower-powered Macs.

Affinity Photo is designed not as an amateur Photoshop wannabe, but as a direct Photoshop rival – Serif is very clear about this. It’s the second in its trio of pro-oriented “Affinity” applications sharing the same core processing engine and file format (after Affinity Designer).

At first sight, Affinity Photo does look a lot like Photoshop. There is a difference, though. At the top left of the window is a row of “Personas,” which put Affinity Photo into different editing modes. The Liquify persona is just like the Liquify window in Photoshop, but feels faster and more fluid. It’s also possible to “freeze” parts of the scene which you want left alone and carry out your pinch, push and twirl adjustments around them. The Develop persona is the equivalent of the Adobe Camera Raw dialog in Photoshop. It lacks a little subtlety compared to Adobe Camera Raw, though.

The Raw Develop persona has a full range of color and tonal adjustment controls, and it’s also possible to apply localized adjustments with gradient and brush tools – just like Adobe Camera Raw. The Export persona does exactly as you’d expect, exporting your images in a range of formats using adjustable parameters (JPEG quality, for example) and presets.

The Photo persona is where you do all your serious work. Affinity Photo uses its own file

format, but it can import and export Photoshop PSD files. It will also work directly with Photoshop-compatible plugins – you simply locate your existing plugins folder within the Preferences dialog.

If you’re familiar with Photoshop and other image editors, it won’t take you long to find your way around. You can add adjustments such as Curves, Levels, Black and White and so on to your images as non-destructive adjustment layers, but panels also have a Merge button in case you want to flatten the adjustment into the layer straight away for a permanent effect. You can also combine images in multi-layer montages, and here Affinity Photo provides a similar set of selection tools to Photoshop.

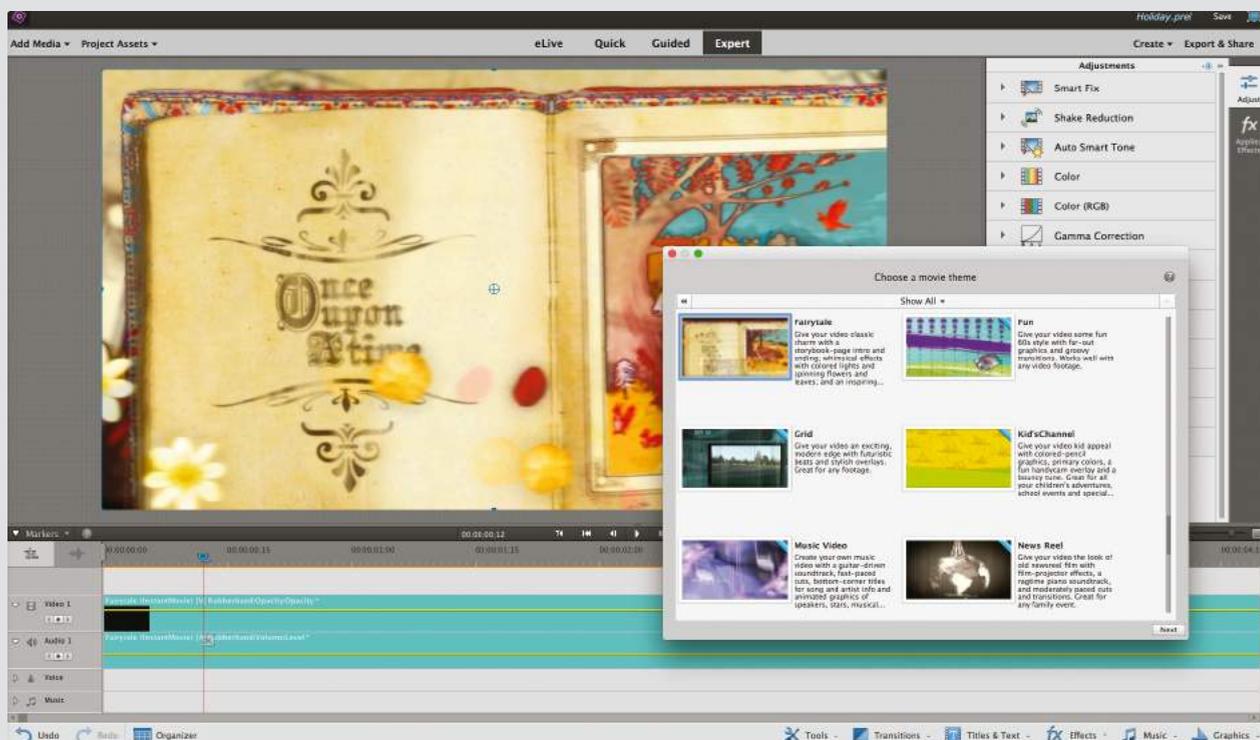
One interesting feature is Affinity Photo’s non-destructive scaling. If you downsample an image layer in Photoshop it’s permanent – but Affinity Photo retains the layer’s full resolution, so you can increase the size of a layer later.

Affinity Photo has powerful retouching tools too, including a neat Inpainting Brush similar to Photoshop’s Content-Aware Fill technology – you paint over an object you want to remove, release the button and the software fills in the space automatically with nearby image data.

**THE BOTTOM LINE.** Affinity Photo is designed from the ground up for Macs as a fast, efficient, and genuinely capable Photoshop alternative. Photographers will love it.



There’s a powerful range of tools on offer here, from simple photo edits to brush-based adjustments.



# Adobe Premiere Elements 14

Video editing with a 4K in its tale

**\$99 Developer** Adobe, [adobe.com](http://adobe.com)

**Requirements** OS X 10.9 or higher

When iMovie isn't enough and Final Cut Pro is too much, Premiere Elements is ideal. It's a video editor designed to make it easy to get started, with some useful higher-end features. The big addition in this version is support for 4K video. While only a few people have TVs or Mac displays ready for his, if you have the iPhone 6s, iPhone SE, or 9.7-inch iPad Pro, you can record it. It offers great quality at native resolution, but there are other reasons to shoot in 4K – to crop into a scene at 1080p, or for stabilizing footage by offering more that can be cropped out. Premiere Elements imports footage at its current resolution and makes that 100% scale as far as the project is concerned, with no apparent way of treating it as the larger footage that it is. Still, it's worth shooting in this format if you can, as simply shrinking 4K down (downsampling) usually looks

better than 1080p video. The rest of the toolset handles everything you'd expect it to, including organizing video, tweaking sound, adding titles (and new Motion Titles with animation presets), and the usual set of effects and transitions that every filmmaker should sign a contract swearing never to use. More complex effects such as popping a single color are handled via Guided Edits, which also help explain more complicated subjects such as masking parts of an image and manipulating time. There's also Videomerge for basic chromakey effects, though you're unlikely to get a clean cutout, even with proper lighting and a green screen. For basic composition and home purposes, though, it's fine.

**THE BOTTOM LINE.** An excellent choice for video editing for those looking to start honing their craft, but aren't pro yet.

The InstantMovie feature is handy for creating stylish films, and Adobe even throws in some free music.

# Paintstorm Studio

This adaptable artist's tool makes for easy workflows

**\$19 Developer** Paintstorm Studio, [paintstormstudio.com](http://paintstormstudio.com)

**Requirements** OS X 10.7 or later, nVidia GeForce 8800/Radeon x1900 or higher



You can set up custom palettes of tools you love really easily in Paintstorm.

If you're looking to dabble with some digital painting or sketching, Paintstorm, which is available on iOS as well as this Mac app, may well be the best way for you to start or improve your life as a digital artist.

Firstly, it runs really smoothly. Even on an old 13-inch MacBook Pro, moving palettes and resizing gave us no problems, and even the most complex brush stroke had minimum lag. Things did slow a little when working with large canvasses and many layers, but not to the point of being unworkable.

Most painting applications offer the same basic functionality, from the simplest stroke or eraser to more complex gradients or perspective grids, which help your images stay on the straight and narrow – but Paintstorm excels by offering a huge array of tools and default content, in the form of preset brushes, patterns, and more. As a beginner – whether that's to a new app or digital art itself – this really lets you learn in the quickest way,

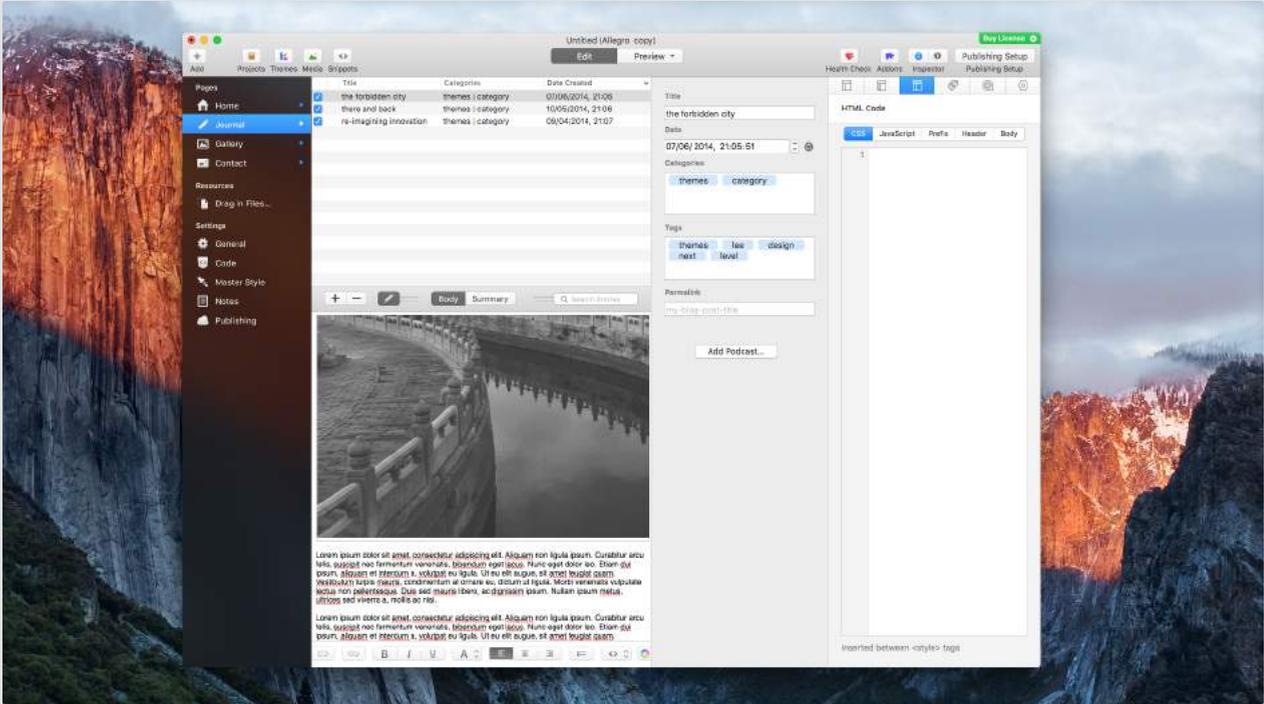
because you can see settings as you use them. Although the results are superb, with brushes that excel in many ways, it's the pure adaptability of Paintstorm that makes it a winner. Some of the interface aesthetic choices can look a little dated, but the implementation is fantastic. You can move and resize every palette to suit your needs, as well as create your own palettes, simply dragging tools into them to set up your own unique interface. If you only ever use a small selection of tools, this makes for better use of your screen, with less hunting around for what you want.

This adaptability can also be seen within individual tools. Using a simple graph, you can shape the path of a brush stroke however you like. This can be used for many things, from pushing harder on a brush mid-stroke to building a complex brush to paint ferns or leaves. Although there are a great many other features, one of real note is the perspective tool. It isn't truly 3D in nature, but if you want to paint a piece with a lot of depth this can help hugely, constraining a brush stroke to fit the perspective guide. Imagine painting a hillside using a brush to draw grass, with the blades automatically appearing smaller in the distance as you go...

**THE BOTTOM LINE.** It's the thought for the user that makes Paintstorm a unique tool, and one that should be in the dock of every digital artist, from beginner to pro. Powerful features in a friendly package – we love it.



Paintstorm is one of the most flexible digital art tools we've ever seen, making it ideal for beginners or pros.



# RapidWeaver 7

Craft impressive websites with the minimum of fuss

**\$99** **Manufacturer** Realmac Software, realmacsoftware.com

**Requirements** OS X 10.11 or later

This website-creation tool is much more powerful than Apple’s long-defunct iWeb, but it shares that app’s approachability and ease of use. It’s built around professionally designed themes, with four new ones added to the collection in this release. You use the sidebar to create the structure of your site, the Edit panel to modify pages, the Preview pane to see what it looks like, and there’s a Keynote-esque Master Style for making global changes to your chosen template. You can also add custom code such as CSS, JavaScript and meta tags. It’s all very easy, enabling you to build a website that’s clean, attractive and standards-compliant in very little time, regardless of experience.

In addition to some new templates, this version boasts a dramatically improved FTP client for uploads and site management. The app also now optimizes CSS and JavaScript code to make it as clean and as quick as

possible, and it includes an SEO check. On top of the stock features, the app offers more than 1,000 paid add-ons. When you consider the effort that goes into making a decent theme or shopping cart app, the average asking price range of \$25 to \$50 is pretty reasonable – and it’s surely better to keep the main app’s price down rather than force you to pay for features you won’t use. For website beginners, RapidWeaver’s key rival is Karelia’s Sandvox, which is simpler and \$20 cheaper. However, RapidWeaver’s templates are more attractive, the app is more powerful and, as with most kinds of design, you’ll often find your requirements become more ambitious over time as your web design skills improve.

**THE BOTTOM LINE.** It’s superb for amateur web designers, but the reliance on templates means losing some design flexibility for more experienced hands.

If you’re a code-savvy web designer, RapidWeaver isn’t the right app for you. Can’t code to save your life? Step right up.

# Studies

A flashcard study aid that's more than just flashy

**\$39.99 Developer** The Mental Faculty, [mentalfaculty.com](http://mentalfaculty.com)

**Requirements** OS X 10.11 or later, 64-bit processor



Take some of the work out of study time with Studies' rich text formatting and support for images, audio, and video in notes.

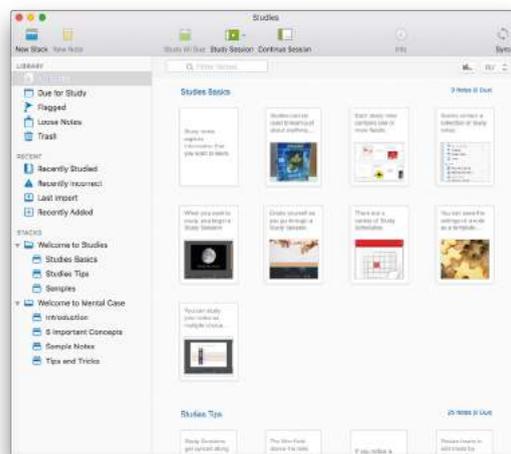
Studies is essentially the third generation of Mental Case, the decade-old Mac software for creating the multimedia equivalent of flashcards using images, audio, video, and formatted text. Although the developer makes it possible to migrate Mental Case data, there's no discounted upgrade path – Studies is a Mac App Store exclusive priced \$10 higher than the application it replaces, which is sure to ding the budget of cash-strapped students.

This grievance aside, the reimagined Studies is an improvement on several levels. The user interface has undergone a welcome facelift, adding a customizable modern toolbar to complement the refreshed left sidebar, home to the note library and recent activity. It's also where you'll find stacks – projects created inside the application or those imported from websites like Cram.com, which can export flashcard sets to CSV format. Single-clicking any note causes it to shake, a visual prompt that it can now be reordered via drag-and-drop.

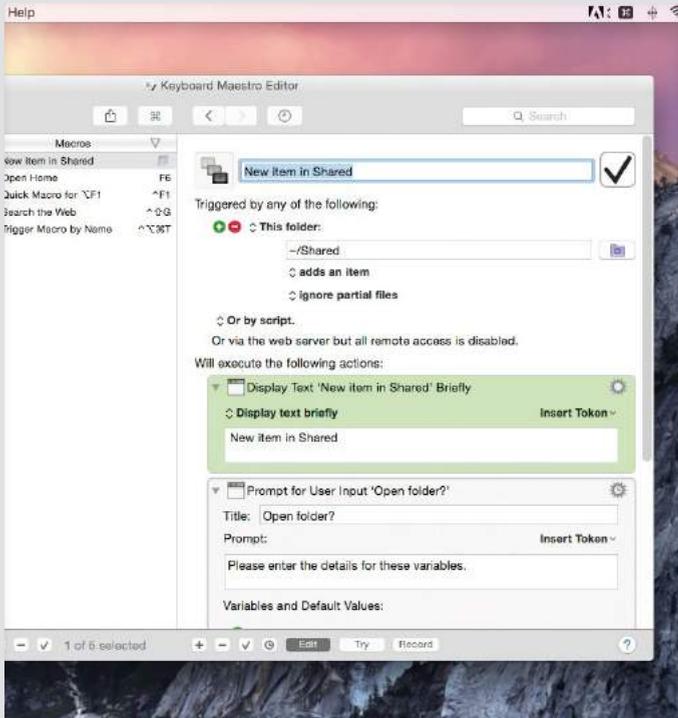
Another major improvement is the adoption of Apple's CloudKit framework, making iCloud sync a good deal faster and more reliable than with Mental Case. It also helps that notes now take up less storage, and stacks can be independently excluded from sync. Syncing not only happens between Macs, but also with the free Universal iOS app, enabling you to benefit from your flashcards on iPhone and iPad, which will be the ideal way to actually revise with them for most people, we expect.

Studies makes it easier to get started by creating new notes from multiple choice, question and answer, reversible, simple, or translation templates that walk students through the entire setup with a wealth of rich text formatting options. Templates can be selected when creating a new stack, or added as new notes in an existing stack. Last but not least, Studies takes great advantage of gestures, which can be used to move through a stack of notes by swiping left or right or grade as right/wrong with a swipe up or down.

**THE BOTTOM LINE.** Studies improves upon the aging Mental Case with a spiffy new Mac application that's capable of far more than just creating and viewing flashcards.



Studies offers a modern user interface that makes it easier than ever to create and view multimedia notes.



# Keyboard Maestro 7

Do (almost) anything with your keyboard

**\$36 Developer** Stairways Software, keyboardmaestro.com

**Requirements** OS X 10.10.3 or later

Keyboard Maestro is all about controlling your Mac with user-defined macros. These comprise a trigger and one or more actions, ranging from simple hotkey commands through to more advanced interactions based on specific conditions.

An example action bundled with the app is Paste Selection Into Last Application. On pressing the relevant shortcut, it copies a selection, switches to the last used app, pastes, and then switches back again. Naturally, the sky's the limit once you get familiar with how to create your own macros.

Triggers now include keys tapped multiple times, window focus changes, and updates to folders. The last of those means you can be notified when new files are added to a shared folder.

Actions-wise, too, the app adds options for bringing new smarts and complexity to macros. There's a new gear menu in every action, for access to contextual operations, an Add Action Bar for rapidly accessing actions, and autocomplete for text tokens, functions, variables, and search tokens. The app still doesn't look especially pretty, but otherwise this is excellent.

**THE BOTTOM LINE.** Still a bit ugly and a touch daunting for newcomers, but Keyboard Maestro remains a macro app with serious ambition.

# Loopback

Powerful, easy, audio must-have

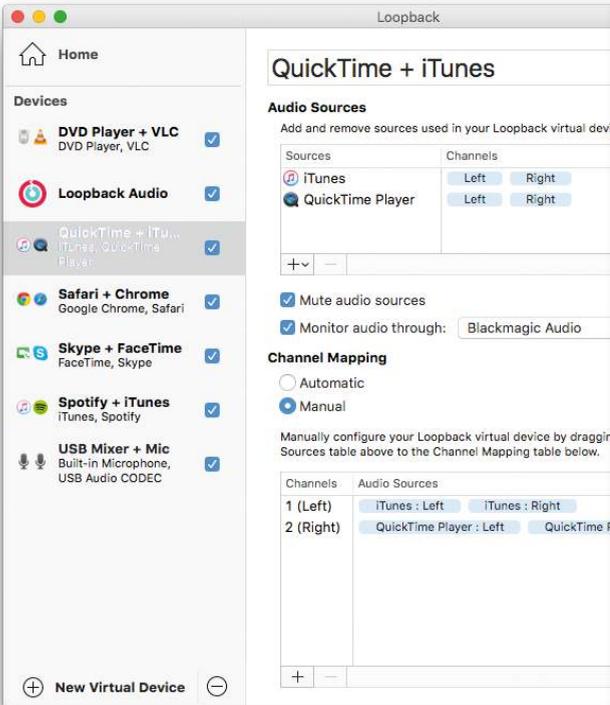
**\$99 Developer** Rogue Amoeba, rogueamoeba.com

**Requirements** OS X 10.9 or higher

Loopback is a Mac utility that creates an unlimited number of virtual device configurations for sending audio between apps, and even allows multiple sources to be combined into one, for easy recording. It works with any app that outputs audio, as well as devices which connect to the Mac, such as USB microphones or video capture boxes. After adding a New Virtual Device and assigning a custom name, add one or more audio devices or applications. Finally, select the new virtual device in your target software, which can include Skype, GarageBand, or countless others.

Audio channels are automatically mapped when added, but can be manually configured by dragging the desired channel(s) from Audio Sources. This kind of customization is great for podcasters who want to record guests on a separate channel from the host; you can even route VoIP voice calls from multiple services to different tracks (up to 32 total), or merge everything into a single recording in a few clicks.

**THE BOTTOM LINE.** Pricy, but throw out those old cables, Loopback has arrived.



# Chronicle 6

Take the stress out of paying your bills

**\$9.99 Developer** LittleFin, [littlefin.com](http://littlefin.com)

**Requirements** OS X 10.9 or later, 64-bit processor



Bill management on the Mac doesn't get much easier or intuitive than Chronicle 6, available as a free update for owners of the previous version.

As long as personal computers have existed in the home, consumers have relied upon financial software to keep tabs on which bills are due and when. Chronicle 6 (a free upgrade for owners of the previous version) is laser-focused on bill management. This isn't a replacement for money management apps such as Quicken, but is used to log expenses and alert users before they come due. Chronicle doesn't hook into payment services, although each bill can include web links to make payments within the integrated browser.

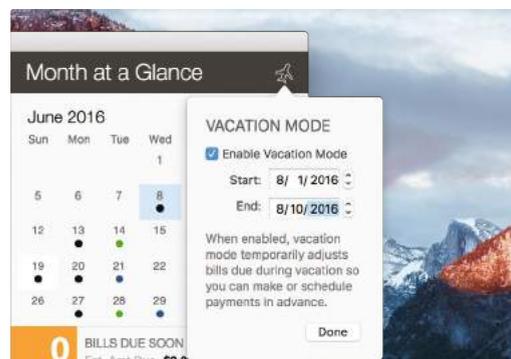
The main window displays a list of active bills, payment amounts, balances, and due dates, along with a preview of what's coming up. Logging payments is as easy as entering a few details; the clean layout visualizes what's owed at a glance, while the search field provides quick access to specific bills.

Bills can be assigned a due date (with optional reminder), fixed or variable amount, repeat interval, payment method, and tags.

Each is assigned to categories with corresponding custom icons, making them easier to spot in the list. Chronicle 6 adds new categories such as music subscription and cleaning services, but all of the icons have been desaturated in the process. They're a better fit in the modern OS X aesthetic, but are harder to differentiate with everything now the same shade of drab gray. A more welcome new addition is vacation mode, which temporarily adjusts due dates for bills that need to be paid in your absence. Click the airplane icon, enter start and end dates, and you'll be reminded to pay those bills prior to your departure – without affecting future payments.

Chronicle users can also track monthly income against expenses with the optional balance sheet feature, which has been redesigned to include sources alongside bills. It's a bit buggy, with repeat entries showing up even when the interval is set to Never. We preferred the less cluttered approach from previous versions, which worked better for freelancers whose income is spread out all across the calendar.

**THE BOTTOM LINE.** A fresh coat of paint to Mac bill management, making it easy to stay on top of your outstanding payments, even when you're going away.



The new vacation mode in Chronicle 6 makes it easy to take care of upcoming bills so you can relax and have fun on your trip.

# Home Inventory 3.5

Listing your belongings just got a bit easier

**\$24.99 Developer** Binary Formations, binaryformations.com

**Requirements** OS X 10.7.4 or later, 64-bit processor

When you buy a house, the first thing your insurance agent will recommend is taking an inventory of household items as additional protection in the event of loss or theft – which can be a daunting task, especially if you’ve never done it before.

With the release of Home Inventory 3.5, there are no more excuses. That’s because this already excellent Mac application has added two major tools to its arsenal that make it easier than ever to catalog the contents of your entire house in record time.

The first is a free print plugin which aids in moving digital receipts stored in other applications, such as Mail, to Home Inventory’s new Inbox (you can also import files via drag-and-drop).

From there, simply fill out a few item details, add it to your catalog, and quickly move on to the next item. The only downside is there’s no automatic text recognition to fill out the data for you, but since many of our purchases are made online these days, this method helps speed up the process.

The second convenience comes by way of a free iOS companion app called Home Inventory Remote Entry. With the main app open on your Mac and on the same Wi-Fi network as your iPhone or iPad, users can roam around the house grabbing photos of everything in sight, which are uploaded directly to the existing catalog.



This can all be done without typing a single word, thanks to voice dictation. Just say the name of the item, state a keyword such as Category, Location, or Price, then tell it the information to add to that field. It gets even easier with new items, since you can simply scan the UPC or EAN code before you even open the box.

Home Inventory makes it easy to catalog everything in your house.

Otherwise, Home Inventory is well thought-out and easy to use. Items are assigned to specific locations of your choosing, but can be sorted into your own virtual collections as well.

There’s also a Home Inventory Mobile Backup app available that allows iOS users to carry catalogs with them wherever they go; however, Wi-Fi backup failed to work for us, and Dropbox sync was unintuitive and a little half-baked for our liking.

**THE BOTTOM LINE.** Home Inventory is a versatile, affordable way to keep tabs on everything you own in one place, with a pair of new features that make it easier than ever to do that.



Reports, charts, and graphs provide detailed information on the value of your stuff.

# Dragon for Mac

The Mac's best dictation tool

**\$200 Developer** Nuance, nuance.com

**Requirements** Intel Core 2 Duo 2.4GHz, 4GB RAM, OS X Mavericks 10.9 or later



Dragon's muted interface is an improvement on its venerable predecessors.

Dictation is built into OS X and iOS, so why would you want to buy a third-party app as well? It's a good question, but if you spend at least a little time each day dictating, the convenience of having almost complete vocal control over your Mac – not just for dictation – makes Dragon well worth it. It's not simply a transcription device: it can launch and close apps, move the mouse, and interact with OS X. It can also be set up to insert blocks of standard text with a single command, and the longer you work with it, the more accurate it will get.

Tradition dictates (no pun intended) that when reviewing voice recognition software, you should use it to write the review, which is exactly what we've done here. We haven't written any of the body of this review using the keyboard, and whenever we wanted to make an amendment we've issued spoken commands to tell Dragon how to go back and make changes.

Upgrading from Dragon Dictate 4 is pain-free: it automatically reworks all

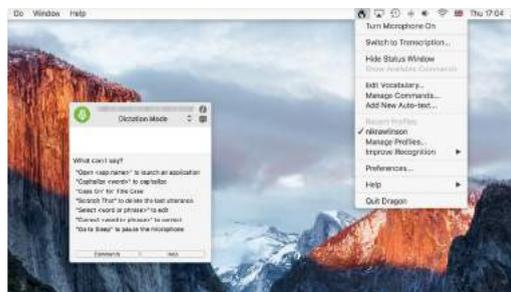
the training you've given it to date, so your manual additions to the dictionary stay. It also claims that it makes the dictation process more responsive, and our tests certainly bear that out, with very little delay between us speaking a word and it appearing on the screen.

The interface has been rethought, too, with a new Dragon menu-bar item keeping the app close at hand. There's also a less garish dictation window, which keeps the most common functions in view and dynamically switches to correction mode when you verbally select a word or range of words in the document. Not that you'll need to do that very often: so far, we've only corrected a single word in this document.

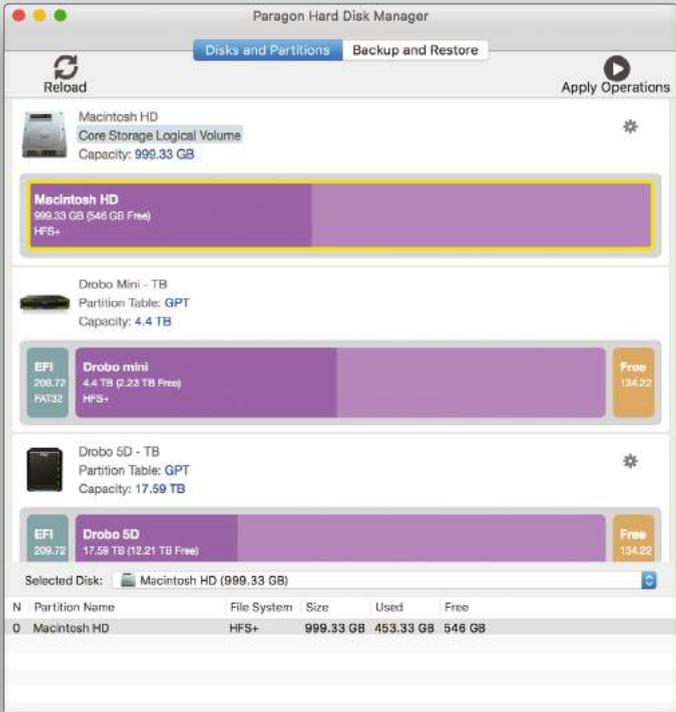
As well as dictating live, you can use it to transcribe voice files, and an upcoming iOS and Android app will let you work on the move. This is scheduled to appear later in the fall, and will sync with the Mac edition (though you'll need to pay for a subscription for that, on top of the app's cost).

Dragon is flexible and very fast to work with, but there's no denying that at \$200 it's expensive. But then, the final tally of errors we corrected while writing this review? Two. You get what you pay for here.

**THE BOTTOM LINE** Forget Magic Mouse and Magic Keyboard... this is Magic Mic, and it's brilliant. Ideal for those with motor difficulties, or who just want to note ideas quickly!



A new menu bar item keeps Dragon close at hand and lets you switch between different user profiles.



# Paragon Hard Disk Manager

Take control of your drive

**\$39.99 Developer** Paragon Software, paragon-software.com

**Requirements** OS X 10.7 or later, 64-bit processor

This app offers sector-level drive backup, allowing volumes to be migrated to another computer or virtual machine with the operating system, applications, and files intact. And unlike Apple’s Migration Assistant, Paragon’s Snapshot feature works without a system restart. It can also be used for day-to-day backup, with incremental imaging that excludes duplicate data. The interface is clear, with complete information about each drive. Clicking the gear icon displays a list of actions, such as wiping data, redistributing free space, or restoring a deleted partition. And it’s not just for Mac-formatted disks – it works with NTFS, ExtFS, FAT, or exFAT partitions. Last but not least, if the new System Integrity Protection (SIP) Apple introduced with OS X El Capitan has become a thorn in the side of your older applications, it can be enabled or disabled with a click from a bootable recovery drive created by the app.

**THE BOTTOM LINE.** For maximum control over storage devices, forget Disk Utility and install Paragon Hard Disk Manager instead.

# Gemini 2

Weed out your duplicate files

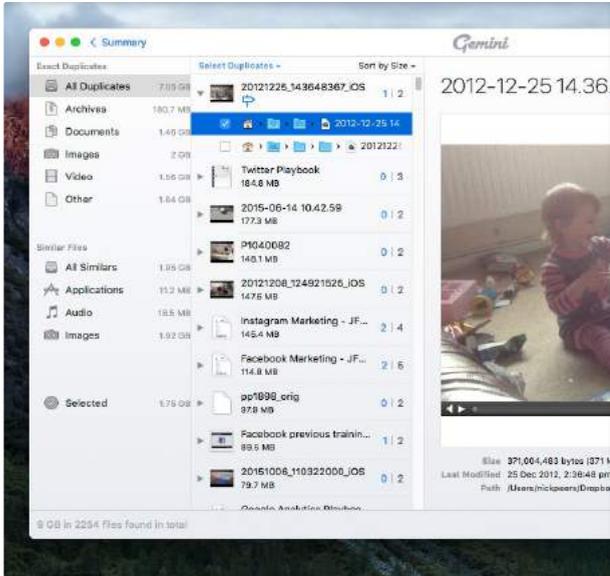
**\$19.99 Manufacturer** MacPaw, macpaw.com

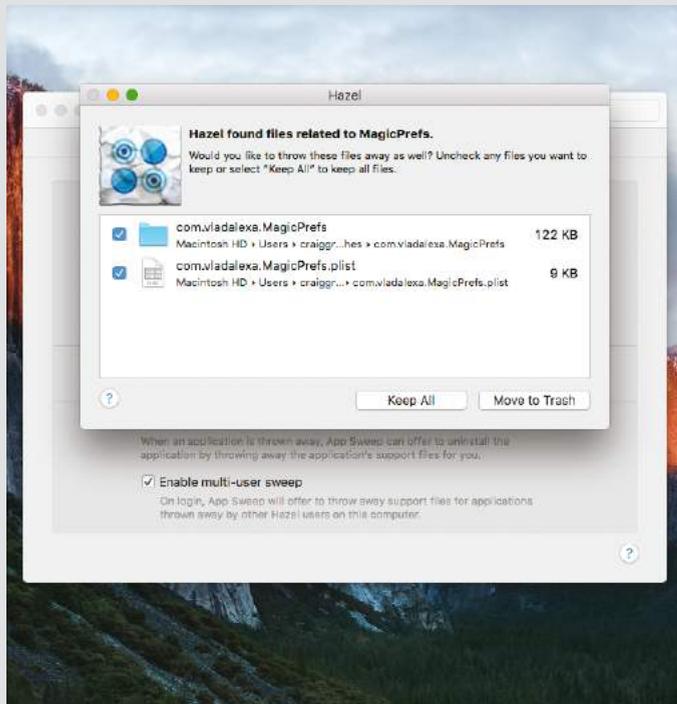
**Requirements** OS X 10.10 or later

Duplicate files are a pain to stay on top of, but thanks to Gemini they’ve become more manageable. The original app targeted duplicates only, but version 2 can flag up similar files, making them easy to compare and remove through its clear interface. It also promises to learn from your decisions, such as which folders you favor when choosing files to keep, to ensure its one-click “Smart Clean” is safer to use.

Gemini can search iTunes and Photos libraries as well as folders. You can choose to trust the scan’s findings and click Smart Clean, or exercise the more cautious option to review each entry. Duplicates and similar files are listed separately, and only the former are selected for deletion (you can choose Duplicate > Select > Deselect All to clear what’s preselected before review). The app provides built-in safeguards – files are moved to the Trash rather than deleted instantly, and a list of what’s been removed is shown with options for restoring. Throw in innovative tools and options (the app can be configured to replace duplicates with hard links, for example) and you’ve got a genuinely useful tool.

**THE BOTTOM LINE.** A powerful duplicate file finder with plenty of tools and safeguards to justify the price.





# Hazel

Keep your Mac tidy with some ground rules

**\$32** **Manufacturer** Noodlesoft LLC, noodlesoft.com

**Requirements** OS X 10.10 or later

Hazel is a housekeeper for your Mac, tidying behind you as you work. You select specific folders to target and rules to apply, setting up conditions and specifying what should happen, such as files being sorted into folders automatically based on their name. Hazel ships with basic rules to get you started, which act as examples. These place specific media types into relevantly named folders, or flag documents of a certain age with a label.

Through carefully constructed multi-condition rules, you can craft surprisingly complex actions, involving importing content into apps, archiving, and uploading. For example, you could have Hazel root around Downloads for music, put it into iTunes, and trash the original files. Construction of rules is now simplified through being able to preview them and discover where they fail. This update also adds rules search, and rules sync between Macs. For Hazel power users, we've no doubt these additions will justify the tiny upgrade fee. As for newcomers, Hazel remains astonishingly good value, on account of how much time it can save, even if you only have it perform the most basic and tedious of tidy-up tasks.

**THE BOTTOM LINE.** Useful – if perhaps not revolutionary – updates build on what was already an essential Mac utility.

# MacScan 3

Prevention is better than cure, and so on

**\$49.99/year (single user)** **Developer** SecureMac, securemac.com

**Requirements** OS X 10.8 or later, 64-bit processor, 500MB disk space

After years of being immune to the frequent virus and malware attacks that plague Windows users, Mac owners increasingly need to take potential threats seriously. MacScan 3 comes to the rescue with an easy-to-use utility that eradicates things that aren't supposed to be there. There are two core functions: Malware Scan (for serious threats like Trojan horses and spyware) and Internet Clutter Cleanup (for removing blacklisted tracking cookies), along with an up-to-the-minute database of current and past threats.

Which mode you choose depends upon how much time you have and how thorough you want to be. In the case of malware, a Smart Scan is limited to the most susceptible areas of the system; Quick, Full, and Custom scans are also available, but take longer (15-60 minutes on average). You can also check suspected files by dragging and dropping them onto the app, and maintain a whitelist and blacklist of cookies for specific sites. Although our test scans only rooted out tracking and Flash cookies, the software definitely provides peace of mind.

**THE BOTTOM LINE.** MacScan 3 is the easiest solution for purging rogue malware and cookies from your Mac.



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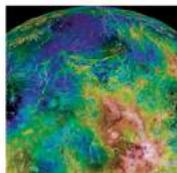
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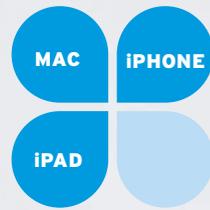
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