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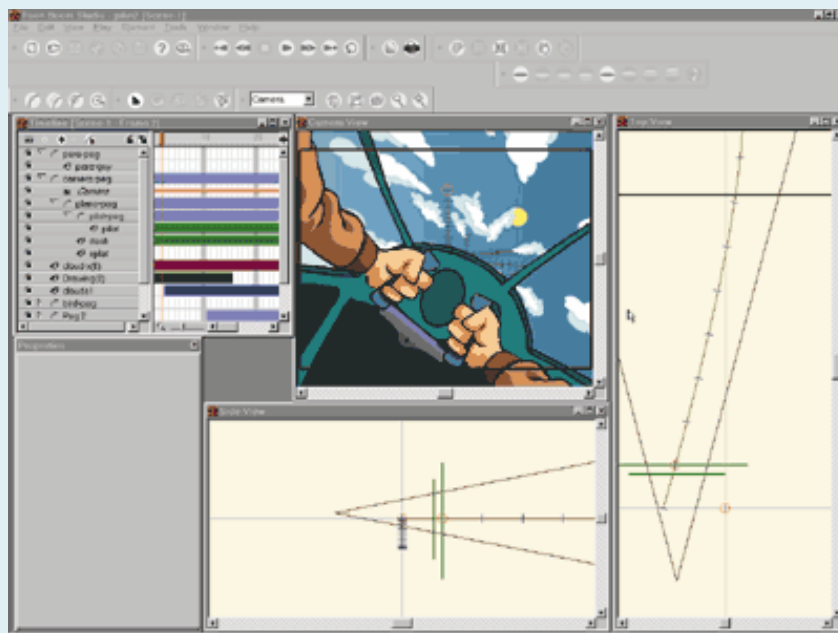
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## Toon Boom Studio

Page 1 of 1



Toon Boom Studio is the cheaper little brother of USAimation, a long-running standard in the traditional animation industry. Whereas Flash could be described as a Jack-of-all-trades, Toon Boom aims to prove its mastery in just one area: online cartoons.

Does it succeed? Well, that all depends. If you are familiar with Flash, you will recognise many of the interfaces. Nevertheless, Toon Boom has an idiosyncratic approach to many tasks, which can make for a steep learning curve. The odd approach to fill-ins, for example, with no 'close gaps' options means that you have to set about closing them yourself, otherwise the image just won't fill. It is in many ways laudable that Toon Boom is in no way trying to be a Flash clone, but this overlooks the masses of Flash users out there who will have to learn a new set of interface quirks to produce similar results.

**Price**  
£233

**Company**  
Toon Boom Technologies  
Inc

**Telephone**  
+1 514 278 8666

**Website**  
[www.toonboomstudio.com](http://www.toonboomstudio.com)

- \$349 download version, \$374 boxed
- Students can purchase Toon Boom Studio for \$99 download, \$124 boxed
- Vector-based animation
- Lip-Sync feature
- 3D Scene Planning mode
- Export in Flash SWF or

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March 2002 [68]



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However, one of Toon Boom's great strengths lies in its Scene Planning mode, where an extra depth dimension is added. It uses a series of windows with a top, side and camera view, enabling elements to be positioned further away. This is an obvious solution, as there is no longer any need to painstakingly rescale your elements to give the illusion of distance.

Another interesting feature is the Lip-Sync option, which analyses any vocal track and produces a sequence of mouth shapes to fit the syllables. The idea is that you copy the Toon Boom-supplied mouth shapes in your own style to fit your animation. This is a nice shortcut, but our one reservation is that there is no option to substitute your own mouth shapes for the defaults.

As already mentioned, Toon Boom has nothing in the way of interactivity, which will disappoint Flash users who have come to depend on the scripting options. On the other hand, for those who are content to make a cartoon simply to be viewed, this is no great loss.

If you're after an all-round vector animation package, then Flash is still the pick of the crop. But if you adapt to new interfaces readily, are simply interested in online animation and don't have any use for any of Flash's interactive bits and bobs, then Toon Boom Studio has a great deal to offer.

**Scores**

- Verdict 4
- Speed 4
- Value for money 4
- Ease of use 3
- Documentation 4

**For:** Impressive 3D interface · Lip-Sync that works · Smooth drawing action

**Against:** No interactivity · Limited export options · Idiosyncratic interface

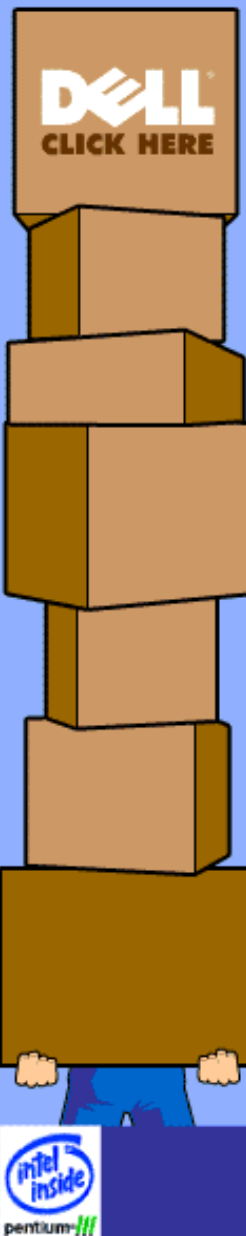
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QuickTime format  
• Pressure-sensitive tablet support

**System**

PC: 233MHz Pentium II · 128MB RAM · 100MB hard disk space · Win 98/2000/ME  
Mac: Power Mac G3 · 128MB RAM · 100MB hard disk space · Mac OS X

**Verdict**



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