

Toon Boom Studio 2.5 (MAC)

Toon Boom Studio 2.5 is a self-contained software animation studio supporting the creation of sophisticated Web cartoon animations. Animated elements are moved between frames by attaching them to a path that represents their direction of movement. Motion is easily controlled by adjusting control points along each path.

The creation of an animation generally follows a suggested workflow in which the elements of the animation are drawn, and other media elements are gathered. An animation project is saved in an Animation Set, which is folder that contains all of the elements of the project. Users can import Macromedia Flash movies and audio files, and can re-use self-created animation elements.

Animation elements are created on individual layers which appear on the Exposure Sheet. The elements are drawn using a set of vector drawing tools, which results in digital components which are very space-efficient, and have smooth edges.

A soundtrack is developed, and the lip syncing process is executed. The program provides a voice track analyzer to assist the animator in determining the proper lip positions that must be drawn to match the voice track.

Detail is added to the line drawings using digital ink and paint. An unlimited number of individual color palettes can be created for each character and scene. The palettes are intelligent, so that a change to the color of a specific line or fill will result in changes to all image zones containing that color.

The Exposure Sheet, composed of rows and columns, shows all of the characters, objects, and backgrounds in the animation. An individual row represents all of the elements that appear in one frame of the animation. The columns represent the duration of the appearance of an element. Sequencing, motion paths and timing are adjusted to represent the story, and the animation elements are positioned accordingly using the 3D Sceneplanning space. The animator has control over every element, its rotation, size, movement, and how it is viewed by the animation camera (pan, truck, and zoom). The Timeline window presents a graphic representation of when each element begins and ends, and the relationship of elements to one another. Finally, the completed animation scene is saved as a Flash or QuickTime file for use on the Web or other medium.

The program has an impressive list of features, too numerous to mention. Among the most impressive are: support for pressure sensitive drawing tablets; onion-skinning; bitmap vectorization; scanner and digital camera support (TWAIN); sound scrubbing from the timeline; and much more. \$429

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