

KICKING the TIRES

by Frank Petrie, MaMUGs, Technology Specialist



PRODUCT: OMNIGRAFFLE PRO V3.1.2

COMPANY: THE OMNI GROUP

<WWW.OMNIGROUP.COM/APPLICATIONS/OMNIGRAFFLE/>

REQUIREMENTS: N/A

PRICE: (US) \$119.90

TEST RIG: iBook G4/933/640 MB RAM

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The Chaos Theory. I've based my life on it. Don't get me wrong, I plan everything but I keep it all in my head (which ever so slowly has been morphing into a colander). In college, I remember constantly diagraming projects. What a pain.

"Diagrams are basic to the way people think, and we create them all the time without even realizing it. Whatever your profession or interests, chances are you've occasionally sketched out some ideas on a piece of graph paper or the back of a napkin. OmniGraffle is the tool to help you organize your thoughts visually, document them beautifully, and communicate them to the world.

With OmniGraffle, it's as easy as dragging and dropping to create flow charts, org charts, network diagrams, family trees, project processes, office layouts – anything you can think of that can be represented by symbols and lines."

Y'know, I've been redesigning the house. Looking for a new layout for the living room. Sounds like a test.

THE GOOD

"Drag the application to the Applications folder." I launch a new project and the pleasantries begin.



I'm greeted with a blank canvas and what turns out to be my control center. The Inspector's tools are laid out in an incredibly simple, yet customizable, palette. It has Smart Guides, just as in Keynote, to help you keep things lined up. And it's scriptable.

As for extra stencils, OMNI's site Add-ons Page has dozens of free stencils and AppleScripts to help you with anything from gardening to laying out a home computer network. What they didn't have I created either by stretching and rotating an existing graphic, or I just used one of the shape tools.

Within a half an hour (without prior experience) I had all the furniture positioned. Later I'll go back and diagram my home theater wiring. (I can't wait until everything is wireless!)

The great thing is that I can now look at my idea and see if it's practical. If not, I'll just plug in the holes.

THE BAD

Online help that has to be downloaded separately as a .pdf file. For this price, I believe that it should automatically be part of the download. No biggie, but all the same ...

THE UGLY

Nada.

THE CLOSE

Anyone who has to diagram anything (and I do mean anything, be it a room, a project, a story line, what-have-you) can most definitely benefit from this program. It's every bit as malleable as your imagination.

I just used it for one simple project that I needed done. You should really download the demo and apply it to your life and see what it can do for you.

Now if only it would actually move the furniture ...

RATING: 9 out of 10

PULL QUOTE: "It's every bit as malleable as your imagination."

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