

1 November 2008

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CrossOver Mac first screen

[CrossOver Seamlessly Integrates Windows Applications in Mac OS X](#)

Install Windows applications and games on your Intel OS X Mac

While CrossOver Mac comes in two forms - Standard and Pro, both versions are touted as being able to run popular Windows applications on your Mac, seamlessly. However, the tests we ran using the software with both supported and unsupported Windows apps revealed that "seamless" is not the term to use just yet when referring to CrossOver's capabilities. Still, those who need one shot at a Windows app can greatly benefit from this program.

At a glance

Considering the fact that many have been able to get a free copy of the software lately, thanks to the Lame Duck Challenge, CrossOver is worth installing on your computer to use whenever the software solutions available for Mac hit a dead end. If you need to make just a few particular Windows applications run, Standard is for you. But if you depend on both your Mac and Windows PC apps at work, with constant support, updates, and so on, Pro is the way to go. Today we're going to focus on the Standard version of Crossover Mac, which has the ability to run a multitude of Windows apps (including games) by creating a typical C: drive containing "bottles" with your installed Windows software applications. Bottles are assigned Windows specific aspects, like the supported OS version for a particular piece of software. Therefore, one bottle can contain a number of applications that work well on XP, while another can store programs that run better on Vista. The best thing about it is that Crossover simulates that environment so you don't actually need a copy of Microsoft's Windows.

'Supported' software

When you first fire up Crossover and skim over the list of supported applications, you either get very excited that your favorite apps are there, or... you don't. Not to worry though, unsupported apps still run, but they're unpredictable. Included in the list of supported Windows applications were Microsoft's popular web browser, Internet Explorer, and the Windows Media Player. So, we tried them both and here's what we got.

Internet Explorer (version 6.0)

- backspace often doesn't work when trying to correct a URL misspell
- IE sometimes doesn't redirect when entering an address without "www." (e.g.: softpedia.com didn't log me in; www.softpedia.com did)
- some pages display badly the first time you try to access their addresses

- scrolling is often very sluggish and almost impossible at times

Basically, IE acts pretty much as an "unsupported" crossover app, rather than as a "supported" program. Nevertheless, all the features are there, including accessing Outlook Express from within the browser.

Windows Media Player (version 9.0)

Right from the get go, Windows Media Player was buggy. Doing simple tasks like adding a playlist is just about as hard as trying to build a house with your bare hands. When I finally got around to adding some songs to the playlist, some played, while others didn't, for one reason or another.

It was obvious that CrossOver wasn't getting along too well with running Mac apps. For example, when I tried adding a URL (copied from iTunes) for one of my favorite radio stations, I got this...

Obviously, I couldn't even get it to connect (again, for one reason or another).

'Unsupported' isn't all that bad

However, my initial bad impression of CrossOver was about to change. Image-Line's Fruity Loops was my random choice for a run with unsupported Windows software. CrossOver was kind enough to warn that I was attempting to install "unsupported software" advising me to consult some of CodeWeavers' online resources. After hitting continue, CrossOver created a new Windows XP bottle and went on with installing the popular sequencer. Needless to say the installation process didn't exactly go smooth (I got about eight errors), but it did succeed. In a few seconds, I was already kicking and snarling to my iMac's frustration. It was acting as if something just wasn't right (hanging, freezing). Some of the plugins didn't work either, while some samples simply didn't exist in their respective directories - those errors were finally starting to reveal their nature. BUT, I actually had an unsupported Windows program working on my Mac without costly virtualization software! I was exhilarating! Some 80 percent of the program's features were usable. My next thought was, "ok, let's see what else we can run with this baby," as many of you are thinking right now, I'm sure.

The Good

CrossOver has the ability to run Windows programs on your Mac, eliminating the need of a virtualization solution like Parallels, or VMWare fusion, which run Windows and Mac OS X

side by side. Unsupported apps still work pretty well. If there's but one feature inside an unsupported program that you desperately need to use right away, there's a good chance CrossOver will be able to provide it for you.

The Bad

Clearly CodeWeavers has a different understanding of the term 'supported' - CrossOver barely manages to make Windows apps feel natural in your hands. And while all of the supported programs' features are a go, there's always that one glitch that messes up the whole experience. Even the apps' icons look ugly in the dock!

The Truth

Simply having CrossOver installed on your Mac gives you a boost in confidence. If you spend enough time trying out new software, you eventually reach a point where the Mac can't offer everything. It's probably the same with Windows users, but luckily for Mac owners, CrossOver can fill that gap whenever the situation calls for it. However, for professional use, the software clearly needs to be kicked up a notch.

More screens of CrossOver working its magic can be found below.