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Curio: For Capturing Creativity

The only thing not provided is the idea itself...

When you have a specific task to do, you usually know what tool you can use to get it done; and when you want to achieve something, you can most like envision how you should go about it. Curio is a program created and aimed at those people who do not yet know what they need to do, what their objectives are, or what exactly it is they want... In other words, Curio is a program designed to help in the creative process, by offering as much expandability and flexibility as possible in order to accommodate your brain when the juices get flowing. **Creativity in a bottle** As you might well know, when you start having ideas, they tend to get out of hand. Computers and programs, although in theory can work with vast quantities of information, have a rather limited approach regarding mixed media. Curio provides us with a ever growing white board, called an 'idea space', where we can keep images, text, sounds, files and just about anything you can think of. Furthermore, the way the information is handled keeps you focused on the idea instead of the working details. Not only can the idea space hold any type of media, referred to as assets, but this media can be placed out and arranged any way you want, and interacted with right from within the application. With Curio you can drag and drop a movie from the Finder, rotate the first frame into any angle you want and place it anywhere... and when you want to see that movie, double-click it and it will assume the normal orientation and display the controls. In order to keep focused on the idea, and not have to change around applications, you can add all sorts of documents right from within Curio. Then if you double-click that newly created document, the corresponding application will start and open the file. This way you can create all those documents you need in the creative stage of the project development and have them all there when it's time to go into details. If you prefer using the web for gathering references and information, you can also do so right from within Curio. Search for any words relevant to your project and drag the results into your idea space. Furthermore, the information you dragged is locally saved and referenced. This means that if, for example, you are looking for a new logo, you can just drag all the ones that look good into your idea space... Later, when you have decided upon one of them, just right-click on the image and select Open in Browser and you will be taken to the page where the asset was acquired. If you are a freehand person, you can use a graphic tablet to jot down your notes, map out charts and relationships and just about anything else you can do with a pen and a piece of paper. The Curio pen is even pressure sensitive and the colors mix with each other if you want them too. **10.000 assets in the idea space, 10.000 assets...** Curio is not only about gathering assets, much of the program is geared towards getting those relationships between all those elements out of your head, and into the screen. You can create flow charts and diagrams much like in OmniGraffle, using shapes and arrows that stick to shapes. The work flow is very fast once you get used to it and there are many shortcuts and little gems. For one thing it features a Expose like shortcut that will zoom out to fit your entire idea space in one screen, click and you zoom in to where you want. Another handy shortcut for those without mighty mice is being able to hold down the space bar to put the mouse into scroll mode. If you are a precision person, you will adore the mini-snap guidelines that appear automatically when two items are aligned, the floating tooltips that tell you the rotation angle and position information of an asset while it is being manipulated. Add to these a host of other shortcuts and various nifty options and you have a very precise tool to work with. Because you will probably have more than one idea space, it is handy to be able to create links between different assets. Curio lets you create web-link like shortcuts that can take you from one point to another over different idea spaces. Furthermore, the

search function will not only hide irrelevant items from the asset library, but also text blocks and entire idea spaces that have nothing to do with what you are searching. **Where did I put that file?** Curio keeps track of all the local assets you add, and all the remote ones too, although both are treated differently. Local files will have their symbolic links permanently updated, no matter where you move the file on your disk, you will always find it in your idea space. You can even use the idea space to track down the location of a file. Resources from remote locations are downloaded and stored locally, but they maintain a reference to the place they were acquired. If you need to share your idea with another user, you can easily pull everything together in one big file and send it to someone else. In case that person does not have Curio, you can easily export a PDF or HTML version of your idea space or just save the relevant bits as TIFF images. It's all easy and fast. **The Good** One of the best ways to brainstorm, there is very little that you can blame for not being creative and getting that great new idea out. The tools are all great and the way you work with them is astounding. **The Bad** There are so many features it is quite easy to get lost. Although this program was written for those people who work with very loose, and often inexistent, guidelines and ambiguous objectives, it can be equally useful to anyone. You could take advantage of its free form work flow to get your speech ideas sorted out, plan your next class, or just about anything else, but since there are so many options and possibilities many people can feel overwhelmed. **The Truth** A great application that is incredibly well designed and programed to be as loose and adaptable as possible. If you have ever wanted a tool that would help you get those ideas out of your head, Curio might be just the thing you need. Here are some screenshots, click to enlarge: