

MultimediaTM SCHOOLS

A Practical Journal of Technology for Education, including Multimedia, CD-ROM, Online, Internet, & Hardware in K-12

Volume 9
Number 3
May/June 2002

Product Reviews

Electronic Resources for Schools

compiled by Kathie Felix
News and Reviews Editor, *MULTIMEDIA SCHOOLS*

RubricMaker

Company: Ten Sigma, 100 Memorial View Court, Suite 200, Mankato, MN 56002; Phone: 800/657-3815; Web: <http://www.tensigma.org/>.

Price: \$95—Mac/Win hybrid CD-ROM, single user. \$225—lab pack, three users. \$400—building license. Multi-building license: minimum two buildings, \$300 per building.

Audience: Teachers, all grade levels.

Format: CD-ROM, powered by FileMaker Pro.

Minimum System Requirements: *Macintosh version:* Macintosh or Power

Macintosh, OS 7.1, 4 MB RAM (8 MB RAM recommended).

Windows version: Intel-compatible 486/33 computer, 8 MB RAM, Windows 3.1, 95, 98, 2000, or NT).

The suggested window resolution is 1024x768 for laptops, 800x600 for most desktops. A 640x480 resolution is not recommended.

Description: RubricMaker, powered by FileMaker Pro, designs and customizes rubrics with the assistance of a database of more than 2,000 prewritten criteria in 15 subjects. The program includes six different styles of rubrics: holistic rubrics (open column, grids, and mixed criteria) or analytical lists (circled scales, total point scales, and check-off scales).

Reviewer Comments:

Installation: I reviewed this program on a PowerMacintosh G3 computer with OS 8.6. Installation is required. RubricMaker is designed to install automatically. The instructions (a .pdf document on the CD-ROM) are easy to follow. I had absolutely no problems installing the program.

The CD-ROM does not have to be in the drive for the application to run. Note that resizing windows could lead to a mandatory closing of the application without the ability to save your work.

Installation Rating: A

Content/Features: RubricMaker's on-screen buttons guide the user through the process of creating rubrics. The Welcome screen allows you to design a new rubric, open a saved rubric, or get information.

The "design a new rubric" feature immediately begins the process of custom rubric design. First, users may choose one of four distinctive rubrics—list, mixed criteria, open column, or grid.

Next, users have access to two screens. One screen contains the on-screen buttons used in rubric design. The other screen contains the basic shell of the selected rubric style.

Each button is identified with a label indicating its use. In addition, on-screen help is always available. The help button (Help/Hints) is located at the top left of the screen. The buttons are color-coded to distinguish between

REPORT CARD	
Overall Rating	★★★★★
Installation	A
Content/Features	A
Ease of Use	A
Product Support	A
Maximum rating: 5 stars	



rubric-building functions and formatting functions (e.g., print, spell check, close, and save).

The Title button titles the rubric with a click and a series of keystrokes. The Name/Date allows the user to choose among various ways to record student information—for example, the standard “name, class, and date format” or name and assignment.

The Scale button helps with the selection of grading or evaluation. Choices include letters, numbers, yes/no, or a customized scale.

The Directions button allows you to define what your scale means. As an example, 4 may equal Excellent, 3 may equal Good, and so on. These definitions are not necessary, but provide an added feature that will ensure that your rubric and your scale are easily understood.

The Criteria Library button allows the user to access hundreds of prewritten criteria appropriate for a list-type rubric. The material can be used as is or can be edited as needed. Clicking on the selected criteria will immediately paste it into your project.

Some of the buttons are specifically used with only one of the four distinctive types of rubrics (e.g., the Category button for grid rubrics).

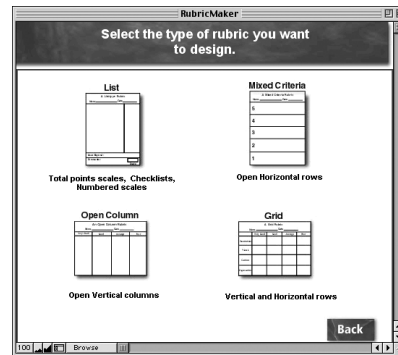
The list rubric includes a comment section. The Comment button provides a place on the rubric to write comments about a student's work. The Comments section is considered a default option.

A series of self-explanatory buttons assist in formatting your rubric. These include Add or Delete a Column, Add or Delete a Level, Add or Delete a Line or Row (two separate buttons), and Add or Delete a Category.

I especially thought the Author Page button was a nice touch. Here, you can save information about your rubric. This information makes it extremely easy to search for rubrics by grade level, etc. Other nice touches include the Goes Beyond button, which allows

documentation of a student's extra effort, and the Ideas button, which takes you to a screen that illustrates example content.

The User's Guide contains information on rubrics and an amazing section on additional resources, as well as information on rubrics and the research behind their use.



RubricMaker

The RubricMaker content is so comprehensive that I could not think of another feature that would make it easier to create a rubric for any need. The ability to cut and paste existing curriculum into this program seals the deal. This program is a must for any teacher! **Content/Features Rating: A**

Ease of Use: RubricMaker is wonderfully simple to use. The navigation tools contained within the program make it easy to develop a rubric in minutes!

Some knowledge of FileMaker Pro would be helpful, but not necessary. The designers of RubricMaker have really simplified the entire process, and, despite the fact that another application (FileMaker Pro) is “powering” the program, simple instructions guide the user through the process.

The entire program is “button-oriented.” Consequently, navigating

through the program is accomplished by clicking buttons, rather than using a series of pull-down menus (easy!). The buttons have easy-to-understand labels and the User's Guide gives full definitions and explanations of each.

Formatting is a breeze. Rubric Maker is designed to support most editing functions found in any word-processing program. You may bold, italicize, or underline any text. The program also supports copy, cut, and paste commands.

The User's Guide recommends knowledge of basic word-processing functions (e.g., use of a mouse, select, copy, and paste) and basic printing options.

I found the program to be extremely user-friendly. I had absolutely no problems with it. **Ease of Use Rating: A**

Product Support: Rubric Maker is fully supported. A Help section is located within the program. The User's Guide includes a tips and troubleshooting section.

Technical Support is available through the publisher's Web site [<http://www.tensigma.org/rm>], by e-mail [rmsupport@tensigma.org], or by fax (507/345-7574).

I found the regular product upgrades posted online to be a tremendous bonus. **Product Support Rating: A**

Recommendation: Any educator using rubrics as part of her/his assessment process will absolutely go wild over this program. I wish I had RubricMaker years ago! Two new upcoming products will load into RubricMaker and add more than 500 digital rubrics from the publisher's Rubrics I and II manuals. Do not delay, order this one today! **Outstanding!**

Reviewer: **John Drag, Jr.**, Principal, The Charter School of Excellence, 1217 S.E. 3rd Avenue, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33316; Phone: 954/522-2997; E-mail: Jpdrag@aol.com.