Embroidery software mac

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If you make a purchase through an affiliate link, I may earn a small commission at no extra cost to you. Free embroidery software is a good place to start when first learning to digitize or edit embroidery designs. For basic design customization, thumbnail viewing, or file conversion, free software might be all you need. After a year of using free programs myself, though, I ultimately decided to purchase software after doing every trial available. This is because premium software is much easier to use and produces better results for auto-digitizing and beginner manual design creation. I don't regret the time spent dabbling in free embroidery software, though, because I learned exactly what I did and did not want when purchasing! If you're new to embroidery, below are my picks for the best free embroidery software. I'll start with a quick description of the types of software available and then review the main features of each. Types of Free Embroidery Software It's important to know the different types of software available to differentiate between the free options. Some embroidery programs will only do one of these functions below, whereas more advanced software will do most or all of these functions. 1. Free File Converters If you download an embroidery file in a format incompatible with your embroidery machine, you must convert it using a file converter. For example, I have to use a file converter to convert the .jef files that I use on our library's Janome machine to .pes files for my home Brother embroidery machine. Embroidery file conversion means only taking an embroidery design file of one machine's format and converting it to another embroidery file format. This does NOT mean uploading a .jpg, .svg, or .png image file and converting it to an embroidery design file. 2. Free Thumbnail Software If you download machine embroidery designs on your computer, they display a generic icon rather than a design picture. If you want your computer to display pictures of designs, you need to download embroidery thumbnail software. 3. Free Editing Software Embroidery editing, or customizing, software allows users to alter and enhance pre-digitized designs loaded into the program. I use editing software the most to resize designs the right way, split large designs into smaller pieces, and add knockdown stitches and embroidery basting boxes to designs. Editing software also allows for thread color changes, basic editing of stitch properties, merging two or more designs, and many more things! 4. Free Embroidery Digitizing Software There are two broad types of embroidery digitizing: auto-digitizing and manual digitizing. The first is done with the click of a button and a few parameter specifications, whereas the second takes time and expertise. Manual digitizing produces the best embroidery designs and is how professional, commercial digitizers produce images. Regardless of the method, digitizing is the process of creating a new embroidery design either by using an image file (.svg, .png, .jpg, .bmp, for example) as a starting point or creating from scratch by hand. Software for digitizing is the most advanced type of machine embroidery software. As such there are only a few free embroidery software for digitizing manually. There are no free auto-digitizing embroidery software options at the moment. 5. Free Font Software While many editing and digitizing software have font capabilities, there is also software geared directly toward working with letters and fonts to form words, names, monograms, and more. Depending on the program, you can use embroidery fonts that you've downloaded in .bx or design file formats, or you can convert .ttf or .otf font files from your computer to embroidery designs. .ttf file conversion is kind of like auto-digitizing, which means you get so-so results. Best Free Embroidery Software I'll start with the programs that offer the most functionality but are more difficult to learn and move on to easier-to-use software that fulfills a smaller niche such as thumbnails, basic editors, and embroidery file format converters. After that, I've summarized programs that have free trials, which is what I recommend if you seriously want to learn embroidery digitizing. Or, if you want to digitize a few images and never digitize again. You also do not have to use the brand of software that matches the brand of your machine. For instance, when I looked for free embroidery software for my Brother machine, I did not have to stick with just Brother embroidery software. Lastly, if you don't have a PC or Mac, there are many free embroidery editing and digitizing apps you can check out also. 1. Inkscape and Ink/Stitch The most complex and best free embroidery digitizing software is the Ink/Stitch extension of Inkscape. Inkscape itself is an open-source vector graphics program that rivals Adobe Illustrator, a premier program for graphic designers. I own a Cricut Maker and enjoy creating SVG files to use when cutting. SVG files are "scalable vector graphics" files, which contain more information than a regular JPG file. The awesome thing about Inkscape is there's the Ink/Stitch extension to help you digitize SVG files and create embroidery designs from scratch. Ink/Stitch doesn't have many built-in fonts, and there is a limit to what you can do with the software. However, it is the best free digitizing software by far and is quite possibly the only free software to split embroidery designs as well as digitize that's updated regularly. It also is one of the best free embroidery software for mac, since mac software options are significantly more limited than free embroidery software for Windows 10. Now, the bad part about Ink/Stitch is if you have no idea what an object, path, or node is, for example, you'll have a tough time learning to use this program. I still create SVG files in Inkscape, but I no longer use Ink/Stitch. It turned out things that are easily done with a click of a button in paid embroidery software required an hour of research into how to do them on Ink/Stitch. Ultimately, time is money! Ink/Stitch Pros By far the most extensive free digitizing software Ability to create SVG files and embroidery files in the same program Ink/Stitch Cons VERY big learning curve for novices with no vector graphic experience. There are some good YouTube videos to help and an active Facebook group, though! No dedicated support staff. You will have to use a forum for troubleshooting or rely on the Facebook group. Simple tasks in other software are much less intuitive since the interface is geared toward vector graphics design creation rather than embroidery design creation. 2. SophieSew Embroidery Digitizing Software SophieSew used to be one of the best free embroidery digitizing software, but development was stopped in 2013 when the creator reported health problems. It is a manual digitizing software that allows you to create your own embroidery designs and edit existing designs. If you're willing to overlook its buggy behavior and limitations compared to more updated embroidery software, give SophieSew a try! A few times, when I tried to design in SophieSew, I ended up with fatal errors (see above.) There are several YouTube videos you'll find to give you a tutorial of use, but if you're not graphics-savvy, this won't be easy to learn. It is sad that development stopped and tutorials are sparse. This program had so much potential as a user-friendly alternative to Ink/Stitch. That being said, this is the only other always-free digitizing software. So, it's worth a try if you don't like Ink/Stitch. 3. dime Embroidery Toolshed Dime Embroidery Toolshed is a recent find that I've been excited to use! It performs basic editing abilities like design resizing, template printing, file format conversion, and thread color changes. You can also cut and paste, mirror designs, and preview design stitch sequences. What's fun is if you end up liking the free customization software, you can purchase compatible add-ons like Perfect Embroidery Pro, their professional embroidery digitizing software, and various modules like My Quilt Planner, My Emoji Stitches, etc. This software is made for PC, but it does run on MAC as well using the downloadable dime MAC translator. 4. 2Stitch Organizer 2Stitch Organizer is an embroidery program that allows you to view designs and their properties on your Windows or macOS computer. You add your embroidery design folders into the program and then easily organize them. I tag mine by digitizer and theme. If you spend the time tagging and giving your designs extra information in the Notes section, there is a GREAT search function. My favorite part, though, of this free embroidery design software is you can also search by maximum hoop size. This filters out large designs and is helpful for those of us with small embroidery machines! If you also click "Reveal in Explorer" when you right-click on a design, this will take you to the location on your computer where the file is saved. This helps me find designs that I want to delete or move to different folders on my computer. 5. Embrilliance Express Embrilliance embroidery software is arguably the most popular embroidery software. It comes in different modules and allows you to purchase as you go. The most basic paid module is Embrilliance Essentials for basic editing and customization, while their most complex module is Stitch Artist 3, a top-tier digitizing program. One good thing about Embrilliance is they have free demo software to try before you buy. However, the downfall is you can't save any of your work until you purchase the program. If you want to save work and are interested in using fonts, Embrilliance Express is a free software download that helps you work with .bx fonts. With .bx fonts and Embrilliance Express, you use your keyboard to type the letters rather than importing them one by one using embroidery software that lets you merge designs. This is a great option if you use lettering regularly. (Here are some places with free .bx embroidery fonts!) 6. My Editor My Editor is another free embroidery editing software. It has very basic abilities but is a good place to start, especially if you really only want to merge or resize designs. You can convert files from one format to another, change colors, and also rotate the design. It even will print a template of your design. This helps with lining up and centering the design on your embroidery blank. The one weird thing about My Editor was it converted several files on my computer to .ngs formats. It turns out I had selected one of the wrong stipulations about how it would handle .ngs formats when I downloaded it. So, be on the lookout! 7. Bernina Artlink 8 Bernina Artlink 8 is another basic editing software with similar capabilities to the other free embroidery programs on this list. It's just the teaser for Bernina's full embroidery software package. Artlink allows for basic design resizing, rotation, and even mirroring. You can combine embroidery designs, change thread colors, convert designs from one file format to another, and simulate a stitch out of the design. If you have a Bernina embroidery machine, this is a good place to start if you want very basic editing software. 8. Premier+ 2 Embroidery Premier+ 2 Embroidery is part of an impressive suite of embroidery software. While you can't access very much of the software for free, you can use basic features. It is fairly easy to use, but your options are indeed minimal. In my opinion, this one is not worth the download unless you are considering purchasing the entire software later. In which case, try it out! 9. StitchBuddy If you're looking for free embroidery software for an iPad, check out StitchBuddy's free machine embroidery editing software, which works on Apple computers, iPhones, and iPads. This program allows viewing, editing, and embroidery file conversion. Merging designs, changing thread colors, performing minor edits on existing designs, and even printing designs and templates are also among its functions. It is NOT a digitizing software, though. Using StitchBuddy HD is free until you want to save designs over 1,000 stitches, in which case you do have to make an in-app purchase. 10. Embroidery Explorer Embroidery explorer is essentially a free embroidery thumbnail software. As I mentioned earlier, this means your computer displays an image of the embroidery design either as a drawing or a stitch simulation rather than its default icon. You can also view information about your embroidery files, such as stitch count, design size, thread colors, and a slow stitch out of the design with this program. 11. Embroidermodder 2 Embroidermodder 1 emerged onto the scene in the mid-2010s but then was not updated after 2014. (So, don't download that version.) However, in December 2021, two of the developers picked Embroidermodder back up and released a timetable for the release of Embroidermodder 2 in late summer 2022. It's not currently available when I'm updating this list, but I'm leaving the link here in case it comes out before I check back. The Embroidermodder Team actually has a great embroidery app called Embroidery Viewer in the Google Play Store, which allows you to view embroidery files on your phone. (I do recommend that app!) Embroidery Digitizing Software Free Trial Options If you've found free digitizing software too difficult to learn or think it doesn't do what you want, below are embroidery software options that offer free trials with the ability to save. (I also have another post detailing what I feel are the best embroidery software choices to investigate if looking to purchase.) While these software aren't technically free, you can use them for no cost during their trial period. To note, Embird and Embrilliance have free trials also, but you cannot save files. Brother has free embroidery software for Brother embroidery machines (and others for that matter) available as a trial, too. You don't have any saving abilities until you purchase. Here's the free embroidery software download for Brother PE-Design 11 if you want to try it out. 1. SewWhat-Pro and SewArt SewWhat-Pro is an embroidery editing and customization software that is very affordable. It offers a 30-day free trial with saves up to 3 colors. I've written a quick Sew What Pro review + tutorial if you want to get a sneak peek of its offerings. I also have a tutorial on how to make monograms from .ttf fonts using Sew What Pro. This is what I started with before upgrading later. SewArt is the companion embroidery digitizing software to SewWhat-Pro. It is an auto-digitizing software, so you are limited in what you can digitize and how effective it will be. For simple, clip-art images and simple logos, results are fairly good! It's not a program that lets you create your own designs from scratch, though. Meaning, you will have to input an image into the program to start the digitizing process. For beginners without aspirations of ever selling designs, I think this is a great option. 2. Hatch 3 Embroidery Software Don't forget to check out the Hatch free 30-day trial. Hatch has 4 different modules that build upon one another and can be purchased separately. I have Hatch Digitizer, which lets me do pretty much everything I want. (It's not cheap digitizing software, though!) In my opinion, it's the best embroidery digitizing software for non-commercial digitizers. There is also Hatch Organizer, Hatch Personalizer, and Hatch Embroidery Composer. Composer allows for auto-digitizing, so if you do not want to do much manual creation, this is all you need. 3. EmbroideryWare EmbroideryWare is a full-featured embroidery digitizing program that offers a 30-day free trial. I found it up there with Ink/Stitch with the difficulty of use, although it has many more features. EmbroideryWare does not offer auto-digitizing, so only look into it if you're serious about manually creating your own images. It does have a helpful Facebook group and a slew of YouTube videos, though. Final Notes I hope you've now been able to find a free embroidery software option to fit your needs! Just remember, learning to digitize embroidery designs takes substantial time. So, don't give up if it seems confusing at first! Also, for beginners to machine embroidery, here are other helpful posts: where to find free embroidery designs, how to use an embroidery machine, and embroidery stabilizer guide.

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