



LEVI ALLEN'S TOOLBOX

A Guide to My Favorite Applications, Plugins, and Utilities

PREFACE:

I am a huge fan of tools that help me gain a productive edge and work more efficiently at what I love to do. For me I find the right tools can help me spend more time on the right things, and focus more energy on actually creating. Levi Allen's Tool Box is my personal guide made of all the tools I use everyday, tools that I simply cannot do without. I am a Mac user, and so this is primarily a guide for other Mac users as well. I hope you enjoy the guide and find some tools that help you pursue what you love!

All the best,
Levi Allen

This guide was built by Levi Allen entirely for the benefit of others. The guide contains my opinion about tools I love and no other party was involved in the editorial process. There is no company I am trying to keep happy by making this. I currently have absolutely no affiliates and I am making no money from this guide. If you want to get involved with more of my work Leftcoast.co is the place!

CONTENTS:

1) WRITING

2) TIME MANAGEMENT

3) PRODUCTIVITY

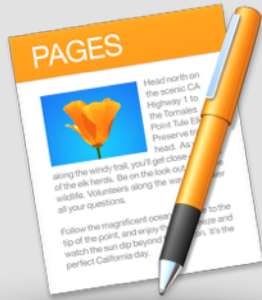
4) VISUAL MEDIA

5-6) VIDEO EDITING TOOLS

7-8) UTILITIES

9) CLOUD STORAGE

WRITING



PAGES

Pages: I love pages. I find it to be one of those apps that works exactly the way I want, 90% of the time. This is my go-to processor for creating pdf guides and consultation packages. This guide itself was even built with Pages. When I just want a nice full fledged word processor, Pages for me is the way to go. There are some specific things that I use Word for, but those are primarily academic related, Pages for everything else.



iBOOKS AUTHOR

iBooks Author: This is a free application from Apple that works excellent for creating ebook style documents. I have only scratched the surface with how to use its tools, but when creating story telling pieces, iBooks Author is my goto choice. It has fantastic layout templates for all sorts of different pages, and is good for managing and organizing a high volume of pages in a book.



DAY ONE

Day One: Journaling is something that I have always loved, yet time and time again I have faced the endless struggle of running out of time to write down everything I want to process. My hand gets too sore and I simply am not a fast hand writer. A few years ago I started journaling in a document on my computer and loved the ability to write almost as fast as I could think. Yet I still didn't do it as often as I wanted, that is until I was recommended Day One. This beautiful and elegant app draws me in to journal. I don't understand how, but I love it.



EVERNOTE

Evernote: While I might not be on the Evernote bandwagon as much as the next guy, I still love it as my digital filing cabinet. This is one of those apps I use everyday, multiple times a day. It is my primary notepad and place to store pictures for reference. The mobile app is great for input and then referencing later on the desktop app. The web clipper also is super helpful and a far better option than trying to bookmark all the articles I want to remember.

TIME MANAGEMENT



FOCUS TIME

Focus Time: The pomodoro technique is my go-to strategy utilizing set apart focused blocks of work. These blocks of time are where I get 80% of my work done. I've tried quite a few of these timer apps, and this one is my favorite by a long shot. It has a great mobile app and super clean interface. You can select various activities and see an overview of what you spent your different focus blocks on. If you want a good pomodoro timer, this is the one.



RESCUE TIME

Rescue Time: I was challenged to use this app by a friend, and the results scared the crap out of me. I knew I procrastinated sometimes, but this app revealed the actual facts of how much time was wasted on useless activities. This utility monitors what windows you use on your computer and sends you weekly reports. You can set certain activities as 'productive' or 'distracting' and view a graph of how much time was actually used on what's most important. It's a good accountability check in for me on how much time I've spent on my computer and what I've been up to. The facts don't lie.



TOGGL

Toggl: While I don't bill by the hour and never talk about the hours involved with my clients, I sometimes track my hours on projects for internal reasons. It's helpful to compare how long certain projects took over a long period of time, and gain a more realistic idea of what time resources go into certain projects.



CALENDAR

Calendar: If it makes it on the calendar, I am going to do it. I treat anything that ends up here as a firm commitment to myself. I actually don't know how I could function without a digital calendar, I would probably just shut down under stress. I keep track of all my commitment deadlines, appointments, scheduled work blocks and any other dates I need to remember. Using the native app with apple products is best for me because it simply just works.

PRODUCTIVITY



OMNIFOCUS

OmniFocus: Getting Things Done, changed my life. Well, not entirely, but this method from David Allen changed everything about how I approach my most important projects. I am not a fully committed GTD'er, but when an action gets turned into a project, OmniFocus is my go to for managing it. If something makes it into this app it is a high priority project I am going to get done. It comes with a price tag, but it is the best project managing tool I have ever used.



SELF CONTROL

Self Control: Building up your muscle for saying no to distractions is an excellent idea, yet sometimes you are weak and need to just eliminate them entirely. This is an app that can blacklist certain websites for a set period of time, it is pretty straight forward and really effective. Once activated there is no way around it until the time you set is up.



WUNDERLIST

Wunderlist: This is the app that stores the 101 lists I keep in my life. I love keeping lists of different things: potential blog topics, packing lists, a list of my process, book lists, and anything else you could put on a list. My main intake tools are Evernote and Wunderlist, while Omnifocus is used for project managing. I treat Wunderlust like my inbox for thoughts and actions, while I use Evernote as more of a filing cabinet for referencing. Evernote is like a box of newspaper clippings while Wunderlist is used as my catalog of things I am going to do.

VISUAL MEDIA



ADOBE CREATIVE CLOUD

Creative Cloud: I love creative cloud. For a monthly price I can afford, I get full access to all of Adobe's applications. Buying the master suite for thousands of dollars was never an option for me and I am so thankful for Adobe moving in the subscription direction. Here are the four Adobe apps I use everyday.



PREMIERE PRO

Premiere Pro: When it came time for me to learn a professional video editor I gravitated towards the Adobe line of products. I was drawn to the ability of Premiere and After Effects working so well with Dynamic Link. Premiere continues to be the editor that I am most proficient and comfortable with and I have found no reason to change to Final Cut X at this point. I see the advantages, but learning a new NLE isn't high on my list of priorities.



PHOTOSHOP

Photoshop: Do I even need to say anything about this app? Yeup, it's Photoshop, the app that has become a verb, and it's the most powerful image editor available. I don't use it for my average photo editing, but when it comes to heaving lifting and creating graphics, Photoshop is the tool.



AFTER EFFECTS

After Effects: This is essentially the Photoshop of video, that's the way I view it at least. After Effects is a really robust tool for doing some fantastic motion graphic work. I use it for creating animations, compositing elements, and touching up timelapses.



LIGHTROOM

Lightroom: This is what I use to edit 99% of the photos I take. I use it to both manage my photo library and do all the editing, rating, and minor touch ups. I also purchased film emulation presets from a company called VSCO that are a staple to my editing process.

VIDEO EDITING TOOLS



SCREENFLOW

Screenflow: When it comes to creating screencasts this app is the industry standard. Not only does it capture what it needs really well, it also gives you plenty of options and has a built in video editor. There is no screen recording app that rivals Screenflow at this point.



LRTIMELAPSE

LrTimelapse: This app single handedly changed the entire way I approach editing timelapses. Previously I would import them as an image sequence and go from there, but now with this utility I find my options for editing are endless. It has an amazing de-flickering tool and other editing options that now I could not do without. It partners with Lightroom and allows you to keyframe all sorts of changes and adjustments across your timelapses.



PLURAL EYES 3

Plural Eyes 3: I record my audio separately from my video camera. This app does an unreal job of syncing together audio tracks with your video. I don't take it for granted, and literally every time that it does it's thing I think it's magic. Gone are the days of trying to sync things up manually.



PANOLAPSE

Panolapse: When I want to keyframe motion into my timelapses I use this app. It does more than just a simple kens burn effect, it utilizes distorting of the image to make it seem as though the camera is actually panning through a real life scene. I try to not over use it, but when used subtly its effect is very helpful. Yes, using an actual motorized pan/tilt head is the best option, but when used right the shortcut will only be noticed by other fellow timelapsers.

VIDEO EDITING TOOLS



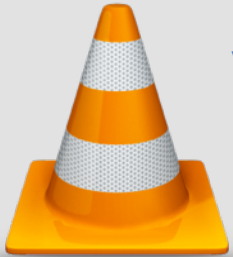
MAGIC BULLET LOOKS

Magic Bullet Looks: My skills in color grading are growing with every production, but I am no where near being an advanced colorist. This plugin from Red Giant helps make color grading straight forward and easy for me to do.



COLORISTA II

Colorist II: This is yet another Red Giant plugin I rely heavily on for color grading. It is essentially an advanced three way color wheel, and it works fantastic.



VLC MEDIA PLAYER

VLC Media Player: There is simply no better media player for the many different types of video files. I have yet to run into a codec that VLC cannot play. It has great gamma representation, and a lot of advanced features. VLC is the way to go.



NEAT VIDEO

Neat Video Denoiser: This plugin is fantastic for removing digital grain from video. I use this in conjunction with adding film grain back over top to keep that organic look. It is very graphic intensive, but works really well. I wait till the end of my post production to apply it as it essentially cripples my graphics card.

UTILITIES



1PASSWORD

1Password: I use this to keep track of my many accounts. It has a straight forward interface and can save to a dropbox database and sync across all of your devices. It also has a helpful safari plugin that makes saving my new passwords super efficient. I don't use its password generator, but I love it for storing login information and keeping track of different emails.



BREEZE

Breeze: This is my favorite finder utility. This app allows you to create what's called saved window states for your most used applications. That means you can use a shortcut and your window will automatically resize and reposition to an automatic place on your screen, regardless of resolution. I have only a few saved states, but I use their generic shortcuts for windows all the time. Instantly full-screen, or quickly move two windows to share the screen, this app has been saving me so much time.



DATA RESCUE 3

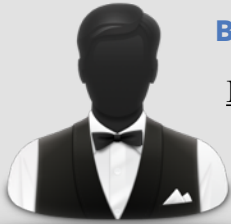
Data Rescue: This simple app has saved my butt so many times. It happens to all of us, we accidentally wipe a card before we mean to, we lose an important file, or maybe we are just being tech support for our careless friends. Either way, Data Rescue is by far the easiest data recovery software I have ever used. I don't use it often, but when I am in a pinch, I am so thankful it works.



BLACKMAGIC DISK SPEED TEST

Disk Speed Test: I don't tend to be one to crunch numbers with my hard drive speeds, but it sure is nice to get a ballpark of how fast they are going sometimes. I use this to test my Drobo 5d and also many of my other hard drives. This free utility gives you lots of numbers and what type of video files you should be able to edit live from that specific drive.

UTILITIES



BARTENDER

Bartender: I hate a messy menu bar. I can't stand when apps automatically include a menu bar icon and don't give you the option to delete it. This is the app that lets you clean up your menu bar once and for all. You have several options: you can remove an item entirely, or you can just hide it under a drop down menu which is accessed with just a click.



CARBON COPY CLONER

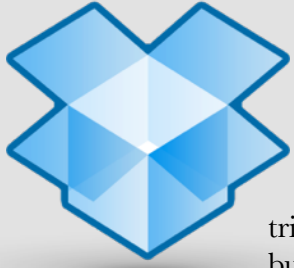
Carbon Copy Cloner: This is the best utility for creating bootable backups. It has a lot of features like scheduled backups that I don't use much, but it is my favorite utility for making backup hard drives and clones of my boot drive.



DEFAULT FOLDER X

Default Folder X: This is the latest addition to my arsenal of power using utilities. It is a robust addition to the save dialogue box in finder. It adds a fantastic 'recents folders' option and also 'favorite folders.' This utility has saved me lots of time that was previously wasted clicking through my folder structures to save files.

CLOUD STORAGE



DROP BOX

Drop Box: The race for the cheapest cloud storage is on, but so far I am loving Drop Box's 10 dollars a month for 1 Tb option. I tried to utilize iCloud Drive, but it simply is not built as a good cloud storage tool. I love Drop Box's syncing infrastructure and find it to work exactly the way I want. The iOS app is fantastic and I use it everyday transferring files back and forth from my iPhone.



GOOGLE DRIVE

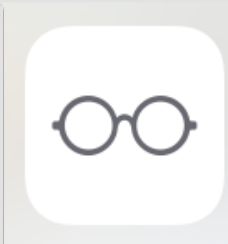
Google Drive: The free 15gb is all I need to use Google Drive exactly the way I want to. It is my go-to document storing solution and there is currently no better tool for shared collaboration with others. I store all of my admin files for Leftcoast here and any other text files I want on the cloud. The iOS app is also an excellent tool for editing spreadsheets and documents on the go.

INTERNET BROWSING



SAFARI

Safari: I have a love hate relationship with Google Chrome. It is my favorite browser but is definitely a resource hog on my Mac Book. For this reason I keep coming back to Safari for my day to day use for everything on the internet. Similar to the Mac Calendar app, it just works.



READING LIST

Reading List: I know this is just a built in function with Safari, but it has made my life so much better. I use this everyday to keep track of articles I want to read or reference later. I tried Instapaper and others, but I come back to reading list because its native integration.



SPREAD THE LEFTCOAST LOVE

Did you find this helpful?

Consider sending the blog article to a friend <http://left.ly/ak3t>

I'm stoked you checked out this guide. I value your interest and truly hope you appreciate this guide. Did you enjoy it? What are your favorite apps? Send me a tweet [@theLeviAllen](https://twitter.com/theLeviAllen), it would be fantastic to hear from you.

I care a ton about how the experience of reading this guide went. If you could spare a few moments to help give me some insights to your experience that would be so fantastic.

**[Click Here to Take Part
in Giving Feedback](#)**

This guide was created by Levi Allen. You do not have permission to sell or redistribute this document. No intent on copyright infringement was intended on the inclusion of any logos. Contact me at levi@leftcoast.co with any concerns.