



Xarnia.com Which DAW Software Ebook (2011)

This ebook is designed to help musicians decide which music software is right for them. If you're new to digital audio workstations, this ebook is for you.

SOFTWARE PACKAGES

www.reaper.fm is the home of the low cost Cockos Reaper software. Reaper is Audio Unit, VST, DX and MIDI compliant, works on both Mac and Windows and costs just \$40 for a license. Reaper is not however suitable for a complete beginner and some experience of DAW software is recommended.

VERDICT : Best low cost solution

Garageband which is now bundled with all new apple computers is a great easy to use DAW for beginners. The fact that it only comes with a mac or works on mac, is a disadvantage obviously, but if you're starting out (and planning on buying a mac), it's a very simple software to learn.

VERDICT : Most User-friendly DAW

Fruity Loops is a simple DAW but it is mainly aimed at dance and electronic music with its built in instruments and plugins being designed for that purpose. It does not work on Mac computers but is very reasonably priced at \$35 for the basic version and \$129 for the most advanced version.

VERDICT : Best for novice dance music producers

Reason/Record by Propellerheads is not strictly a DAW as it has no support for VST plugins, but it is a complete studio with 3 synthesisers, a groove maker and a whole load of orchestral, rhythmic and very real sounding instrument patches. At more than \$300 for both Reason and Record (Record being the direct audio recording functionality which you cannot record vocals or instruments without) it is not very cheap. It does have the advantage of being simple to use and easy to learn, and the built in plugins are good.

VERDICT : Best all-in-one package

Logic Express and Logic Pro are the two versions of Logic that Apple offer. Logic only works on Mac computers. Logic is a professional piece of software which produces very high quality audio. It is quite tough to master and some of the functionality is quite complicated and not for the inexperienced.

VERDICT : Professional results on a smaller budget

Pro Tools HD, LE and M Powered are Digidesign's DAW software versions. You need a Digidesign interface (either M Audio for M Powered or Mbox for LE or a HD device) which is the audio engine for the software instead of the software using your computers on board sound. HD is very expensive but considered the industry standard for a recording studio. LE and M Powered are more home studio versions. Another software similar to HD is MOTU digital performer and can be used with the Digidesign HD DAE device.

VERDICT : LE and M Powered are very similar to Logic. Pro Tools HD and Digital Performer are professional solutions

Other DAW software packages

- Ableton Live – Great for pre-preparing DJ sets, and live loop based performances
- Cubase & Nuendo – Nuendo is the expensive Pro version and regular Cubase is the home studio solution. Some excellent plugins built in like groove agent make it a good choice
- Cakewalk Sonar Producer – Windows only DAW with a cool matrix cell-sequencer
- Sony Acid Pro – Started out as a remix tool, but now developed into a full Windows only DAW, Acid Pro is still well-liked by DJs, remixers and game music producers
- Magix Samplitude – expensive at £725 for the pro version, but has great features like elastic audio
- Adobe Audition – A decent software package with a good looking interface, but the MIDI setup can be confusing
- Acoustica Mixcraft – Windows only DAW with video scoring functionality, and some good instruments included like the minimoog emulator and a dozen studio fx plugins.
- Presonus Studio One – Mac only DAW which does not support third party VST plugins but does have a good selection included.

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