

why use SkyTools?

What is the benefit to using a planner?

- ◆ checklists, targets, goals, an objective...
- ◆ certifications
- ◆ view only unseen objects
- ◆ view objects at best times
- ◆ consolidate paper lists, magazine suggestions, etc
- ◆ high accuracy, very current
- ◆ lower magnitudes
- ◆ speed up planning, spend more time observing

everybody & their dog

"Regular" planetarium applications do the following:

- ◆ show stars, DSOs, planets, etc.
- ◆ against a simulated night sky
- ◆ grid lines, constellations, ecliptic, etc.
- ◆ details on selected object
- ◆ simulate field of view
- ◆ searching
- ◆ printed charts
- ◆ red light mode

planners / loggers

The main features of a planner are building lists and logging.

- ◆ event planning, making lists, best sequence
- ◆ dynamic and manual filtering
- ◆ integrated log book
- ◆ very accurate and very current
- ◆ accelerated star hopping
- ◆ predicts quality of visual view

the players

There are a few options... SkyTools is best of breed.

product	demo	Windows	Macintosh
Calsky (web site)	n/a (free)	✓	✓
AstroPlanner	✓	✓	✓
Deep-Sky Planner	✓	✓	
Deep Sky	✓	✓	
SkyTools	✓ *	✓	

Standard Edition demonstration

Blake demonstrated key features.

- ◆ observing list content
- ◆ the dynamic Night Bar
- ◆ detailed Object Information
- ◆ making a list manually or with the automatic generator
- ◆ powerful searching
- ◆ the zoomable, customisable Interactive Chart
- ◆ the Context Viewer simulating eyepiece views
- ◆ high-speed unique star hopping chart
- ◆ chart printing

1000+ days later

- ◆ Blake doesn't leave home...
- ◆ builds observing lists for
 - personal observing sessions
 - club observing sessions
 - star parties & outreach events
 - imaging runs (with the Pro edition)
 - simply, quickly, what's up right now?!
- ◆ logs viewed objects
- ◆ configured for it for the Paramount ME
- ◆ still learning stuff!

see over

- ◆ for snapshots!

cool features not demonstrated

- ◆ sharing lists, downloading shared lists
- ◆ session logging, permanent logging
- ◆ Current Events, monthly calendar, daily report
- ◆ plotting solar system object paths

pros

- ◆ if you love lists...
- ◆ logging, for career, certification, and filtering
- ◆ automatic generation tool is handy and fast
- ◆ accuracy and currency
- ◆ rich double star data
- ◆ everything in one spot, less paper
- ◆ shared lists
- ◆ observing more

cons

- ◆ not cheap
- ◆ intimidating
- ◆ 600 page manual (for the Pro edition)
- ◆ different interface
- ◆ Windows only (but runs in WineBottler)
- ◆ buy a new (big) monitor!?

editions

- ◆ Starter
 - planning, searching, list creation
 - telescope 3-panel chart
 - trial version available!
- ◆ Standard
 - + list sharing, rich filtering
 - Interactive Atlas, Context Viewer
 - events, month & day calendars
 - observing status, permanent logging
- ◆ Professional
 - + telescope control
 - imaging planning, calculations
 - expanded database with 522 million stars
 - enhanced searching

how much?

- ◆ direct from Skyhound
 - Starter USD \$40 trial version available!
 - Standard \$100
 - Professional \$180
 - shipping \$12
- ◆ arrange a group buy
 - for astronomy clubs
 - 2 to 9 is 25%
 - +25 people 50% off!

learnin'

- ◆ slightly steeper learning curve; long
- ◆ lots of support options
 - on-board tutorials, help screens, how-to guides
 - extensive manual
 - private Yahoo!Group, which the author monitors
 - video tutorials on web
- ◆ fellow members

need info?

- ◆ Blake Nancarrow
blaken AT computer-ease DOT com
- ◆ Blake's blog-- <http://blog.lumpydarkness.com>
- ◆ Skyhound-- web <http://skyhound.com>
- ◆ 'Unk' Rod Mollise-- <http://uncle-rods.blogspot.com>
- ◆ SkyTools Yahoo!Group

dynamic Night Bar showing darkness and when object is highest

list of evening targets, sorted for optimum viewing

Context Viewer simulating eyepiece view

logged entries

Interactive Atlas showing naked eye wide field, with nearby objects identified

Object Info box with lots of details on selection

SkyTools 3 Professional Edition
 Nightly Planner | Current Events | Special Events | Ephemerides | Real Time
 Evening of 2011 Nov 26 EDT | Carr Astronomical Observatory | Celestron C14 | Blake Nancarrow

Primary ID	Alternate...	Con	RA (Ap)	Dec (Ap)	Mag	Size	Distance	Begin	Optimum	End	D...	Be...	Ploss	
M 76	Little Dumbbell	Per	01h3m08.3s	+51°38'23"	10.1	2.7'	2400 ly	19:09	22:42	05:08	easy	easy	Ploss	
M 1039		Per	02h42m54.2s	+42°48'55"	5.8	35.0'	1600 ly	19:11	23:42	05:30	easy	obvious	Ploss	
NGC 1068		Cet	02h43m19.6s	+40°02'19"	9.7	6.5x5.5'	70.0 Mly	20:39	23:42	02:43	easy	easy	Ploss	
M 45	Pleiades	Tau	03h47m45.2s	+24°09'16"	1.5	120.0'	490 ly	20:04	00:46	05:28	obvious	obvious	Ploss	
NGC 1904	Lep	05h24m42.7s	+24°30'50"	7.7	9.6'	49000 ly	23:24	02:23	05:21	easy	obvious	Erle		
NGC 1912	Aur	05h29m30.9s	+35°51'24"	6.8	20.0'	3500 ly	21:04	02:27	07:07	easy	obvious	Pano		
M 42	Great Orion Nebula	Orn	05h35m56.3s	-05°22'33"	4.0	40.0x20.0'	1500 ly	00:05	02:34	05:03	obvious	obvious	Ploss	
M 35		NGC 1960	Aur	05h37m08.2s	+34°08'46"	6.5	10.0'	4300 ly	21:18	02:35	07:12	obvious	obvious	Ploss
M 37		NGC 2099	Aur	05h53m07.5s	+32°33'16"	6.2	14.0'	4500 ly	21:39	02:51	07:09	obvious	obvious	Erle
M 38		NGC 2168	Gem	06h09m46.3s	+24°20'47"									
M 41		NGC 2287	CMa	06h46m33.7s	-20°46'09"									
M 50		NGC 2323	Mon	07h03m18.3s	-09°24'04"									
M 47		NGC 2422	Pup	07h37m09.7s	-14°30'36"									
M 46		NGC 2437	Pup	07h42m20.6s	-14°50'17"									

Object Information
 Pleiades
 R.A.: 03h47m45.2s Dec.: +24°09'16" (2000)
 Galactic lon: +166°34' Galactic lat: -23°31' in Taurus
 Also known as: M 45, Collinder 42, Melotte 22, OCL 421
 Magnitude: 1.50
 Size: 120.0'
 Catalog Data
 Radial Velocity: 7 km/sec
 Distance: 490 ly
 Age: 135 Myrs
 Color Excess E(B-V): 0.040
 Metallicity index: 0.11
 Images | Links | Observing Lists | Visual Difficulty | Chart Numbers
 Visual Synopsis | Notes | NightBar | YearBar | Apparent Data
 Apparent RA: 03h47m45.2s Local Sidereal Time: 03h48m
 Apparent Dec: +24°09'16" Hour Angle: 03h01m
 Ediptical lon: +59°53' Airmass: 1.1
 Ediptical lat: +44°46' Mean extinct magnitude: 1.8
 Altitude: +19°54'
 Apparent Altitude: +69°40'
 Altitude above visible horizon: +70°25'
 Zenith Distance: +20°20'
 As of 2011 Nov 27 00:46 EDT
 For Carr Astronomical Observatory
 Celestron C14

Telescope chart allows extremely rapid star hopping!

Zooming controls

step 1: aim your telescope in this general area

step 2: use the Finder panel to verify field stars

step 3: enjoy the view in the eyepiece

orientation or direction marker

Time controls

Path plotting tools

Change the eyepiece, Barlow, etc.

Rotate the eyepiece field if nec.

Visual Sky Simulation
 2011 Dec 25 18:55 EST | Carr Astronomical Observatory
 Default Observer: TeleVue 101 Telescope | TeleVue Radfan 18mm F10
 Naked-Eye: SW | Eye-piece: 30x, 2.0°
 RA: 00h36m00.3s Dec: +40°53'02" (J2000) in | Fully dark ML 13.5 target easy | +02°21'x+02°32'

Screen snapshots prepared by Blake Nancarrow (blaken AT computer-ease DOT com) using SkyTools 3.