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

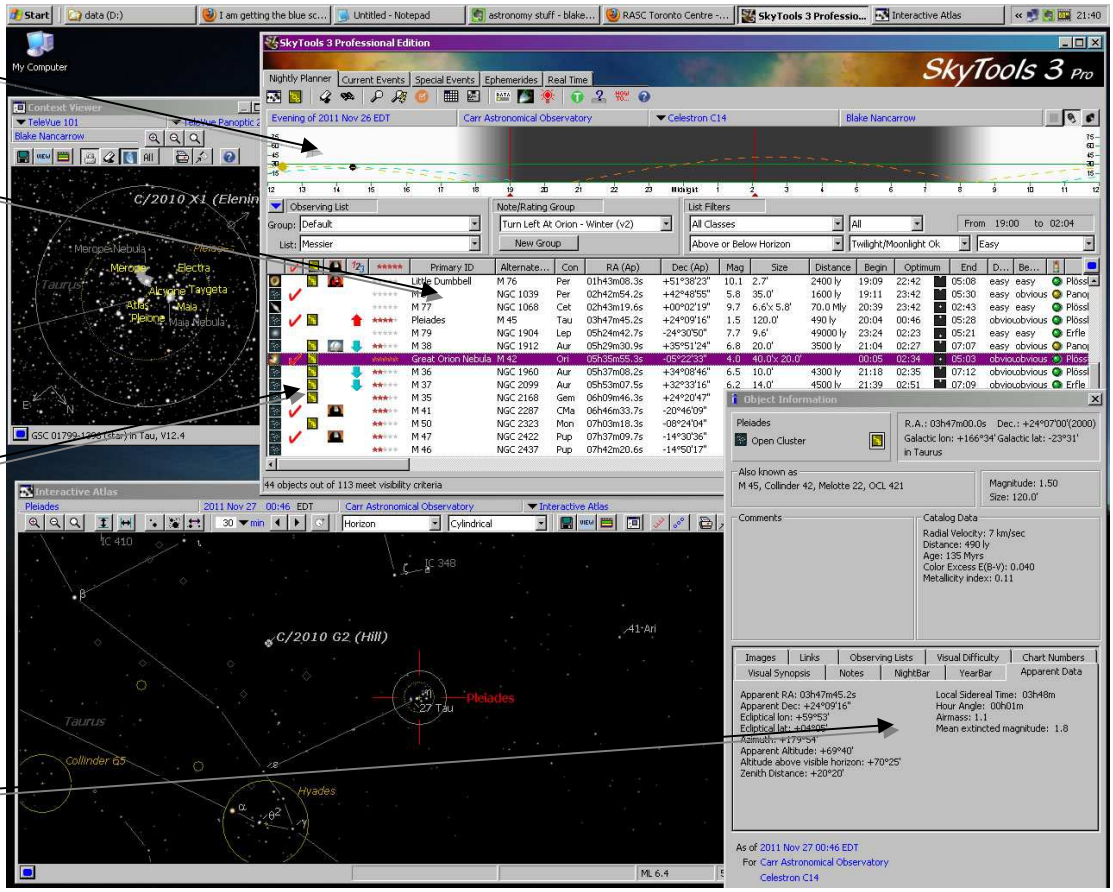
list of evening targets, sorted for optimum viewing

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



Telescope chart allows extremely rapid star hopping!

Zooming controls

Time controls

Path plotting tools

Change the eyepiece, Barlow, etc.

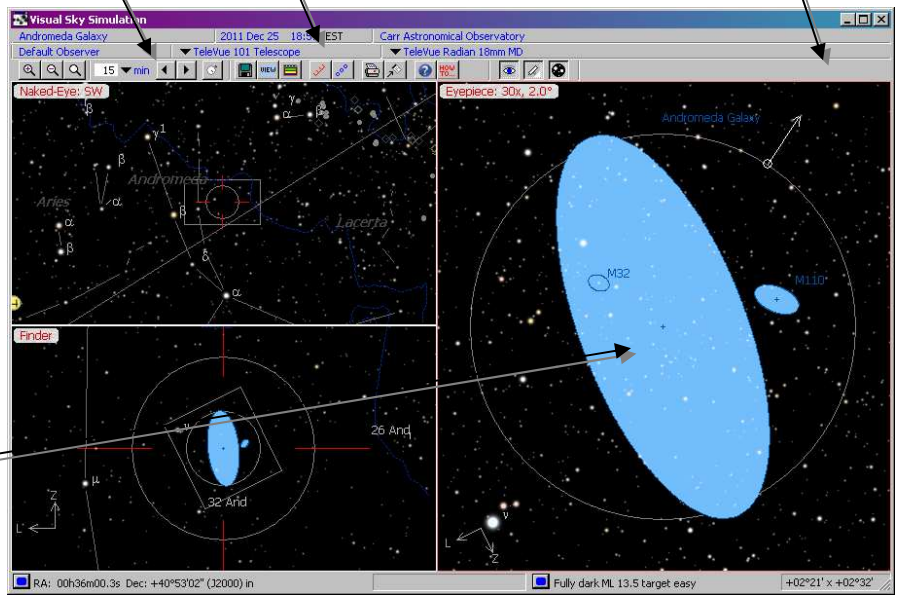
Rotate the eyepiece field if nec.

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



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