eview by Daria Aikens

Product: IconDropper
Version: 3.2
Publisher: The IconFactory
Price: $20
Contact Info: http://www.iconfactory.com/
Genre: Icon Customization Tool
Requirements: System 7.5 or higher, a little free time and an overwhelming need to customize your Mac.

ake Life Interesting

If you're going to own a Mac, you may as well have fun personalizing it. If you're gonna personalize your Mac, you'll need to get your hands on a good icon management tool. Once you start changing all of the icons on all of your favorite documents, folders, and applications, it will be easy to lose track of the numerous icon collections that you will have downloaded from the Internet. You don't want to store every icon as a custom folder — talk about wasted hard drive space! Furthermore, performing the tired old Macintosh dance of choosing "Get Info" from the File menu to cut and paste all of your icons will slowly drive you mad — I would know!

The team at IconFactory aims to save the world from all of this nonsense by providing Mac users with a set of useful icon tools that are perfect for all levels of icon enthusiasts. Interface junkies and media designers alike will love the convenience of IconDropper and its helper applications. That's

right! Paying the cheapo $20 registration fee for IconDropper also registers you for IconDragger and IconPacker, which come included when you download IconDropper.

hy IconDropper Should Be Your Tool of Choice

Let's get straight to the point. There are three good reasons why IconDropper belongs in your bag of tricks:

1. IconFactory Maintains a Top-Notch Icon Warehouse
Just visit http://www.iconfactory.com/ . At the IconFactory, you can find thousands of quality icons, ready for download in IconDropper format or as non-proprietary custom folders. Of course, IconDropper format is the best way to download these icons, but you've gotta love a company that doesn't block out those users who may not be enlightened as to the wonders of IconDropper. Their website is superbly designed and provides excellent support for their software and the Macintosh interface junkie community.

2. Ease of use
ou don't need to read any manuals to begin using this software effectively, although the included documentation is well-written and often witty. After installation, Mac OS 8.x users may notice that control-clicking on any icon gives the option to "Change Icon..." Choose this option and the IconDropper interface appears. The interface can also be activated by dropping any icon in the Finder onto the IconDropper application icon. Drag and drop, contextual menus — what else do you want?

Once IconDropper launches, you'll see that the item that you selected in the Finder is now in the top pane (see below screenshot). Below that pane, you'll see a collection of icons from which to choose. IconDropper stores its icons in a proprietary format called "Packs." When you download IconDropper from the IconFactory website, it comes with three free packs, and many, many more free packs are ready for you to download from http://www.iconfactory.com/ .

To replace your icon, simply click any of the icons in the left-hand pane. On the right-hand side of IconDropper, you can quickly scan through all of the IconDropper icon collections in your "Packs" folder. Just click on any one of the packs and all of the icons in that collection will be viewable in the left

pane of the application. In fact, the first icon in each pack is visible within that sam right-hand pane. Quit the IconDropper application and you're back to productivity. Compare this speedy process to "Select Source File -> File:Get Info -> Edit:Copy -> Close Window -> Select Target File -> File:Get Info -> Edit:Paste -> Close Window" and you'll soon see that this software rocks.

. Support for 8.5's 32-bit icons
 brand new feature in Apple's Mac OS 8.5 is
its support for icons with millions of glorious
colors. As you can see in the pretty picture at
right, 32-bit icons sure are a treat for the eye.
The IconFactory is proud to be the first organization to release icon collections specifically for Mac OS 8.5, and IconDropper was updated to version 3.2 in order to accomodate the change.

conPacker and IconDragger

t would have been enough for IconFactory to release IconDropper
and be done with it. Instead, they threw in two great, original icon
utilities into the market as well. Best of all, they come free with IconDropper. IconPacker is a neat application that allows you to build your own icon Packs. Far from just a boring archival application, IconPacker allows the user to control the layout and appearance of their icon Pack when viewed in IconDropper. Users can also add author and copyright information. These features are great for anyone looking to distribute their own custom icon collections. Importing icons into IconPacker is as easy as Macintosh drag and drop.

IconDragger is another nifty icon tool that allows users to easily

export icons from icon Packs into image editors such as Photoshop.

It's interface looks similar to that of IconDropper, but its functionality is much different. Simply choose an icon and either drop in into the Finder to create a picture clipping, or drop the icon into any application that supports drag and drop.

Few Episodes of Weirdness

Throughout the course of this review, I experienced a few noteworthy quirks within the IconDropper software. These prevented me from giving IconDropper our highest rating — five stars. For instance, the first time that I attempted to drag an icon from the Finder on top of the IconDropper application, nothing happened. I opened up the manual and this problem was mentioned at the very beginning of the troubleshooting section. The fix is a simply to rebuild the desktop. I rebuilt and the problem was solved. Ho hum.

A more annoying problem happens intermittently, and I've yet to find a pattern to its madness. Every so often, when I attempt to quit the IconDropper application by clicking on the close box, I get an error message that the application has quit with a Type 3 error. Fortunately, it doesn't crash the whole machine or cause any other type of mischief.

One final bug has to do with IconDragger. When dragging icons from the IconDragger window to the desktop, my preferences specify that the icon clipping be saved with the name of the icon as the name of the clipping. What actually occurs is that an icon with the name of "Daria's Icon" would be saved as "Daria's Icon @#^* *%)*%E@". This quirk does not affect productivity or usefulness, but it sure is weird. Where does all that junk come from?

he Verdict

IconFactory puts so much time, effort, and support into their software and website that they definitely deserve the $20 asking price for IconDropper. Don't forget that you get two bonus applications, IconDragger and

IconPacker! If you're looking for a stocking stuffer for your favorite Mac nut, this software package is a real treat. If you are using this program but did not pay the registration fee, you're not getting anything but coal this holiday season. Nevertheless, trust me when I say that if you use custom icons on your Macintosh, you should have IconDropper. I've tried competitors, and IconFactory's software beats up the competition and takes away its lunch money. IconDropper is by far the most convenient and easy to use icon management tool on the market.

Daria Aikens
daria@applewizards.net

http://applewizards.net/