



# Reviews

## X



## VMware Fusion 1.1

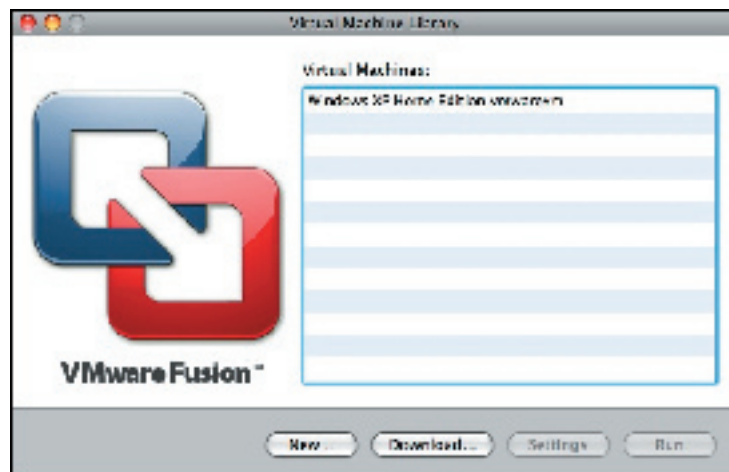
by Rolland Piazzoni

VMware Fusion is a Macintosh OS X application that allows the user to install Windows operating systems from Windows NT to Windows Vista. This review only covers Windows XP.

(It states that there are over 60 guest operating systems supported. The literature from VMware states that it also supports several other 32 Bit operating systems such as Novell, Red Hat, Ubuntu Linux and more. It also states that it supports many different 64-Bit operations systems).

Installing VMware Fusion is a straightforward OS X installation. The Windows Easy Install is available for Windows Vista 32-bit, Windows XP and Windows 2000 - as well as Windows Server 2000 and 2003. The advantage for using Easy Install is that it automatically creates a shared folder for saving files on the Mac side and keeps out all the “nasties” that come all too often to the Windows side. As an added bonus for keeping your files on the Macintosh side is that Time Machine can be used for backing up your Windows files automatically every hour, if you have OS X 10.5 (Leopard).

When you open VMware Fusion the following screen will be displayed which allows you to select any of the Virtual Machines you have installed or you can add a new machine.



The VMware Fusion literature states that it is also possible to install VMware Fusion and Windows on an Apple Boot Camp Partition; however, as my hard drive does not have sufficient room to install this partition I was unable to test this option. Since everything else I read in their literature seemed to work, I don't have any reason to think this would not.

The subsequent installation of Windows XP was just as straight forward. I have a rather ancient copy of XP, and how would anyone have anything but an old copy. The job of downloading and installing some 96 updates takes over an hour and a half depending on your broadband connection.

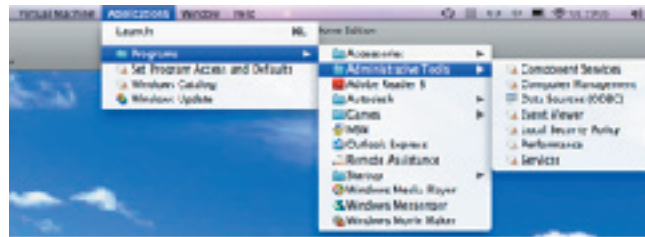
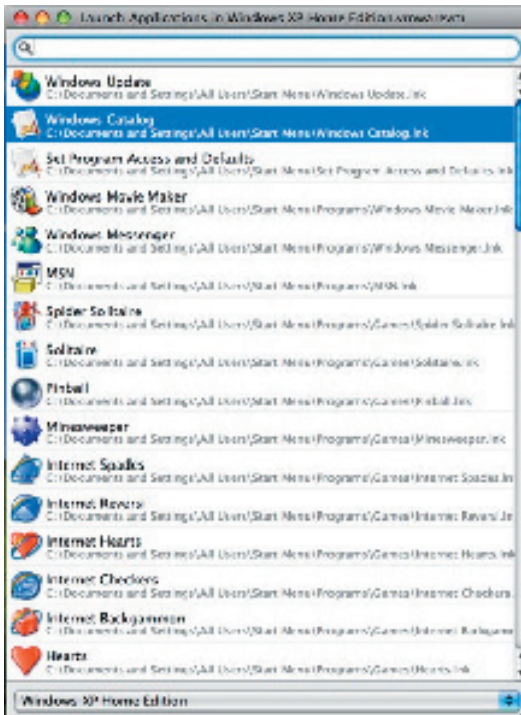
Now with the formalities of installations complete, it was time to install some software. I have been in the Apple/Macintosh family for these past 25+ years; I do not have a lot of Windows software lying around. My son has been using an architecture application called Revit, which only runs on Windows, and I was able to download the trail/demo version of this application and installed it. It is a very RAM hungry application and I wanted something large to test out the “run-ability” on my laptop with only 2GB of memory. I got my son to use and experiment with Revit on my MacBook Pro, and he said that it worked faster than on his work machine. But to be fair his PC is a few years old. He put it through many tests and never had a problem.

Now that a few applications are installed, it is time to use it. The “Quickstart Guide” states that when you boot up any installed application or those that come with XP the icon will appear in the Macintosh Dock. However, I could only get it to work ‘sometimes’ i.e. notebook and Adobe Acrobat Reader but Revit and Solitaire would not. I checked out VMware Fusion Help menu and followed their suggestions but this did not work as it stated. When it did work, the application would boot VMware Fusion-Windows and the application automatically. In other words, just like it works on the Mac side, though it had to boot up VMware Fusion-Windows first. I think that it would be handy to have this available for all applications that you would be using on the Windows side, but it is not absolutely necessary.

Booting up Windows seems to be somewhat faster than Parallels, but as I didn't really measure the exact time this is only an impression.



I do like the menu item Applications in VMware Fusion, as it displays the same set of install Applications that is displayed when you 'left-click' on the Start Menu of the Windows desktop - much easier to find the application you want than all the options of the Windows Start Menu displays. The other option from the same Applications menu item is the Launch selection. This just lists all the applications installed on the virtual machine. (See Figures below)



I did acquire and install a Windows game, and its installation went as expected, until I had to insert the second CD. This posed a real problem, as the first CD did not eject as expected. I had to hunt around

Windows to discover how to open the drive and eject the CD. Windows users have a button beside the drive that, when pushed, will force the CD to eject. I guess I need to become more of a Windows user. However, after the software was finally installed, and I tried to run the game, there was some kind of error message about not having a required video card. Oh well, it was just another test and I ended up running uninstall. When the virtual machine is running, and you have chosen to automatically detect DVD/CD in the settings option, it will cause problems on the Macintosh side. This means that if your virtual machine is running in the background and you are on the Macintosh side, the Macintosh cannot recognize the DVD/CD. You will need to disable this option in the VMware Fusion settings menu.

In VMware Fusion, as in Parallels, it is possible to make the Windows desktop disappear. The only difference is what they are called: in Parallels it is called Coherence and in VMware Fusion it is called Unity. Not sure why, but I am guessing it has something to do with copy-writes or patents.

I especially like the default feature to use 'cmd-tab' to switch between Windows and any Mac software you have open at the time. As I was 'surfing' the menus trying out all the different items, I ran across the choice to "Download Virtual Appliances." Naturally, I had to try to figure out just what they were and to explain their functions. But better yet here is what the company has to say about them.

*"Virtual appliances are pre-built, pre-configured, ready-to-run enterprise applications packaged with an operating system inside a virtual machine. Customers can easily install and deploy these pre-integrated solution stacks. This speeds up time to value and simplifies software development, distribution, and management."*

The Virtual Appliances are specialized integrated software and operating packages that do specific task(s) in the business community. As I am not in the business world I will be giving this a wide berth.

There are discussion forums for both VMware Fusion as well as the Virtual Appliances. After giving them a look, I found them to be quite extensive and international in nature.

One final tool that is included is the Take Snapshot/Revert to Snapshot feature. This allows you to Take Snapshot (save the state) of your Windows so you can later Revert to Snapshot (return to the same state) in case your Windows should 'ever' crash. It is interesting that this feature should be added. Maybe it has something to do with Windows crashing regularly. 🍏

## The Skinny

**Evaluation:** It is fast, convenient, and easy to use and as I said before it "just works." After all that is why we buy a Macintosh in the first place.

### Requires:

**OS:** Mac OS X 10.4.9 or later;

**Hardware:** Intel-powered iMac, Mac Mini, MacBook, MacBook Pro & Mac Pro Tower.

**Processor:** Intel Core Solo, Intel Core Duo, Intel Core 2 Duo and Intel Dual-Core Xeon.

**Memory:** Minimum memory requirements of 512 MB RAM. 1 GB RAM or more recommended.

**Disk Space:** 275 MB of free disk space for VMware Fusion installation plus 1 GB or free space allocated for each virtual machine. (10 GB or more recommended)

**Company:** VMware Inc.

**Distributor:** Smith Micro Software

**Street Price:** \$79.99

**Available Demo**