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REVIEWS

SuperDuper! Review

One of the very best local cloning and restoration apps available for the Mac.

By Chris Barylick
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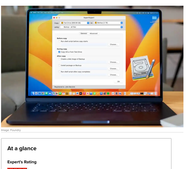

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At a glance

Expert's Rating

★★★★½

Pros

- Easy installation, great user interface, a friendly face as the intimidating world of data cloning and restoration
- Superb scripting and customization capabilities
- Excellent and reliable updates that you can practically set your watch to

Cons

- No network volume support at this point in time
- No FAT, exFAT, or NTFS support, which could greatly widen the application's scope

Our Verdict

Shirt Pocket has always come through with solid updates, primed down bugs when they surfaced and supported new protocols introduced by Apple. SuperDuper! is one of the very best local cloning and restoration apps available for the Mac.

Price When Reviewed

$27.95

Best Prices Today: SuperDuper!

RETAILER	PRICE	
Shirt Pocket	$27.95	VIEW DEAL ›

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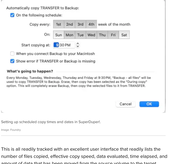
Let's face it, the idea of cloning your Mac's hard drive can be simultaneously awesome and intimidating. This enters the next level of tech prowess, and you want to be sure that the archive you're creating on an external volume is spot on, can be easily accessed later, and is easy to recover data from in a pinch, especially if the original hard drive is failing, making the infamous "click of death" sound, or mechanically spinning itself into non-functional slag. This is where Shirt Pocket's SuperDuper! comes in (version 3.8 at the time of this review).

Long a favorite of the Mac techie community, SuperDuper! has been a reliable go-to in the event that your hard drive was failing and data needed to be recovered from it. While not quite as flashy as some of its competitors, the software was renowned for being easy to install and consistently updated whenever a new hardware element or version of macOS came out. This has persisted to this day, as SuperDuper! is simple to download, install, assign full drive permissions to, and get to work with.

SuperDuper! 3.8, which retails for a one-time payment of $27.95/£26.95 for a registered copy (you can use it for free, but you need to pay to unlock scheduling, smart updates and some other features).

It supports the APFS and HFS+ file formats, and can be as simple or as customizable as your needs see fit. Beyond simply cloning from one volume to another, the application supports scheduling, and an included volume of basic scripts allows you to specify files that are copied over, including Unix-specific elements such as user folders, shared users, shared apps and applications, backup files, and more. It's also easy to restore volumes from one volume to another, which comes as a welcome relief over Apple's somewhat tedious restoration options within the macOS's Disk Utility application.



Setting up scheduled copy times and dates in SuperDuper!

Image: Thursday

This is all readily tracked with an excellent user interface that readily lists the number of files copied, effective copy speed, data evaluated, time elapsed, and amount of data that has been moved from the source volume to the target volume and quotes the ever-present worry as to whether the cloning/recovery process is working or not.

Beyond the application's basic scripts, there's an excellent level of customization to work with. Users can edit current scripts or write their own, as well as choose between methods such as Total Backup and Smart Backup (Total Backup erasing the target drive while Smart Backup moves updated files over). It's also easy to dive into the application's options and set up events like permission repairs before a copy begins, scripts to execute after a copy has completed, and for your Mac to eject the target volume, shut down, go to sleep, or quit SuperDuper! once the copy is done.

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SuperDuper!'s library of standard scripts and actions.

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As excellent as SuperDuper! can be, there's still some room for improvement. First, SuperDuper! can't back up to network volumes yet, which is a bit of a letdown. Perhaps this is a feature being developed for version 4.0, and given that we're living in more of a NAS- and cloud-based world, this would be excellent to see. And while SuperDuper! does an outstanding job preserving and writing to APFS and HFS+ formats, there's currently no FAT, exFAT, or NTFS support to speak of, which would definitely come in handy when working with and setting up Windows and Linux volumes. Granted, this might also move into the terrain of licensing and securing legal rights, which is an entirely different minefield to navigate outside of standard maintenance updates and fixes. This, and some links to video tutorials as to each function, could only make the application that much easier to dive into, and could easily be set up for the version 4.0 launch.

Buying advice

In as much as I'd love to see SuperDuper! adapt full support for network backups and FAT, exFAT, and NTFS support in version 4.0, Shirt Pocket has always prided itself on coming through with incremental, reliable updates as opposed to sweeping changes. This, in turn, has made SuperDuper! into one of the very best local cloning and restoration apps available for the Mac. It'd make sense for Shirt Pocket to play to their current strengths, and the fact that SuperDuper! only requires Mac OS X 10.10 (Yosemite) or later to install and run and has always run well on every Mac I've ever installed it on speaks volumes. Shirt Pocket has never been one for the dramatic marketing hype, astounding upgrades, and massive changes, but has always come through with solid updates, primed down bugs when they surfaced, supported new protocols introduced by Apple, and communicated well via their tech support and marketing, which is saying something.

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In a computing universe in which every company is trying to be the Swiss Army Knife your Mac needs, SuperDuper! hones in on its feature set, performs like a reliable champ, can be readily customized and scripted, and offers something excellent for a good price, which is absolutely to its credit.

Best Prices Today: SuperDuper!

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Chris Barylick is a D.C.-based technology journalist, loves writing about emerging technologies, video games, DIY projects, hardware, utilities, politics, and occasionally, the occult. His work has appeared in PCMag, Tom's Guide, Tech Hive, Macworld, SoundGuy, T-Ginzu, the Wireless Mess Mess Dinocast, and has masters degrees in both Business Administration (George Washington University '09) and Journalism (The University of Maryland '23), and inadvertently wound up in the Guinness Book of World Records for being the "4 AM Guy" at the first Apple Store opening in 2001. To date, he has accidentally set two hard drives on fire.

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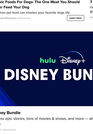

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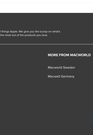

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