Bingo Genie

User Guide - Version 1.2.3 - March 2024

Table of Contents

1. Introduction: What is this? 3
2. Quick Tutorial: Let's make some cards! 4
   a. Design the layout of your cards 4
   b. Type in the words to use for each cell, one per line. 4
   c. Build a deck of 16 Bingo cards. 5
   d. Print the cards and call sheet 5
   e. Use "Caller Mode" to play Bingo 6
3. Features: What can this software do? 7
4. Differences between the Full and Lite versions 8
5. Terminology: What is this thing called? 9
   a. Deck of Cards 9
   b. Call Sheet as List 10
   c. Call Sheet as Cells 10
   d. Caller Mode Window 11
6. Help: How do I do this? 12
   a. Customize bingo cards with a background color or image 12
   b. Remove a background image from the cards 13
   c. Change the text font size of the cell items on the cards 13
   d. Split lengthy cell item text into 2 lines 13
   e. Add extra descriptive text to a Call Sheet Item 14
   f. Print smaller cards, e.g., 2 cards per page 14
   g. Save a complete card deck as a PDF file 14
   h. Magically re-create a deck from an old printed card 15
   i. Re-print a specific lost card 16
   j. Extract/copy the "Deck ID" from a newly created deck 16
   k. Quickly make several decks that have similar settings 16

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l. Remove the Free Cell from the cards 17
m. Make a quickie "American Bingo" Deck 17
n. Change all the colors to black-and-white for book printing 17
o. Change all the program settings to original “factory defaults” 17
p. Find the secret easter egg features 17
7. More Information 18
a. Possible Future Features 18
b. Contact Me 19

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1. Introduction: What is this?

Bingo Genie is a Macintosh software application that helps you create and print your own customized "Bingo Game Cards", using your own lists of words or phrases. You can then use your printed cards to teach vocabulary, science or math in schools, play games for parties or special company events, and distribute/sell them as card packs.

Bingo Genie has many features that let you design beautiful cards, and it sports a powerful engine under the hood to quickly create however many cards you need for a Bingo deck, guaranteeing that each card is unique.

You can create bingo card sizes of 3x3, 4x4, 5x5, 6x6, or 7x7, with card decks containing from 4 up to 100 unique cards. See the "Features" section below for a complete list of things you can do with this versatile software.

Bingo Genie runs on any Macintosh (Intel or Apple Silicon) using Mac OS 10.12 or newer.

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2. Quick Tutorial: Let's make some cards!

Here is a quick step-by-step tutorial for creating your first Bingo card deck.

a. Design the layout of your cards

Under the “Design Cards" tab, tap the "Titles" tab and type "The Owl" for the Card Title text, and choose a font and color for the title.

Then tap the “Card Layout" tab and choose the 3x3 Card cell dimensions.

b. Type in the words to use for each cell, one per line.

Under the “Design Cards" tab, tap the “Cell Items" tab, and type in one word per line: ***Talon, Beak, Crop, Wing, Eye, Raptor, Feather, Nest***. When you have typed enough lines for this card layout size (3x3), the progress dot under the text field will change from red to green.

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c. Build a deck of 16 Bingo cards.

Choose the “Build Cards" tab, type "16" in the "How many cards to make" text field, and then tap the "Build Deck of Cards" button to make the deck. You will see a preview of one of the cards now on the right side of the window. You can tap the up/down buttons under the card preview to see each of the cards that was made. Each time you tap the "Build Cards" button, it will create a whole new deck of cards with a different "scrambled" ordering of your cell items on the cards.

d. Print the cards and call sheet

Tap the “Print Cards" tab, and then tap the "Print Deck of Cards" button to bring up the print dialog. You can now tap the "Print" button to print the 16 cards and the call sheets to your printer. Just like magic.

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e. Use "Caller Mode" to play Bingo

Bingo Genie will not only shuffle your bingo call items, it will also display the cell items, one by one on the screen. You can call them out and/or project them on an overhead screen so game players can also see them. Bingo Genie even keeps track of which items have been called and provides you an updating listing of them. You can easily switch between the currently called item display and the listing display.

Choose "Caller Mode" from the Action menu, and Bingo Genie will display a Caller window. You can tap the buttons at the bottom to step to the next (or prior) item to call, or declare a winner. Tap the "Start Again" button to re-shuffle the order of items and start the calling over again.

You can tap the "Listing" tab at any time to display a listing of all the items that will be called in their current calling-order. It places a check-mark next to each item that was already called, and an arrow pointing to the currently-displayed item. This can help you quickly verify a winner.

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3. Features: What can this software do?

We have conjured up a full list of Bingo Genie features below[1]:

- Choose card sizes from 3x3, 4x4, 5x5, 6x6, or 7x7.
- Create a deck of any number of cards, from 4 up to 100 unique cards, with an accompanying call sheet that lists each cell item used on the cards.
- Use your own list of words or phrases for the cell items, including different languages or emoji, your own title and subtitle above the cards, and choose your own fonts and colors to customize the cards.
- Turn on or off the “FREE” cell in the middle, and choose your own word/font/size/color for the "FREE" cell.
- Turn on or off the display of the "BINGO" letters above the columns, and choose your own letters, font and color for the text.
- Choose a different color and size for the grid lines around the card cells, or turn the grid lines off completely.
- Optionally add your own background image or solid color behind the cards.
- Save your designed card deck as a file for opening and printing later, or for sending to other Bingo Genie users.
- Generate and print a "Call Sheet" reference page, listing all cells used in this deck of cards. You can use this to do your random selection/calling of the cells. The call sheet comes in two formats, "list" and "cells."
- Print your deck of cards to a printer, or save the entire deck as a PDF file for later printing, or sharing/publishing/selling to others who do not have Bingo Genie.
- "Caller Mode" screen interactively displays each of your items in a random order for "calling" out to the card-holders.
- Use the uniquely generated "Deck ID" from an older printed deck to exactly "re-create" the deck with Bingo Genie, in case you need to re-print card #13 that somebody accidentally took home and lost.
- The "Deck ID" printed under each card consists of alphabetic letters, however, it is always "sanitized" to insure no embarrassing "naughty words" are accidentally embedded in it, so it will always be "classroom-safe."
- Buy this software once, use it forever. No hidden upgrade costs or extra fees. Ever.
- Run this software without a net. Bingo Genie does not need an internet connection to do its magic.

[1] Note: Some of these features are only available in the Full version.

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4. Differences between the Full and Lite versions

This chart lists the features that are different between the “Full” and “Lite” versions of this software.

Generally, the Lite version lets you create and design bingo cards, and print them or save them as PDF files, just like the full version can. However, it limits the size and number of cards that can be printed, and lacks some nice extra features.

Feature	Bingo Genie	Bingo Genie Lite
Save/Open documents:	✓ Yes	× No
Card Sizes:	3x3, 4x4, 5x5, 6x6, 7x7	3x3, 5x5
Number of cards possible:	4 to 100	4 to 8
Re-build from "Deck ID":	✓ Yes	× No
Caller Mode	✓ Yes	× No
Add backgrounds:	✓ Yes	× No

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5. Terminology: What is this thing called?

There are three different things that this software creates and displays:

a. Deck of Cards

b. Call sheet as List

c. Call sheet as Cells.

d. Caller Mode window

Let's take a look at each one, and give a name to each area, so you know what to look for in the software when you want to customize it.

a. Deck of Cards

When you "Build Cards”, the entire group of cards that is generated is called a “Deck". This is a group of unique cards, each of which you distribute to a player. This built deck of cards is given a unique "Deck ID" identifier (which is sort of like a serial number for this unique deck), shown on the footer of each card. Each time you re-build another deck, it will shuffle your cell items, and create a completely different deck of cards, and this new deck will have a different “Deck ID”.

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b. Call Sheet as List

This is a complete list of all your cell items used in this deck of cards, displayed in a list, making it easy for you to separately cut out the list items and pick them from a hat, or simply "call them out" them from the page.

c. Call Sheet as Cells

This is the same list of all your cell items that are used in this deck of cards, now displayed in a grid of cells, making it easy for you to separately cut out each of the cells and pick one from a hat, or simply "call them out", reading them from the call sheet page as you mark them off.

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d. Caller Mode Window

The software also has a "Caller Mode" window, which will display each of your cell items in a random order, for you to call out to your group that has the printed cards.

See Section 2.e above for information on using it.

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6. Help: How do I do this?

Here are some quick answers to questions you may have about doing more advanced things with the software.

a. Customize bingo cards with a background color or image

You can make your cards stand out by adding either a solid background color, or a background graphic border/image behind each Bingo Card.

Solid Color: Choose the “Design Cards" and “Card Layout" tabs. Under the "Background" pane, choose "Solid Cell Color" from the "Background Style" popup menu. Then tap the "Background cell color" and pick a color. The card preview will immediately show the color behind your card.

Image: Choose the “Design Cards" and “Card Layout" tabs. Under the "Background" pane, choose "Card image" from the "Background Style" popup menu. Then simply drag a JPEG or PNG image from your computer into the "card image" preview box (tan box under "Background" pane) and drop it in. The card preview will immediately display the image behind your card.

You can “maintain aspect ratio” of the image, or stretch it to fit the card. You can also reduce the opacity, that is, how lightly the image is printed behind your cell items.

Note that the image that you drop onto your card deck will be ***copied*** into your Bingo Genie document, and saved with it. The good news is that even if you edit or move or delete the original image file on your computer, your Bingo Genie image will still be saved in your

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document, and the card deck will continue to re-print perfectly. The bad news is that storing this copy of the image makes the size of your saved Bingo Genie document much larger.

b. *Remove* a background image from the cards

If you have added a background image to your cards, and now want to completely remove it, simply tap on the "image preview" (tan box under "Background Image/Border") to select it, and press the DELETE key on your keyboard.

To temporarily hide it, simply choose "None" from the "Background Style" popup under the Card Layout tab. You can then build and print cards, and later change the popup back to "Card Image" and the card image will re-appear.

c. Change the text font size of the cell items on the cards

If you find that your cell item text is a little too small or a little too large for the card cells, you can fine-tune the overall size of the letters.

For your Cell items: Under the "Design Cards" tab, select the “Cell Layout" tab, and look underneath "Cell Item Appearance" for the slider called "Font size adjustment". After building a deck of cards, you can move this slider up (larger text) or down (smaller text), while watching the "Cards" Preview text on the right to see what size works best. You may need to step through some of the previewed cards to see each of your cell items.

Alternatively, you can simply turn on the checkbox "Auto-scale text in each cell", and the text in each cell will grow or shrink to insure it exactly fits. Note that turning on this auto-scale checkbox affects both the Card cell item text and the Call Sheet cell item text, and disables their manual font-size sliders.

For the Call Sheet text: Under the "Design Cards" tab, select the “Call Sheets" tab, and look for the slider called "Call Sheet - List: Font size adjustment”, or "Call Sheet - Cells: Font size adjustment". You can move these sliders up (larger text) or down (smaller text), while watching one of the "Call Sheet" Previews on the right to see what size works best.

For the Title and Subtitle: The title and subtitle will *automatically shrink* for longer text, and will wrap to two lines if needed.

d. Split lengthy cell item text into 2 lines

The text of a cell item will automatically wrap to multiple lines if it is too long using the font size you chose. However, it wraps at word boundaries, and not necessarily at the word or hyphen boundaries you might want. There is a way to tell Bingo Genie exactly where you want to break the cell item text. You can enter a '\' (back-slash) character on a cell item line right where you want to force a line-break. For example, typing a cell item line "Way\Out" would display this in the card box:

Note that this \ technique works on your custom "Free Cell" item text as well.

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e. Add extra descriptive text to a Call Sheet Item

What if you want to use an emoticon or foreign word as the cell item text, but you want to add some extra descriptive text when that item is in the Call list? You can do that by adding your descriptive text after your cell item text, separated by double-colons, like this:

🦉 ::Owl

This will use just the first part (owl emoticon) for the Card cells, and it will use the owl emoticon *and* the text "Owl" for the Call sheets.

f. Print smaller cards, e.g., 2 cards per page

You may want to print your card deck as smaller cards, perhaps 2 cards per page.

First, make your card deck, and then choose to print it. From the print dialog, tap the "Show Details" button if the page setup dialog doesn't already show the extra information. Choose the "Layout" section, then choose the "Pages per sheet" popup, and pick how many cards per page you want. Then print!

g. Save a complete card deck as a PDF file

Sometimes you may want to save your entire card deck (or a few cards) as a single multi-page PDF file, allowing you to take the file to a printing center to print for you, or you may want to save it for printing later, or send the PDF file to a friend to print who does not have the Bingo Genie software.

First, build your card deck, and choose to print it. Then from the print dialog, set up the page layout (and which

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pages to print if you don't want to save the entire deck.) Then, in the lower left corner of the dialog open the "PDF" popup menu and choose "Save as PDF". Choose a file name and location on your computer to save the PDF file… tap SAVE, and you are done.

h. Magically re-create a deck from an old printed card

You may need to re-create an entire deck from a single printed card. You can do this, as long as you have two pieces of information:

1. The "Deck ID" which is usually printed at the bottom of each card.
2. The complete original list of cell items. These are usually all contained on a single card, unless it was created with more items than card cells, in which case you need to get the entire list from multiple cards.

Run Bingo Genie, and start re-creating the deck of cards. First, re-enter the original card size and the list of cell items, either from the printed card or from some saved or remembered list. These must be the same cell items used in the old deck, but they do not need to be in the original order.

Then, choose "Enter Deck ID" from the "Action" menu. Type in the 16 letter "Deck ID" code that is on the footer of the old card. The Deck ID contains information about the card size and other settings used to create a particular deck. As long as the Deck ID you type matches the old card Deck ID and it also matches the number of cell items you have re-entered, then the little dot by the Deck ID box will glow green (instead of red), any error messages will clear, and you can press the OK button, re-creating the full deck of cards, exactly in their original order. You may have to edit the titles, fonts, colors, background images, etc. to get them to look the same as before, but the ordering of all the cells on each card will be identical to the old deck's cards.

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i. Re-print a specific lost card

You may want to re-print a single card from your deck. Let's say it was the unlucky card #13 that got lost.

First you need to open your Bingo Genie document that you saved your card deck in. If you didn't save the original document, you will need to first re-create it, using the steps mentioned above in "Magically re-create a deck from a printed card".

Once you have opened the deck, select the "Print Cards" tab, and tap the "Print Single Card..." button. A dialog box will open, allowing you to type in the specific card number you want to print ("13" in this example.) Tap the "Print" button, and a print sheet will open allowing you to print just card #13.

j. Extract/copy the "Deck ID" from a newly created deck

You may want to save the magic Deck ID for a card deck you created, perhaps in some other document, or you may want to e-mail it to a friend so they can create an identical deck as yours. It would be silly to have to re-type it.

Once you have created a card deck, its Deck ID is displayed under the "Build Cards" tab, in the box after the text "The Deck ID for the cards you just built:"

Simply tap inside the deck ID text and choose "Select All" from the Edit menu, then "Copy" from the edit menu, and the full deck ID will be in your clipboard… then switch to your other document and choose "Paste" from the Edit menu, and voilà, there it is!

k. Quickly make several decks that have similar settings

You may want to design a card layout and use it as a basic "template" for several future decks. Perhaps you always make 5x5 decks with a free space, and always want a subtitle of "Mr. Brown's Biology Class".

Simply set up the settings the way you want, and choose "Save as Default Settings" from the "Bingo Genie" menu. From now on, any new documents you create will start out with those default settings. This does not affect any existing documents you have already saved, since each document keeps its own settings once it is saved to disk.

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l. *Remove* the Free Cell from the cards

To create Bingo cards where every box is filled, and there is no "Free" cell, simply tap the "Design Cards" tab, then the “Cell Layout" tab under that. Then turn *off* the checkbox entitled "Place a Free cell on cards", and re-build your cards. Note that if you remove the free cell, you may need to add another cell item to have enough items to build the cards.

m. Make a quickie "American Bingo" Deck

If you want to simply press a few buttons and create a "Standard American Bingo" deck of cards, you can get pretty close with just a few steps:

1. Under the **Design Cards:Card Layout** tab, choose a 5x5 card layout.
2. Under the **Design Cards:Cell Items** tab, hold down the *Option* key when you tap the **Fill with Numbers** button, and it will fill with 75 numbers instead of the default 25 (5x5.)
3. Under **Build Cards** tab, type the number of Bingo cards you wish to create, and tap the **Build Deck of Cards** button.

This will create a deck of Bingo cards for you. Note that it this card deck does not quite conform to "standard", in that the numbers will be evenly scattered across all columns, whereas in true "American Bingo", the numbers are restricted within each column, e.g. only 1-15 can appear in column 1, etc.

n. Change all the colors to black-and-white for book printing

If you want to quickly change all the colors used for card titles, cell backgrounds, grid lines, etc. to black and white and grayscale instead of colors, there’s a menu item for that! Choose the menu item “Change Current Colors to B&W” under the “Bingo Genie” menu. This changes the colors in the currently opened document, and does not change them for other documents.

o. Change all the program settings to original “factory defaults”

If you have made a bunch of changes to the settings and saved them as defaults, but now want to quickly restore *all* the settings to their original values, there’s a menu item for that! Choose the menu item “Reset Settings to Defaults” under the “Bingo Genie” menu. After you choose this, all new documents you create will open with these settings as defaults.

p. Find the secret easter egg features

I'm sorry, Dave. I am afraid I cannot tell you that. You have to find them on your own. If they even exist.

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7. More Information

Bingo Genie was written by Eduard Schwan of SchwanSongs, with a lot of collaborative design and testing help from his friends around the world (Germany, Australia, California…)

This software has now grown to over 13,000 lines of Objective-C code, which is the size of a small novel. It includes many intriguing chapters that help you create cool customized cards, randomize your cell items while insuring that the same card configuration never shows up twice, builds a special "Deck ID" serial number that can re-create all your settings like magic, and can print the cards exactly the way you want. It has been great fun for me to research the world of bingo cards, check out the competitiion, and build this unique versatile and solid software to fill your needs.

a. Possible Future Features

Below are some possible feature ideas I am thinking about for future versions of this software. If you like one of these or have your own feature idea you would like request, or if there are any problems you have found, feel free to contact me. I always do my best to update my software so that it does what *you* want.

1. Allow user to add images/clipart instead of, or in addition to, the cell item lines in each box (and a way to choose the format: text only, image only, image above text.)
2. Allow inserting an image instead of text for the Free Cell.
3. Allow exporting the cards and call-list to other formats (PNG, JPG, TXT, SVG, JSON)
4. Different box separator line styles
5. Allow user to also paste in tab-delimited or comma-delimited text and have it magically re-format it into box lines.
6. Remember user printer settings in the document so they don't need to re-choose layout settings each time.
7. Allow creating the non-square 9x3 "British Bingo" cards
8. Pre-made Card Packs: Offer add-on card packs, that would replace the user-list with a set of pre-built sets of boxes for cards, drop-in-and-ready to use (math terms, counting in Spanish, President names, etc.)? Maybe comes bundled with background images too?
9. Localize this software to your favorite language.
10. Have a separate iPhone/iPad app that could open your saved Bingo Genie file, and do the "Calling". Also could do ball animations, or have a feature to calculate and display to you the caller which card #s are close to winning, or which card has now won.
11. Write a separate interactive iPad/iPhone version of "reader" software, that a student could load a teacher-generated/saved document, and each user could mark the squares by touch on the screen as the boxes are called.

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12. Option to print ***large format*** bingo call sheets, one cell item per page for large "hold-it-up" display.

b. Contact Me

Send any feedback or correspondence to: `software@schwansongs.com`

I welcome you to visit my main company web site any time… there may be other software or published book treasures that I have buried there that are exactly what you are looking for.

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