A ONE PAGE FILTER FOR YOUR MAC

Is This App Worth *Keeping?*

The quick checklist I run before any Mac app earns a permanent spot.

I download new Mac apps almost every week, and most of them are in the Trash before lunch. After years of testing software for a living, I stopped deciding on a feeling and started running every new app through the same short filter. **This is that filter.** Walk a new app through these eight checks. If it trips a dealbreaker, delete it on the spot. If it clears the must-haves and you would genuinely miss it, it has earned its place.

> HOW TO USE Tick a box only when the app honestly passes that check. Print it, or keep it open beside the App Store. The dealbreakers below are non-negotiable, so start there.

PART 01 STOP IF IT FAILS ANY OF THESE

The dealbreakers

01 ☐ **Does it come from a source you trust?**

Download from the developer's own website or the Mac App Store. Skip the random "free download" mirrors, and do not wave away a notarization warning without a very good reason. **If you cannot tell who made it, that is your answer.**

02 ☐ **Do the permissions match the job?**

A wallpaper app has no business asking for Full Disk Access. When an app wants more access than its purpose needs, slow down and check **System Settings, then Privacy and Security** before you grant anything.

03 ☐ **Where does your data actually go?**

Prefer apps that do their work on device. If what you type or store gets sent to a server, the privacy policy should say so in plain language, and the reason should genuinely make sense for what the app does.

Most apps are perfectly fine. Almost none of them are ***keepers.*** *The whole game is learning to tell the difference fast.*

THE USEFUL TECH · ON TESTING 200+ MAC APPS

PART 02 WHAT IT REALLY COSTS YOU

The cost test

04 ☐ **A one time price, or another subscription?**

A subscription is fair when there are real ongoing costs, like servers or constant development. **A simple local utility that charges every year for the same features is usually a pass.** Count what it adds to your yearly total before you say yes.

05 ☐ **Is there a free or built in alternative?**

macOS quietly does more than most people realize, and a Shortcut or a setting often covers the same ground. Make the app earn its place by clearly beating the thing you already own for free.

PART 03 DOES IT EARN A PERMANENT SPOT

The keep or trash test

06 ☐ **What is the performance cost?**

Keep an eye on CPU, memory, and battery for a day with the app running. **An app that fixes a tiny annoyance but heats up your Mac is a bad trade.** Activity Monitor tells you the truth in two minutes.

07 ☐ **Who makes it, and are they still around?**

Look for a developer with a track record, recent updates, and a real way to reach support. A solo developer who answers email beats a faceless app that has not been updated in two years.

08 ☐ **Would you miss it after a week?**

Use it for seven days, then switch it off. If you do not notice it is gone, it was a fun idea, not a keeper. **The apps you genuinely miss are the ones worth paying for.**

MAKE THE CALL

The verdict

Once you have run the eight checks, the decision is almost always one of these three. Be honest, especially about the last one.

- **Trash it** — It failed a **dealbreaker** in Part 01. Delete it now, no exceptions, no matter how good the rest of it looks.
- **Let it go** — It cleared the dealbreakers but **you did not miss it** after a week. A clever app you never reach for is just clutter with a nice icon.
- **Keep it** — It cleared everything and **you genuinely missed it**. Keep it, and pay for it happily. That is the app that earns the money.

Want the whole system, not just the filter?

This checklist keeps the clutter out. My Mac Setup Guide builds the whole thing up: more than 40 settings worth changing, the full app stack across 15 plus categories, terminal commands explained in plain English, and an honest take on whether Setapp is worth your money. It is the resource I wish someone had handed me on day one.

MAC SETUP GUIDE `theusefultech.gumroad.com/l/mac-setup-guide`

FREE DISCORD `discord.gg/WjfenUSZp4`

Happy hunting,

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