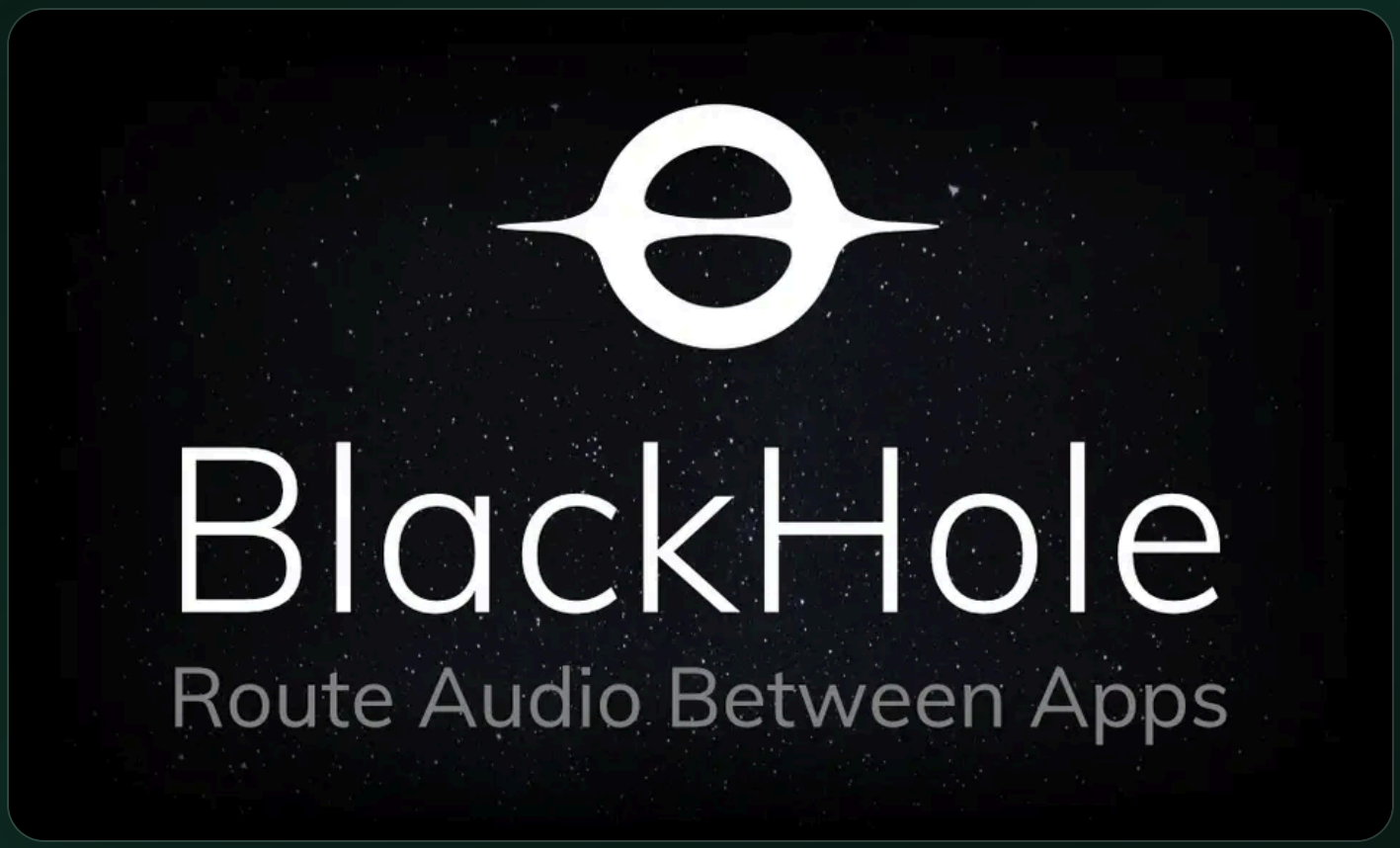
ToolGPA

NOVEMBER 2026

BlackHole

The Insider's Guide

Virtual audio loopback driver for routing sound between Mac apps



Every plan, grade, refund rule and rival among desktop utilities, read from BlackHole's own pages.

Made by Existential Audio · checked Nov 13, 2026 · toolgpa.com

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Who made this guide, what else is on the site, and how to cite it

ToolGPA put this guide together from BlackHole's own pages, its app-store listings and our grades. Every fact in it is on BlackHole's page too, where it is kept up to date. Checked Nov 13, 2026.

Welcome

What it is, who it suits, its grades and the ten things to know first

2.4

GPA, above 35 of the 186 other desktop utilities we grade

BlackHole is a macOS virtual audio driver that lets one application send its audio to another with no added driver latency. It comes in 2-channel, 16-channel and 64-channel versions, and its source code is on GitHub under the GPLv3. The installer is offered for a suggested donation, or free through Discord or Homebrew.

To get you started, here are **8 things to know about BlackHole**, taken from its own pages and our grades.

> "
>
> **It has no mixer or window of its own, so you build the routing yourself.**
>
> From our report card of BlackHole

1 **Best for routing audio between Mac apps for free**

BlackHole is a free virtual audio driver for Mac that passes sound from one app to another.

2 **It is free**

BlackHole has no paid plan at all. Free: get it through Homebrew or the vendor's Discord instead of donating.

3 **It runs on macOS**

macOS.

4 **Audio loopback between apps**

Lets applications pass audio to other applications through a virtual device, with zero additional latency according to the vendor.

5 **2, 16 and 64 channel versions**

The download page names 2-channel and 16-channel versions, and Homebrew offers blackhole-2ch, blackhole-16ch and blackhole-64ch.

6 **All standard sample rates**

Supports 44.1, 48, 88.2, 96, 176.4 and 192 kHz.

7 **A 2.4 GPA, above 35 of 186**

That is against the other desktop utilities we grade, on value, the free plan, features, ease of use and platforms.

8 **Keep it**

BlackHole is free, so making your own would save you nothing.

BlackHole at a glance

PRICING Free	FREE PLAN Yes
FREE TRIAL None stated	RUNS ON macOS
MADE BY Existential Audio	CATEGORY Desktop Utilities
OUR GRADE 2.4 GPA, fair	

The report card

Best for routing audio between Mac apps for free

BlackHole is a free virtual audio driver for Mac that passes sound from one app to another. It has no mixer or window of its own, so you build the routing yourself.

TOOLGPA REPORT CARD	BlackHole	Graded Nov 13, 2026

SUBJECT	GRADE	COMMENT
Value for money	A	Free, with a Homebrew or Discord route instead of donating.
Free plan and trial	A	Free outright with no cap, under GPLv3. No cap, no trial and no donation needed.
Features	D	It is a driver and not a mixer: sound goes to other apps or devices you set up, so it needs another product to be useful.
Ease of use	C	No rating on record. Routing needs aggregate or multi-output devices to be set up by hand.
Platforms and integrations	D	Mac only. The vendor's Windows page says it is not ready.
Grade point average		Fair, out of 4.0 **2.4**

An A is worth 4 points, a B 3, a C 2, a D 1 and an F nothing. The GPA is the average of the five.

Who BlackHole is for

- ✓ Fits if you record or stream your Mac's own sound
- ✓ Works for people who already use an audio app that can pick an input device

Who it is not for

- ✗ Not for you if you want a mixer, since it has no interface of its own
- ✗ Skip it if you use Windows, as the vendor says it isn't ready there
- ✗ Watch out: projects that aren't GPLv3 need a licence from Existential Audio, and the readme gives no price
- ✗ Watch out: the readme advises against the AirPods microphone as the clock device

Good to know

Good for

- ✓ Streamers and podcasters capturing one app's sound in another
- ✓ Instructors and producers who record or process a Mac's audio
- ✓ Developers who want a driver whose source they can build

Worth knowing

- ⓘ Mac only; the vendor's Windows page says BlackHole is not ready for Windows.
- ⓘ It is a driver with no mixer of its own; sound is sent to other apps or devices that you set up.
- ⓘ Projects that are not GPLv3 need a license from Existential Audio; the readme gives no price.
- ⓘ The readme advises against using the AirPods microphone as the clock device in an aggregate or multi-output device.

What it costs

Every plan, the free plan, ways to pay less and how prices have moved

Free

No paid plan at all

BlackHole is free to use.

> **Free, with a Homebrew or Discord route instead of donating.**
>
> From our grade for value for money

FREE

$0

Open source under the GPLv3; the download page's button is a $10 donation that also gives the installer, and Homebrew and Discord are free.

The free plan

Free: get it through Homebrew or the vendor's Discord instead of donating.

Read from existential.audio on Nov 13, 2026.

What it does

Its main features, where it runs, what it works with and who makes it

1

Place it runs: macOS

Virtual audio loopback driver for routing sound between Mac apps. Here is what it does, as its own site describes it, and what it covers: open source, works offline.

> **It is a driver and not a mixer: sound goes to other apps or devices you set up, so it needs another product to be useful.**
>
> From our grade for features

Audio loopback between apps

Lets applications pass audio to other applications through a virtual device, with zero additional latency according to the vendor.

2, 16 and 64 channel versions

The download page names 2-channel and 16-channel versions, and Homebrew offers blackhole-2ch, blackhole-16ch and blackhole-64ch.

All standard sample rates

Supports 44.1, 48, 88.2, 96, 176.4 and 192 kHz.

Customizable build

The GitHub readme says channel count, latency and hidden devices can be customized.

Intel and Apple silicon

Built for both, and compatible with macOS 10.10 Yosemite and newer.

Where it runs

macOS

What it works with

Its own pages name no integrations.

BlackHole is made by Existential Audio.

PART 04 · STANDING

Where it stands

Its grades against its category, and whether to keep it or make your own

35/186

Other desktop utilities it is graded above

BlackHole's GPA of 2.4 is higher than 35 of the 186 other desktop utilities we grade, and level with 33.

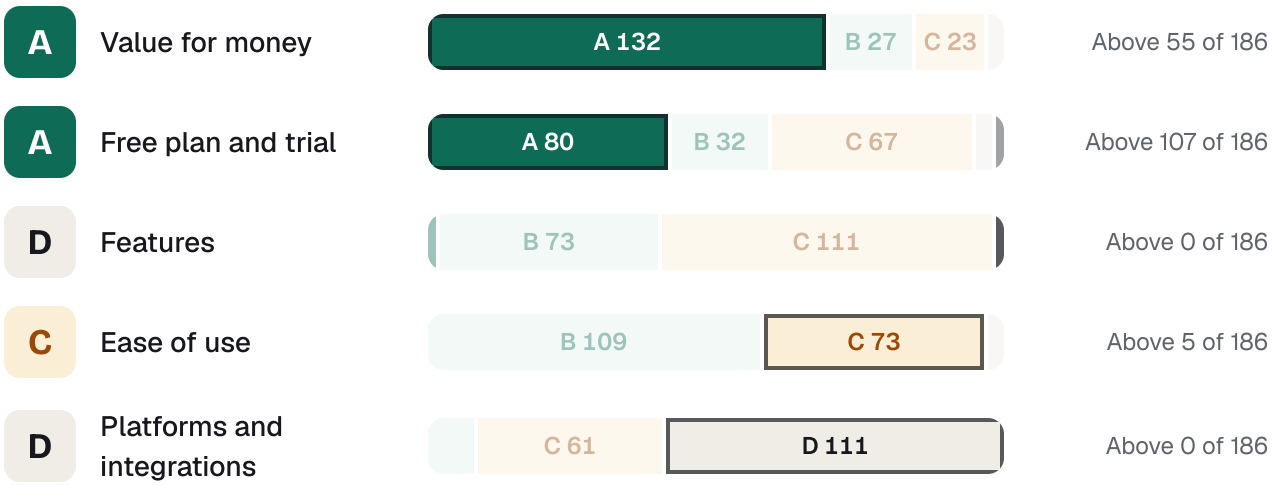
It stands best on free plan and trial (A, above 107 of 186) and worst on features (D, above 0).

BlackHole has no paid plan.

On features, ease of use and platforms it scores 1.3 out of 4. Nothing scores higher for less, though at least one tool matches that score at a lower price.

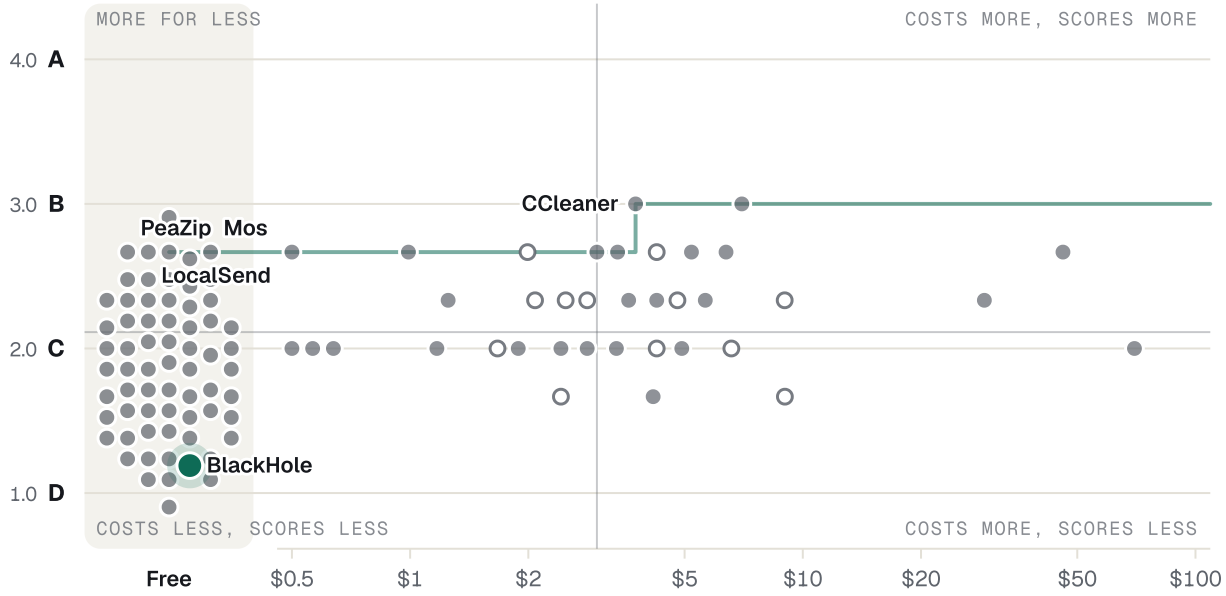
Each grade against the category

Every bar is all 187 desktop utilities we grade, cut by the letter each got. BlackHole's own letter is outlined.



Price against what you get

Each dot is one of 103 desktop utilities. Further left costs less; higher up scores better on features, ease of use and platforms. BlackHole is the marked dot.



What paid plans start at, a month (each step along is roughly double)

Keep it, or make your own?

Whether this is something you could build for yourself with an AI app builder, and what you would give up.

Keep it

BlackHole is free, so making your own would save you nothing.

That makes this kind of software worth paying for, not this one in particular: 118 of the 186 other desktop utilities grade higher.

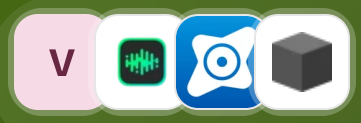
What you could not

- ✕ A real app for macOS. Something home-made would be a web page.

What this rests on. BlackHole's listing: what it does, where it runs, what it plugs into and what it costs. It is a judgement about the kind of software this is. We have not built a replacement for it, and making your own means looking after it too. How we decide, and every tool's verdict.

The alternatives

The tools it is most often weighed against, side by side



Voicemeeter, eqMac, SoundSource and FxSound

The 4 tools BlackHole is most often weighed against, with where each one differs from it.

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Voicemeeter

Free plan · from $15 one-time

Virtual audio mixer for Windows, sold as donationware.

- Only BlackHole lists a macOS app.
- Only Voicemeeter lists a Windows app.
- BlackHole is open source, according to its own site.

BlackHole and Voicemeeter compared in full

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eqMac

Free plan · from $3/mo

System-wide equalizer and per-app volume mixer for macOS.

- BlackHole is open source, according to its own site.
- eqMac can be bought with a one-time purchase.
- eqMac also covers menu bar app.

BlackHole and eqMac compared in full



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SoundSource

Free trial · from $49 one-time

Per-app volume, output routing and audio effects for the Mac.

- BlackHole has a free plan. SoundSource does not, though it has a free trial.
- BlackHole is open source, according to its own site.
- SoundSource can be bought with a one-time purchase.

BlackHole and SoundSource compared in full



3.0
GPA

FxSound

Free

Free open-source Windows equalizer and volume booster.

- Only BlackHole lists a macOS app.
- Only FxSound lists a Windows app.
- FxSound also covers noise cancellation.

BlackHole and FxSound compared in full

PART 06 · QUESTIONS

Quick answers

The questions people ask about it, each answered in a line or two

12

Questions, each answered in a line or two

The short version of everything above, for when you only need the answer. Each one is told in full in its part of the guide.

Is BlackHole free?

Yes. BlackHole is free to use.

How much does BlackHole cost?

BlackHole lists one plan. Free: $0.

What platforms does BlackHole work on?

BlackHole is available on macOS.

Does BlackHole have an Android app?

No Android app was listed when its pages were read on Nov 13, 2026. BlackHole is listed for macOS.

Does BlackHole have an iPhone app?

No iPhone app was listed when its pages were read on Nov 13, 2026. BlackHole is listed for macOS.

Is BlackHole open source?

Yes. BlackHole is open source, according to its own site.

Does BlackHole work offline?

Yes, according to its own site. What works without a connection differs by plan and platform, so check the vendor's page for the detail.

Who makes BlackHole?

BlackHole is made by Existential Audio.

What are the alternatives to BlackHole?

The closest alternatives to BlackHole in our directory are Voicemeeter, eqMac, SoundSource and FxSound.

How does BlackHole compare with other desktop utilities?

BlackHole's GPA of 2.4 is higher than 35 of the 186 other desktop utilities we grade, and level with 33.

Is BlackHole good value for money?

ToolGPA grades BlackHole A for value for money. BlackHole has no paid plan.

Could I make my own version of BlackHole?

BlackHole is free, so making your own would save you nothing. That makes this kind of software worth paying for, not this one in particular: 118 of the 186 other desktop utilities grade higher.

Where this guide comes from

The prices, plans, platforms and features were read from BlackHole's own pages on Nov 13, 2026, and the grades were given on Nov 13, 2026. Graded from this listing, whose facts were read from Existential Audio's own pages on 13 November 2026. Not based on using the product, and shorter than our full reviews.

Every tool we list gets five grades, A to F, each with its reason, and a GPA that averages them. How each is decided is at toolgpa.com/grades. This guide is ToolGPA's own work; it is not made, paid for or approved by Existential Audio. Prices change, so check existential.audio before you buy.

existential.audio/blackhole/

existential.audio/blackhole/windows/

github.com/ExistentialAudio/BlackHole

About ToolGPA

Who made this guide, what else is on the site, and how to cite it

7,721

Tools graded, in 95 categories

ToolGPA grades software the way a school report grades a pupil: five subjects, a letter for each with the reason written beside it, and a GPA that averages them. Prices, plans and platforms are read from each maker's own pages and dated, so you always know how fresh a figure is.

Every grade, review and ranking on ToolGPA is our own judgement. No company can pay for a grade or change one. Every tool on the site has a guide like this one, free to download and pass on. It all lives at toolgpa.com.

7,721	95	739	579
tools graded	categories	price changes on record	apps priced in 12 countries

What else is on toolgpa.com

BlackHole, kept up to date

Everything in this guide, with prices and grades as they are today

toolgpa.com/tools/blackhole

How grades are given

The rules behind every letter and every GPA

toolgpa.com/grades

Value charts

What each tool costs against what it scores, for every category

toolgpa.com/charts

Compare

Any two tools side by side, plan by plan

toolgpa.com/compare

Price changes

Every price rise and cut on record, each with its source

toolgpa.com/price-changes

Prices by country

What apps cost on the App Store in 12 countries

toolgpa.com/prices-by-country

Pay less

Every public discount: yearly billing, students, nonprofits

toolgpa.com/save

Keep or make

Which tools are worth paying for, and which you could build yourself

toolgpa.com/keep-or-make

Scan for the live page

Prices and grades as they are today

Quoting this guide?

Please name ToolGPA and link to the live page, so readers can check the figures for themselves:

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ToolGPA, "BlackHole: The Insider's Guide",
checked Nov 13, 2026.
https://toolgpa.com/tools/blackhole
```

Know someone choosing between desktop utilities?

Send them this guide:
toolgpa.com/tools/blackhole/guide

ToolGPA elsewhere: youtube.com/@toolgpa

See our other guides

The best-graded desktop utilities after BlackHole, each with an Insider's Guide of its own.

Desktop Utilities Insider's Guide

Every one of the 187 desktop utilities we grade, compared

Just Color Picker Insider's Guide

Free portable color picker and editor for Windows and macOS

3.2 GPA

LocalSend Insider's Guide

Open-source file sharing between nearby devices, no cloud

3.2 GPA

Mos Insider's Guide

Free Mac menu bar utility for smooth mouse wheel scrolling

3.2 GPA

ToolGPA

Choosing software? Every tool graded, every price dated.

Compare tools at toolgpa.com ›

Everything in this guide is ToolGPA's own summary of what BlackHole's pages, its app-store listings and public reviews said on the dates shown. Grades are our judgement under the rules at toolgpa.com/grades. Every grade, review and ranking on ToolGPA is our own judgement. No company can pay for a grade or change one. BlackHole is a trademark of its owner, and this guide is not made, paid for or approved by Existential Audio. Prices and plans change: check existential.audio before you buy.