Introducing WebCatalog 3: A New Way to Use Web Apps on Your Computer

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TLDR. WebCatalog is a desktop app for macOS, Windows and Linux which allows you to **install your favorite web apps as standalone apps**. These standalone apps can stay on your dock, can notify you with notifications, can work as full-fledged desktop apps with resizable windows and multi-tasking support—which **significantly boost your productivity**. You can download the app at: https://getwebcatalog.com.

In the age of mobile, most of us are familiar with the concept of apps. One of the first things we all do after buying a new phone is to go to the app store and download our favorite apps.

Of course, we know we can just open a web browser and use the web apps instead. By doing this, we could even save us some precious storage space, especially when you are using a 16GB iPhone; or some battery. But still, the convenience of launching an app quickly from our home screen, of receiving notifications, of multi-tasking, of staying away from countless number of browser's tabs, makes it a no-brainer for us to sacrifice our valuable smartphones' resources.

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But getting back to our computers, no matter if you are using Windows, macOS or Linux, we have no choice except using web apps. As tech companies are no longer interested in making native desktop apps, Gmail, Facebook, WhatsApp, Trello, etc.—all the apps we love are all

on the webs. They work well, but we do miss the ease we have on our smartphone.

Soon, developers come up with utilities such as Fluid and Nativefier, which allowed users to turn their favorite web apps into native-like apps quickly. Those apps can stay on your dock, can notify you with notifications, can work as full-fledged desktop apps with resizable windows and multi-tasking support.

Still find it hard to understand the concept? Watch Todd Ditchendorf, the developer of Fluid, explaining in his video.

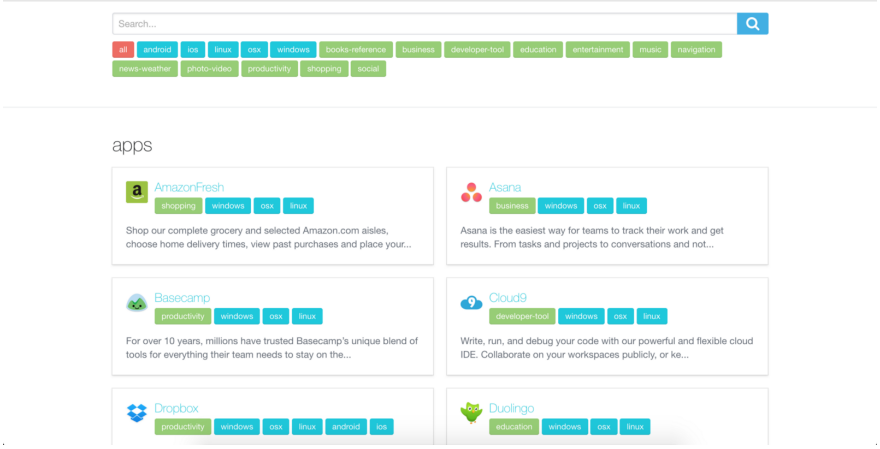
Fluid's introduction video.

Fluid has been around for years, and many people have used to improve their productivity. Having Gmail, Trello or Facebook Messenger on the dock or task bar sounds like such a simple idea, but if you try it, you cannot imagine how much time it saves you and how much joyful it adds up to your life.

But there is one problem: Fluid, Nativefier or other similar apps are not easy to use at all. They are not like your mobile app stores where you can just search for an app and install it. You need to understand what is URL, to find a proper icon, or even to know how to use CLI to use these apps. And I decided to develop WebCatalog to solve this problem.

WebCatalog: From 0 to 3

I created the first version of WebCatalog in just one week in February 2016. It was a website where you could download your standalone apps such as Facebook and Trello and installed like any other desktop apps. And you no longer had to spend your time searching for good-looking icons or correct URLs. It was much easier to use compared to Fluid or Nativefier.



First version of WebCatalog

But in this version, the apps you downloaded from WebCatalog did not support updates, were heavy as each of them took hundreds of megabytes, and were lack of many features such as search-in-page or Flash support.

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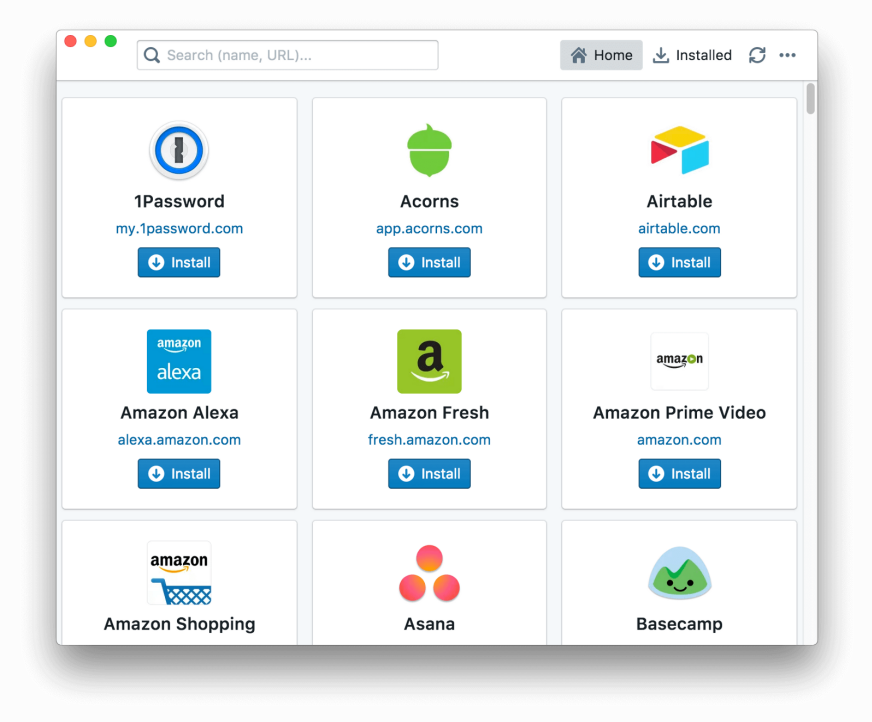
Recognizing those problems, in December 2016, I started rebuilding the app from scratch and WebCatalog 2 for macOS was published a month later. It worked much better: standalone apps on WebCatalog

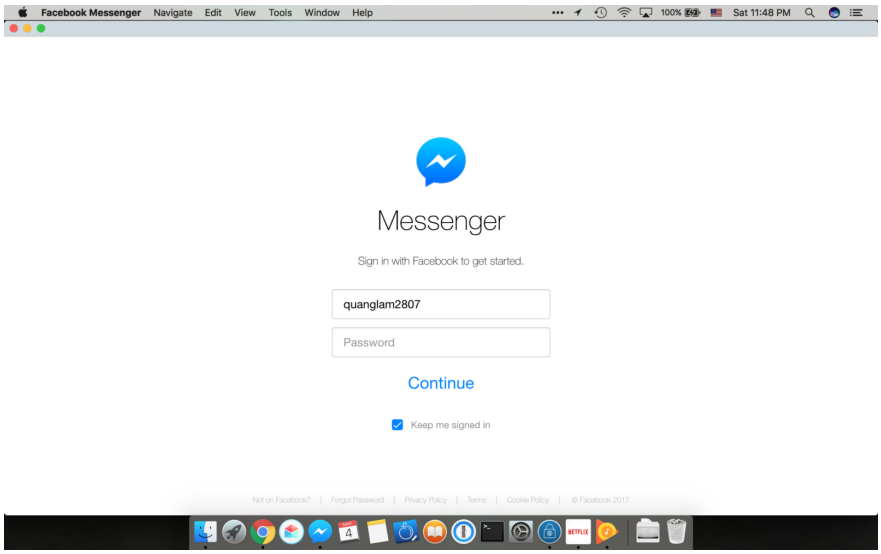
could be installed in just a few seconds with a single click, updated with new features easily and very light-weight.



WebCatalog 2/3.

Now, after many updates based on the feedback I received from the early adopters (*Kudo to all of you! You are awesome!*), WebCatalog 3 is now ready. It works on all major desktop platforms, including macOS, Windows, and Linux.

And more… :) Go explore.



Facebook Messenger standalone app installed from WebCatalog with Netflix, Google Play Music staying in the dock.

Interested?

You can find more information and download WebCatalog on its website: https://getwebcatalog.com. Also, WebCatalog is open-source on GitHub: https://github.com/quanglam2807/webcatalog so feel free check the code, contribute or report an issue.