

# Sights & Sounds of Multimedia

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## **MapQuest 4 Mobile**

All recent cell phones contain a GPS (global-positioning chip) which can be used in many ways. One popular way is mapping your route from here to there.

*MapQuest 4 Mobile* is a free (yes, really!) application that works on many cell phones, in particular, my Blackberry Curve. You must use the cell phone's browser to get to the web page that has the download link, then download and install on your phone.

Once installed, the application is ready for action. There are several functions available. The most useful is the mapping function. You choose to start at your present position, enter the destination address and get a map showing the beginning of the route.

The screen on the Blackberry is one of the larger ones for a cell phone, but it is still small, compared to a desktop or laptop. Still, the map is quite readable. You show only a small part of the route, but you can pan and zoom to show more.

As an alternative to a map, you can choose to see directions. These are turn-by-turn directions which keep you on the chosen route. If you're driving, it can be hard to keep your eyes on the road and also check the screen for the information you need to keep on route.

The map you use has not only your position, but also street names. These are helpful to keep track of your position as you proceed toward your destination.



There is also an aerial view of the area nearby. This makes it easy to orient yourself.

You can use the search function to find a particular business or restaurant. The search can be by name (Tony's Pizza, for example) or simply a category. There is also the ability to place a quick call to a business, so they're ready when you get there!

If you needed more to convince you, there is also a function to show traffic conditions. You can avoid heavy traffic areas, construction and the like with this feature.

Last, but not least, is the Find Me function. Here, you select that function and your current position is shown on a map. Helpful if you're lost or disoriented.

What if you don't have a Blackberry? *M4M* is available on 25 devices, over eight carriers and in two countries! If you have a smart phone, it's likely that you can have *M4M* on your very own device. See [www.MapQuest.com/mq4m/phones](http://www.MapQuest.com/mq4m/phones) for details.

And the best part is that the service is free. No initial cost and no continuing cost. What a deal

**About:** *MapQuest 4 Mobile*

**Vendor:** Mapquest  
[www.mapquest.com](http://www.mapquest.com)

**Download:** @ [m.mq4m.com](http://m.mq4m.com) on your mobile's browser

## **Akvis Magnifier**

This product purports to help you easily increase resolution of various image types, such as jpg's, gif's and so on. The resolution can be increased without the loss of quality, according to the company.

I had a great deal of difficulty using the program at first. While the controls are clearly labeled, I could not see much (or any!) effect from using them on my test image.

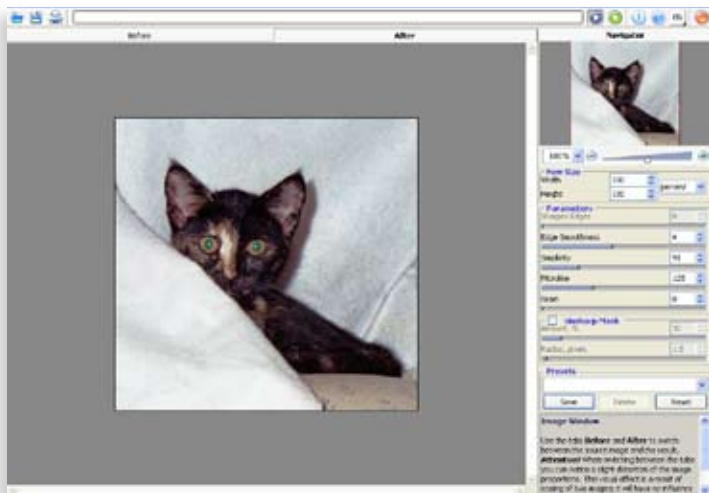
I tried the Help file, which did. There is a tutorial on using the controls which allowed me to see how the program worked on my test image.

You can dramatically increase the size of an image, yet avoid the pixilation which would normally occur. The program has two windows, "Before" and "After," which allow you to see the effects of the latest change you made.

There is no easy way (that I found) to compare the original image to the changed version without again opening the original image. There is also no easy way (that I found) to undo the last set of changes. As you make changes in your image, you can save each step as an additional image.

You can increase size up to 30,000 pixels in either direction. There are controls to Sharpen, Smooth and do other changes which improve the appearance of the resulting image. Changes can be made by either changing an index number for the particular control or clicking on a slider for that control.

There is a description window at the bottom right of the screen that explains each control. If the explanation is longer than can be displayed in the window, there is the usual scroll bar available. Unfortunately, the scroll bar cannot be reached since the explanation only appears when you hover over the control itself.



This program can be a valuable addition to your image processing capabilities. Akvis Magnifier can increase resolution without distortion better than any other program I've encountered.

**About:** Akvis Magnifier

**Vendor:** Akvis  
[www.akvis.com](http://www.akvis.com)

**Price:** \$129 as standalone or plug-in;  
free trial download available

## Verbatim Color LightScribe Disks

Verbatim is trying a tried and true marketing method by providing color choices for their DVD Lightscribe disks.

You can buy just about anything in a choice of colors in contrast to the Ford Model T. Presumably, color choices make one more interested in buying.

Lightscribe is a method of etching a label on the non-data side of a DVD disk. It is coated with a reactive dye that changes color when hit with the laser's beam. As the disk rotates, the beam forms a monochromatic image, working from center to outside of the disk. The speed of etching depends on how big the image is, among other things.

Verbatim's colored disks join the color parade with the standard gold and adding red, orange, yellow, blue and green. Their packages of disks of 25 include 5 disks of each color.

You will need a DVD drive with Lightscribe capability, the Lightscribe software (get it at [www.lightscribe.com](http://www.lightscribe.com)) and some of the Verbatim disks. Then you can make impressive labels for your DVDs with no printer and no sticky labels.

**About:** Verbatim Color LightScribe Disks

**Vendor:** Verbatim  
[www.verbatim.com](http://www.verbatim.com)

**Price:** \$10/10 disks online at various outlets