

Trackplanner Press Kit

As of: 2 October 2026 · **Embargo:** 1 October 2026, 10:00 CEST · **Please send us a copy of anything you publish**

IN THREE LINES

Trackplanner is track planning software for model railway layouts. It runs in the browser and does two things this hobby has not had before: a plan you have already laid can be reshaped at any time, like a sketch, although it is made of real catalogue parts, and several people can carry on building one plan together, across generations if they like. Georg Wächter wrote the first version in 2004, aged 16. It is released, rebuilt from scratch, on 1 October 2026.

In this kit: press release · short versions (50/100/250 words) · fact sheet · what makes Trackplanner different · the story behind it · quotes · imagery · pricing and availability · questions editors tend to ask · review access · press contact

1. Press release

Embargo: 1 October 2026, 10:00 CEST

Pull the oval longer, and the software finds the track to fill it

Trackplanner returns after 22 years: track plans that reshape like a sketch, that others can take over, and that several people can work on at once

Berlin, 1 October 2026 — A track plan is an awkward kind of drawing. It has to be right to the millimetre, because what ends up on the board are parts with fixed dimensions. A Märklin C straight is 236 millimetres long and there is nothing to negotiate. Anyone who notices halfway through that their oval is twenty centimetres too short pulls it apart in the usual programs and lays it again. On a drawing board it would be one line to move.

From today both are possible at once. **Trackplanner**, written in 2004 as a Windows program by a 16-year-old and known in the hobby ever since, is released today, rebuilt from scratch, as an application in the browser. Its most visible change sits in the handles on the track: pull on a laid oval and it gets longer while the software rebuilds the stretched section from real catalogue pieces. Flexible track goes in only where a gap would otherwise remain.

The same applies to turnouts, and that is where it gets useful. A turnout on a running line is a movable anchor in Trackplanner. Slide it and the siding beside it grows or shrinks, the two neighbouring sections are put together again from suitable pieces, and the rest of the layout stays where it is. The radius of a loop can be opened out by one step, with the straights shifting sideways so the loop stays closed. The spacing between two parallel roads is a handle as well.

“A model railway layout is never finished, there is always one more idea,” says founder Georg Wächter. “The software has to cope with that without making you start over every time.”

Plans that carry on

The second change concerns what happens after the planning. Every plan in Trackplanner has an address. Open it and you see the plan in the browser, orbit it, measure it and read it down to the parts list, without signing in. With an account, that same plan can be taken over into your own space and rebuilt there: put someone else's station on your own route, cut a layout from the gallery down to the size of your cellar, merge two ideas. The plan records where it came from.

What happened to word processing on the web fifteen years ago is happening to track plans. As long as a file exists only as an attachment it is an end point, something you look at and put away. Once it has an address where other people can carry on, it becomes a starting point. In a hobby where a good plan for two metres by four gets passed around forums for years and redrawn by hand every time, that is a practical change rather than a theoretical one.

It also covers the people building one layout who do not sit at the same table. A grandfather and his grandson plan together, each from their own computer, with the other's cursor and name in view. A club puts its members on the same layout instead of passing files around until three versions are in circulation.

“A grandfather plans in the cellar, his grandson lives a hundred kilometres away and joins in from his own computer,” says Wächter. “That is the case I thought about most while building this. If you are sitting side by side at the same table, you do not need software for it.”

And the shopping list at the end

What Trackplanner produces at the end is an order rather than a drawing. Every piece of track in the plan carries its part number; from those the software writes a parts list with quantities and prices and hands it to a retailer's basket. Above that sits a calculation every buyer starts in their head at the counter and rarely finishes: is the starter set worth it, or is it better to buy piece by piece? Trackplanner works through every combination of sets and single pieces and puts the answer in one sentence:

“1 × Piko A-track set A (55300) + 5 single pieces = €42.47 instead of €47.72, you save €5.25. 2 pieces more than the plan needs.”

It names the surplus too, because a box nearly always holds something nobody ordered. That is what makes the figure worth having: if you save €5.25 and have two pieces left over, you should see both and decide for yourself. On the rare occasions the sum comes out against the set, it says that as well. Where a price is missing, it claims nothing.

While you plan, a check runs alongside and marks what will cause grief on the board: open ends, radii that are too tight, gradients that are too steep, or a platform road two centimetres short for your own goods train. The yardstick is the trains the user has entered; the “Operations” tool for entering them is coming soon. There are also gradients and ramps with the percentage worked out, helices, scenery and a 3D view showing the same model as the drawing. Anyone who already has a plan need not redraw it: Trackplanner reads files from WinTrack, AnyRail and XTrkCAD, and the `.glp` files of its own 2004 predecessor.

Freemium, Berlin, one person

Planning is free and stays free. The full editor, all 63 track systems, the reshaping, the parts list and the handover to a retailer cost nothing, and there is no cap on the number of pieces. Premium at €5.99 a month or €29 a year unlocks gradients and scenery, the precision analysis, 1:1 printing as PDF, DXF export for the CNC router, private plans and roles for editing together.

Behind Trackplanner is a one-person business in Berlin. The buying links are affiliate links; where a partnership is in place, an order pays a commission. It still shows the cheapest offer it knows of for each line, and names what speaks against a starter set as well.

Trackplanner is available from 1 October 2026 at **trackplanner.io**, along with data sheets for every track system, tutorials and a glossary.

Length (excluding headings): approx. 5,500 characters

2. Short versions

50 words

Trackplanner is track planning software that runs in the browser. A plan you have already laid can be reshaped at any time although it is made of real catalogue parts: stretch ovals, slide turnouts, open out radii. Other people's plans can be taken over and built on, and a shopping list comes out at the end. Relaunch: 1 October 2026.

100 words

Trackplanner is track planning software for model railway layouts and runs in the browser with nothing to install. What sets it apart: a plan you have already laid can be reshaped at any time, like a sketch, although it is made of 1,727 real catalogue parts from 63 track systems. Pull an oval longer and the software rebuilds the section from suitable pieces; a turnout is a movable anchor that lets the siding beside it grow with it. Every plan has an address where others can view it, take it over and build on it, several at once. At the end Trackplanner writes a shopping list and works out whether a starter set beats buying singly. Planning is free.

250 words

Trackplanner is web-based track planning software for model railway layouts. Georg Wächter wrote the first version in 2004, aged 16, for Windows; it was picked up by the hobby press and downloaded for years. On 1 October 2026 it returns, rebuilt from scratch, as an application in the browser.

Track planning has been rigid because a plan consists of parts with fixed dimensions. If your oval is twenty centimetres too short, you pull it apart and lay it again. Trackplanner solves that with handles: pull on an oval and it gets longer while the software rebuilds the stretched section from real catalogue pieces, with flexible track only as filler. A turnout on the running line is a movable anchor that lengthens or shortens the siding beside it. Radii can be opened out by a step without the loop coming apart.

The second difference is in the sharing. Every plan has an address where anyone can view, orbit and measure it without an account. With an account it can be taken over into your own space and rebuilt, so someone else's station can join your own route. The plan records where it came from. Several people can work on one plan at the same time, from a grandfather and his grandson to a club planning its layout with all its members.

At the end the plan becomes a parts list with part numbers, quantities and prices that can be handed to a retailer's basket. Trackplanner works out whether a starter set plus a few single pieces would beat buying piece by piece, and says so when it would not.

Planning is free. Premium costs €5.99 a month. The provider is a one-person business in Berlin.

3. Fact sheet

Product	Trackplanner, track planning software for model railway layouts
Category	Planning/CAD software for a hobby (model railways)
Platform	Web application in the browser, desktop and tablet. Nothing to install
New version released	1 October 2026, 10:00 CEST
Address	<code>trackplanner.io</code>
First version	2004, a Windows program ("Railroad Construction Pack")
Track systems	63 , of which 47 currently sold and 16 historical
Track parts	1,727 , each with part number and factory dimensions
Scales	Z, N, TT, H0, O, I and G, plus LEGO Duplo and Playmobil
Brands in the catalogue	among them Märklin, Roco, Piko, Fleischmann, Trix/Minitrix, Tillig, Kühn, Peco, Atlas, Kato, Hornby, Bachmann, Lionel, LGB, Lenz
Import	WinTrack, AnyRail, XTrkCAD and <code>.glp</code> from the 2004 Trackplanner
Price	Free: €0, permanently · Premium: €5.99/month or €29/year, cancel monthly
Languages	German and English
Market	Launching in the German-speaking countries; the catalogues already hold British and US systems
Provider	Georg Wächter, sole trader based in Berlin
Team	Founder and developer, one and the same person
Press contact	Georg Wächter · <code>info@trackplanner.io</code>

About those numbers: the 63 track systems, 1,727 parts and the scales come from the application's library index as of 30 September 2026. The data sheets on `trackplanner.io` are built from the same source. They can be counted and they grow with every system added, so please cite them with the date.

4. What makes Trackplanner different

Four points, each with the test an editor can put it to.

1. The plan reshapes although it is made of real parts

This hobby has planned with catalogue track for twenty-five years, and rightly so, because only what the manufacturer sells can be bought. The price was rigidity: you move a sketch, you demolish a laid plan.

Trackplanner resolves that with handles that rebuild a whole run rather than single pieces. An oval gets longer or shorter along its axis while the loop stays closed. A turnout slides along its running line, and the parallel road beside it grows or shrinks. A radius opens out by one step and the straights shift with it. After each of these moves the software rebuilds the affected section from catalogue pieces and uses flexible track only where something would otherwise not add up. What looks on screen like smooth deformation is a buyable parts list underneath.

Test: lay an oval in Märklin C, pull the stretch handle, and watch the part numbers in the parts list change.

2. Plans other people can take over and build on

Every plan has its own address. Without an account it can be viewed, orbited, measured and read down to the parts list. With an account it can be taken over into your own space and changed there, putting someone else's station on your own route or cutting a layout from the gallery down to your own cellar. The original author stays recorded on the plan.

In a hobby whose good ideas have so far travelled through forums as screenshots and been redrawn by hand every time, that changes what a plan is for. It stops being an end point and becomes raw material.

The same mechanism carries the case that is closer to home for most people: one layout, several people, one plan. A grandfather and his grandson build on it, each from their own computer, without either sending the other a file. A club plans its layout with every member who wants a say, rather than with the one who installed the program. Anyone working on the plan at the same time sees the others' cursors and names.

Test: open a plan from the gallery on trackplanner.io in a private window, then sign in, press "take over" and rebuild it.

3. The shopping list that does the sums

The plan becomes a parts list with numbers and quantities. Trackplanner shows how much of it each retailer covers, what it costs there, and hands over the basket. Above that sits the set calculation: n boxes plus the remainder against buying singly, worked through exhaustively, with the saving and the surplus. When it comes out against the set, it says so.

Test: plan an oval in Piko A-track; the build plan names set A (55300) and the difference.

4. A check that knows your trains (soon)

Radii, usable lengths and gradients are checked against the train categories the user enters. A platform road is then not generally "short" but too short for your own goods train. The user sets up the train categories in the "Operations" tool, which is coming soon.

Test (soon): change the train profile and the findings change with it.

5. The story behind it

2004: a 16-year-old without a tool

Georg Wächter wanted to plan his own model railway and found nothing that made a decent job of it. So he wrote it himself, at school, in Visual Basic, on a Windows machine. The program was called “Railroad Construction Pack”, it was freeware, and it travelled well beyond his own cellar: into the hobby press, into forums, onto download portals. The trackplanner.de website then stood unchanged for twenty years and kept being linked to.

In between: two decades

The program stayed in use; the technology under it did not keep up. Windows moved on and so did what people expect from software. A fresh start came up often and never had an occasion.

Today: the next ones are laying track

The occasion came from his own family. When Wächter's children started laying track themselves, the question was no longer whether a rebuild was worth it but what they should plan with. The answer is Trackplanner in its second form, 22 years on, in the browser, with the parts that were not technically possible in 2004: the road from plan to purchase, and the option of two people working on one plan.

The old software is neither hidden nor still offered. At trackplanner.io/classic you can see what it was, with screenshots, and read that it is hopelessly out of date. The old trackplanner.de addresses have redirected to the new site since September 2026, and the old track plans are being imported rather than archived.

6. Quotes free to use

All quotes are from **Georg Wächter, founder and developer of Trackplanner**, and may be cut for editorial reasons.

“A model railway layout is never finished, there is always one more idea. The software has to cope with that without making you start over every time.”

“On a drawing board you pull a line longer and you are done. On a track plan that used to mean half an hour of relaying. That difference had to go.”

“A grandfather plans in the cellar, his grandson lives a hundred kilometres away and joins in from his own computer. That is the case I thought about most while building this. If you are sitting side by side at the same table, you do not need software for it.”

“A file is the end of one plan, an online plan the start of ten.”

“Which basket comes out cheapest depends on which shop stocks what and which set contains what. No one works that out in their head. Trackplanner knows both and does the sum.”

“Twenty years ago I built the program because nothing like it existed. Today I am rebuilding it because my children want to use it.”

“We do not check against a standard, we check against the trains that run on your layout. Whether a road is too short is decided by your goods train, not by a table.”

7. Imagery and video

Every file is available directly under <https://trackplanner.io> and cleared for editorial coverage of Trackplanner: free of charge, with no time limit, print included. Credit: **Trackplanner / Georg Wächter**. For a bundle or higher resolutions, write to info@trackplanner.io.

The most important asset moves. The reshaping described in chapter 4 is hard to show in a still. At </wissen/tutorials/anim-dehnen-en.mp4> there is a short silent clip in which an oval is selected and pulled outwards at its handle while the straights fill up with matching catalogue pieces. For an online article that is the file that tells the story.

Subject	File	Use
An oval being stretched (clip, silent)	/wissen/tutorials/anim-dehnen-en.mp4	The reshaping, chapter 4.1
A parallel road appearing (clip)	/wissen/tutorials/anim-parallel-en.mp4	Parallel roads and spacing
Editor with a track plan (lead image)	/home/home-editor.webp	Märklin C, 34 pieces, tools left, 3D bottom right
Build plan with parts list and prices	/home/home-bauplan.webp	The image for the shopping and set story
Running plan check with findings	/home/home-check.webp	The image for the checking story
3D view with scenery	/home/home-3d.webp	Layout with station, houses, trees
Train on a platform road, usable length	/home/home-aufgleisen.webp	Checking against your own trains (soon)
2004 next to today	/rcpack-2004.jpg and /home/home-editor.webp	The before and after of the story
The old software	/classic/trackplanner-classic-editor.jpg , /classic/trackplanner-classic-3d.jpg	For looking back at 2004
Portrait of Georg Wächter	/georg-waechter.jpg	Founder photo
Symbol	/press/trackplanner-signet.svg (vector), /trackplanner-logo.png (512 px)	There is no wordmark as a file, it is set in type — ask and we will supply one

Still missing (please ask if you need it): a “first track plan in ten minutes” video, a clip of a turnout being slid, English versions of the snapping and turnout clips, and photographs of a layout actually built next to its plan.

8. Pricing and availability

	Free	Premium
Price	€0, permanently	€5.99 a month or €29 a year, cancel monthly
Planning	full editor, all 63 track systems, no quantity caps	the same
Reshaping (stretching, sliding turnouts, radius, spacing)	✓	✓
Parts list, build plan, basket	✓	✓
Import (WinTrack, AnyRail, XTrkCAD, .g1p)	✓	✓
Taking over and rebuilding someone's plan	track work without limits; inherited scenery can be moved or deleted but nothing new placed; gradients stay as they are	✓
Checking	basic check with suggested fixes	plus precision analysis: minimum radius (soon), S-curves, edge clearance, loading gauge (partly soon)
Gradients, ramps, helices	—	✓
Scenery, landscape, terrain	—	✓
3D view	orbitable window	plus full screen and split
Output	image export with watermark	1:1 print as PDF, DXF for the router, image without watermark
Sharing	plan by link, viewable without an account	plus private and unlisted plans, roles, editing together
Earlier states	recorded as you go	time travel: view and return

Three things worth knowing, because they surprise people otherwise:

1. In the free version, plans are created **public**. Private or unlisted plans need Premium. That follows from the gallery: it is the reason anyone can look at and take over other people's plans without an account.
2. **Viewing and taking over** are free; **writing on the same plan together** is Premium. Anyone can open the link, subscribers can write.

3. A free user who takes over a plan **with** gradients or scenery keeps both: the copy is made in full and stays saveable, and the track work underneath is open to any rebuild. On the inherited parts, free accounts can tidy but not build: scenery that came with the plan can be moved, rotated and deleted, but no new pieces placed, no terrain shaped and no object height changed. The track gradients stay as they are; the height tool itself is Premium.

Payment runs through Stripe. A withdrawal button and a cancellation button are reachable without logging in, as German consumer law requires.

9. Questions editors tend to ask

How can a plan made of fixed catalogue parts stretch smoothly? It does not, it only looks that way. During the gesture Trackplanner recalculates the affected section continuously and looks for the best sequence of catalogue pieces for the length you want. Flexible track fills what is left. You can let go at any point, and what is on screen is always an orderable parts list. The software also marks the “clean” lengths that come out of fixed-length pieces alone.

Does this not exist already? Planning with catalogue parts is 25 years old. The catalogues do; reshaping a plan you have already laid does not. In the established programs a laid run is a chain of individual pieces you handle one at a time. The difference is that Trackplanner understands the chain as a whole and lays it again after every pull.

Where does the money come from, the subscription or the buying links? Both. The buying links are affiliate links; where the partnership is in place, an order pays a commission (today that is some of the retailers, not all). The app says so rather than the small print. Offers are ordered by price and availability. The set calculation goes by the total alone: if that comes out against the set, none is suggested.

How current are the prices? They are guide prices with a date. They come from the feeds of the connected retailers and are re-imported daily. The software says so and uses the cheapest offer it knows of from the chosen retailer for each line. If a price is missing, no total is shown that could be mistaken for a complete one.

Is this a price comparison site like Idealo? No. It compares the offers of connected retailers. The advantage lies elsewhere: in the question of which combination of sets and single pieces builds the same plan most cheaply. No price portal can do that sum, because it does not have the plan.

Who owns a plan somebody has taken over and rebuilt? The copy belongs to whoever made it, and the original author stays recorded on the plan. You can rebuild it straight away but not print or export it straight away: Trackplanner releases that once the copy differs clearly from the original. Plans by paying authors are exempt.

What happens to the data? Servers in the EU (Frankfurt), sign-in by password or through Google, Apple and Microsoft, no advertising trackers. Plans belong to their authors and are never deleted automatically. Details at trackplanner.io/en/datenschutz.

Does it work on a tablet? Yes, finger operation included. On a phone you can view a plan; for serious planning use a tablet or a computer.

Do you need to be online? To open it, yes. After that the app keeps working on a shaky connection and writes to the cloud later.

Is Trackplanner available in English? Yes, interface and website. The catalogues hold British and US systems; the launch is still in the German-speaking countries, because that is where the retailer connections are.

How big is the team? One person.

10. Review access

The free version is not enough for a test, because gradients, scenery and the output are missing from it. Editors can therefore have **30 days of Premium** on request. A short email to info@trackplanner.io naming your publication is enough, no payment details needed.

An interview with the founder can be arranged at short notice, screen share included. In around twenty minutes a plan goes from empty board to filled shopping list, including the moment where the finished oval grows another twenty centimetres.

11. About Trackplanner

Trackplanner is software for planning model railway layouts. The first version appeared in 2004 as a Windows program, written by the then 16-year-old Georg Wächter. On 1 October 2026 it returns, rebuilt from scratch, as an application in the browser: with the catalogues of 63 track systems, handles that reshape a plan at any time, shared plans that others can take over and build on, and a parts list that costs out the shopping. The provider is Georg Wächter, a sole trader based in Berlin. Web: trackplanner.io

Short boilerplate (2 sentences): Trackplanner is web-based software for planning model railway layouts, in which a plan you have already laid can be reshaped at any time and built on together with others. The first version appeared in 2004; the new one on 1 October 2026.

12. Press contact

Georg Wächter — founder and developer Email: info@trackplanner.io Contact form:

trackplanner.io/en/contact Web: trackplanner.io Press page with this kit:

trackplanner.io/en/press

Postal address and provider details: trackplanner.io/impressum (German)

Georg Wächter answers enquiries himself, usually within two working days. A copy of what you publish, or a link to it, is always welcome.