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About the Author

Kathy Bartlett believes that mind maps are an under-used and poorly understood tool. She wants to help people use them for business and personal projects.

"My ebook will help people who have never used mind maps and will share ways that experienced people save time and express their creativity better with them."

"If you've tried them and found it too difficult or less effective than you were promised, my book could get you back on track in a few days."

"I share the best ideas I've found for using mind maps. Some of the tips were new to me, although I've been using them for a few years"

Kathy said that mind maps were used in ancient times but her focus is on giving her readers ways to use them now.

She has helped many people to benefit in their personal and professional activities from mind maps.

"Children are very keen users of mind maps and parents find they can connect with them by doing projects together or helping their kids with mind maps they use at school."

"They are used on the latest computers and other devices, so it will be increasingly important to be able to understand and use them for years to come."

Introduction

A mind map is a method of organizing and displaying information. It has been used through the centuries from the Ancient Greeks.

It is used in many areas including presentations, research, planning and problem solving.

A **Mind Map** is a diagram which spreads over the page from a main topic to include and connect ideas and items related to the topic.

Most Mind Maps start with the main topic in a circle in the center of the page. Then, the most important aspects of the topic are given their own boxes on separate lines which radiate from the main topic.

Further sub-topics are added to lines leading out from each of those boxes as required.

The main boxes are called **Nodes** and the boxes which extend from them are either **Siblings** if they are equally important or **Children** if they are not as important as the topic they have grown from.

More text may be added to any of the boxes where required but it must be kept to a minimum for best results. Minimum text makes it easier to focus on the basic points and develop further ideas from them.

The advantages of Mind Maps over simple lists, and even text-based outlines, becomes clearer now.

You can add colors, pictures, highlights and format the most important text in particular sections to emphasize importance, similarities and other factors.

Some people promote Mind Maps as the answer to almost everything, but they are just another tool.

I will show you many ways that they can be used to improve your personal and professional activities.

Just remember the first rule is to keep everything simple. A basic list or a tabbed outline may still be a better choice with some tasks.

Who Needs a Mind Map?

Mind Maps are commonly used in businesses for planning, brainstorming and presentations, but they are also potentially very useful for enhancing many of our personal activities.

It is a powerful method to organize and review information and very easy to use.

Mind Maps get us using our visual sense more than simple lists can.

When we add color, symbols and emphasize particular text, it makes it easier for us to remember the information and the relationships of the various parts.

Everybody who has to review information or is learning something can use Mind Maps to improve the results they get from that activity.

Most schools use Mind Maps and have proven they work for the students and the instructors as well.

It's easy to create a simple Mind Map just to organize your notes about a project, whether it's a trip you are planning or a birthday party.

You can also share your Mind Map with colleagues or friends. And there are some systems which make it easy for you to work with other people on constructing and enhancing a Mind Map.

Mind Maps are very good for organizing the information you get from a book or lesson.

They are equally good for organizing how you will write your book or prepare a lesson you will give.

Advantages of Mind Maps

Because all of the points are visible and common values are highlighted, more ideas are generated and new ideas come easily.

The open layout makes it easier to mark similarities and connections between different topics. These would be less likely to come to mind when looking at a regular list or outline.



It's also easier to include new points or ideas in the most appropriate location with a Mind Map than it would be with normal lists.

The mind map approach keeps users interested and makes retention of the material much better.

It's much easier for a new person to grasp the most significant areas and points in a Mind Map

which others have worked up than it could be where the material is a simple text document.

Most computer based Mind Map systems allow you to print the Mind Map in various formats or convert it for use with other programs such as Microsoft Office or those in the free Open Office suite.

Mind Maps are one way to be able to display all factors related to a problem you want to solve.

It will probably help you notice if any important information or factors are missing from the data.

Creative tasks are enhanced by using Mind Maps because relationships between the different parts are highlighted.

More of our senses are engaged with a Mind Map.

You can focus on those elements which are important to your intended use of the information.

You can move nodes or even smaller sections to other areas of the Mind Map.

Another person would probably make a different structure because their particular focus would differ from yours but you would each be able to understand the other’s version of the Map.

Why Some People Don't do Mind Maps

Some readers have probably been disappointed by their previous experiences with Mind Maps. I want to explain common problems that people have when they are introduced to Mind Maps.

This is to show that the Mind Map process is not the problem. It's also unlikely that you were not responsible for the poor results either.

After this section, you will be able to have some confidence about doing more Mind Maps and getting great results.

The problem may have been that your introduction to using Mind Maps:

- Was too short on detail for you to be able to produce anything worthwhile afterward.
- Was given by someone that had little interest in how well you understood what they showed you.
- Promised too much.
- Had poor quality or incorrect instructions.
- Was too advanced or used terms which you did not understand.

Like any other useful skill, it will take time and practice for you to become really good with Mind Maps.

Making a Mind Map of a lecture or a meeting is possible. But, it is not as easy to do well as some other types of source material. If you were required to do this before you were ready, it could easily put you off Mind Maps for a long time.

I will give you some suggestions for putting various types of information into a Mind Map with minimum effort and stress later in this ebook.

These will be methods which I have used or know that have worked for other people with limited experience doing Mind Maps.

Always try to follow the instructions for your first one or two Mind Maps so that you are sure you understand what is required. Then, adapt the instructions to fit your personal requirements.

Making Your Mind Map

The first rule is to ***KEEP IT SIMPLE***.

The best way to get comfortable with producing and using Mind Maps is to draw the first few just with pen and paper before you start using any of the computer-based packages.

Most of those programs are fairly easy to use but each will need some practice. If you are already familiar with the basics of Mind Mapping, it will be easier for you to concentrate on learning to use the software program.

Use plain white unlined paper, preferably at least A3 (16.5 x 11.7 inch or 420 x 297 mm) in size. If you don't have A3 or larger stationery, you could use blank newsprint or some light-colored wrapping paper.

Get a variety of pens and pencils so you can express yourself and mark important connections and similarities.

Don't make the text larger than necessary or the lines and shapes bigger than you need for them to be easily readable. You will add more material to this diagram than you would to a regular list and space will sometimes become hard to find if you use large text and shapes.

Pick a topic related to your areas of work or some other significant interest.

Make it something easy. This is just an exercise to help you become familiar with the method. You will quickly become comfortable with the basic technique. It will not be long before you are using Mind Mapping even for topics which you have little knowledge of.

Lay the paper down with the longer side at the bottom (landscape mode).

Start with the main topic in a central box.

Draw a short line from one side of the box and add an important related item in a separate box there.

Add more items of similar importance to other lines radiating from the box with the main topic.

Each item which starts on a line from a particular **Node** is a **Child** of that

node. All the Nodes which are children of a particular Node are **Siblings** to each other.

Draw more lines from one of those boxes for topics which relate to it.

Do the same thing with each of that topic’s siblings.

Group related items together.

Draw lines between items in different groups that are related in some way.

When you have gone two levels out, start to consider how the map will extend. If you don’t have enough blank paper in that direction, attach another sheet there so you can keep going.

As the Mind Map sprawls out, you will see items that are in different areas which have important relationships that you want to mark for attention.

If they are Nodes, you might want to represent the relationship by making them a particular shape which is different to the other nodes.

Other ways to indicate a relationship between them could be having a common color for their background or for their outlines.

Color is very helpful because it attracts our attention and the user will probably remember the information better.

If you are just using a single pen, you can give certain text a special emphasis by formatting it as bold, italic, upper case or underlining it.

Using Mind Mapping encourages us to lay out the various sections of the topic in ways that help us to recall the information as well as to understand the special relationships between the various parts.

Get a Check: When you have practiced enough to be confident of your Mind Mapping, ask someone to look at one of your Mind Maps and tell you if they understand the information it contains.

This is a good check on your progress. It is not a test, so don’t worry or become defensive if they find any parts of it hard to follow.

Their input can help you fix any mistakes before you start on Mind Maps where any mistakes might have significant consequences.

Brainstorming and Mind Maps

Mind mapping is sometimes confused with brainstorming.

Brainstorming is a popular method for getting people to share their ideas and suggestions on a topic.

Mind mapping is a way that you might record the ideas which are produced from a brainstorming session in a form which would be easier to review than by just making a list of everyone's suggestions.

Brainstorming is also a method which has to be used properly if you want to get the best possible results.

If your organization gathers people from different areas together for communal brainstorming sessions, you might find that some people will not provide much input.

They may:

- ✿ Just be prepared to coast
- ✿ Feel that their input in previous sessions was not appreciated
- ✿ Felt that their concerns and desires are not important to people in other sections in the company.

They may have found they got limited time and attention or even none at all!

One simple way which has been effective in some groups I was involved with was to let the people from each area have their own separate meetings before the main one. There, they can get prepare a list of those items which they want included in the process.

Each group should be given a chance for someone to present their suggestions and questions, subject to a common time limit.

A Mind Map could be used for note-taking if someone has the experience to handle the task well.

Start Here

Start with a simple mind map as described in this book before you invest any money or much time in learning a computer-based mapping program.

Use the minimum of flourishes in your first couple of maps but try something different with each of your “training maps” to check that you understand how that feature is used.

There is no one perfect design for a mind map of any particular project. But, when you get to the stage where you are producing Mind Maps for use within the company you work for, you must follow any guidelines which are in place for maps used within your organization or submitted to an instructor.

The organization needs the maps to be easily understood by all their employees. Many instructors require a specific process to be followed so that they can easily check if every student understands and follows their instructions.

But, you will inevitably adapt the set process to your own needs for other mind maps which you create.

You will start to use the various techniques and tools in the way which is most effective for your purpose after you have some experience.

Basic Features of a Mind Map

Mind Maps Have Nodes and Branches.

They resemble a tree with the Nodes at each point where new branches grow out in a different direction.

The main topic for a mind map is usually set in the center of a page or board. But, you may sometimes want to put it at the side if the expected form of your mind map will extend in the direction of the other side of the page.

Branches don't connect to each other.

All entries on a mind map should be as short as possible. I don't always use just one word in a node title. If you need two or three words to make the title clear to the reader, that's fine.

That might set limits on the branches which you can add to that node.

But, you could easily rename the node with a more narrow term so that you can add the other term to a new sub-node further along.

Example Mind Map

This is the simplest example of a Mind Map which you will see.

This is done with **FreeMind** from

freemind.sourceforge.net/wiki/index.php/Download

I kept it very simple to just demonstrate the basic ideas without introducing any features which were not in most of the available programs.

In fact, you can do most of this with the traditional pen and paper.

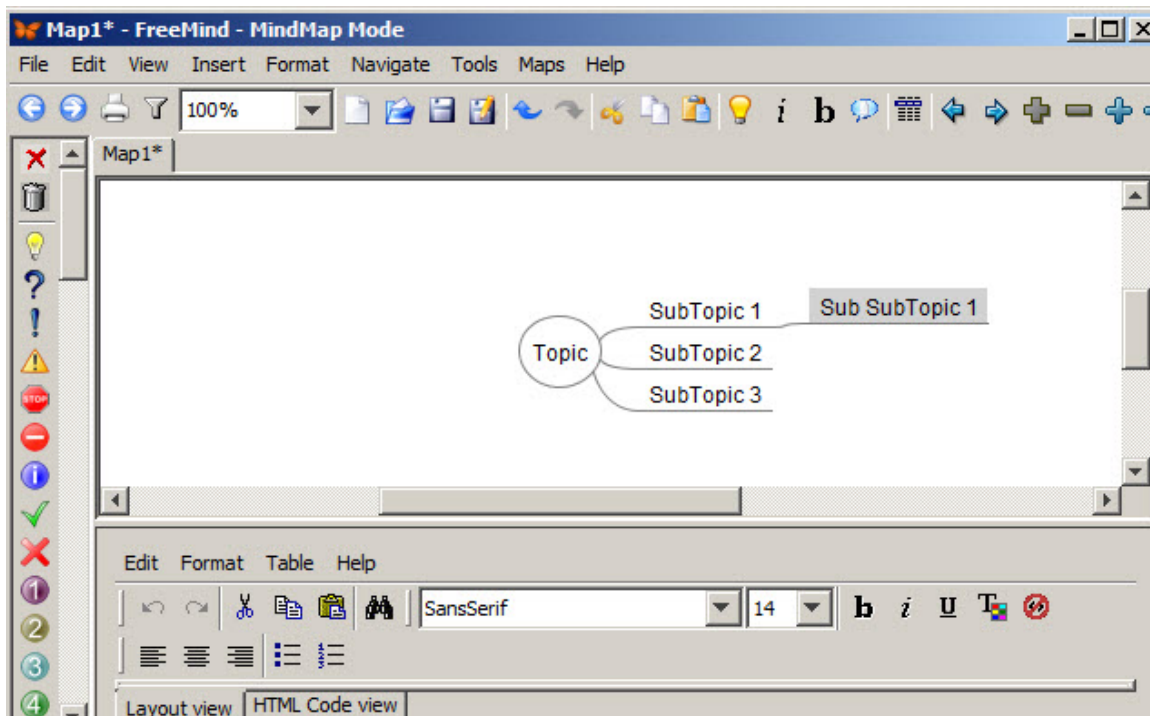
To start your Mind Map, open your computer program and start a new Mind Map. This usually is done by opening the File Menu and clicking on **NEW**.

You will see a shape appear, usually in the center of the screen.

This represents the main topic which is the subject of your Mind Map.

On this Map, it's the circle with **Topic** in the center.

The proper name for each item which has its own container is a **“NODE”**.



The next step is to decide on the most important items or ideas which relate closely to the main Topic.

These go on the next level of your Mind Map. Their Nodes are the children of

the item which they come from.

They are SubTopic 1, 2 and 3 on the first picture.

These represent the items which are of about the same importance. All nodes which are on the same level are called “Siblings”.

Then you would put in lines and boxes (one level lower or to the side) for the topics which most closely related to each of the SubTopics.

I just put in one for the example, SubSubTopic 1.

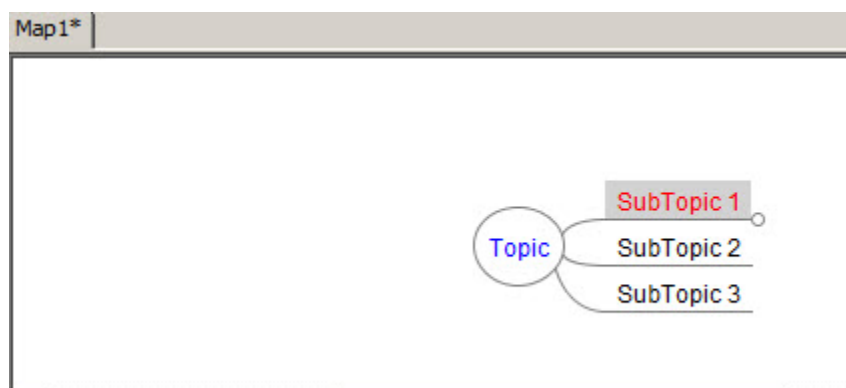
I hope that you are starting to see the advantages which a Mind Map gives you over a simple list.

A list is two-dimensional and, some items may be out of your site fairly quickly as your list grows. But, the three-dimensions of the Mind Map lets you keep more items in view.

More importantly, the relationships between all of the items on the Mind Map can be seen. You can draw lines between items which are not connected to the same node. Then, to ensure that their relationship is clear to anyone seeing the Mind Map, you can color the edges or background of the boxes or the text, or make the boxes of those items a different shape.

Even when you are using pen and paper, you are not restricted as strictly to the size of the paper or board which you are using. You can add more paper at the sides of your current sheet.

The computer programs all allow you to collapse some of the “branches”, so that you can focus your attention, or the people who you are explaining the topic to, on those boxes which are showing.



This picture shows the Main Topic and its three children.

There is a small “bubble” on the end of the line for SubTopic1. That small circle tells you there are more items on that line.

When you want to discuss them work on them, just tap the small circle and they will expand.

Mind Maps

Many people that are unfamiliar with mind maps wonder what they might use them for. After they have mind maps explained to them, they see possible uses almost everywhere!

You can use Mind Maps for:

- ✿ Planning any sort of project.
- ✿ Organizing and reviewing information from a lecture, book, meeting or just about any other source.
- ✿ Prepare for any sort of writing project.
- ✿ Prepare a presentation.
- ✿ Check your knowledge of a particular subject.
- ✿ Collaborate with people from almost anywhere in the world on a common task.

Mind Mapping Phone Calls

A simple mind map is great for making notes during a long phone conversation.

Your notes may be fairly long and detailed.

A mind map will often require less paper and will encourage you to keep your notes brief and clear..

If you hop between topics during the conversation, you may have information about one point spread through your notes.

The mind map approach lets you add later mentions close to the earlier ones as you talk. If that is not possible, you can use a colored highlight or a specific symbol on each entry so you can easily connect the various parts when you review your notes.

Making a mind map of the points you want to make during an important call is probably better than just using a regular list.

The one or two word subjects will be easier to work from than detailed notes.

You can read them and still easily keep up with what the other person is saying.

Prepare a Presentation

This section shows one simple way you can prepare a presentation with a mind map.

This will take some time when you first use the method, like anything else. But, you will find it has advantages over other systems.

When you have done a presentation, you can use the mind map as a template for future presentations on similar topics.

Gather your source material.

Get a clear idea of your students and what they want to use mind maps for.

Make your all of your content directly relevant to their needs at all stages.

Make a mind map of what you are going to say. You just need brief notes as memory joggers.

Review the material to ensure you have made no errors. Check that you have not skipped any small but important steps. Many people cannot successfully pass on their experience well because they assume some basic points are common knowledge. They have some steps ingrained in their memory and don't mention it in their instructions.

Work up some simple questions to ask those attending during your presentation. It is important to check that people are keeping up and understanding the information they need to have. Please don't criticize anyone that cannot answer the questions.

These questions are not a test. The problem may be with how you presented the material.

Don't rush through the material even if time is limited. I have heard more complaints from students about instructors talking too fast. The students have to take in material which is not familiar to them, so take it easy.

It's better to cover the basics thoroughly and leave some of the more advanced parts for another time rather than miss something out.

Keep time for questions at the end. This can be as valuable to you as the

students. It gives you a better idea about anything which may not be clear to them.

Using short labels for the sections will help you keep you on track.

You can display a version of your mind map on a screen for your audience.

The people who are listening will not be distracted by other entries which you have not yet explained because the labels are short.

The visual elements will also help to improve the appeal to your audience.

Don't be concerned about the quality of your artwork as long as it is clear what each of the items represent.

When you have done a presentation, review the results you got and see if there is any simple way you might improve your mind map?

Then, make a template from the mind map which will save you time when you start to prepare other presentations.

Mind Maps for Job Applicants

There are few more potentially stressful situations than applying for a job.

Your ability to mind map information can be very helpful because it is simple to do and effective.

You can produce a mind map for your applications which will only need minor modification if you apply for more than one position.

Using a mind map for notes you use when interviewed will ensure that you recall it quickly and help to prevent you overlooking any important details you want to provide. Many people say that they have forgotten some important detail which might have improved their chances of selection and only recalled it after they had left their interview.

Use a mind map to draft really good answers to the common questions:

What are your goals for the next 5 years?

Why would you be a good choice for this position?

What qualities do you bring to the job?

What is your relevant experience?

What do you know about this company?

What do you want to know about this company?

The mind map format will encourage you to keep your answers brief and always on-topic.

Mind Maps with Children

Schools in several countries have reported success with children using mind maps as part of their lessons.



Many parents have also used mind maps to help their children with schoolwork or other projects.

Some research suggests that material learned with the help of mind maps is retained and recalled better than when it is learned in the usual “read and remember” method. But, this opinion is still under review.

I think children have a natural advantage when using mind maps because they are mostly visually focused.

Also, they tend to have short attention spans, hopping around various parts of a topic constantly.

This is not as big a problem when they use mind maps because they can add the various sub-topics to the map and go back to the other points when they are ready.

If your child has to make a presentation to the class, suggest that they do a mind map.

They will like using pictures, shapes and colors to enhance their text and it will add more interest for the other children they make their presentation to.

Don’t load them down with explanations of why we use the different shapes, colors and pictures.

Keep it light and quick. That will encourage them to use mind maps for other projects in the future.

Self-Testing

When you are preparing for any sort of test, you can use a mind map to check the extent and depth of your knowledge of a subject.

This is one of the most valuable uses I have for mind maps.

The method requires less time than you would need for writing out the information you have.

Because of the links and highlights, you will find any gaps or mistakes more easily in a mind map.

The mind map can be the basis of a new version as you get more knowledge during your preparation for the test.

If you have someone, or a small group that you study with, you might find it valuable to each make a mind map and compare them.

A fresh set of eyes on your mind map can help you immensely. They might suggest more items which can be added to improve the usefulness of your mind map.

You might find them deciding to use pictures from your mind map which will be better indicators of the type of information they refer to.

Using a Key Box

If you share some of your mind maps with other people, consider adding a key box where you show what different icons (small pictures) represent.

The key box will also help you because you can add it to each new type of mind map you produce.

This will mean your mind maps will have a similar look.

Using a standard set of graphics for your various mind maps will not limit the eye appeal of your mind maps.

It will save you time when you prepare them.

It will help others that you share them with to get a clear understanding of your Mind Map more quickly.

Your friends and colleagues will appreciate your thoughtfulness.

Preparing Videos

Mind maps are an ideal way to start laying out the requirements for a new video presentation.

And they are an ideal way for the writer to prepare his script as well.

The advantages over a text only format are similar to when it is used for any group project.

Having the different parts of the project in separate clearly-defined sections (the nodes), makes it easy for each person to focus on those which involve them.

Because the text is brief, there is less chance of misunderstandings.

Changes, additions and corrections are easier to fit into the area which they closely relate to without having to redo the whole layout. You can paste a small piece of paper over the section if necessary.

When the mind maps has developed to an advanced stage, it may be worthwhile to create a “clean” version to use as a template for future videos.

Is the Hand-Drawn Mind Map Obsolete?

As the electronic versions of mind maps increase in number and power, you might wonder if the basic pen and ink version is still useful?

Everyone should start with making some paper-based mind maps so that they have a clear understanding of the process before they try any electronic version.

If you look through the various uses for mind maps which we discuss in this ebook, you will see that some are probably just as easy to do with pen and paper as they would be on a computer.

Sometimes, you don't have access to a mind map program or application.

You will also use paper mind maps when computers are not permitted or you just want a simple mind map.

Being able to produce and use a paper-based mind map can be impressive. If you always use a computer, people are likely to think that the power is there rather than in you!

You will also use paper mind maps when computers are not permitted or you just want a simple mind map.

You will also use paper mind maps when computers are not permitted or you just want a simple mind map.

Some research suggests that hand-drawing a mind map is likely to ensure that you will have better recall of the material than when you produce the same mind map using a computer.

That's based on the fact you are using more senses to prepare the map and will be more focused on what you are doing.

Some creative people have even used mind maps as the basis for real works of art. I am sure that more people will start to do this in the future.

Tech-based Mind Maps

There are many programs for creating mind maps. I will give you details of some but you should check with people you know, especially those who use mind maps for the same purpose you have in mind.

Your employer or instructor may have recommendations or even a firm policy about the software to be used.

If you expect to share your maps with other people, check which programs they use and the formats which their programs can export files in.

Unless you need to use a particular program because your company requires it or your colleagues all use it, you will have a wide range of programs to consider.

Some of the free programs have enough features to be adequate for many people in their business and personal activities. If you need help with the program, the suppliers of the free programs cannot be expected to provide it like the support staff for the commercial companies usually do.

But, most of the free programs have an enthusiastic group of users who provide limited but good support through a forum which is maintained by the suppliers of the software. You can ask your questions there but it's a good idea to check through the forum to see whether someone else has already answered the question you want to ask first.

The commercial programs usually have a free trial period of up to thirty days where you can use the program before deciding whether to pay to continue using it. Some of these trial versions may not have all the features of the paid versions.

Read reviews carefully. Remember that some people may be paid to review some programs.

Check among your own friends and colleagues for people that use mind maps for the same task which you will. They will be able to tell you about any problems or advantages which they found when using particular programs.

It also helps to know how reliable the support is from different companies.

Advantages of Computer Based Mind Maps

Mind maps have been used in some form since the ancient Greeks, but the recent advances in computer and phone technology have seen a fantastic boost in their use and power.

The pen and ink based mind maps will never disappear, like paper books and vinyl records are still around, but some form of computer based mind mapping software is probably in your future, even if you see no need at this time.

You do not need high-level computer skills to use the various programs to create and use mind maps. There is excellent support and tutorials for all of the commercial programs and even the free ones which I have seen.

As Simple to Do as pen and Paper: If you keep your focus on just using the features which you really need, you will soon be producing useful mind maps which would take you much longer just using pen and paper.

Sharing your Mind Maps: All the programs give you at least a few ways that you can share your mind maps. Many will produce files that can be dropped into programs like Microsoft Office and the Free Open Office suite.

But, you can also put your mind maps out in the form of an Acrobat PDF file which means that every computer and most web browsers can display it.

Some programs even allow you to produce versions of your mind maps which can be used in other mind mapping programs.

Better Visuals: Most programs give you a selection of graphic images which you can use for mind maps produced with that program. Licensed users of Microsoft Office have access to a very large library for their use.

Always check that you have written permission to use any images or other material which you get from the Internet. Providers of stock photos and other images constantly check the Internet for sites which misuse their pictures and many people have been charged large amounts for inadvertent misuse.

Compress and Highlight Sections:

Mind maps tend to grow and become almost overwhelming. The computer-based ones have a major advantage because you can compress any particular node or section so that it becomes easier to concentrate on a smaller area.

Then, you can compress that and open the other one out in turn.

Your computer based mind maps can be copied at any stage and saved with a different name for that file. Then, you can use that earlier version as the basis of another mind map or keep it as a precaution against the possibility of the current version becoming unusable for any reason.

Group Mind Mapping

Most readers are likely to be involved in business, sporting or charitable organizations at some time.

If you are an active supporter of some group, you might want to suggest they use mind maps for some of their discussions and planning.

The mind map method lends itself to group discussions and planning.

Each person or section within the larger group can create a mind map about the points they want discussed and these can all be included in a mind map output at the conclusion.

This will help to ensure that all those present know that their views and desires have been considered. That can significantly improve the general level of acceptance of the group’s final decisions and plan of action.

Mind maps are also good for planning and organization of projects.

But, don’t push too hard if there is resistance to using a mind map. Many people are more comfortable using methods they know are already giving good results.

Mind Mapping Programs

Always check any software which you get, even if it is from somebody you know well. They may have got it from an unreliable source. Scan **all** programs with your anti-virus software.

The sites and programs listed here are offered with no warranty or guarantee of any kind. Each person must accept full responsibility for their use of this information.

This section gives you basic details and links to some of the more popular mind mapping programs which are currently available.

There are too many currently available for me to mention more than a small sample. More are still being produced.

Many companies already offer versions of their programs which work on the most popular smart phones as well as traditional computers.

I have kept my preferences to myself and just give you comparable information about each package.

Our best source of advice will probably be people who are using their mind mapping software for similar applications to what you do. But, beware of anyone who insists that the program they use is the **only** practical choice.

They cannot have tried every alternative offering and you should compare your needs and your resources with theirs.

Price is not always a good indicator of power.

Many of the free programs are powerful enough to be used in most situations.

You should download and try the evaluation version of any program you are thinking about buying. This gives you an opportunity to review the documentation and support from the company though you cannot expect full support unless you are paying for the package you use.

Most programs will let you produce your mind mapped information in various formats including Acrobat PDF, some graphic formats and files compatible with Microsoft Office and the free Open Office suite.

I have not included pricing or version information for the various packages because that varies for each country and changes when new versions are released or competition in the market increases.

FreeMind, from freemind.sourceforge.net/wiki/index.php/Download is a very popular free program for producing Mind Maps. It was last updated in 2011 but is still very popular.

iMindMap from <http://www.thinkbuzan.com/iMindMap> . Mr Tony Buzan is the best-known advocate and developer of Mind Map methods and techniques. **iMindMap** is the software package developed by his Buzan Organization. It is well-supported by his organization and associated companies around the world. It has a fiercely loyal customer base of companies and individuals. It is a powerful package with a lot of features.

MindJet Mind Manager from <http://www.mindjet.com/> is a powerful package and currently one of the market leaders. It is designed for business use and people that are using the Microsoft office programs will find it easy to integrate with that package.

MindNode from <http://www.mindnode.com> is a powerful but plain looking package which offers free (MindNode Lite) and paid (MindNode Pro) versions. The current versions require Mac OS version 10.7.3 or later and a 64 Bit processor.

XMind is available from <http://www.xmind.net/> in a powerful free version and a commercial version which has some extra features, mostly focused on collaborative mind-mapping situations.

It is easy to use and has a number of templates included.

As well as letting you put your mind map into a PDF of various graphic formats, XMind will make it easy to put the Mind Map which you output on display in your website or blog.

More Mind Mapping Tips

Adding Comments to a New Mind Map: When you are making a mind map from a meeting or someone else's material, it's likely that you will think of relevant points of your own.

You could put them on a separate page of notes but I find it better to record these notes in line with the other material.

But, I use a different color pen or a unique border for them so I know that they are my input when I review or rework the material later.

There is no “one right way” to Mind Map: When you are learning the basics of mind mapping, stick to the same procedures as you are shown. But, when you are confident you understand the principles, you can start trying your own ideas to make the mind maps more meaningful to you.

Don't rush to make too many changes. Just try one new thing at a time so that you can see what effect it has on the usefulness of the mind maps.

Use Only what you Need: When you start to use a new mind mapping program, just try one new feature at a time. You may never need to use some of the program's most advanced features if you don't need them. Focus on keeping it simple and effective. When I asked a successful small businessman about which program he used, he named one which I knew. But, he said that he only used it in a very basic way. He said that suited him and I had to admit his results showed that worked well for him.

If he wanted to use the advanced features, they were ready but tucked out of the way unless he needed them.

The Future of Mind Mapping

I don't know what advances will happen in the future with mind mapping.

I am amazed at the benefits which almost anyone can get from learning to use this basically simple tool.

I hope my ebook has got you started or helped you to get through any difficulties you may have had with your earlier attempts to use mind maps effectively.

Kathy Bartlett

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