

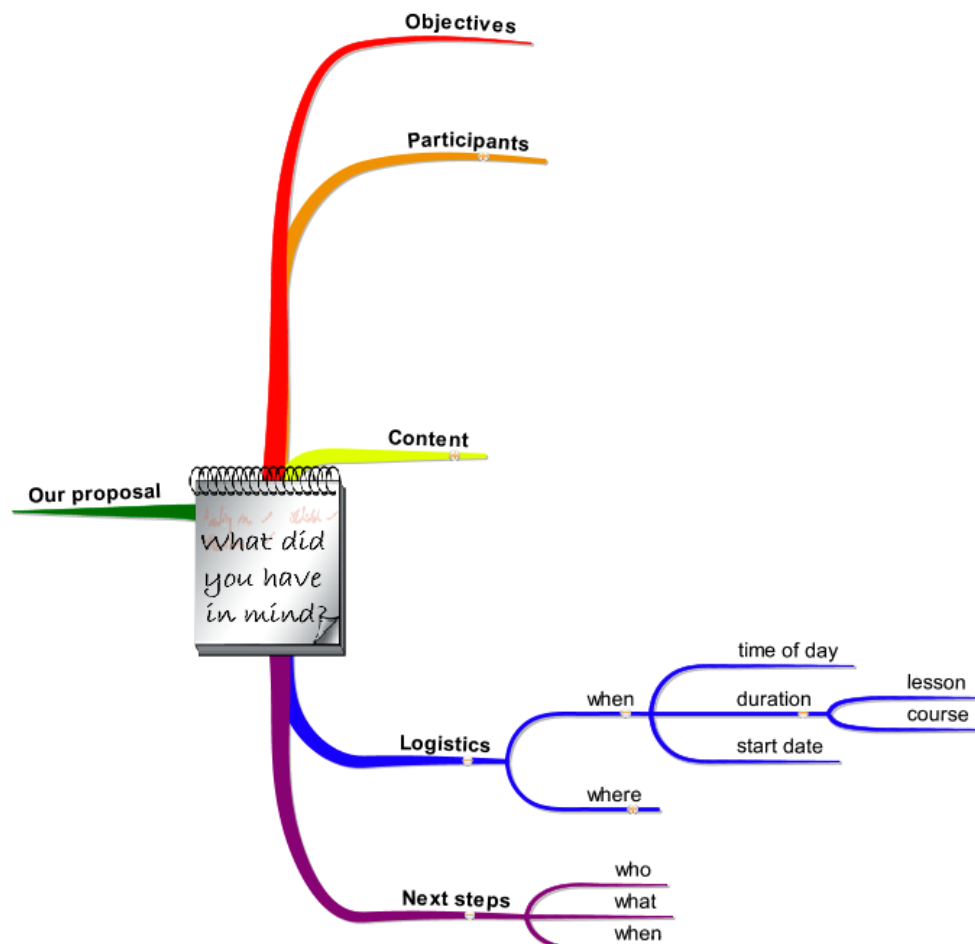
# I work, iMindMap, it works!

by *Graham Buik*

I find iMindMap very easy to use. It displays well on the 22-inch widescreen monitor on my desktop and also on the 7-inch screen of my ultraportable Asus Eee. It also works beautifully on my MojoPac virtual PC. So I really can use iMindMap virtually anywhere!

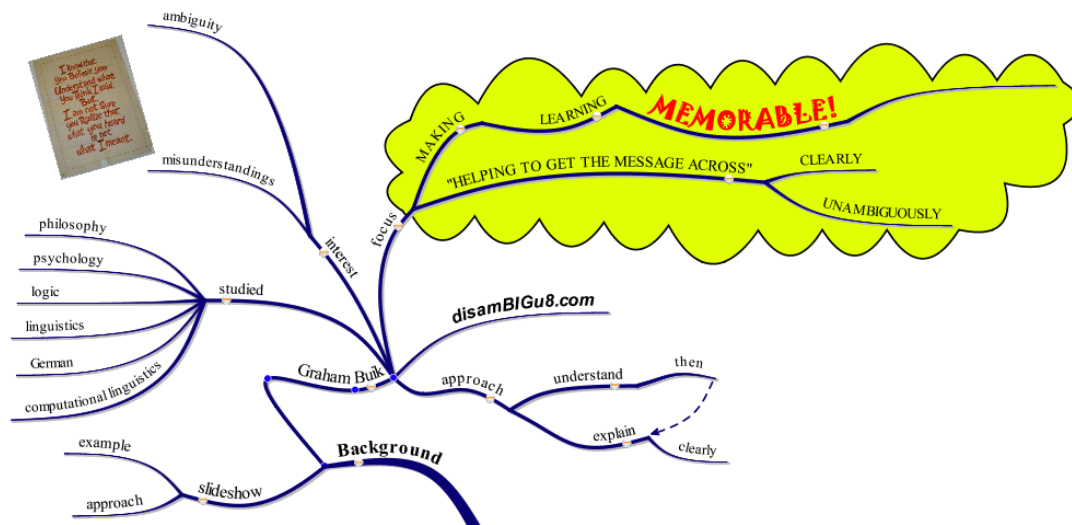
If I want to share a Mind Map with others, I upload an image to my website or to my "external brain" on Evernote. I also find the PDF and "interactive PowerPoint" export options in iMindMap particularly useful.

Here's a Mind Map outline I used at a meeting to identify a client's requirements for a training course:

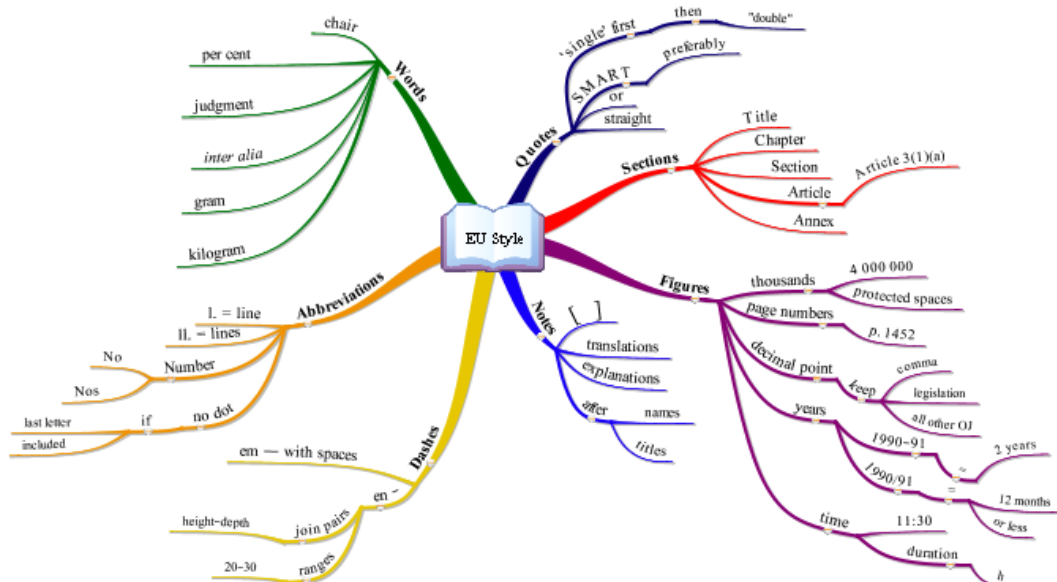


I took it along as a printed form and filled it in by hand during the meeting; it helped me stay on track and avoid overlooking any details.

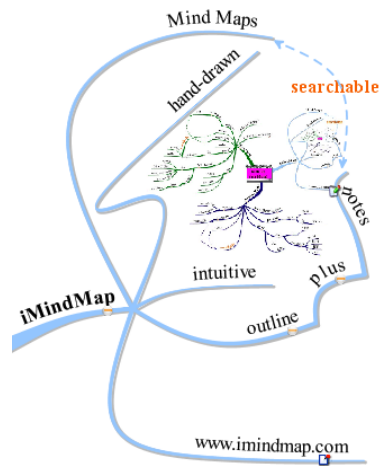
For presentations, I prefer a more organic style - something like this:



Mind Maps are also great for making reference material readily accessible. Here are some points from the European Commission's English Style Guide that I wanted to have at my fingertips:



I particularly like the way iMindMap lets me produce "hand-drawn" Mind Maps using the computer and the mouse - and I'm not talking about the "freehand" option, either. Here's a section from a larger MindMap that illustrates what I mean:



### One [key recall] word per line

Based on my own experience as a Mind Mapper over more than three decades, I definitely agree that, for classic Mind Maps (especially for learning purposes), "one [key recall] word per line" is best. But, as the designers of iMindMap have taken into account, sometimes there are other factors to consider - particularly with "business maps", or even just in preference to inserting a note, text box or link when a Mind Map is going to be printed or circulated in a different format.

There may also be regional differences in perception of exactly what constitutes a "word" in this context. For example, in German, "Sprachberater" is one word, but the English equivalent ("language consultant") is written as two words. I'd analyse that as a single term. (But if I didn't speak German, I probably wouldn't look at this issue in the same way!)

So, as a general principle, I strongly encourage the use of "one word per line" in Mind Maps. It may take more time and effort initially, but it really forces you to engage with the material - which also helps you to understand and remember it better.

On a different and more adventurous note, since iMindMap lets you put "one phrase per line" and even "one sentence per line", I soon found myself experimenting a little...

### Introducing "Reverse Mind Mapping"

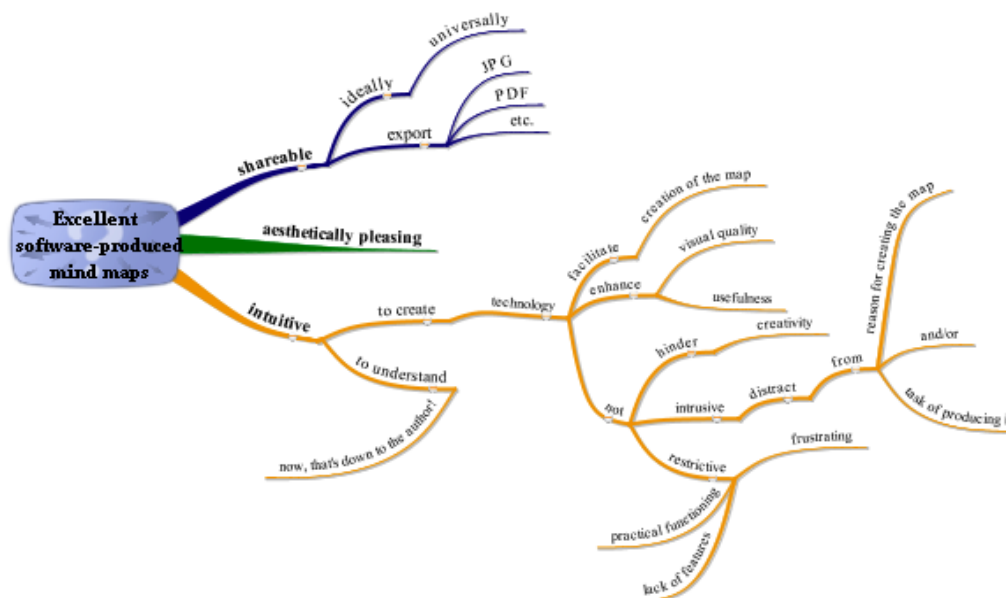
One surprising use I have found for iMindMap is **formulating linear text** - in considerable detail!

Here's a short example. In September 2008, Chuck Frey asked the readers of his excellent Mind Mapping Software Blog a very interesting question: **"What are the**

defining characteristics of an excellent software-produced mind map?" He got a lot of great responses. This was my own "two Eurocents' worth":

For me, a key word here is "intuitive". The software should make the on-screen mind mapping process as intuitive as possible. Using the software should actually make mind mapping easier as well as enhancing the visual quality and usefulness of the finished result. The software should not hinder creativity by being too intrusive (distracting the author from the reason for creating the mind map in the first place and/or the task of producing it) or by being frustratingly restrictive in its practical functioning and/or lack of features. To qualify as "excellent", the mind map itself should also be intuitive for its intended viewer(s) and user(s) to understand. At this point in time, that's still something that's squarely down to the author, however sophisticated the technology may be!

... and this was how I had used iMindMap to think the question through, clarify my ideas, and draft that comment:



Is that a Mind Map? Well, of course, it depends what you mean. But clearly, the process of mapping out my thoughts in words in preparation for writing that comment was one of **expansion from key words towards linear text**, rather than the classic Mind Mapping process of **condensation of linear information into key recall words and images**. The sub-branches are not always going down to another level of detail, either. We might say it's a Mind Map that is growing organically on the same level and is starting to express itself in phrases and sentences! But we can take this technique further.

Some of my work involves writing and editing where serious linguistic precision is required. I used to try sketching out sentence structures on paper, but now iMindMap gives me a fast, efficient and dynamic way to analyse sentences - and also to formulate what I want to say in writing. Personally, I find it much easier to keep

focused on the big picture and the individual sentence structure this way than I would if I was using a word processor (let alone trying to put pen to paper in order to write).

When I'm mapping sentences, I don't stick to "one word per line" - but, then again, this really isn't classic Mind Mapping at all. Maybe we could call it "Reverse Mind Mapping". Anyway, the fact of the matter is that iMindMap naturally lends itself to this way of working, too. I'll conclude by trying to describe what "this way of working" is like.

It's a bit like working through "on paper" the kind of process that (I suppose) occurs in my head when I stand up in front of an audience and start using a Mind Map as an outline for making a speech: Originally I drew the Mind Map using key recall words to condense a lot of linear information. Now I'm "unzipping" those key words, one at a time, reconstituting the information in my mind, and articulating it in a new (and linear) form, combined with other thoughts, experiences, references and associations as they occur to me.

It's like making a sort of instant virtual impromptu speech, one chunk at a time. And at each stage it's all captured visually on the screen in front of me - in writing, and also in context!

Then I can start mapping out the structure of individual sentences in as much detail as I want or need to (very rigorously indeed if legal language is involved!); fine-tune the wording, and play about with the overall structure of the document until I'm happy with it. (Branch ordering is brilliant for this.)

Mind Mapping is based on key recall words. In "Reverse Mind Mapping", words are also "key", but in a different way: each word and phrase in the linear text under construction is examined and re-examined to see whether it performs a "key" function in getting the message across within the big picture. If it doesn't, it probably needs to be revised or eliminated!

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