

Brainstorming/ Mindmapping Software

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction – Page 3

Mindmeister – Page 4

Using & Comparing Mindmeister – Page 5

XMind – Page 6

Using & Comparing XMind – Page 7

Freemind – Page 8

Using & Comparing Freemind – Page 9

Conclusion – Page 10

Introduction

Mindmapping Software is an application that allows a user or users to come together and pitch ideas and concepts. It allows users to see the relationships between pitched ideas and it helps them to pave the way for their next big project. Brainstorming has been around for as long as time itself. From when you were in Primary school to your full-time job, you will have to deal with Brainstorming so it is best that you know what to do with Brainstorming. Even the very biggest and the very best companies spend hours on end Brainstorming ideas to make their business succeed. So whenever you are in school, alternatively, college and you're told to brainstorm, actually do it and try to get good at as well as you I'll definitely need it.

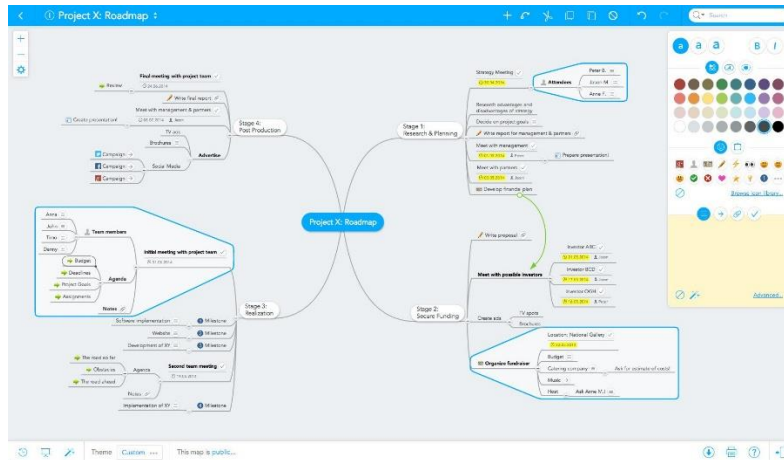
To most people, Brainstorming is pointless and a waste of time but you couldn't be more wrong. Brainstorming has many many benefits as its Diagrams make projects easier to follow and Brainstorming is also a great place to express yourself and to create as many ideas as you can. Mind maps put everything into perspective which is great for ironing out any problems you may face with an idea. Mind maps also carry multiple purposes. They create a visual of the idea but they also help with creating strategies. I personally use mind maps as I feel that I get a lot more information and ideas when doing so. Mind maps are also very quick and easy to create all you need is a pen And paper and away you go, let your imagination run free. Mind maps are great as they work almost everywhere. Are you writing a story? Use a mind map to decide the plot, characters, location, and time and so on. Are you making a groundbreaking video game? Use a mind map to describe what features it will have and its aim. You think you have an idea that could change the world forever? Then get out your pen and paper and get writing on what it will do and how it will do it.

For this report, I have to find, use and compare 3 of the finest mind mapping software I can find and decide which ones best. After gaining experience in mind mapping software when I did my group project earlier this year, I have decided to MindMeister and after doing some research on other popular mind mapping software, I decided to choose 2 of the top mind mapping software which is Xmind and Freemind.



Mindmeister

Mindmeister is an online mind-mapping tool that lets you create and shape ideas. It has more than 7 million people are using it and It is deemed very useful as it web-based so there is no downloading or updating which is handy for those who are more impatient. It worlds on all platforms and it is being used by SAP, Tesco, Oracle and much more.

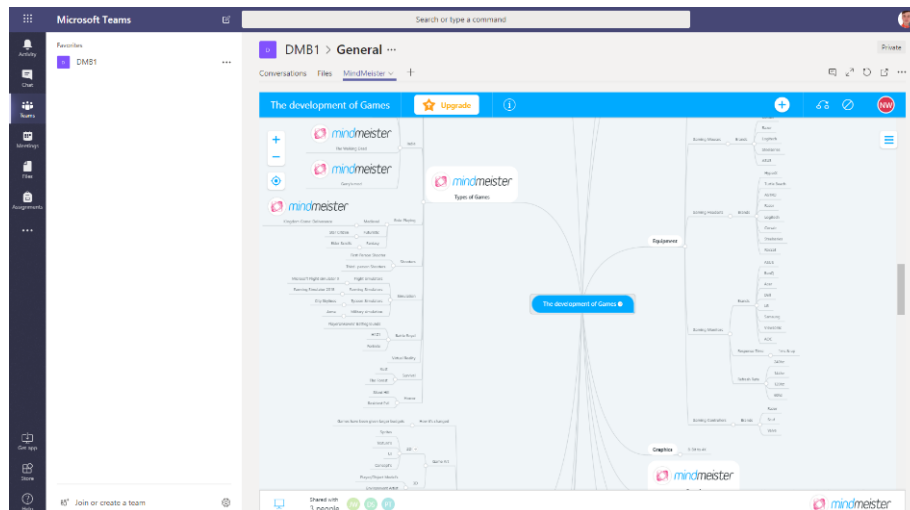


Mind Meister is free to use is free to use but pricing is optional also. There is Basic, Personal, pro and Business. After looking up the details of each package on the Mindmeister website, I learned that Basic allows the user to create 3 mind maps, share them and import other peoples mind maps at no cost. Personal costs €4.99 a month and it is aimed towards people who are making personal projects for themselves and not in groups. Personal allows the user to create unlimited mind maps, attach files and images, export images and PDF files, and allow mind maps to be printed and priority support. Meanwhile, Pro has all the benefits of Basic and personal as well as, Adding multiple team members, an admin account, team statistics and reports, a G Suite for domains to sign into, Word and PowerPoint export and custom styles, boundaries and themes. Finally, Business is perfect for group workers. It costs €12.49 per user and it allows the user to have groups within teams, compile exports and backups, custom team domain, multiple team admins and 12 x 7 priority support.

Basic	Personal	Pro	Business
Up to 3 mind maps. Share, Collaborate, Import.	For individuals and use in personal projects	For top-notch mind mapping, alone or in teams	For enterprise users and mapping enthusiasts
FREE	€4.99 per month	€8.25 per user per month	€12.49 per user per month
Sign Up	Buy Now	Buy Now	Buy Now
Basic includes: Mind mapping with: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Up to 3 mind mapsCommunity supportReal-time collaboration	Personal includes: Everything in Basic, and: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Unlimited mind mapsFile and image attachmentsImage exportPDF exportMind map printingPriority support	Pro includes: Everything in Personal, and: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Multiple team membersAdmin accountTeam statistics and reportsG Suite for domains sign-inWord exportPowerPoint exportExport presentations as PDFCustom styles and boundariesCustom themes for your maps	Business includes: Everything in Pro, and: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Groups within your teamComplexity reports and insightsCustom team domainMultiple team administrators24/7 priority support

Using Mindmeister

In terms of using Mindmeister, I find it very easy, user-friendly and generally useful. I like how it is available as an add-on on Microsoft Teams, which is perfect when working in groups. It also looks very stylish and simple. It really is very eye pleasing. It is very helpful to people who see themselves as visual learners. The sheer look and appeal of Mindmeister make me just want to use it as much as I can. I also like how as a free user, you are not limited on what you can and cannot do. I find that very helpful and I am very impressed that a large brand such as MindMeister allows that. Many companies should do the same. I love how you and your team can simultaneously work on your mind map. This encourages teamwork and communication, which is the number 1 factor in career success and failure.

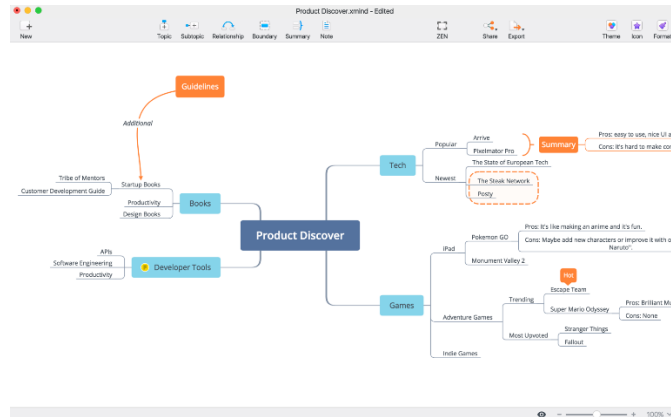


Comparison to others

Mindmeister is definitely the easiest to use as it doesn't require to be downloaded and it can also be used on Microsoft teams as well. I also liked how everything was where you would expect it to be and everything was at close reach. However, general pricing isn't that great either. Although I feel that you don't really need it is more expensive than what Xmind has to offer. Mindmeister is much better to look at than Freemind but not as nice as Xmind. I feel that Mindmeister's party piece is its ability to allow more than one person work on a mind map at once. I feel that Mindmeister is best if you are doing a team assignment or working in a group of people because of this. In terms of a team working, Mindmeister leads the field over Xmind and Freemind. In terms of Overall quality, I feel that Mindmeister is a very strong competitor in this comparison.

Xmind

Xmind is another type of mind mapping software, which has been around for a while. Like Mindmeister, Xmind claims that it lets you create and shape ideas. However, unlike Mindmeister, You have to download it, which is perfectly fine; however, some less computing minded people may not like downloading software that is not Spotify or iTunes.



Xmind is free to use is free to use and there are several free versions available. These are Xmind: ZEN, Xmind 8 and Xmind: Mobile. Xmind: ZEN is an all-new updated version of features an all-new Engine known as Snowbrush 2.0, which adds more fonts and font families. A dark UI was added as well as a new Outliner and Zen Mode. Other features include Styles, themes, hyperlinks, audio note, images, topic link, attachments, labels, notes and stickers. Xmind 8 is also fairly priced. The desktop version costs €58 a month.

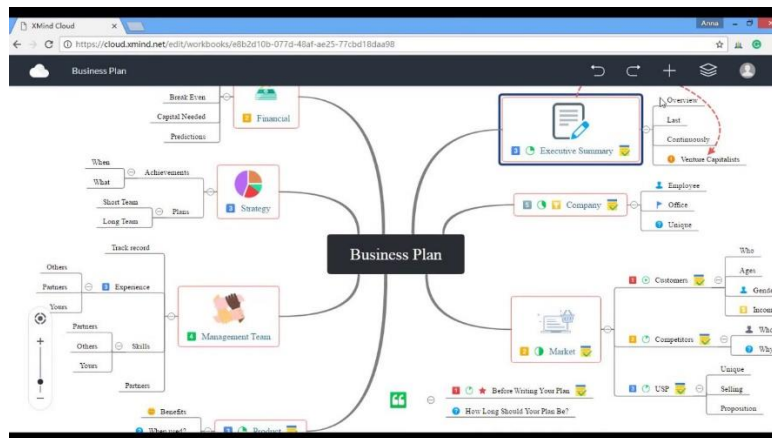
There is also XMind 8. This was released 10 years after Xmind's original launch. Slide-based Presentations were added as well as Gantt Viewing. Xmind 8 also introduced the collaboration of Xmind and Microsoft Office. This means that your ideas can be brainstormed as word documents and PDF files. Business users would be delighted to see that Business Charts were added in to help release pressure from previous Xmind software and their general lifestyle. Presentation mode allows the user to present their fine graphs in front of the colleagues. Clipart was added with lots of images to choose from so that your mind map is more eye-pleasing and less boring to look at. There were also more added features such as Templates, Advanced filter and a new mind toolbox, which is ideal for collaborations in the office. However, Xmind 8 is not cheap. It costs €129.

The advertisement banner for Xmind 8 features a red background. On the left, the text reads "XMind 8" in white, followed by "Popular and classic mind mapping tool for over a decade, millions of people are using it." Below this are two buttons: "Free Download" (with "Windows" written below it) and "Buy Now" (with "Only \$129" written below it). On the right side of the banner is a laptop displaying a complex mind map.

Finally, there is Xmind Mobile. The Mobile app, which is available on the App Store and the Google Play store free. It features most of the same content as the Desktop version. It recently had an all new engine installed and it has a wide selection of themes, The ability to export to PDF, PNG Or XMind. It has the vital features of Xmind just on your phone I personally found it very useful. Obviously, some features are blocked for free users but at €1.24 a month, you really can't go wrong. Pricing is generally good. The desktop Xmind: Zen is yours for €4.58 but for €4.99 a month, you can get Xmind Zen for Desktop and Mobile.

Using Xmind

Xmind is as simple and as useful to use as Mindmeister. It's generally easy to use and very pretty to look at. However, there are a lot of missing features for free users which is annoying and the fact that Xmind isn't web based is inconvenient as well. I feel like people who don't use computers often may feel a little uncomfortable downloading this software but realistically, they have nothing to worry about. Despite this, I found Xmind simple to find ways around them and to be honest, the average user won't need half of the things available, so all is not lost. Overall, Xmind is great as even the free users have tons of features available for them to make simple easy and excellent mind maps.

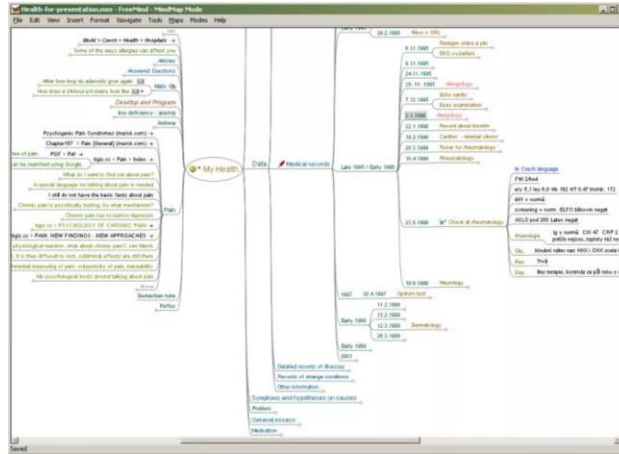


Comparison

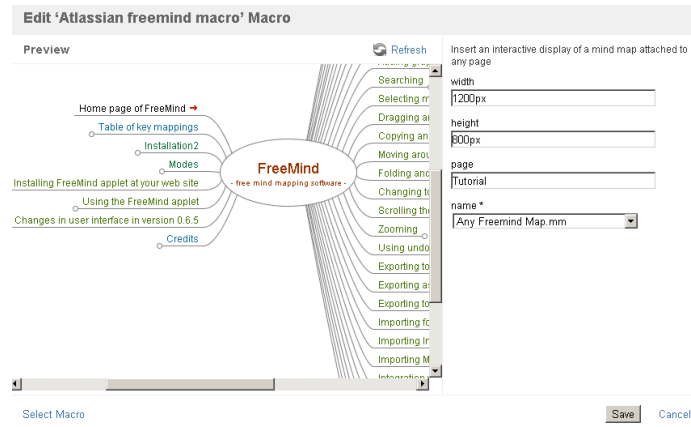
Xmind is the most eye pleasing of the 3 software's. Its features are plentiful but free users may struggle. There are also no plugins available like in FreeMind and unlike Mindmeister, Xmind needs to be downloaded and it's not available on Teams. The prices, especially for Xmind 8 are also very expensive. I also didn't like how the free version was limited on certain features that both Mindmeister and Freemind have in their free version. Xmind definitely has the most amount of content in it in comparison to Mindmeister and Freemind. Xmind is similar to Freemind in the fact that they are both downloadable in comparison to the browser based Mindmeister.

Freemind

Freemind is our final Mind mapping software. It promises to reduce stress for users as it believes to have everything under one roof. It runs on most platforms and it is used by millions all over the world. Freemind makes difficult business situations easy. It has been deemed very useful by many all over the world. With Freemind, you and you colleagues can combine your best ideas fast and effortless.



FreeMind is completely free and it has been around since 2010. It hasn't received as much updates recently. In fact, it's most recent was in 2016. Free mind was developed in Java. Despite being free to use and lacking in support, Free mind is very powerful. It has a lot of good features. It supports HTML and other platforms, so it is generally too good to be true. There is a paid version which is only worth €0.99 so it's probably with that euro you found on the street.



Using FreeMind

Free mind is very easy to use. It's dated look makes it look boring and something from windows 95 but looks are not deceiving as it is very powerful. Within one single click you can edit notes in large amounts, break down branches and copy and past nodes that can be moved by clicking and dragging them. Its brilliant.

Since it supports HTML. This means that you can easily add references to you webpage to your FreeMind mind map like a champion. You can also reference your online material very easily and export your maps as HTML files. Its not just HTML though, there are hundreds more export files to choose from. The most common export format being Microsoft Office.

Best of all, you can expand on FreeMind with add on plugins. These are brilliant if you need to manage time, remind yourself about certain nodes. The Freemind website looks very old, dated and it makes me feel like the web developer was knocking off wikipedia. However, it does have links that direct you to Downloads, Forums, Plugins, accessories, documentation, FAQs and more.

However, like I said earlier both the app and the website look very dated and could do with being completely redesigned. Obviously as the app is free, I can imagine not a lot of money is made from it but I can imagine that some people are completely put off by how old and complicated it looks. The apps ancient styling could give people the impression that it's a haven for viruses and much worse but, if that's what they think then they are really missing out. Overall, I was massively impressed with FreeMind and I feel that it will be a very strong competitor in this report.

Comparison

In comparison to Mindmeister and Xmind, FreeMind falls short in the aesthetics department on both the websites and the app itself. It's also not as well laid out as a lot of features are in menus within menus it gets very annoying very fast. However, FreeMind's bang for your buck appeal makes it a class leader in this report. There are no hidden features behind optional pay plans. No special accounts need to be made so it's safe to say, that FreeMind is definitely unbeatable in value. Freemind's ability to add more plugins is a great help as well. Considering that they're all free and easy to download. You can actually end up with more content on a plugin filled FreeMind than Mindmeister or Xmind. Freemind can export to almost any format which is something you have to pay for on the other two. Overall, Freemind may not be the prettiest or user friendly but it is loaded with content and easy to use and excellent for making mind maps.

Conclusion

Overall, I found that this was a very interesting and very difficult report to do as I had 3 separate softwares and they're all very good and different to one another. At the end I feel that there can only be one winner. After reading through the softwares reviews and comparisons, I have decided that the winner is Freemind. Freemind gives you all that Mindmeister and Xmind have to offer plus more. The fact that the entire program is free of charge which makes it the best for value, content and quality.

Despite not looking visually pleasing, its ability to add plugins and free download makes you forget about that in a flash. The only thing that lets Freemind down is its poor looking and out of date website. Another negative is the lack of recent update to the software application. I feel that the creators of Freemind need to give their app a fresh lick of paint and update it to compete with the competition even more.

My personal favourite feature is the array of files that you can export your mind map in. A paid option for Mindmeister and Xmind, Freemind lets their user do whatever they want to their Mindmaps and put them anywhere they please. This is very convenient as it means that no matter what type of file your project is saved as, you are covered.

Overall, this was a very interesting report. I learned a lot about mind mapping and the software needed to make them. I hope everyone who read this found it useful and easy to follow. I hope you enjoyed this as much as I did. If you have any questions or comments. Leave them below in the comments section.

