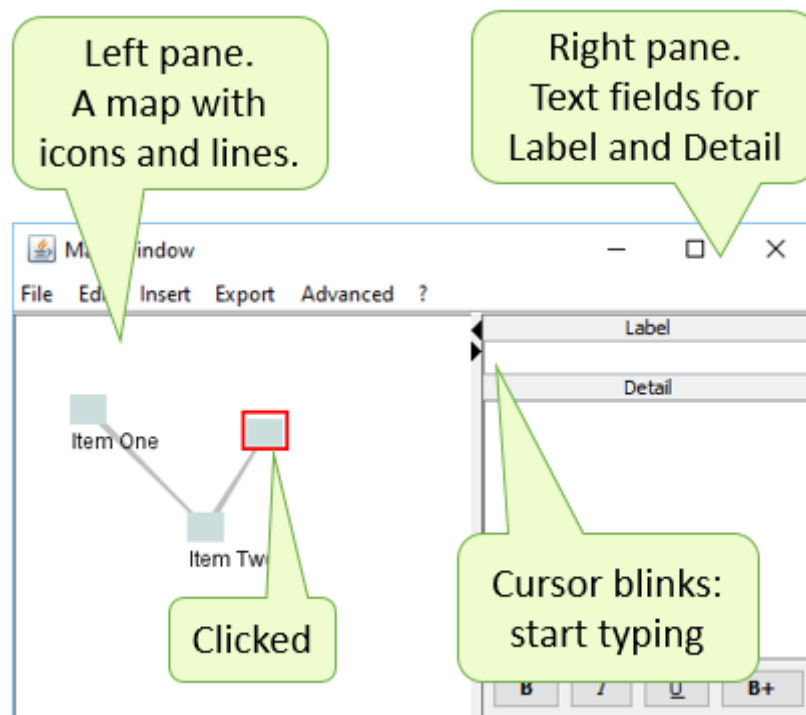


Part 1: User's Guide

1.1 Getting Started

Enter Text

If you don't have any icons on the map on the left pane, [create](#) a new one first. Then turn to the upper **right** to a field called 'Label'. If the cursor is not blinking there, click the field to move the cursor there so you can start to **type**. Once you press the Enter key, the new label will also be shown on the map on the left. You may also turn to the right and click the field called 'Detail', to make the cursor blinking there and enter text there.



If you do have icons on the left, click one of them to **select** it. It will be highlighted by a red rectangle around it. Then turn to the right and start typing or set the cursor, as described before.

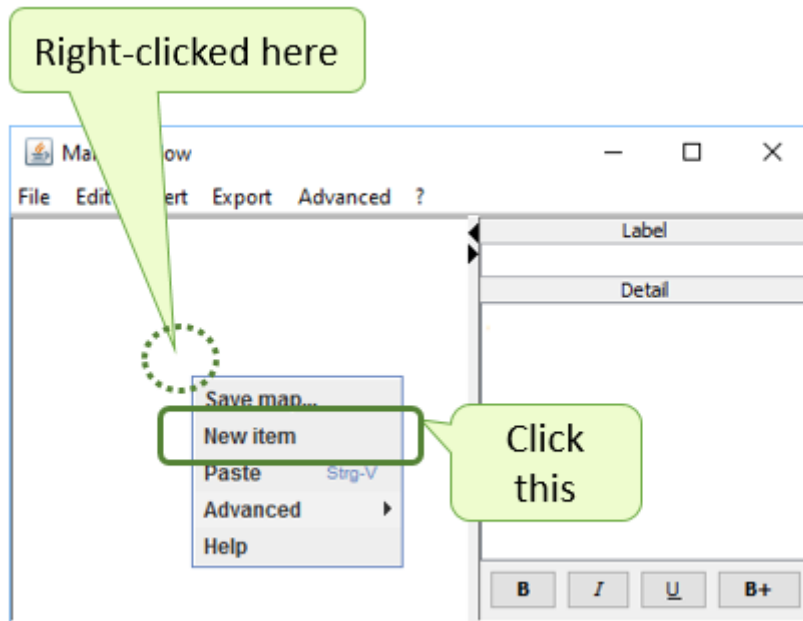
If you've got copied text on the clipboard ready for pasting, you can simplify the item creation and filling -- see [paste](#).

To enter multiple lines at a single blow, you may use the **Insert** menu in the menu bar and then click **Insert Items**. A composition window will open where you can paste, drop or type input. When you're done with that, press **Continue**. Your input lines will become new items, and their icons will line up on the map.

You can simplify the input even further if you **Launch the Import Wizard** from the **Insert** menu, or just drag and drop text snippets or files directly into the map pane.

Create a New Item

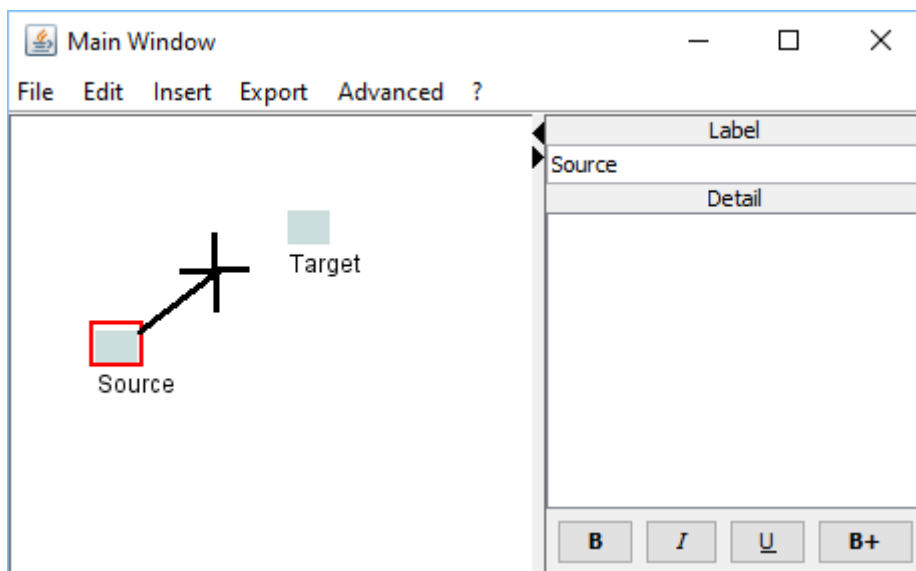
Choose a free spot on the **background** canvas where no icons or lines are and where the new icon is to be placed. A context menu will pop up. Click **New item**. Then you may turn to the right and [enter](#) some text.



Note that you may leave the item without any text, so you need not come up with category names if you just want to connect some items.

Create a Line

Let's say you want to draw a line from an icon called 'Source' to another icon called 'Target'. Press and hold the **Alt** key, then click on the Source icon. Then **drag** the mouse pointer out of the Source icon while still holding 'Alt'.



A growing line will be painted from the source icon to your mouse pointer, while the mouse pointer is shown in the shape of a cross-hair. When the cross-hair has reached the Target icon, you release the mouse button and the Alt key to finish the line. If you released them elsewhere, start over again.

Instead of the Alt key, you may use alternate methods to modify your drag action, see [modifier](#).

Move an Icon

To move a single icon, you **click** it and **drag** it, i.e. press and hold the main mouse button while moving the mouse pointer across the map.

All attached 'strings' will immediately follow -- unlike the strings of the real world, where trying to connect some post-it notes by a string, would be futile.

The main mouse button (or button 1) is typically the one that is operated by the pointer finger of the hand that holds the mouse, i.e., for left-handers it's the right button, for right-handers it's the left button. Nevertheless, we will refer to clicking the opposite button (button 2) as 'right-click', due to widespread expectations.

If you slightly missed the icon before moving the mouse, one of two unexpected things may happen: either a whole cluster of connected icons is moved (if you hit a line instead of an icon), or the map background canvas is panned (if you hit an empty spot). In either case, nothing is seriously broken, just move back by the approximate same distance.

Delete an Item

Right-click the icon of the item to be deleted, and from the context menu popping up, click **Delete**. After a confirmation dialog, the item with all its connector lines is deleted.

Delete a Line

Right-click the line to be deleted, and from the context menu popping up, click **Delete**. After a confirmation dialog, the line is deleted.

Right-click

- on the background canvas: to insert new items and save,
- on an icon: to change its color or delete it,
- on a line: to change its color or delete the line or a whole cluster;

Drag

- the background canvas: to pan the entire map,
- an icon: to move it,
- a line: to move a cluster of connected items

Modified Drag

- press and hold the Alt key: to connect items or drag and drop clusters,
- press and hold the middle mousebutton (wheel): to substitute the Alt key (recommended),
- precede the dragging with a doubleclick: to substitute the Alt key (good for pen).

1.2 Overview

Considering four major benefits of the tool, we'll cover some of the corresponding user interface elements.

Offloading

Traditional mindmapping or concept mapping tools focus on the input and on the output, while the step in between is largely omitted -- because it seems a given that the [mental juggling](#) must be entirely done in your head, i.e. the juggling clubs must be always in the air. Our tool, by contrast, helps you to temporarily *offload* part of the stuff, and still have it immediately at your fingertips. Offload your stuff in the text [pane](#) on the right, and pick it up again by clicking on the map on the left.

Window structure

The overall structure of the tool, therefore, consists of the two panes. The map pane, in turn, consists of icons like post-its or index cards, and connector lines between them. The text pane, on the opposite side, contains a smaller field for a label, and a larger field for the details. The label of an item appears on both panes.

That's it. When you click an icon on the left, your eyes will *dart* at the upper right corner at the detail, because its fixed location allows for such a [saccadic](#) motion which is extremely quick and effortless. After a short period of habituation, we seem to 'gaze' immediately with our mouse pointer, and so we are eventually able to navigate a whole lot of stuff from a densely packed map.

Dropping and Pasting stuff

To facilitate the offloading, stuff can easily be entered in a variety of ways: by [Dropping and Pasting](#) text snippets or files directly into the map pane, by a composition window for simplifying the basic [typing](#), or by a rich [Import wizard](#),

Imports

Currently, the import wizard supports 14 different formats, some of which are imported as ready maps with icon coordinates or just connector lines or tree structures, while others are just taken as split lines from notes, bibliographical data or arbitrary text.

Note that you can also drag most files directly into our windows and paste text into them. Also try to drag text snippets from other applications, or even map snippets from our windows.

Connecting and Condensing

To see the hidden connections of a difficult topic, it helps if the related items are not too far apart. [Connecting and condensing](#) are, well, connected activities. Collecting items from different [sources](#) is one way to achieve the desired condensing. Another way is picking a short label of a larger paragraph, which is particularly facilitated by our [Bold Special](#) function.

As soon as you discovered a new connection, you capture it just by [drawing a 'string'](#) -- freeing your mind for new discoveries. Once you have captured a few connections, you will be able to condense the map even more effectively, by gradually [rearranging](#) the map and trying to reduce the length of the connector lines, such that the [gestalt](#) principles may take effect. And another iteration of the connecting and condensing process can begin.

Diverse relationships

Unlike a concept map, our tool does not urge you to annotate the connector lines. Rather, it allows to express also vague and emerging relationships. Even if you are hesitant to connect two individual items at all, you can still express their conceptual proximity by juxtaposing them into close spatial proximity, or maybe draw a line but [color](#) it 'pale'. And you don't need to think much about the direction of the link. Although there is a direction visible, it is unobtrusive enough to ignore it.

Rearranging and Structuring

Traditionally, the [structuring](#) was thought of as creating a linear, hierarchical outline, by inventing categories and putting all items into these 'pigeonholes'. After all, the uncomfortable state of juggling them in one's head only, was usually minimized. But now, with your thoughts offloaded to virtual post-its that stay extremely close to your brain, it is no longer a pain to [rearrange](#) them until the true *emergent* structure becomes visible.

Map handling

To facilitate the most distraction-free rearranging experience possible, the most frequent actions require just clicking and dragging. Many other functions are reachable via **right-click** or via [modified](#) drag. See the '[cheat-sheet](#)' available via the '?' help menu from the menu bar.

Part 2: User's Reference

2.1 The File Menu

New

Start a new map via the Composition Window

Open...

Open an existing map, or one or more files whose text or names are to be inserted

Save

Save your file to your hard disk (in the .xml format)

Save As...

Save your file under a different name

Print ?

(In the File Menu.) How to print

Quit

Exit the program

2.2 The Edit Menu

Undo

Revert last map change

Redo

Revert last undo

Cut

Cut the cluster containing the selected line

Copy

Copy the cluster containing the selected line

Paste

Paste contents of the system clipboard

Delete

Delete the selected item or line

Find...

Find a label

Find Again

Find a label again

Select ?

(In the Edit Menu.) How to select

Lurid Colors

Color scheme for new icons and lines

2.3 The Insert Menu

Insert Items

Paste, Drop, or Type into a Composition Window

Launch the Import Wizard

see [The Import Wizard](#)

2.4 Composition Window

Paste, drop or type input here ...

Paste

Press this button to Paste from Clipboard

-- Tab-separated text lines are interpreted as label + detail;

-- short lines are used as labels;

-- longer lines will be numbered, instead.

Drop File here

Drag & Drop an Existing File here

Continue

Press this button to submit your composed text to the map

Cancel

Press to abort the composition window

2.5 Import Wizard

Select one of the following file formats, ...

Evernote

If you have an "ENEX" export file exported from the Evernote note taking application

iMapping

A map from the iMapping.info think tool application

DWZ

If you have a "KGIF" Knowledge Graph Interchange Format file exported from the

DenkWerkZeug.org think tool application

Cmap

If you have a "CXL" export file exported from the CmapTools concept mapping application

TheBrain

If you have a "Brain XML" file exported from the TheBrain note management application

Word

A Microsoft Word Document (we take the plain text from each paragraph)

Endnote

If you have an "Endnote Tagged Import Format" file exported (we just split it up)

Citavi *)

A Citavi project file (we extract the core knowledge network)

VUE

A map file from the VUE (Visual Understanding Environment application)

RIS

If you have an "Research Information System" file exported (we just split it up)

BibTeX

If you have an "BibTeX" file exported (we just split it up)

FreeMind

A map file created by the "FreeMind" mindmap application or imported into it

OPML

An outline file in the "OPML" format. Notes (e.g from Scrivener) are supported.

Zettelkasten

If you have an "ZKX3" file exported from the Luhmann-inspired notes application.

(Note)

You can also drag most files directly into our windows and paste text into them. Also try to drag text snippets from other applications, or even map snippets from our windows.

2.6 The Export Menu

You may export the map to one of the following formats:

to Wordpress WXP format

Wordpress Export Format

to CMap CXL file

ConceptMap by cmap.ihmc.us

to Brain XML file

Create a TheBrain PB-XML import file

to VUE map file

Create a VUE map file

to Zettelkasten XML file

Note-taking application according to Luhmann

to CSV text file

Just Character separated Values

to iMapping iMap file *)

Think Tool iMapping.info

to DenkWerkZeug KGIF file *)

Think Tool DenkWerkZeug.org

to interactive HTML page

An HTML snapshot for interactive Read-Only mode

to printable HTML page

HTML graphics to zoom out

2.7 The Advanced Menu

Contains every feature that is not necessary for occasional users.

Hyperlinks on

Click to enable hyperlinks but disable editing in the detail pane

Hyperlinks off (Edit Mode)

Click to disable editing in the detail pane but enable hyperlinks

Centrality Heatmap *)

Warmer colors represent higher betweenness centrality

Make Tree *)

Generates a tree layout and structure for exporting

Tablet Pen Mode

Doubleclick improvement, Alt-Key for Pen and Touch

Preferences

Not yet interesting

Items as Index Cards

Rectangles or circles

Icon Shape Automatic

Show items as circles if more lines than items exist

Big Icons

Presentation Mode

Borders

Display arrows pointing to lost areas

Accelerate

Fast but coarse graphics

Power User Mode

Acceleration, Lurid Colors, and Borders

Menu Bar

Hide menu bar (restore via rightclick on canvas)

Appending dropped stuff

Exact drop position is ignored and new stuff is just appended

Export to anonymized map ...

Saves a copy with all a-z replaced by x

Legacy Save...

Export to legacy zip file format

Another Map Window

One more map (to ALT + Drag item clusters)

*) Limitation

Due to their large size, some functions are only available in the extended version which can be downloaded for free from <http://x28hd.de/tool/extended/>

2.8 The Help Menu

Located under "?" in the menu bar

Help

Shows a provisional help page

About

Shows version number etc

2.9 Cheat-Sheet

Icons:

Click on an icon to view its detail in the right pane;

Drag an icon to move it;

ALT-Drag an icon to connect it with another one;

Right-Click an icon to change its style or delete it;

Lines:

Drag a connector-line to move all connected items;

Right-Click a line to change its style or delete it;

To create a line, drag an icon while pressing the ALT key, or while pressing the Middle Mouse-button (the wheel), or double-click before dragging.

Background:

Right-Click the canvas background to

-- create a new item,

-- save your map,

-- or to paste new input;

Drag the canvas background to pan the map;

Details pane (at the right):

-- click the "B"/ "I"/ "U" for bold/ italic/ underline,

-- click the "B+" Bold Special to add the marked text to the item's label above and on the map

2.10 The Background Menu

Save map...

Same as [Save](#) in the File Menu

New item

Inserts a new item at the current mouse position

Paste

Same as [Paste](#) in the Edit Menu

Advanced

Paste here

Inserts new items starting at the mouse position instead of appending them at the bottom

Help

Same as [Help](#) in the Help Menu

2.11 The Item Menu and the Line Menu

Change color

Pick one of the six rainbow colors

Pale

Turns the color to pale gray

Dark

Restore the default dark gray

Delete

Same as [Delete](#) in the Edit Menu

Advanced

Only in the Line Menu

Delete Cluster

Delete an entire cluster of connected items

Flip Cluster Horizontal

Mirror a cluster of connected items over its vertical axis

Flip Cluster Vertical

Mirror a cluster of connected items over its horizontal axis

2.12 The Editor Pane

B

Bold

I

Italic

U

Underline

B+

Bold Special: bold and add the marked text to the item's label above and on the map

Label

Short text that also appears on the map. To see it there, click the map.

Detail

More text about the selected item, always at your fingertips.

Part 3. Frequently Asked Questions

Some questions, known issues, and tips & tricks about [map handling](#) -- [map appearance](#) -- [lines](#) -- [items](#) -- [texts](#) -- [system](#) -- [useful info](#).

3.1 Map handling FAQs

How can I scroll?

Pan the map by clicking on the empty background canvas and drag it-

Is touch supported?

If your finger or pen simulates the mouse, there should be no problem. There is even some support for tablet pen available from the Advanced Menu.

How can I connect or move items over large distances?

Not perfectly. You can move the icons to provisional locations and pan the canvas, alternatingly.

Can I zoom the map?

No, this is not our way to switch between overview and detail. A similar tool that does a great job at zooming is iMapping.info. You may, however, export the map into a read-only HTML file that can be zoomed by your internet browser.

3.2 Map appearance FAQs

How can I get an Autolayout?

Not perfectly. Use Make Tree (in the free Extended Version) but it is often strangely distorted -- although I think I applied the UCI libraries correctly.

Sometimes the whole map pans when I am trying to move an icon or a cluster.

You may have missed the icon or the cluster and clicked on the canvas background. Just move it back by the approximate same distance.

Sometimes multiple items move when I am trying to move an icon or pan the canvas.

You may have missed the icon or the canvas and clicked on a line within a cluster of connected items, and so you moved the whole cluster. Just move it back by the approximate same distance.

Suddenly, one of the panes has disappeared. What now?

Locate two tiny arrows at the upper right or left corner. They sit on the divider between the panes and you might have hit one of them. Click the arrow that is pointing inwards to put the divider back in the middle.

Suddenly, all index card icons turned to circles. What happened?

Probably you are using the default setting Icon Shape Automatic and you created a new connection that outnumbers the item count. This signals that your map is now more of a network than of a loose collection or a tree. If this default setting keeps annoying users, please give us feedback and we'll reconsider it.

Suddenly, the map scrolled down and a mess of duplicate items appears.

You can get rid of the duplicated cluster of connected items by clicking on one of its connector lines, right-click it, choose 'Advanced' from the popup menu (below 'Delete'), and then 'Delete cluster'. What happened is that your mouse action was probably interpreted as a drag action modified by a preceding double-click -- which yields a drag and drop of that cluster. An early indicator for this is when the mouse does not obey your drag action and, instead, the mouse pointer has a plus sign attached. Next time when this happens, keep calm, don't release the mouse button, and move the strange mouse-pointer to the window's upper edge or title bar, until it turns into a 'No parking' sign. There you may safely release the mouse button.

Can I use pictures as icons?

No, not on the map. To show pictures in the detail pane, you could use the IMG tag of HTML before you insert your input.

How can I revert the colors after using Advanced > Make Tree?

Toggle back Advanced > Centrality Heatmap.

3.3 FAQs about Lines

How can I add/ create/ draw/ paint/ an arrow link/ a relationship/ an association/ a connector/ a string?

See [create a line](#).

How can I indicate the direction of my connectors?

Not perfectly. There are no arrow-heads, just decreasing line width. But this has the advantage that you can almost ignore the direction if you don't need one.

Can I change the thickness of a line?

No, but you can make it pale.

3.4 FAQs about Items

How can I add/ create/ write a new index card/ note/ virtual postit/ floating topic/ concept/ idea/ thought/ node/ icon?

See [create an item](#).

How can I select one or more items?

Not perfectly. See [Select](#). If you want to delete or move many isolated icons, consider connecting them to a new temporary item.

Can I duplicate one or more individual items?

No, you can only copy and paste a cluster of connected items. As a workaround, you may temporarily add an extra item and connect it.

Can I change the size of a single icon?

No, but you can make it pale. There is a switch 'Big icons' in the 'Advanced' menu, but this is for presentation mode and affects all icons.

3.5 FAQs about Text

Can I do Search and Replace?

No, the tool is not optimized for editing text.

How can I activate any hyperlinks contained in the detail texts?

There is a toggle in the 'Advanced' menu that enables hyperlinks. However, it disables editing, so you may need to revert it later.

How can I markup categories or tags?

Not perfectly. The tool does not privilege hierarchical structures. You can add tags or categories as ordinary items, even without a label, and connect your stuff to them.

How can I annotate my links?

Not perfectly. You can currently add details but they do not appear on the map. Export to Cmap or VUE if you need that.

How can I rename an icon?

Go to the 'Label' field in the upper right and replace its content.

How can I insert both a label and a detail via a single input row?

Separate them by the TAB character.

Why is editing in the detail field sometimes impossible?

Maybe you have enabled hyperlinks. Disable it via the 'Advanced' menu.

Can I increase the font size of the detail pane?

No, this is an unresolved flaw.

Sometimes the line breaks in the detail field do not obey.

This is an unresolved flaw. Try to select another item and then come back. Sometimes, the line breaks work better the second time.

3.6 System FAQs

What are the system requirements?

The application should run on any Windows, Mac, or Linux PC with a Java Runtime (JRE, free from java.com). It is not yet really mobile friendly, in particular because it makes little sense with too small screens. Disk space is neglectable.

Is there an installation process available?

No, not yet. However, a great way to simplify the daily routine is to put a '.bat' file (Windows), shell script (Linux), or an Automator (Mac) on the desktop which opens any map files that are dropped onto its icon. See [here](#) for more.

Can I rely on an Autosave option?

No, you need to save your changes at the end. But you do not need to care about individual changes in the detail pane when you leave it.

How can I print my map?

Not perfectly. See [Print](#)

Sometimes, the Main Window stays empty for a long time. Why is that?

The first start of this Java application after your computer startup is slow because the Java Runtime seems to do a lot at startup.

Sometimes, the application does not seem to respond. What can I do?

Maybe there is a popup dialog window waiting but somehow it is hidden behind other windows?

3.7 Useful Info FAQs

Can the application remember my preferences?

No, because there is no installation because the program tries to be minimally invasive.

What are the default settings of the various toggle switches?

All of them are on the Advanced menu except Lurid Colors on the Edit Menu (Default is Off). So just start another instance of the tool and check them.

Why is there no View Menu?

Because the two main kinds of viewing are both permanently and simultaneously available.

What about sustainability? What happens to my data?

Look at the saved XML files with a text editor: your texts are easy to extract, and the application works completely offline. You can export into many different formats, even CSV.