



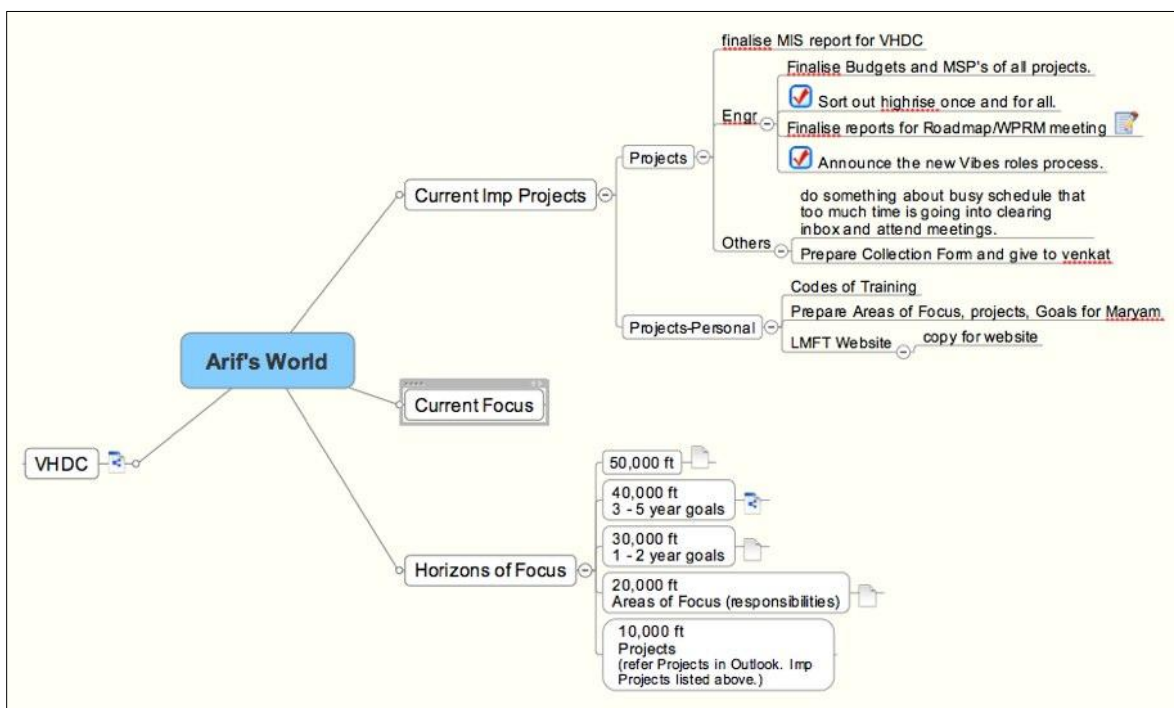
Advanced Strategies for MANAGING YOUR MIND MAPS

Introduction

If you are an avid user of mind maps, you may already have so many that you'll have a hard time keeping track of them. Here some advanced tips and techniques for managing them effectively.

Use a master mind map: Ideally, all of your mind maps should be linked to a master map. This master map should be set up so that it is the default map that opens every time your mind mapping program opens. Doing so will help you to get into the habit of using it as the "nerve center" for your projects and tasks.

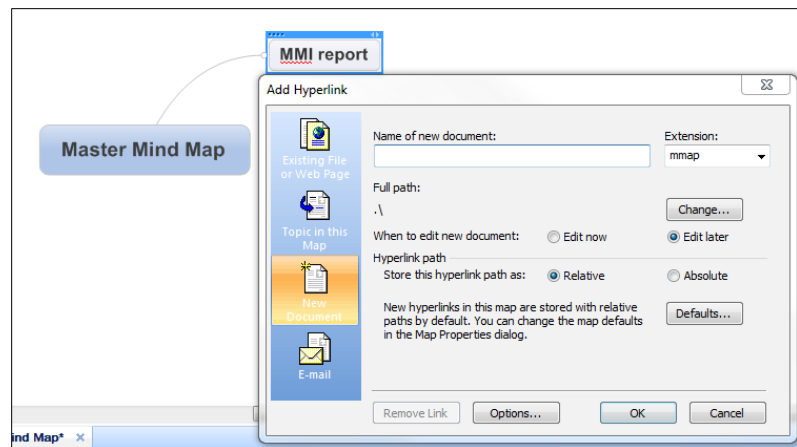
Remember, your master mind map isn't just for keeping track of all of the visual maps you have created. You should use it to create links to all of your important project files, including Word documents, Excel spreadsheets, PowerPoint presentations and even individual e-mails. I even



know of some people who have created a separate topic named "programs," which they use to launch the programs they use each day.

Generate new mind maps directly from the master map:

Ideally, you should use your master mind map to create any new maps. In other words, create a topic that will be the "home" for your new mind map – in the case of the example at right, the topic is entitled "MMI report." Then, from that new topic, create a linked mind map – a new file that is linked to this topic, so you can open it with a single mouse click.



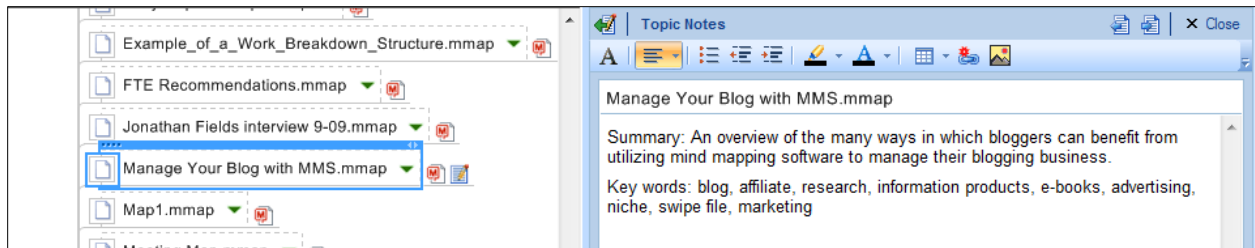
MindManager is one of the programs that enable you to do this. Here's how it works:

1. From your master map select an appropriate topic, right click and then select the "insert hyperlink" command.
2. A multi-tabbed dialog box opens. Click on the third tab, "new document."
3. Enter a name for your new linked mind map in the field entitled "name of new document."
4. Make sure that the "extension" drop-down box has the value of "mmap" selected – that's the MindManager file type.
5. Click "OK" and a new linked mind map is created with the name you specified.

What's cool about this technique is that you don't have to add this link manually. If your mind mapping program doesn't support this type of functionality, you may have to create a link from your master mind map manually. In any case, you should be diligent about making these connections, so your master map is an accurate representation of all of your maps. This is especially important if you have already established the habit of storing your mind maps in separate project folders - which means they may be scattered all over your hard drive.

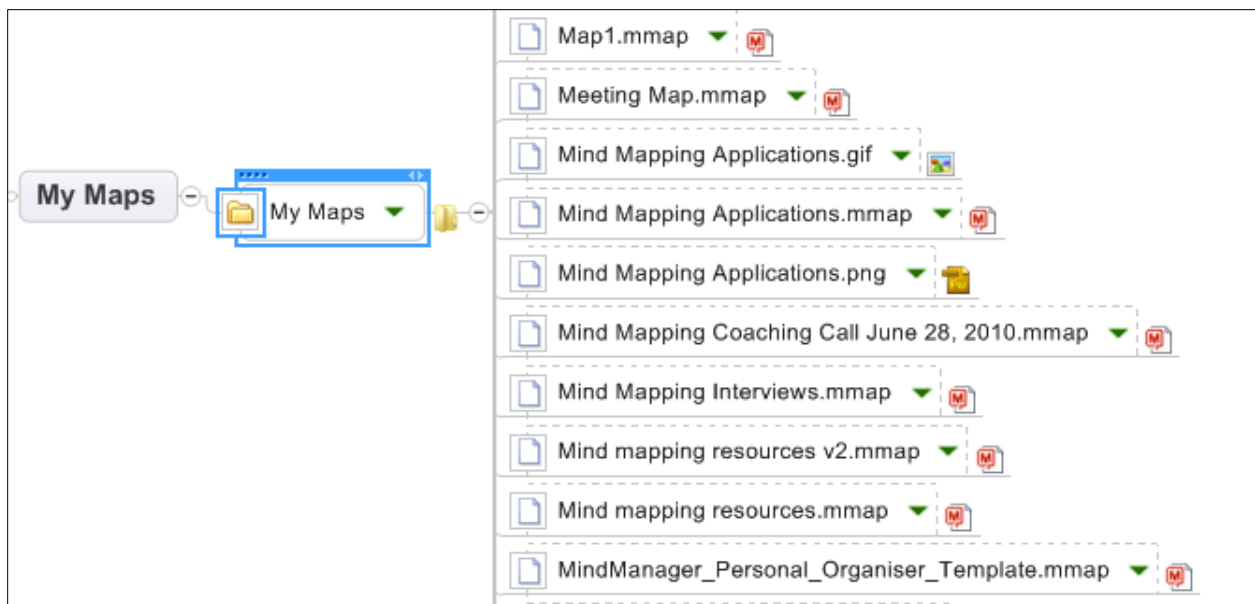
This enables you to grow your library of mind maps organically - everything is connected, like leaves, branches and trunks of a plant or tree. By using this technique, you will ensure that all of your maps are well organized by topic and subtopic - which will make them easier to find.

Add a summary and keywords to topic notes: Use the notes section of the linked topic above to create a summary of the mind map, including any relevant keywords. This will enable you to conduct keyword searches of your master map and find any maps you're looking for, quickly and easily. It will also save you the time and trouble of having to open up multiple mind maps to search their contents.



Store all of your mind maps in the same directory: This will help to ensure that programs like MindManager can display all of your maps within the program's "my maps" view. I have done it both ways: I have stored maps in individual project folders as well as in my program's default directory. The latter is always preferable, in my opinion, because it makes maps much easier to find.

Add your maps folder to your master map: Some programs, such as MindManager, enable you to add entire file folders from your computer's hard drive to your mind maps. The File Explorer Map Part parses out the list of files in this directory, and creates a topic based on the file name and a link to each one. You may be able to use this folder view to add your library of mind maps to your master map.



Better yet, use the map part to pull all of your mind maps into your master map. Then create an appropriate topic and subtopic structure to contain them, and drag and drop these shortcuts to

the appropriate topics. Or, if you prefer to leave them all linked to a single “my maps” topic, that’s fine, too – whatever works best for you.

What’s important to remember is that these time-saving links need to work for you. Don’t be afraid to move them around so they work best for you.

Questions?

Got questions about managing your mind maps? Don’t hesitate to contact me at chuck@innovationtools.com.

Published on 12/17/10