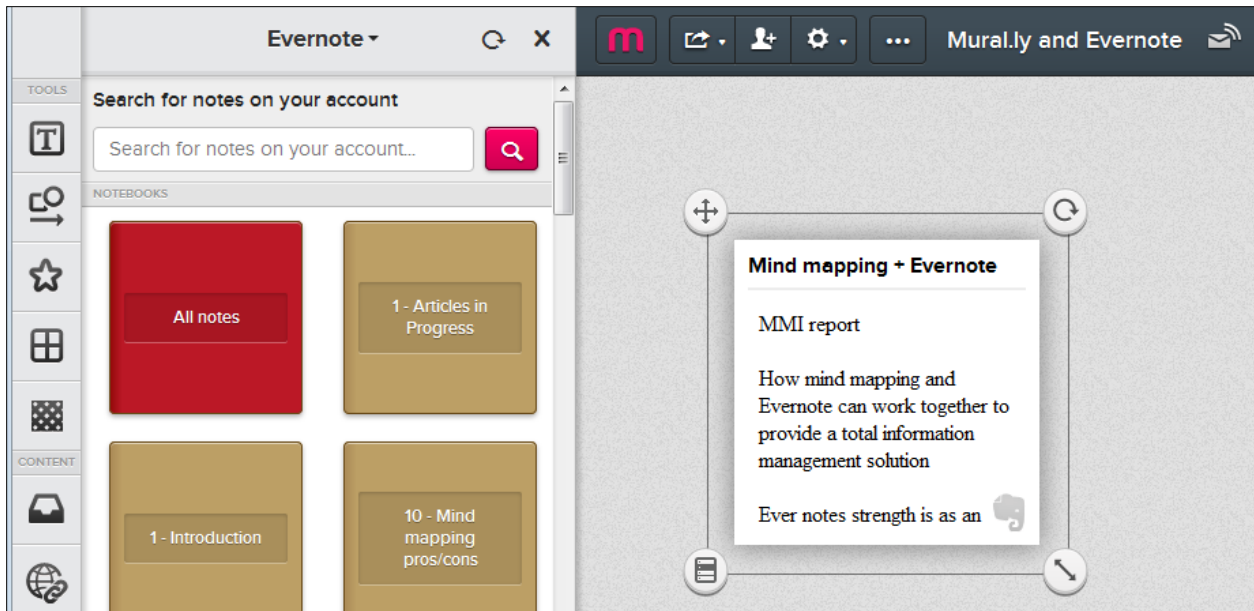


How to integrate Evernote with mind mapping applications



Since its launch in 2008, [Evernote](#) has evolved into a powerful tool for taking notes and capturing all types of digital content. Its growth rate has been amazing; as of February of this year, it has over 50 million users, with 100,000 a day signing up for it. Developers of mind mapping and visual thinking applications have embraced Evernote, integrating with it in a number of different ways.

In this report, I will provide you with an overview of the desktop- and web-based mind mapping and visual thinking applications that integrate with Evernote. I will describe how they work together and the pros and cons of each developer's approach.

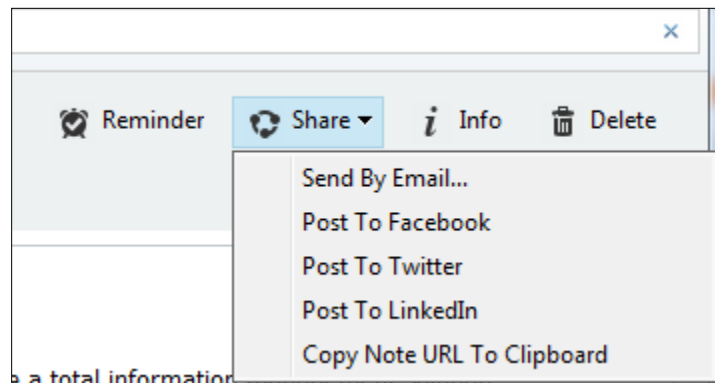
As a writer, I have a strong personal interest in this topic. I have been using Evernote for several years as my primary tool for capturing content ideas. I also do a significant amount of writing within it, mainly because Evernote does a fantastic job of giving me instant access to all of my notes no matter where I go or what computing platform I'm using. I also find it useful for

gathering research for reports I'm working on. Evernote's web clipper enables me to quickly and easily capture all or part of any web page, tag it and store it in a folder of my choice.

So naturally, for larger reports and projects, I'm keenly interested in developing new ways to incorporate the great content and ideas I've gathered in Evernote into my mind maps. So let's take a closer look, shall we?

One capability all mind mapping applications share

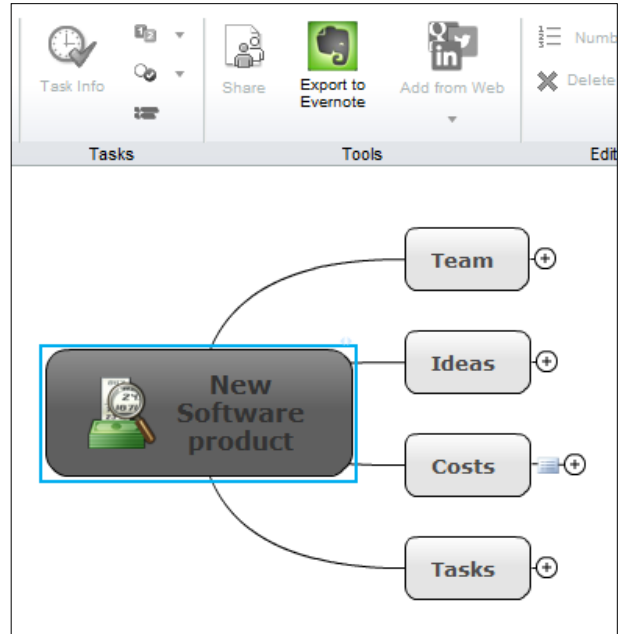
At the most basic level, any mind mapping program can "integrate" with Evernote. Simply click on the "share" button at the top of the note window. A drop-down menu appears that gives you several choices. The last one says "copy note URL to clipboard." Select that, and then switch to your mind mapping program of choice. Select a topic where you want to place the URL and use whatever command you need to open up the hyperlink window. Then paste the Evernote URL into this field and save your link. You can now click on that link in your mind map, and browser window will open containing that specific Evernote note.



Mindjet

[Mindjet Web](#), the developer's web-based version of MindManager (which is sold as part of its ProjectDirector set of cloud-based team collaboration tools), includes an Evernote export tool that enables you to export part or all of a mind map to a note in Evernote. In the process, it creates a link back to the map's location in your Mindjet Web account. This assumes, of course, that your mind map has its permission set to "public." This functionality won't work with private maps. It also only works in the Mindjet Web application, not in the developer's popular desktop mind mapping software for Windows and Mac.

Ideally, I'd like to see integration work the other direction between Evernote and the desktop version of MindManager. I'd love to be able to pull a single note, with all of its content and formatting intact, into a mind map. It could be placed as either an attachment or as a topic note. That would help me immeasurably in my goal of utilizing the knowledge I've captured in Evernote in my mind maps. But, as of now, no developer has tackled this need exactly as I envision it. While conducting research for this report, I came across a discussion thread in the Mindjet support forums where its staff was asking users what their ideal MindManager-Evernote integration should look like. Many people contributed some excellent suggestions for how the two applications should work together. But so far, Mindjet hasn't released any improvements to its integration since it was first added to Mindjet Web two years ago.

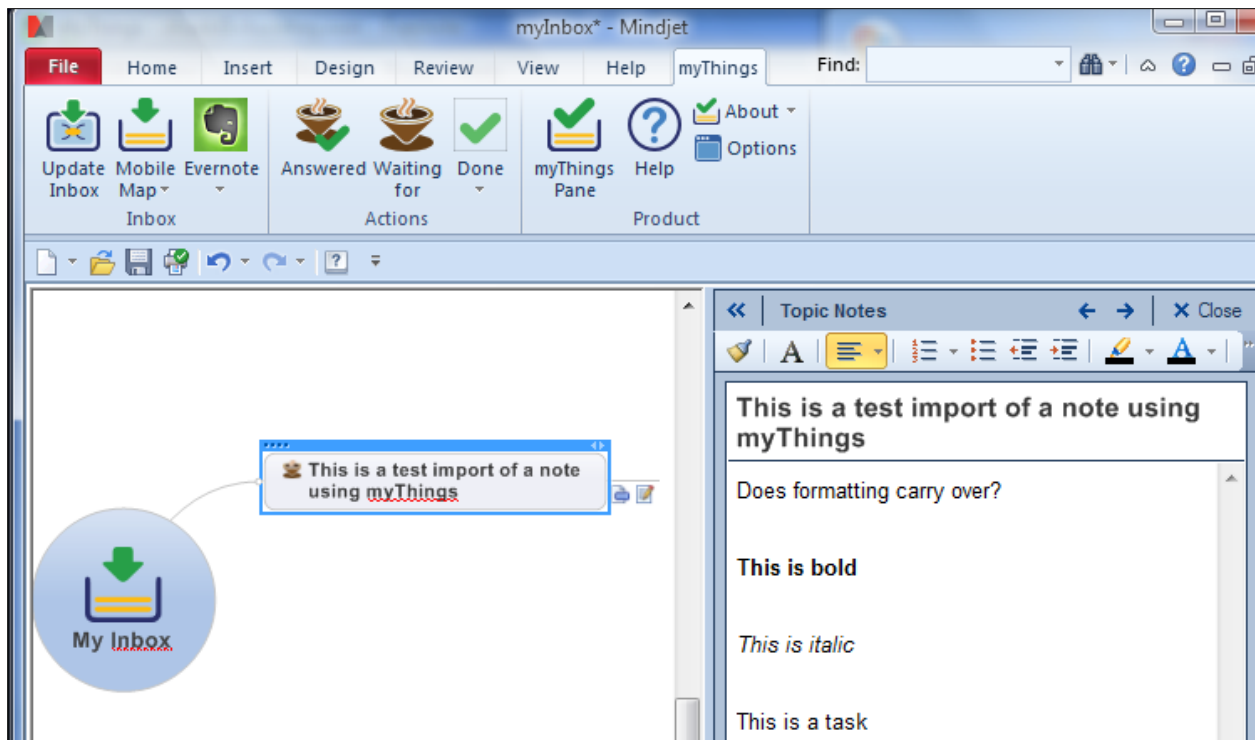


This integration is only accessible if you purchase a MindManager PLUS subscription for US\$99 a year if you already own the PC and Mac versions of MindManager or \$129 a year if you don't. This enables you to receive all updates for your desktop software, plus a Mindjet Web account.

myThings 2 add-in for MindManager

This add-in makes it possible to send a note from Evernote to MindManager. When it is imported into MindManager, its content is converted to topic notes – with all formatting intact! The one downside is that [myThings 2](#) isn't a generic way to import notes into MindManager. It's actually a tool for implementing David Allen's Getting Things Done (GTD) task management system. So imported notes can only be stored in a map called "inbox," where they are to be processed for next actions.

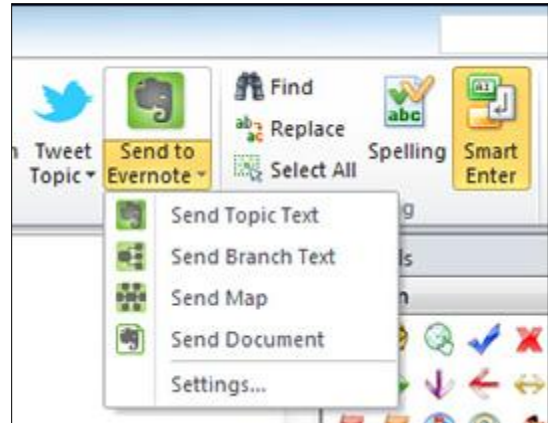
When you first set up myThings 2, the application installs a new tab in MindManager's ribbon toolbar. The first time you use it, it asks you which Evernote folder you want to dedicate to capturing next actions and pulling them into MindManager. When you run myThings, it scans this folder and imports all notes it finds into a special map called "inbox." But it doesn't just make a copy of the note and send it to MindManager – it moves it out of your designated Evernote folder. Seen within the context of the GTD system, it makes perfect sense – you capture a bunch of next actions in Evernote and then move them into your GTD maps in MindManager – but it isn't the functionality I was looking for. Still, it's cool to see that this type of Evernote-to-topic-notes import is possible, and it works very elegantly!



ConceptDraw MINDMAP

For a number of years, CS Odessa, the developer of ConceptDraw MINDMAP, has offered a growing set of add-ins for this well-designed mind mapping program in its Solutions Exchange. Last year, they released an Evernote plug-in for it called [Note Exchange](#).

When you install Note Exchange, it adds a “Send to Evernote” button featuring the information manager’s bright green and black elephant icon to the toolbar of ConceptDraw MINDMAP. Clicking on it causes a drop-down list with four transfer options to appear:



1. Topic text – Sends the text from a single topic to Evernote
2. Branch text – Sends the text from an entire branch as a hierarchical outline to Evernote
3. Send map – This option sends the text from your entire mind map as a hierarchical outline plus an image of your mind map to Evernote
4. Send document – This option sends the text from your entire mind map as a hierarchical outline, a map image and the native CDMZ mind map file to Evernote. This last option makes it possible to access your ConceptDraw MINDMAP maps anywhere you have access to Evernote. Because they are stored in Evernote as attachments to notes, these notes can be tagged, making them easy to retrieve later.

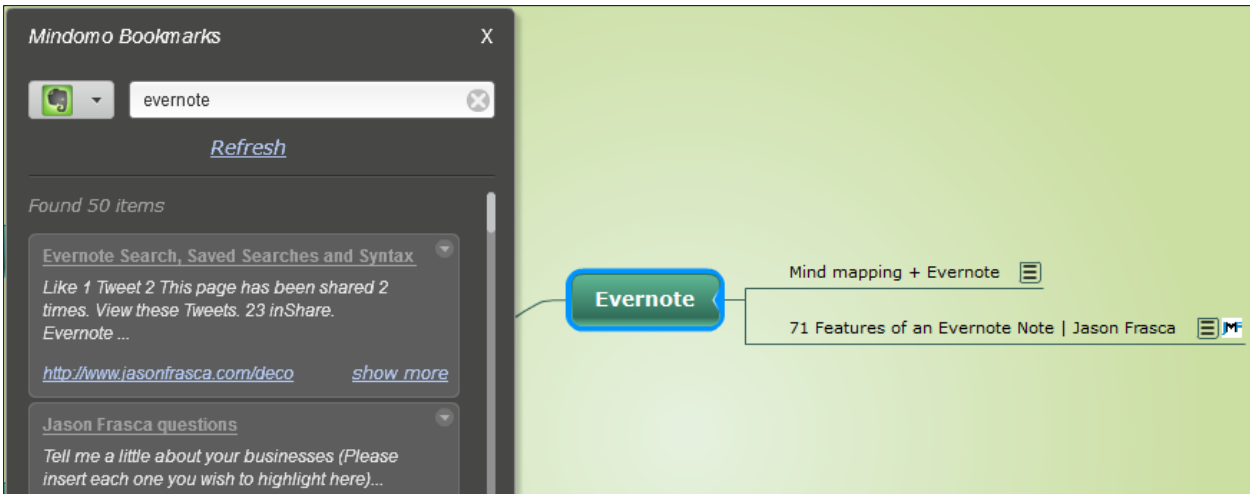
Simply click one, and your map data instantly appears in the desktop version of Evernote. Note Exchange works in both the PC and Mac versions of ConceptDraw MINDMAP. However, as of this writing, it is only one-way integration; you can’t import notes to your mind maps.

Mindomo

[Mindomo](#), a popular web-based mind mapping application, does a really nice job of integrating with Evernote – perhaps the most intuitive integration I’ve seen. The process to do so is very simple:

1. Select the “bookmarks” icon in the toolbar near the bottom of the icon bar on the left side of the workspace (it looks like a light bulb)
2. In the menu that appears, click on the drop-down list and select Evernote. The first time you do this, you’ll need to authorize Mindomo to access Evernote.
3. Once that’s done, refresh the view in this dialog box and your latest Evernote notes are visible.

A search field at the top of this dialog box makes it possible to find the notes you're looking for using keyword search. Unfortunately, there currently isn't a capability to drill down by folder, but that's OK. The user interface of this integration is very well designed. It displays the title and first three lines of each note, which is usually enough to tell what it contains. If that's not enough, a "show more" link expands the note's summary so you can see more of its content. If you click on the headline, the URL embedded there will display the full note in a browser window.



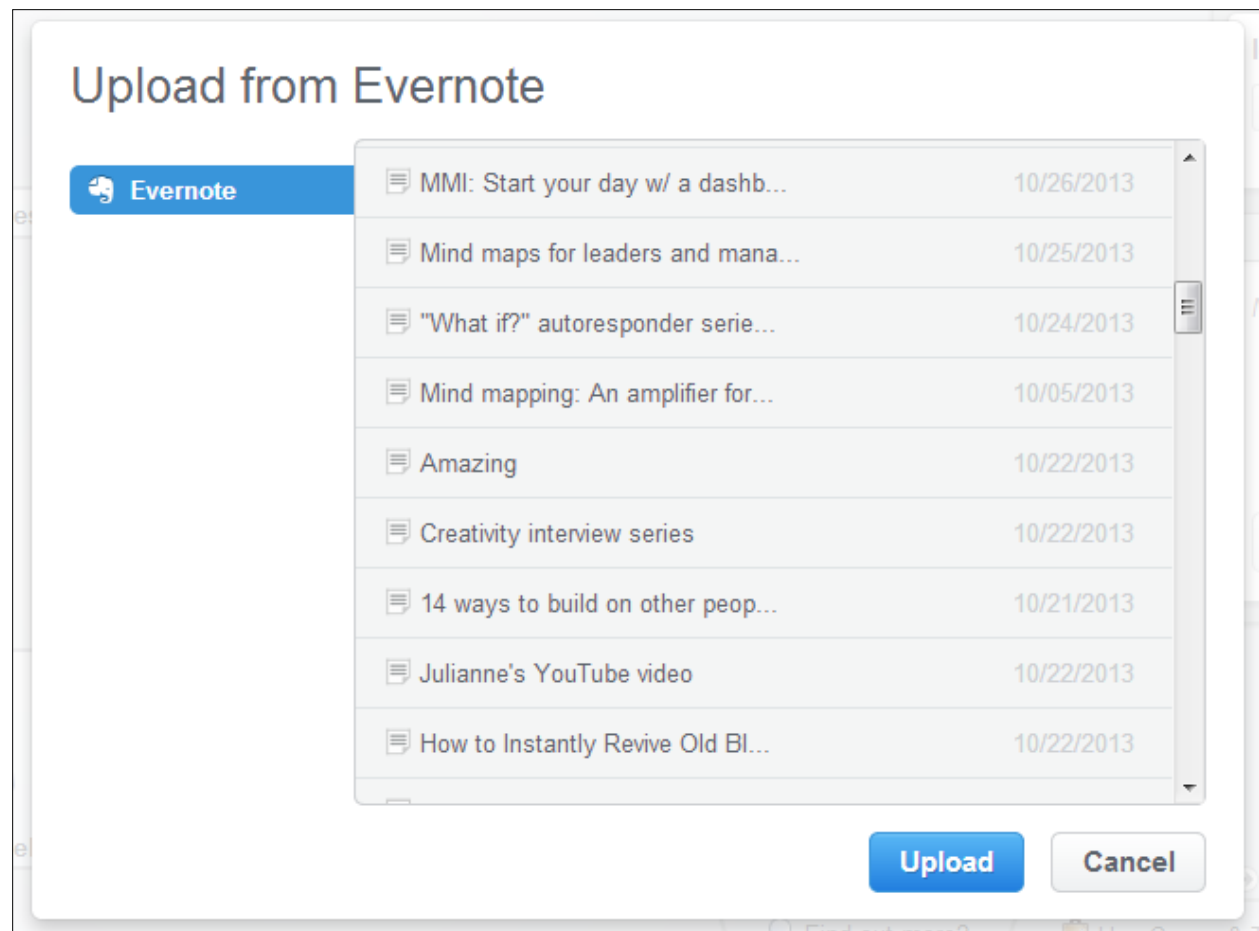
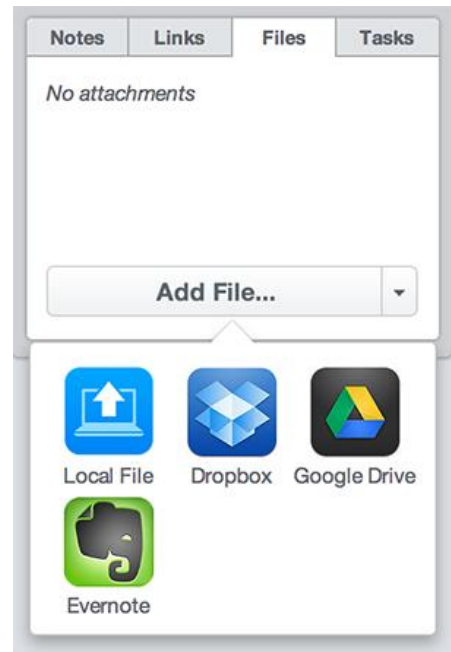
To add a note from this bookmarks window to your mind map, first select a topic in the map. Then click on the drop-down arrow in the upper right corner of the Evernote topic you want to add. Select "add as subtopic" and Mindomo inserts it into your mind map, using the note's title as the topic text, while the note's contents are converted into a topic note. Drag and drop is not supported. I tried it and it didn't work.

When I looked at the contents of one of the Evernote notes I moved into Mindomo, I discovered that all formatting was removed – including the returns at the end of paragraphs. So all of the note text appears as one really long, plain-text paragraph. I suspect this was a conscious decision on the part of Mindomo's developers, because many users of Evernote use its web clipper to capture web pages. If you tried to move one of these captured articles into Mindomo, it would contain a lot of extraneous formatting that Mindomo may not be able to interpret. Still, I'm a little disappointed, because I typically use bold text and bullet points in Evernote to help me organize the contents of my longer notes. It's a shame that all gets smashed together into one hard-to-read paragraph when it makes the transition into Mindomo.

Mindmeister

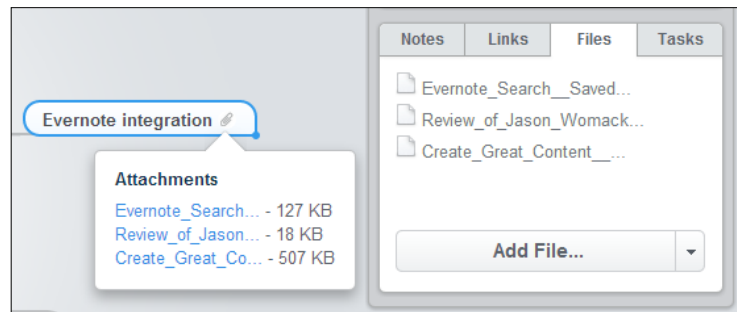
MindMeister is the leading web-based mind mapping application in the world. Its developers recently added Evernote integration to its impressive suite of capabilities. You can do so by clicking on the “files” tab on the right side of the workspace, then on the “Add File...” button. When you do so, the dialog box expands to show four places from which you can attach files to your mind map: A local file directory, Dropbox, Google Drive and Evernote.

When I clicked on the Evernote icon, I was transferred to a new dialog box that first asked me to connect my Evernote account with MindMeister, and then displayed the notes in my Evernote account, in reverse chronological order (newest first). There is no search field and no capability to drill down via my folder structure in Evernote (see the screen shot below).

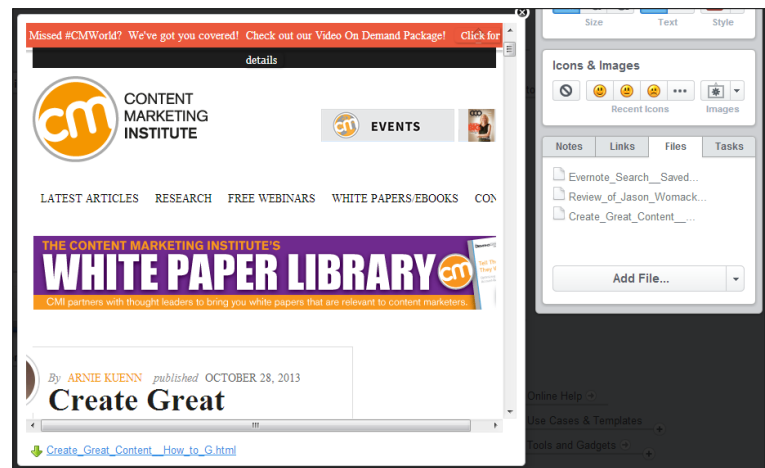


If you have a lot of notes in Evernote like I do, this is a major disadvantage. It should have at least a search field!

Once you have attached your note to a map topic, it looks like the screen shot at right. The map topic now contains a link icon and the tabbed dialog box displays it under the “files” tab. You can attach multiple files to a single map branch in MindMeister; they are displayed in the files tab to the right of the workspace, as well as below the topic, if you hover your mouse over the top of it for more than a second.

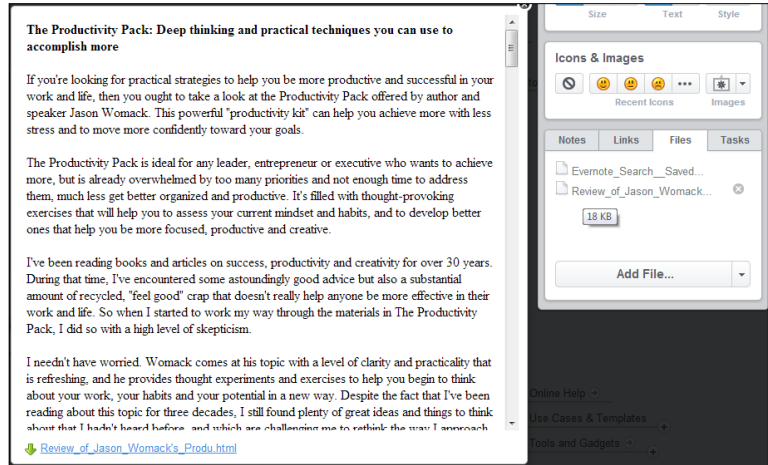


Clicking on the paperclip icon in the map topic displays a pop-over window with your notes contents, like the view at right. I tried this with several notes. The first was a web page about repurposing content from the excellent Content Marketing Institute website, which I clipped from a blog post. It worked very well and preserved all of the formatting. A second test with a blog post that contained some large



text didn't work at all – just a bunch of jumbled text and images. This is exactly what I was talking about in my review of Mindomo's handling of its Evernote integration. By the time the web page code reaches your MindMeister map, it has already traveled through two iterations – first on the native web page, and second, as Evernote interpreted it when it clipped the page. Sometimes, important data may get lost in the process.

My next test was to import a note that contains some basic text formatting – the first sentence was bold. This turned out much better, as you can see in the screen shot at right. The font isn't preserved (the original note was formatted in Arial 10 point) but the bold text is. Nice!

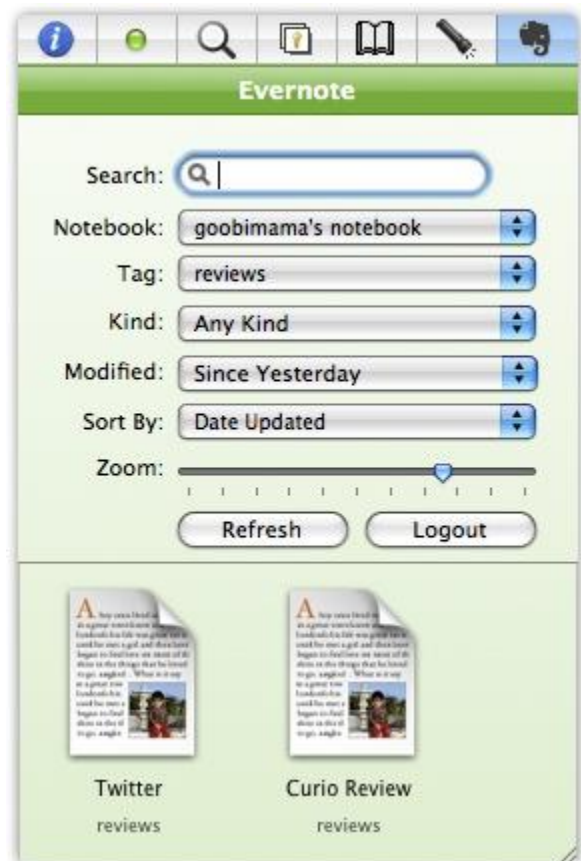


The bottom line is that MindMeister's integration with Evernote works fairly well – most of the time. It's Evernote search needs some improvement. Otherwise, you may have to scroll forever to find just the note you're looking for.

Curio

[Curio](#), a Mac-based personal note taking, mind mapping, brainstorming, and task management application, gives you access to your Evernote folders and notes, where you can easily drag and drop notes into its rich, flexible workspace. Text notes, voice recordings, and snapshot photos from Evernote notes are all supported within Curio.

As you can see from this screenshot of an inspector panel in Curio, it gives you a lot of flexibility when searching your Evernote database. Once you have typed in a search term, you can filter and sort the results up to 5 ways – very powerful. Search results are displayed at the bottom of the inspector as note titles and thumbnail images. Developer Zengobi has thoughtfully included a zoom bar so you can display more or fewer notes in the search results.

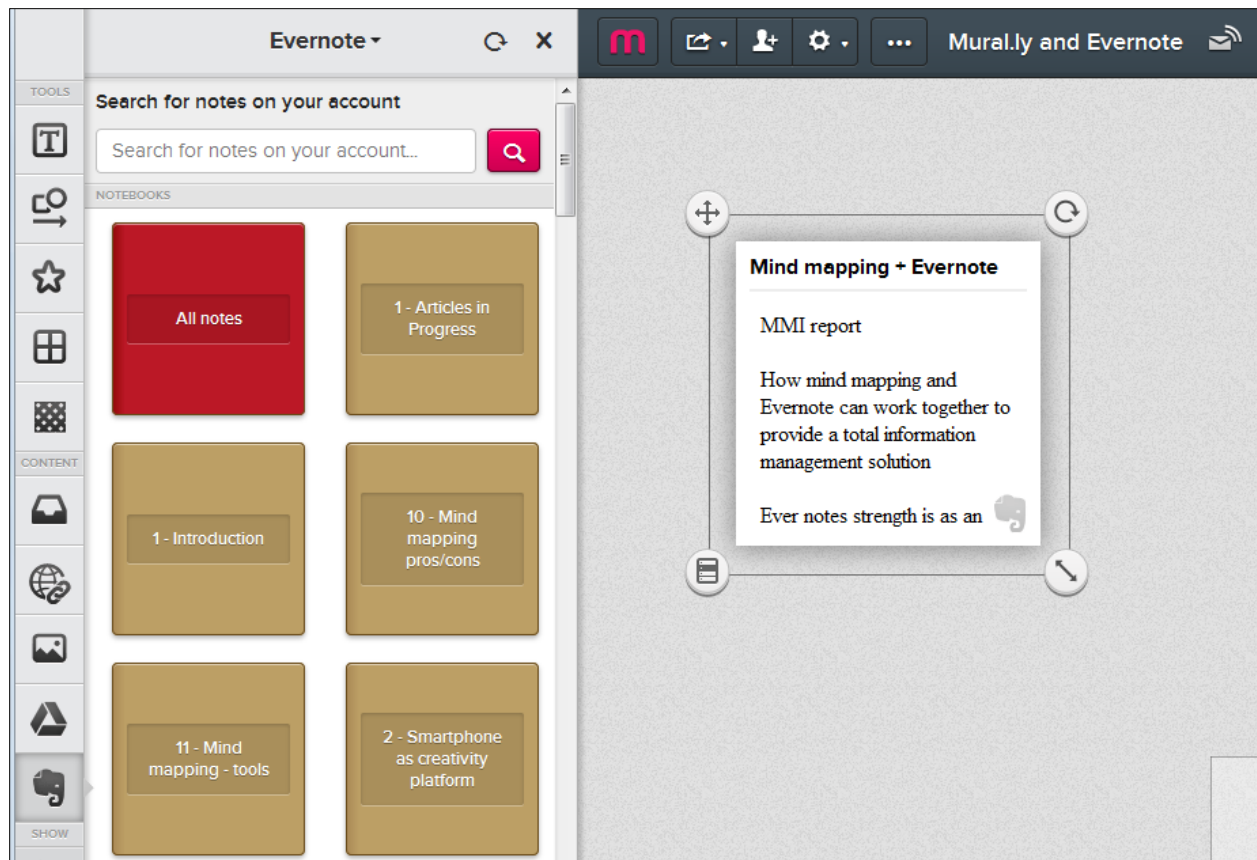


I also see a drag handle in the lower right corner of this window, which means you can expand it to show more search results if you want to.

This looks like a very elegant integration of Curio and Evernote!

Mural.ly

[Mural.ly](#) is a cloud-based platform that allows you to aggregate links and other web content (including images, embedded video, links, and social media content) and display them in a customizable space that resembles a bulletin board or wall. It also offers collaborative features, so you can share your “murals” with others and co-create murals with them.



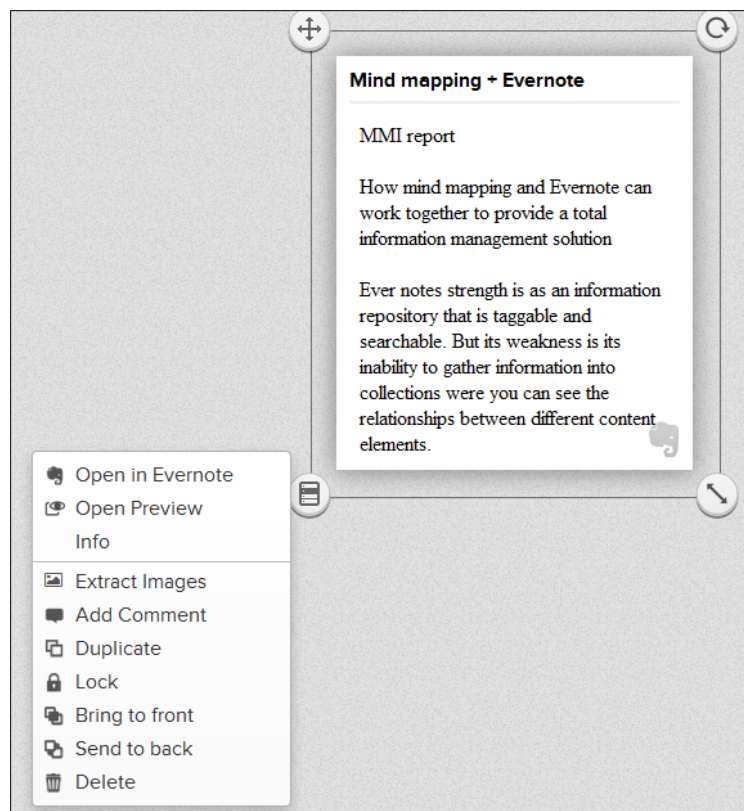
Mural.ly does an excellent job of supporting Evernote. Its developers don't treat integration with it as an afterthought. Instead, in the toolbar on the left side of the screen, there's a button with Evernote's distinctive elephant logo, which you can use to connect to your Evernote account and then easily add content from your notes to your murals.

When I connected some of the mind mapping applications in this report to my Evernote account, the integration process was rather buggy, with occasional error messages and failed attempts at first. In contrast, Mural.ly handled this process very smoothly. When it was done with the one-time authorization process, it immediately displayed a neatly organized list of my Evernote notebooks. Above that is a keyword search tool. That's right – Mural.ly gives you both options, a first in this review.

I really appreciate this, because sometimes I know exactly where I note I'm looking for is located. I just want to navigate to the folder, find the note and drag and drop it into my mural – done! Other times, I may not have any idea where a specific note is stored, or I may want to search my entire Evernote database for everything I have captured on a specific topic. I love the fact that Mural.ly accommodates both scenarios.

Adding a note from the application's Evernote window is a simple drag and drop operation. Mural.ly does a decent job of retaining basic text formatting, including bold text – even for an article that I captured from a blog in Evernote, and then dragged and dropped into a mural in Mural.ly. Notes in the Mural.ly workspace contain a small elephant icon in the corner, so you know what their source is. Nice!

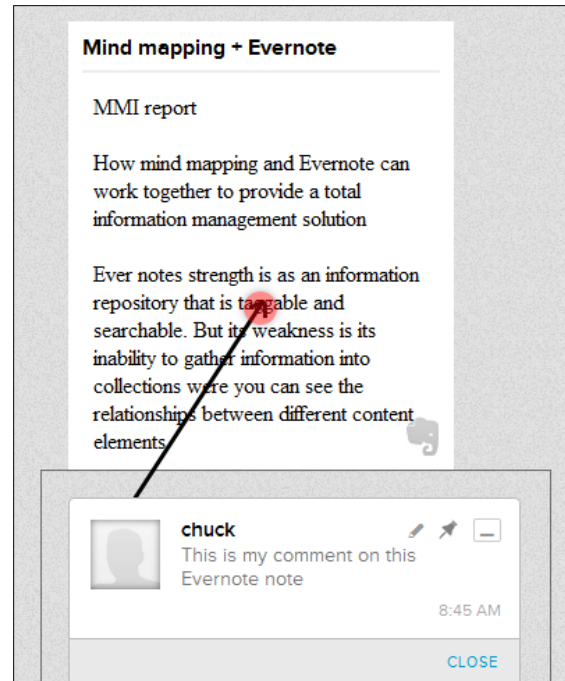
Once you have imported a note into Mural.ly, you can do some special things with it that are specific to Evernote, such as opening it in Evernote, previewing its contents in a browser, extracting any images it contains and annotating it with comments. Comments are added as a separate element in the Mural.ly workspace, with an arrow pointing toward the note (see the screen shot at right).



Comments can be collapsed; in closed form, they appear as a small black conversation balloon with a number inside it, which corresponds to the number of comments it has received.

Stepping back from the Evernote integration and talking more broadly about Mural.ly's elegant interface, one of the core tenets of its design is to enable collaboration. That's why it handles comments the way it does. It's ideal for small teams to prototype designs for web pages, diagrams, advertising concepts and more. This gives the team the ability to their feedback in an organized way, so they can reach consensus faster.

I like the flexibility that Mural.ly provides with these comments. You can easily move the head of the arrow to any location within the note – which is useful if your comment refers to one specific part of the note. I also really like the fact that you can collapse comments, which helps to reduce the visual clutter on screen.



In conclusion, Mural.ly has a very well-designed, intuitive Evernote integration.

Questions?

Please contact Chuck Frey at chuck@chuckfrey.com.

Please [visit the Mind Mapping Software Blog](#) for all of the latest news, trends and resources related to visual mapping.

You can also [follow Chuck Frey on Twitter](#) for even more insights and ideas.