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FreeMind - free mind mapping software

FreeMind is a premier free mind-mapping (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mind_map) software written in Java. The recent development has hopefully turned it into high productivity tool. We are proud that the operation and navigation of FreeMind is faster than that of MindManager because of one-click "fold / unfold" and "follow link" operations.

So you want to **write** a completely new **metaphysics**? Why don't you use FreeMind? You have a tool at hand that remarkably resembles the tray slips of Robert Pirsig, described in his sequel to Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance called Lila. Do you want to **refactor** your **essays** in a similar way you would refactor software? Or do you want to keep personal **knowledge base**, which is easy to manage? Why don't you try FreeMind? Do you want to **prioritize**, **know** where you are, where you've been and **where you are heading**, as Stephen Covey would advise you? Have you tried FreeMind to keep track of all the things that are needed for that?

Did FreeMind make you angry? Write us (http://sourceforge.net/forum/forum.php?forum_id=320014), anonymously if you want.

New: FreeMind is the Project of the Month February 2006 (POTM) at SourceForge. See the Project of the Month (<http://sourceforge.net/potm/potm-2006-02.php>).

New: FreeMind 0.8.0 has been released on 6.9.2005. See the announcement (http://sourceforge.net/forum/forum.php?forum_id=494979) or overview of new features (http://freemind.sourceforge.net/docs/features/0_8_0/Features%200.8.0.html).

Download

Choose among the following binaries of the current **FreeMind 0.8.0**, depending on your operating system:

- **Microsoft Windows**
 - **Windows Installer** (http://prdownloads.sourceforge.net/freemind/FreeMind-Windows-Installer-0_8_0.exe?download) (smaller version without export to SVG, 3 MB)
 - **Windows Installer Max** (http://prdownloads.sourceforge.net/freemind/FreeMind-Windows-Installer-0_8_0-max.exe?download) (all-including version, 8 MB)

- **Mac OS X**
 - **MAC OS X** (http://prdownloads.sourceforge.net/freemind/Mac_OS_X_Freemind-0_8_0.dmg?download) (all-including version, 8 MB)
- **Linux**
 - **Debian Linux** (http://sourceforge.net/project/showfiles.php?group_id=7118&package_id=161831&release_id=355162) (it is **highly** recommended to check first the release notes (http://sourceforge.net/project/shownotes.php?release_id=355162))
 - **SuSE 9.x Linux** (http://sourceforge.net/project/showfiles.php?group_id=7118&package_id=161830&release_id=355738) (and other RPM-based) (see also release notes (http://sourceforge.net/project/shownotes.php?release_id=355738))
- **Any operating system**
 - **binaries for any operating system** (http://prdownloads.sourceforge.net/freemind/freemind-bin-0_8_0.zip?download) (smaller version without export to SVG, 3 MB)
 - **binaries for any operating system - max** (http://prdownloads.sourceforge.net/freemind/freemind-bin-max-0_8_0.zip?download) (all-including version, 8 MB)

You can also download older versions, see all files for download (http://sourceforge.net/project/showfiles.php?group_id=7118).

Note: FreeMind **requires Java 1.4** or higher; download JRE - Java Runtime Environment (<http://java.sun.com/j2se/1.5.0/download.jsp>) (go directly to JRE (<http://javashoplmsun.com:80/ECom/docs/Welcome.jsp?StoreId=22&PartDetailId=jre-1.5.0-oth-JPR&SiteId=JSC&TransactionId=noreg>)) for your platform or download JRE for Mac OS X (<http://www.apple.com/downloads/macosx/apple/java.html>), if you do not have Java 1.4 already.

Maximum and minimum versions

Above, FreeMind is available in two versions -- maximum and minimum. Minimum version is considerably smaller to download, having around 3 MB instead of 8 MB. Maximum version contains additional plugins, downloadable also from Files (http://sourceforge.net/project/showfiles.php?group_id=7118) section. The plugins feature exporting to Scalable Vector Graphics (SVG), exporting to Portable Document Format (PDF), reminders that can be attached to nodes, and help for FreeMind reminiscent of help usually delivered with Microsoft Windows applications.

Install and run

The easiest way to install FreeMind on Microsoft Windows is to download and execute the installer **FreeMind-Windows-Installer-0_8_0.exe**. Alternatively, download the latest binary, e.g. **freemind-bin-0_8_0.zip**, and unzip the binary to some folder; if you are running Windows platform, double click **freemind.exe** and you're running FreeMind; if you are on some of the Unix / Linux platforms, open **freemind.sh**. You **don't need to download sources** to run FreeMind.

Get a taste of FreeMind

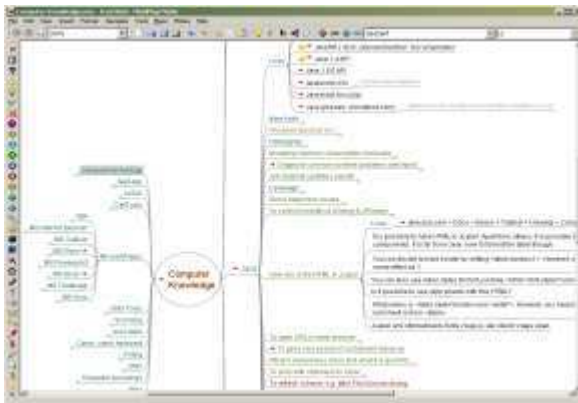
You can view maps created with FreeMind **now**, the only thing you need is Java 1.4 installed; just click one of the following links:

- Daniel's public map (<http://freemind.sourceforge.net/PublicMaps.html>) (some bookmarks and remarks)
- FreeMind development (<http://freemind.sourceforge.net/Freemind-development.html>)

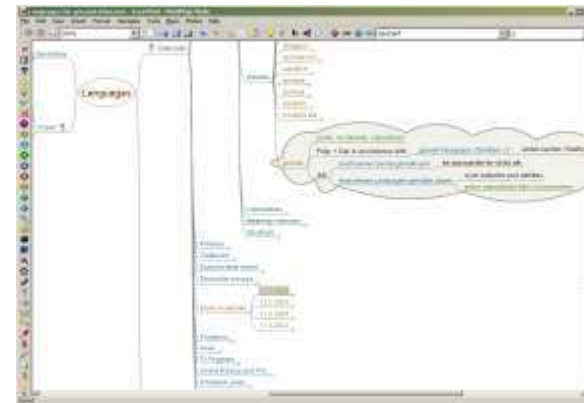
If you wonder how the maps exported by FreeMind into HTML look like, follow:

- Daniel's public map (HTML) (<http://freemind.sourceforge.net/PublicMaps-exported.html>) (some bookmarks and remarks)

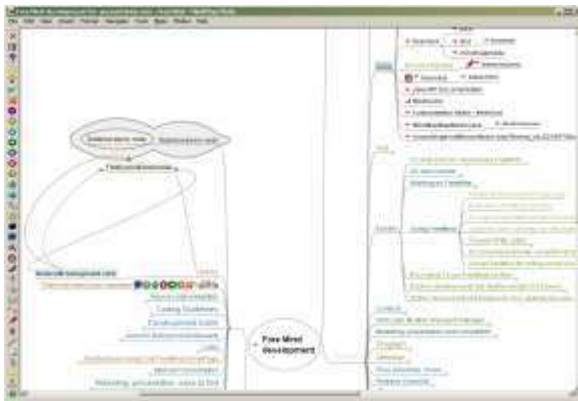
Screenshots



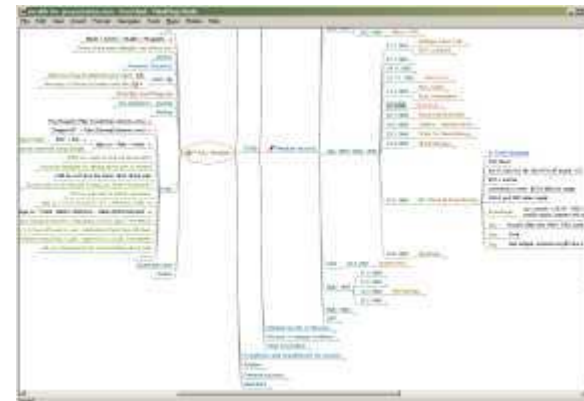
(<http://freemind.sourceforge.net/FreeMind-computer-knowledge.png>)



(<http://freemind.sourceforge.net/FreeMind-learning-german.png>)



(<http://freemind.sourceforge.net/FreeMind-freemind-development.png>)



(<http://freemind.sourceforge.net/FreeMind-my-health.png>)

What FreeMind is good for

Current users of FreeMind use it for the following purposes:

- **Keeping track of projects**, including subtasks, state of subtasks and time recording
- Project **workplace**, including links to necessary files, executables, source of information and of course information
- Workplace for **internet research** using Google and other sources
- Keeping a collection of small or middle sized **notes** with links on some area which expands as needed. Such a collection of notes is sometimes called **knowledge base**.
- **Essay writing** and **brainstorming**, using colors to show which essays are open, completed, not yet started etc, using size of nodes to indicate size of essays. I don't have one map for one essay, I have one map for all essays. I move parts of some essays to other when it seems appropriate.
- Keeping a **small database** of something with **structure** that is either **very dynamic** or **not known in advance**. The main disadvantage of such approach when compared to traditional database applications are poor query possibilities, but I use it that way anyway - contacts, recipes, medical records etc. You learn about the structure from the additional data items you enter. For example, different medical records use different structure and you do not have to analyze all the possible structures before you enter the first medical record.
- Commented **internet favorites** or **bookmarks**, with colors and fonts having the meaning you want.

Features

Apart from other things, this release of FreeMind features:

- Fully functional **following of HTML links** stored in the nodes, be it www links or links to local files.
- From very early versions, Freemind supports **folding** which is its essential property.
- **Fast one-click navigation**, including folding / unfolding on one click and following links on one click at the same time (you don't have to make choice between fast following of links and fast fold/unfold). You can move the map by dragging the map's background as well as using mouse wheel.
- **Undo**
- **Smart Drag'n Drop**, including the possibility to copy nodes or copy style of nodes; dragging and dropping of multiple selected nodes; dropping of texts or list of files from outside
- **Smart copying and pasting into**, including pasting of links from HTML or structuring the pasted content on the basis of the number of leading spaces in a line; pasting of lists of selected files
- **Smart copying and pasting from**, including plain text and RTF (MS Wordpad, MS Word, MS Outlook messages).
- **Export of map to HTML**, with folding (see example (<http://freemind.sourceforge.net/PublicMaps-exported.html>))
- **Find** facility, where found items are shown one by one as you do "find next", and the map is unfolded only for the current item.
- Possibility to use and **edit long multiline nodes**; even with **newlines**
- Possibility to decorate nodes with **built-in icons**, colors and different fonts.

- **Low costs of risk of switching away** to another mind mapping tool, because FreeMind stores maps in **XML** format. If you have a lot of maps created by FreeMind and you want to switch to another program, writing a conversion program should be easy, especially if that program features Visual Basic scripting facility. Christoph Rissner describes in his article (http://krottmaier.cgv.tugraz.at/docs/seminar/sem2002_mindmaps.pdf) at IICM site (<http://krottmaier.cgv.tugraz.at/veranstaltungen/seminar/abgeschlossen.html>) his implementation (http://krottmaier.cgv.tugraz.at/docs/seminar/sem2002_mindmaps.tar.gz) of data exchange between FreeMind and MindManager.
- File mode enables you to **browse the files on your computer, seeing the folder structure as mind map**.
- See more details in Freemind development tree (<http://freemind.sourceforge.net/Freemind-development.html>)

Weak spots include:

- The support of **pictures** in nodes is in preliminary stage. When you want to carry a map around with you, you have to take care that you take the image files with you.
- FreeMind is basically **one user** application. Although users can in principle work on the same map, there is only **preliminary locking mechanism** to prevent conflicts, at the time, switched off by default.
- In **rare cases, following of HTML** links in the web browser **does not work** on some computers; the same holds for opening local files.
- **Limited** support for fancy graphics.

License

FreeMind is a free software, licenced under GPL - GNU General Public License (<http://www.gnu.org/copyleft/gpl.html>). Basically, that means that you are free to use FreeMind to whatever you want without paying for that, and that any code derived from current FreeMind's code must also be licenced under GPL.

Get help from other users

Ask a question on FreeMind's Help (http://sourceforge.net/forum/forum.php?forum_id=22102) forum. Also, consider looking at the collection of asked questions, using the search function of your browser. If you're unlike most of computer users, you may also consider reading the documentation, accessible from the menu Help > Documentation; press Ctrl + F to search through the documentation. For *Linux* users, FreeMind on Linux page may be helpful.

Is FreeMind mind mapping software?

The term **mind mapping** is related to british psychologist Tony Buzan. In Buzan's context, mind map is a tree with many colors, pictures and personal expression. **FreeMind is not really mind mapping software in the sense of Tony Buzan**, nevertheless, one would say that FreeMind belongs to the class of so called **mind mapping software**.

Some of members of that class come pretty close to Buzan. Have a look at the site of first class commercial mind mapping software MindManager (<http://www.mindjet.com/>). You may also want to see examples (<http://www.mind-mapping.co.uk/mind-maps-examples.htm>) of mind maps in Buzan's sense.

Alternatives to using FreeMind

To achieve that which FreeMind offers, you can use variety of tools.

- **Free or freeware mind mapping program**, for instance Thinkgraph (<http://www.thinkgraph.com>), VYM - View Your Mind (<http://www.insilmaril.de/vym/>) or Kdissert (<http://freehackers.org/~tnagy/kdissert/>). Thinkgraph is not open source licenced, and in our view falls back behind FreeMind in terms of ease of use and look-and-feel. VYM is licenced under GNU GPL, with no distribution for Windows available; comparative evaluation to FreeMind is missing. Kdissert is licenced under GNU GPL, and is not available for Windows; evaluation is missing as well.
- **Commercial mind mapping program**, for instance MindManager (<http://www.mindjet.com/>), Inspiration (<http://www.inspiration.com/>), MindGenius (<http://www.mindgenius.com/>), Visual Mind (<http://www.visual-mind.com/>) or MindMapper (<http://www.mindmapperusa.com/>).
- **Note editor / reference manager / PIM - personal information manager**, for instance open source Key Note (<http://www.tranglos.com/free/keynote.html>) for Windows. In the case of Key Note, you obtain folding, much richer text formatting than in FreeMind, many small notes in one file and it is quite easy to reorganize the structure of your notes. It is not so fast when it comes to changing the color of nodes and not so intuitive when you move things around. It is not possible to set a link to a node, only inside the note, which is sort of equivalent of FreeMind's node without children. Key Note is much faster because it is not written in Java, but it runs on Windows platform only. Definitely worth having a look at. In Linux, the hierarchical rich text note editor TuxCards (<http://www.tuxcards.de/>) may be of interest.
- Text editor with **Outline mode**, e.g. MS Word (<http://www.microsoft.com/office/>), LyX (<http://www.lyx.org/>) or Emacs (<http://www.xemacs.org/>). Outline mode enables you to fold headings and move complete "nodes" (chapters, sections, subsection) around, as well as changing the levels of the nodes. The convenience and speed of operation in the areas of restructuring, organizing, overviewing and adding items does not reach that of FreeMind, but on the other hand: if you already use one of these editors, you can avoid the extravagance of installing and learning to use a new tool and gain part of what FreeMind offers that way.
- Text editor with **Folding mode**, e.g. Emacs (<http://www.xemacs.org/>), Vim (<http://www.vim.org/>) or jEdit (<http://www.jedit.org>). Again, you achieve information hiding, but the overheads of using folding mode when compared to FreeMind are considerable.
- **Outliner** (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Outliner>), e.g. cross-platform Java outline editor (<http://outliner.sourceforge.net/>) or Microsoft Windows based Outliner (<http://hardtware.de/index.cgi?site=products&action=outliner>). Compared to FreeMind, these programs are rather rudimentary. Another option is cross-platform Python-based outliner Leo (<http://webpages.charter.net/edreamleo/front.html>) (Python Licence); evaluation is missing.
- A **concept map editor**, like freeware CmapTools (<http://cmap.ihmc.us/>), GNU GPL-licenced Conzilla (<http://www.conzilla.org/>), or freeware Compendium (<http://www.compendiuminstitute.org/>) (written in Java, and relying on database). Unlike mind maps, concept maps are general graphs rather than trees.

Authors and contributors

The current project director is **Daniel Polansky**, with **Christian Foltin** serving as a project manager. Decisions of the project director can be cancelled by the supervisory board, currently consisting of Christian Foltin, Dimitri Polivaev, and Eric Lavarde, if at least two members vote to cancel the decision in question.

Up to version 0.4, FreeMind was developed by **Jörg Müller** (<mailto:joergmueller80@yahoo.de>). Jörg has not only started the project, he has also done a very good registration on Open Directory and designed the architecture that is still in use today.

The versions 0.5 and 0.6 have been developed by **Daniel Polansky** (<http://danpolansky.blogspot.com/>).

The credit for version 0.6.5 goes mainly to **Petr Novak** of Brno, with smaller contribution of Daniel Polansky.

The credit for version 0.6.7 goes mainly to **Dimitri Polivaev** and **Christian Foltin**, with smaller contribution of Daniel Polansky.

The credit for version 0.7.0 goes mainly to **Christian Foltin**, with smaller contribution from Bob Alexander, Alex Dukal, Andrew Iggleden, Takeshi Kakeda, Dimitri Polivaev, Daniel Polansky, Knud Riishøjgård and others.

Version 0.7.1 is a bug fix of version 0.7.0 including auto-save with contributions by Christian Foltin, Daniel Polansky and a patch by Dimitri Polivaev.

The credit for version 0.8.0 goes mainly to **Christian Foltin** and **Dimitri Polivaev**, with smaller contribution from Daniel Polansky and others, including translators.

According to Jörg, various smaller contributions are due to Sebastian Fischmeister - misc patches, Jean-Luc Deladriere - french support, Jared Rhine - no longer used perl script freemind2html, Richard Krutisch - author of MAK (<http://mak.sourceforge.net>). Hauke Helmers - the images, Rainer Janssen - time and Jost Schenck - author of MyMap (<http://mymap.sourceforge.net>).

Tools

FreeMind team used YourKit Java Profiler (<http://www.yourkit.com/>) to analyze memory consumption and performance issues.

Do you want to reward authors for their work?

Drop us a line saying that you like FreeMind. You can do it even anonymously on our Thank you for the music (http://sourceforge.net/forum/forum.php?forum_id=320015) forum - just start a new thread and click "Post comment"; it's really easy. We are always glad to read that someone finds FreeMind useful. This definitely increases our motivation. Also, we appreciate to read what attracts you on FreeMind, and what is your most important case of use of FreeMind.

Please, address any questions with problems to the Help (http://sourceforge.net/forum/forum.php?forum_id=22102) forum.

What users say about FreeMind

Soroush, 26.2.2005: Take a look at his blog (<http://hyperreality.wordpress.com/2006/02/26/mind-mapping-with-freemind-review/>).

Rich, 14.4.2004: First off, congratulations on a truly awesome application with a fantastically intuitive interface... I thought I'd spend 10 minutes evaluating it but I had so much fun I ended up playing for hours - I even missed lunch!

Daniel, 1.2.2003: How do I know that FreeMind is a high productivity tool? The answer is I don't. I am using FreeMind on daily basis and am very satisfied with the benefits it brings me. What I really consider important is that when I use FreeMind, most of the time I don't have to ask myself "how do I do this thing in FreeMind", but I rather just do what I need without thinking about it. FreeMind makes my task of collecting, organizing and analyzing information on a given topic much easier.

James, 14.10.2002: Now, having tried out the new release, I can tell you: It's brilliant! Well done!

Henning, 21.11.2002: I recently started using FreeMind and I'm rather delightet. After getting to known it, it immediately became one of my every-day-use-tools.

Joe, 20.1.2003: I downloaded Freemind several months ago and it has become a vital part of my daily activites. I am enormously grateful for the program.

Paul, 9.2.2003: What a splendid piece of work!

Tom, 13.2.2003: I appreciate version 6.1 very much. Having the DnD capability into and out of my emails has now made Freemind the source document for my management work. 6.1 is stable, simple and elegant in text, lines, and manipulation. I prefer such elegance to commercial versions because I have work to do, not time to make things look better. This is a superb complexity organizer.

I also use it at home to capture my martial arts learning as I head towards a black belt. I put in the basic movements and the katas or arranged groups of movements. I use that when I practice at home.

Perry, 10.4.2003: I have been using FreeMind for two or three months now, and find it totally indispensable! I simply can't say enough good things about how it has helped me get on top of an overwhelming workload. I've tried task managers and project managers ad-nauseam, and they are either too simplistic or too cumbersome.

See more of positive reactions on Thank you for the music (http://sourceforge.net/forum/forum.php?forum_id=320015) forum.

Forums

You can discuss FreeMind in the following forums. (Links to the forums are also scattered through the web page above.)

- Help (http://sourceforge.net/forum/forum.php?forum_id=22102) -- questions on tips or technical difficulties, no feature requests
- Open Discussion (http://sourceforge.net/forum/forum.php?forum_id=22101) -- possible future directions, fundamentals, or whatever
- Complaints from users (http://sourceforge.net/forum/forum.php?forum_id=320014) -- complaints from users, even anonymous, angry and unpolite, on critical problems like losing of data
- Thank you for the music (http://sourceforge.net/forum/forum.php?forum_id=320015) -- a place to express your thanks and satisfaction with FreeMind, no feature requests

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