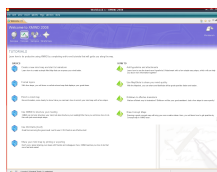


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By: Ionut Ilascu, Editor, Software Reviews



XMIND 2008

## [Put Your Thoughts on the Screen](#)

### *Plan each detail carefully*

Keeping your thoughts in a neat, organized way is considered to bring success in any of your activities. As every action has a reaction, having thought in advance about the repercussions of some activity is definitely going to help when facing that particular situation as you are not taken by surprise. And yet I found a study somewhere on the Internet carried by British researchers pointing out that people with a messy desk are more productive. The basic idea was that this kind of people have a very developed sense of prioritizing their tasks (by placing the most important folders at the top of the pile). Anyway, I am very aware of the fact that without a well drawn plan there is little chance for success and unless you have a super developed intelligence able to calculate each possibility in advance, I suggest you keep reading. Whether it was about a presentation, a sorting of one's thoughts, defining the position in the company of every employee, etc. one would always use a pen and a piece of paper. Nowadays all you need is a computer and the appropriate software providing the necessary means for creating the necessary diagram. If you are into making at least a bit of planning before proceeding to action, XMIND 2008 Pro is for you. Judging by the way it is conceived, the application is not designed exclusively for business use and can be successfully used at home for any kind of plan. It is a mind-mapping software tailored to put your thoughts in order. The price used to be outrageous but only for a while and now it has dropped to \$129.95 as part of a special offer (I really hope it stays that way as a special software should always benefit from a special offer). Its usability extends to creating fishbone charts, 2D charts, presentations, brainstorming, project management, all these having the possibility of getting enriched with labels, notes, attachments and even audio recordings. An attractive interface, not to mention the ease of use involved in handling it, await for you to start your first project. At the beginning you can access Overview section, jump directly into Tutorials, check out the samples or take a look at what is new in this release. Starting working with the application directly skipping all the information provided by the developer will require some time to get used to all the possibilities and options available, but it will be a fun activity and frankly, it won't even take too long. I needed about two minutes to make a small design, get along with using colors, markers and notes. Users have a large amount of space and you can move the diagram around the screen when working to certain parts of it. Choosing Default Template for starters results in the display of a box for the central topic right in the middle of the screen. From there you can start building main topics and subtopics just by using the keyboard (TAB for creating a main topic and its subtopics, F2 for renaming each item and the arrows for navigating from one element to another). In the right part of the screen there are the three perspectives (Brainstorm, Drawing and Meeting) equipped with all sorts of instruments for differentiating the elements of the chart/diagram. They bring different utensils for customizing the items in the chart, starting with changing the color of the box, its shape or background color to changing text type, color and size, numbering of the elements or adding all sorts of markers (both default ones as well as your own). For detailed charts and diagrams users can create multiple sheeted maps in order to comprise all the guidelines necessary. For making the diagram as visually attractive as possible XMIND 2008 allows introducing smilies representing different states (anger, laughter, smile, crying, surprise or boredom). The pesky elements can be the perfect ingredient for transmitting the situation of a project as it evolves or the different turns it can take. Also, for creating priorities you can make use of color coded little stars with numbers on them (unfortunately there are only six such elements). Adding them to the items in the diagram is as easy as dragging and dropping into the desired box. The list of

markers is not limited to smilies and priority elements and includes further items like task completion markers, flags, different other icons (alarm clock, email, telephone, people, coffee cup, question mark, etc.) and, at the end of the list you can add your own icons. All attachments are treated as topics so all options for these are applied to attachments as well: adding notes, labels, topics, subtopics, markers, drilling down, etc. Any kind of file can be dropped into editing area and its rendering is accomplished by the default program it is associated with. XMIND 2008 comes with quite a limited range of search engines (Google, Yahoo, IMDb, Live Search, Wikipedia and Dictionary.com) to look for a particular term on the web. The downside is that you cannot add your own search engines and you will have to wait until the application updates the list of search engines. XMIND features a spell-checker but judging by the results of our testing this feature needs a lot of working. Users have input level close to nil and there is no way to properly customize the settings. During our testing the application failed to recognize a random string of letters with the spell-checker enabled. If you look closely in the lower left hand corner of the application window you will notice a number of little icons that change with the perspective you're in. However Gallery will stay there regardless of the perspective and will provide you with a myriad of beautifully designed icons ready to mark the different topics in the diagram for a more exciting visual experience. XMIND 2008 Pro proved to be a very easy to use mind mapping tool with a great interface and enough options to suit most of your needs. It can be used for creating interactive diagrams or beautifully designed and to the point presentations which can be exported to the most important file formats: DOC, TXT, RTF, PDF or BMP, JPG, PNG and GIF image formats. The wizard at your disposal will guide you through each step until the resulting file is safe on your computer. **The Good** The application is indeed useful for short and medium term plans. There are no complicated features and editing window's zoom can be adjusted with a drag of a slider. Comes with great options and possibilities for making elements stand out, plus it will self adjust the diagram for all the elements to fit perfectly (although it would be nice to let the user calculate the distances as well). It supports attachments of any kind and these can be manipulated just like a topic or subtopic in the diagram or chart. XMIND 2008 features a great deal of options all very easy to use and with important contribution to the final result. Maps can be exported into some of the most popular file formats with the utmost ease. **The Bad** Spell checker is practically inexistent and does a very poor job if you are not paying attention. Also, it would be nice if attachments would open at a single click, not having to press Alt key and then click for launching them. I felt the need of internal players to render the files pinned as attachments in the map. **The Truth** XMIND 2008 is a good mind mapping tool providing precious options for quickly finishing your job. All the elements in the diagram are controllable and the application is doing a great job at ordering them around. It can deal with complicated diagrams like those for project management or organization charts displaying the name and job title of every employee in a company. You have 21 days of full access to all the functionality of the application before deciding to buy it. The price has dropped from \$299.95 to just \$129.95 and Governments, Schools and Non-Profit organizations can purchase it for \$99.95. *Here are some snapshots of the application in action:*