



Version 12

User Guide

Companion for using Version 12 of TheBrain for Windows and macOS.
Posted September 2021

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Introduction

Welcome to TheBrain™, your ultimate digital memory and no limits mind mapping software. Intelligence comes from the mind's ability to think associatively—that is, to leap from thought to thought, building webs of greater and greater complexity, until new ideas are built. Associations are our inspirations. TheBrain allows you to organize your information in the same way, without limiting you to a pre-determined file structure. In fact, with your digital brain there are no limits. You can create a small project-focused brain or grow your brain to hundreds of thousands of thoughts!

Now you don't have to force any idea or project into a single folder. TheBrain organizes information as **thoughts**. Unlike folder directories and search lists, a “thought” in your brain can have many connections and contexts. Moreover, TheBrain displays your thoughts by concept or project, linked according to how you think. Now you can get the big picture and discover information that might otherwise be overlooked.

Thoughts contain relevant notes, web pages, and files. Brains can be synced for easy access from your desktop to TheBrain Cloud or your mobile devices.

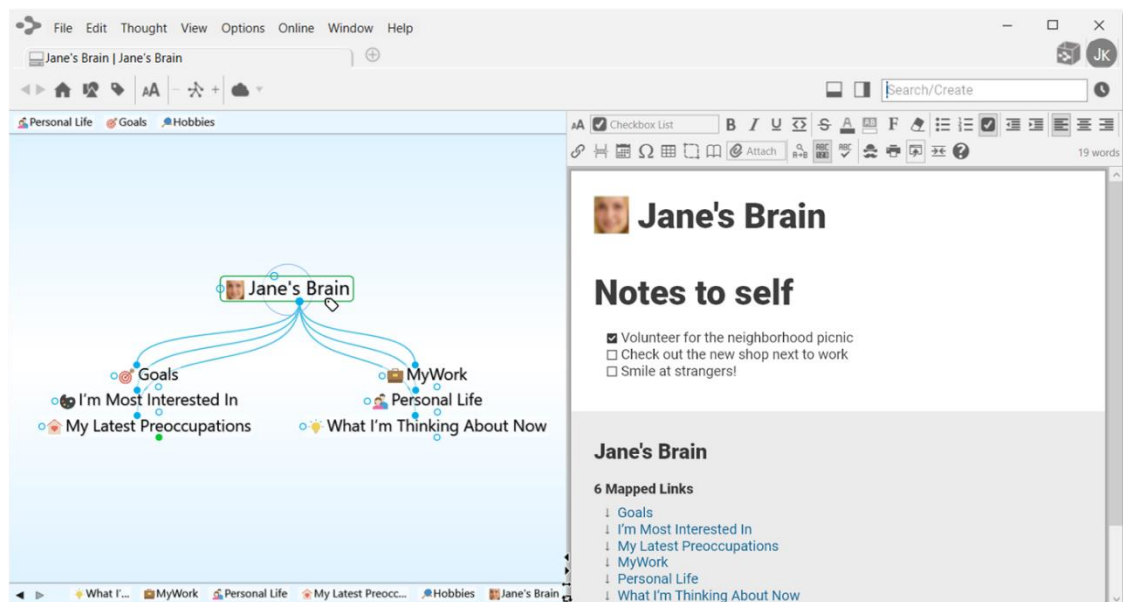


Figure 1. TheBrain Interface

Thoughts are Information

TheBrain thoughts can represent just about any type of information, including concepts, people, documents, spreadsheets, images, videos, shortcuts, and web pages. By letting you create links and associations between thoughts, TheBrain expands to become a visual interface that reflects the way you think.

Using simple click-and-drag techniques, you'll be able to create and navigate through networks of thoughts in a conceptual space unique to your work habits. When you begin using TheBrain, you will find that your computer becomes easier to use—faster, more enjoyable, and less frustrating—helping you use your time more efficiently.

TheBrain's Dynamic Graphical Interface

TheBrain lets you create a simple, dynamic graphical map in which to input and navigate all your information. Your brain starts with a single thought, to which several other thoughts can be visually linked. These thoughts have their own links to other thoughts and, possibly, to each other. TheBrain's flexible structure allows any thought to be linked to any other thought, so you are never more than a few steps away from the information you are seeking. It's simple to make connections between thoughts so that they reflect the connections you make in your mind.

Cross Platform Accessibility

Brain data is accessible from virtually any device with rich full-featured clients on Windows and macOS plus mobile clients for iOS and Android. Additionally, you can access your brain via a web browser by logging in at www.thebrain.com. TheBrain's sync service keeps all your data backed up and synchronized over the cloud for seamless access.

This user guide is focused on the Windows and macOS software. Please visit www.thebrain.com for information about the mobile clients.

About this Guide

The following icons are used throughout this guide to flag categories of information:



This icon is used to identify notes.



This icon is used to flag tips and suggestions.

TheBrain is offered in two editions—Free and Pro. Icons are used throughout the guide to flag features that are specific to the Pro edition. Features that are available in **both** editions are not designated with a special icon.



This icon is used to indicate that the feature is available in the Pro edition only.

Because TheBrain works on Windows and macOS. OS-specific features are flagged with icons throughout the guide. Features that are available for **both** Operating Systems are not designated with a special icon.



This icon is used to indicate that the information applies only to computers running macOS.



This icon is used to indicate that the information applies only to computers running Windows.

In addition:

Labels Names of buttons, menus, commands, keys, and icons appear in **this font** throughout the guide in order to stand out.

Note to macOS Users



Right-clicking: Most features in TheBrain can be accessed with just a single click of your primary mouse button. However, there are several context-sensitive shortcuts available in context menus which appear when right-clicking. On a Macintosh, many systems do not have a right mouse button. For trackpad users, click or tap with two fingers. Alternatively, hold down the **Control** key while you click. Note that many mice can be set up to interpret clicks on each side of the main button differently so that **Control**-clicking is not necessary. To enable this, alter the Mouse settings in the System Preferences area of your Mac. Select “Secondary Button” for the right side of the mouse.

Ctrl key: Some features are accessed by clicking while holding down the **Ctrl** key on Windows. For macOS, use the **Command** key.



Here is a list of working definitions for the basic terms used throughout TheBrain.

Brain

A collection of associated thoughts, each of which can have content. You can create multiple brains.

Thought

The topics that you link together in your brain are called thoughts and are the basic unit of a brain. A thought can represent anything you want it to. It can include an icon, notes, and one or more attachments (such as files and web sites) or it can have no content at all and simply act as a subject heading or organizer. Minimally, a thought has a name.

Plex The visible, graphical portion of your brain that displays your thoughts.

Content Area The portion of TheBrain window that displays content that can be associated with the active thought or link. Types of content include notes, attachments (such as worksheets, presentations, documents, videos, and images), links, URLs, and events. The Content Area also displays and provides quick access to related thoughts.



Clicking any thought or link in the Plex displays its associated content in the Content Area.

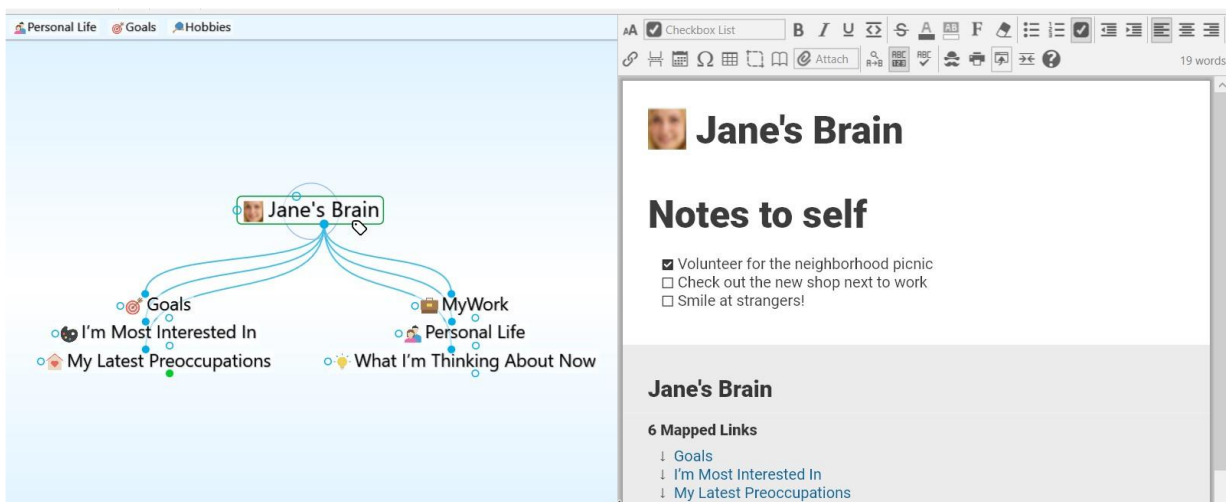


Figure 2. TheBrain Plex and Content Area

Active Thought The active thought appears in the center of the Plex and is the current focus. Any items attached to the thought, like notes, files, links, and events appear in the Content Area.

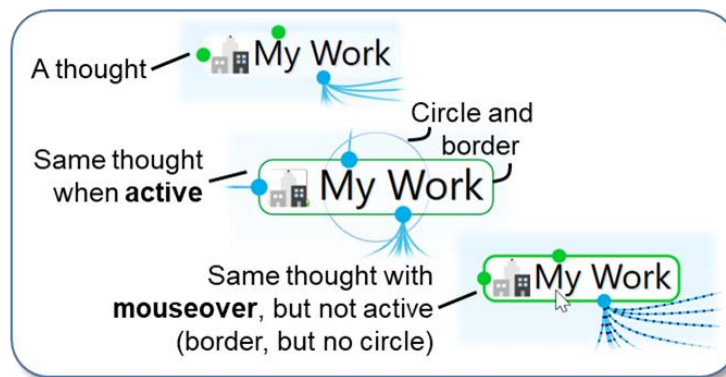


Figure 3. The Different Ways a Thought Can Appear

As shown below, when you click a thought, it moves to the center of the Plex and it becomes the active thought.

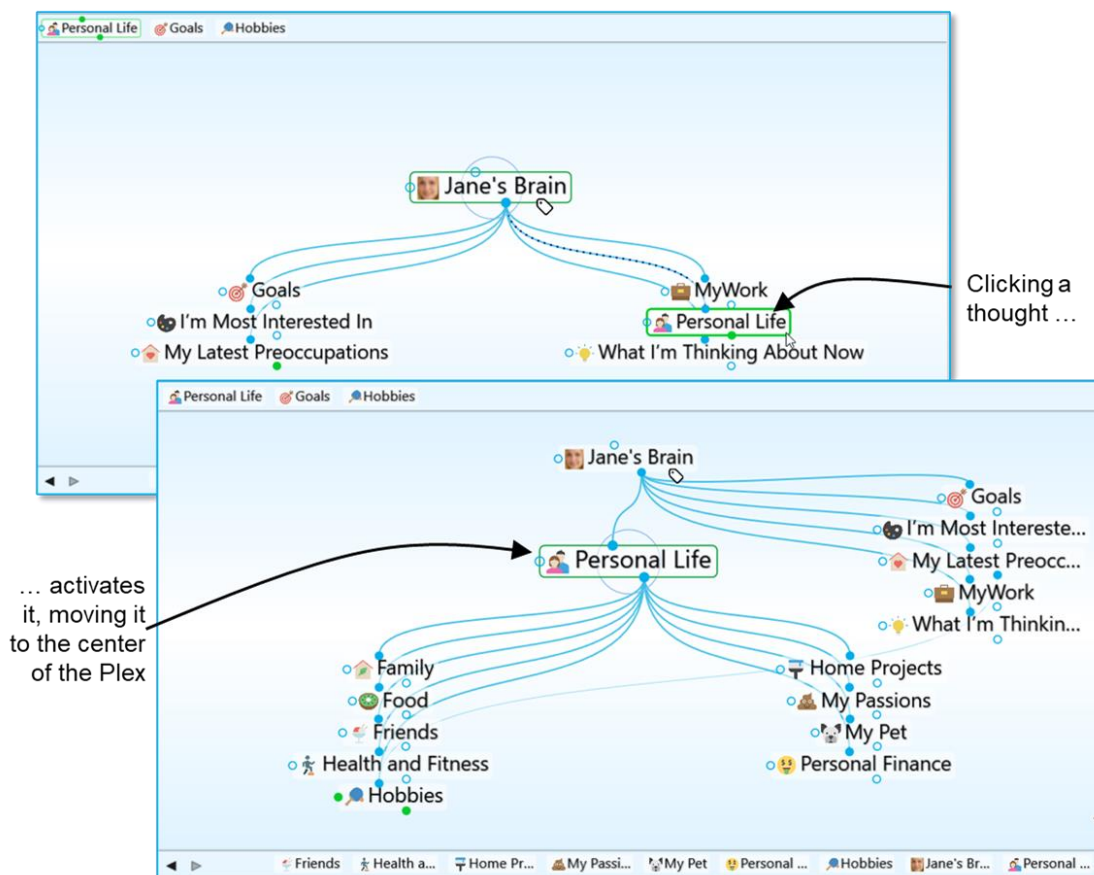


Figure 4. Activating a Thought

Thought Relationships

A thought is said to be a “parent thought,” “child thought,” “sibling thought,” or “jump thought” based on its relationship to other thoughts with which it is linked.

In your own life, you may be someone’s parent, and someone’s child, and someone’s sibling, and someone’s peer, advisor, or colleague. So, who are *you*? The answer to that question is relative—it depends on the circumstances and what hat you’re wearing at the moment.

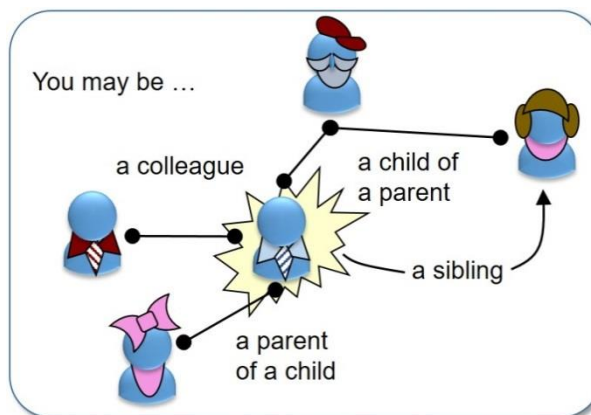


Figure 5. Relationships are Relative to You

The same applies to thoughts. The relationships between thoughts are displayed automatically, based on which thought is active at the moment.



Whether a thought is a parent, child, or sibling depends on its current relationship to the active thought.

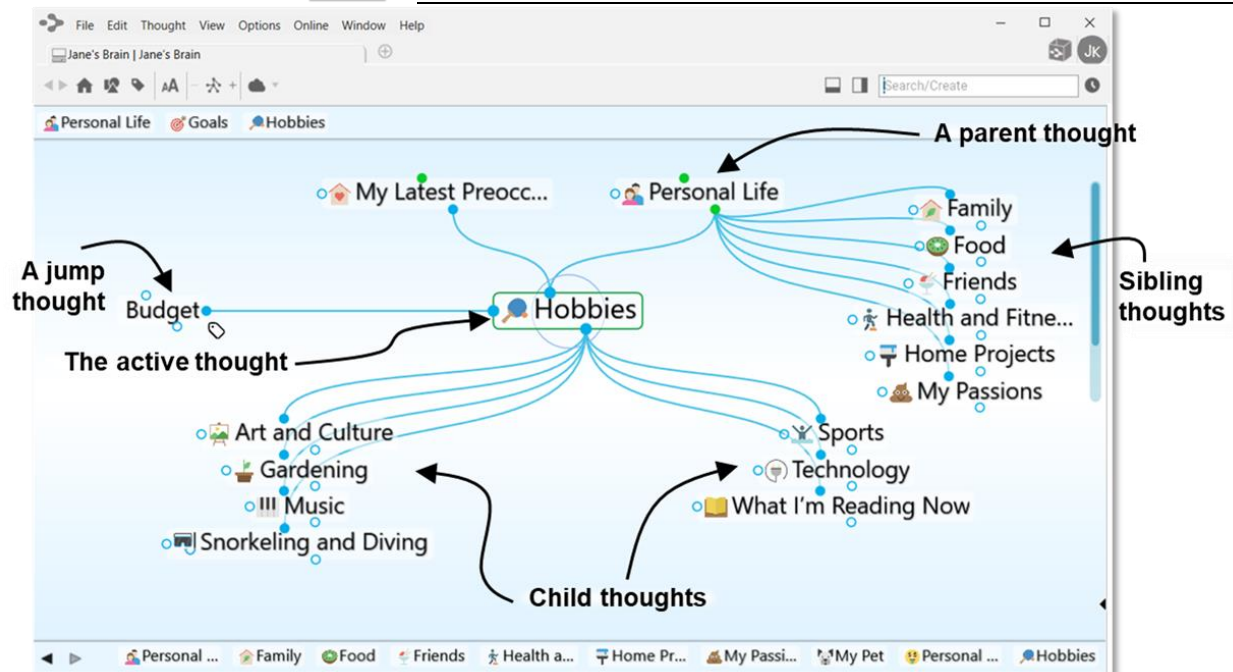


Figure 6. Thought Relationships are Relative to the Active Thought

Child Thought

Child thoughts are subtopics of the active thought. They appear in the "child zone," below the active thought. In the picture above, the active thought "Hobbies" has seven child thoughts.

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| Parent Thought | Parent thoughts represent superordinate topics of the active thought. They appear in the parent zone, above the active thought. |
| Sibling Thought | Sibling thoughts share a parent with the active thought. They appear in the sibling zone, to the right of the active thought. In the picture above, “Family,” “Food,” “Health and Fitness,” “Home Projects,” “My Passion,” “My Pet,” and “Personal Finance” are siblings of “Hobbies” because they are all children of “Personal Life.” |
| Jump Thought | Jump thoughts are related to the active thought but are neither child nor parent topics. They appear in the jump zone to the left of the active thought. Jump thoughts have an “equal weight” relationship with the thought to which they are related. For example, as shown above, “Hobbies” has the various hobbies “Art and Culture,” “Gardening,” “Music,” “Snorkeling and Diving,” “Sports,” “Technology,” and “What I’m Reading Now” linked as child thoughts since they are types of hobbies. “Budget” affects the amount of resources available to spend on the various hobbies and so it is closely related, but it is not a hobby itself. Therefore, it makes a perfect jump thought—related, but not part of the main thought grouping. |
| Gate | Thoughts in the Plex have three circular “gates,” each of which is used to link a specific type of relation: The parent gate is above a thought, the child gate is below it, and the jump gate is to the left or right of it. A gate is hollow when there are no links attached to it and solid when one or more links are attached. Solid gates in a contrasting color have links to thoughts that are not currently showing in the Plex. The color of gates is based on the current color scheme. When you point at a gate, a highlighting circle appears around it. |
| Link | A link is the line that connects two thoughts. When used as a verb, to “link” is the act of connecting thoughts to establish close relationships. Links can also show direction to help you visualize relationships. |

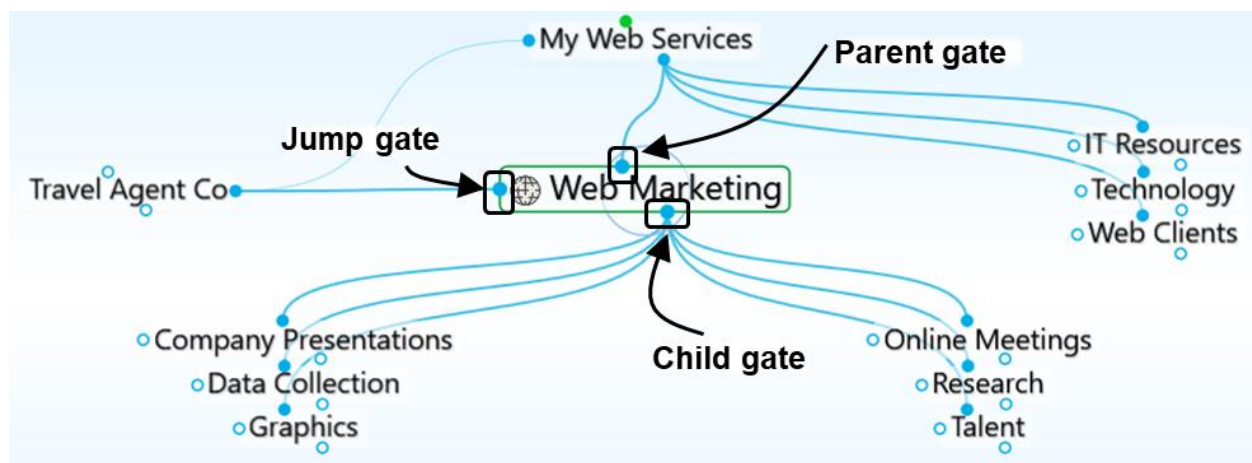


Figure 7. Thought Gates

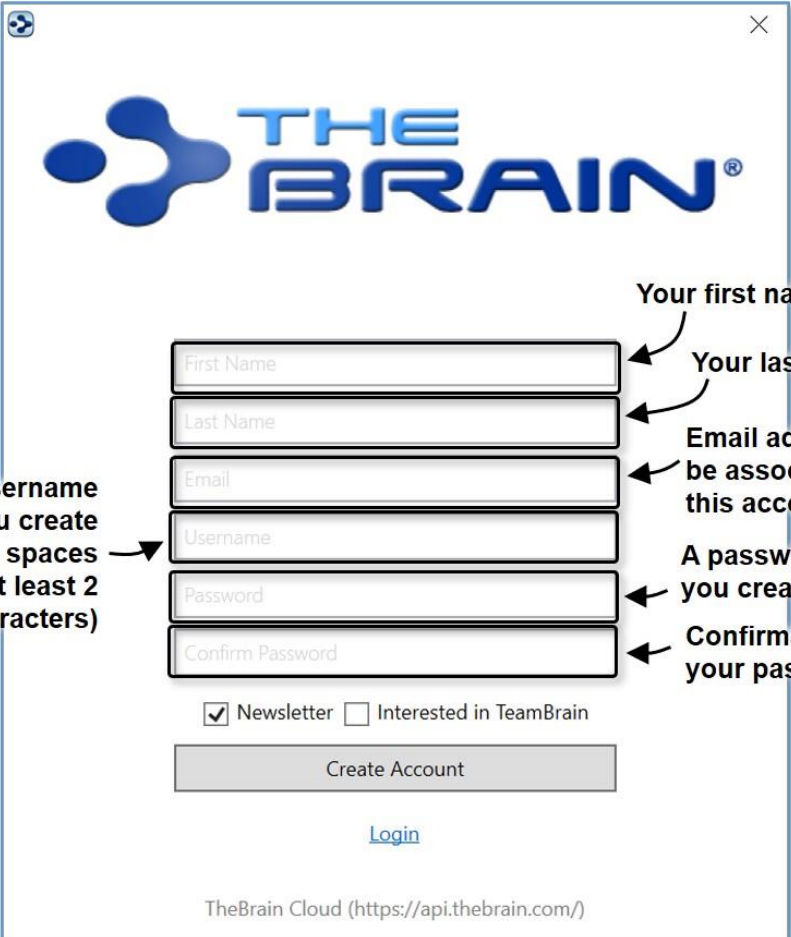
Installing TheBrain and Creating an Account

The first time you download and install TheBrain, you'll be prompted to log in or create an account if you don't already have one. The log-in window provides the ability to create a new account or log in to an existing account.

The screenshot shows a login window for 'THE BRAIN'. The logo is at the top. Below it are two text input fields: 'Username or Email' and 'Password'. A 'Login' button is below the password field. Below the 'Login' button are two links: 'Forgot Password' and 'Create Account'. At the bottom of the window, the text 'TheBrain Cloud (https://api.thebrain.com/)' is displayed.

Figure 8. TheBrain Log-in Window

Here are the fields to complete if you're creating a new account:



The screenshot shows a web form titled "THE BRAIN" with a logo. The form contains the following fields and elements:

- First Name**: A text input field with an annotation "Your first name" pointing to it.
- Last Name**: A text input field with an annotation "Your last name" pointing to it.
- Email**: A text input field with an annotation "Email address to be associated with this account" pointing to it.
- Username**: A text input field with an annotation "A username you create (no spaces and at least 2 characters)" pointing to it.
- Password**: A text input field with an annotation "A password you create" pointing to it.
- Confirm Password**: A text input field with an annotation "Confirmation of your password" pointing to it.
- Newsletter**: A checkbox that is checked, with the label "Newsletter".
- Interested in TeamBrain**: An unchecked checkbox with the label "Interested in TeamBrain".
- Create Account**: A large button at the bottom of the form.
- Login**: A link below the "Create Account" button.
- TheBrain Cloud**: A footer text with the URL "https://api.thebrain.com/".

Figure 9. Creating a New Account

After you click the **Create Account** button, TheBrain will send an email to the address you specified.



Check for a message from no-reply@thebrain.com. Make sure to check your spam folder if you don't receive the message promptly.

When you open the message, you will see a green **Activate Brain Account** link. After you click the link, you'll see a notice confirming your success.

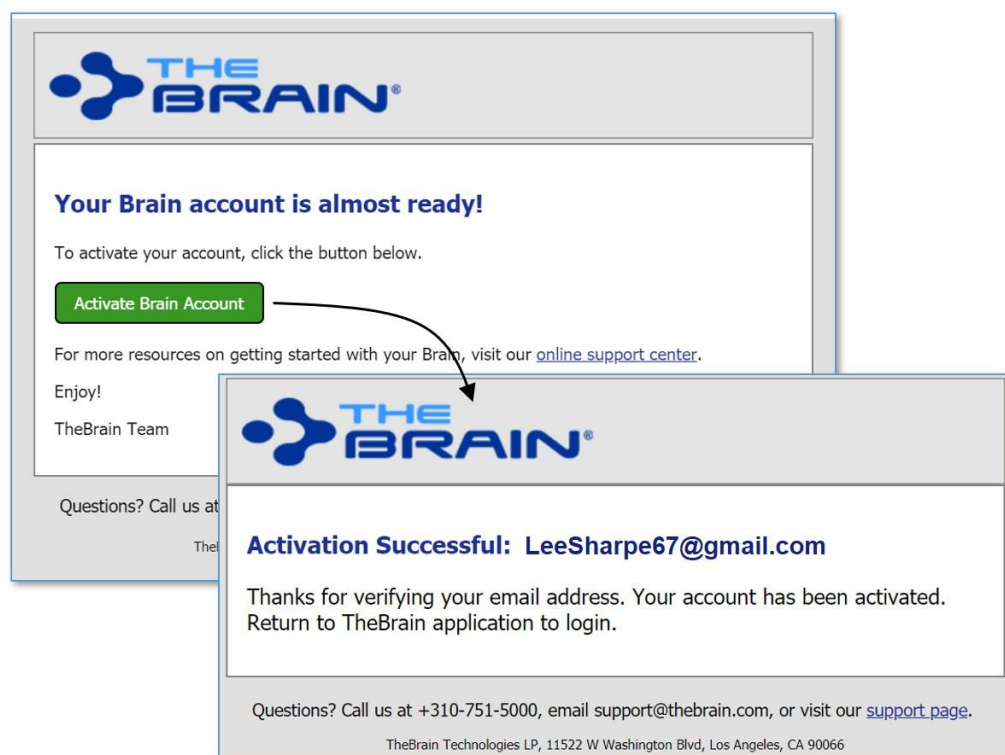


Figure 10. Activating a New Account

Now you can return to TheBrain and log in.

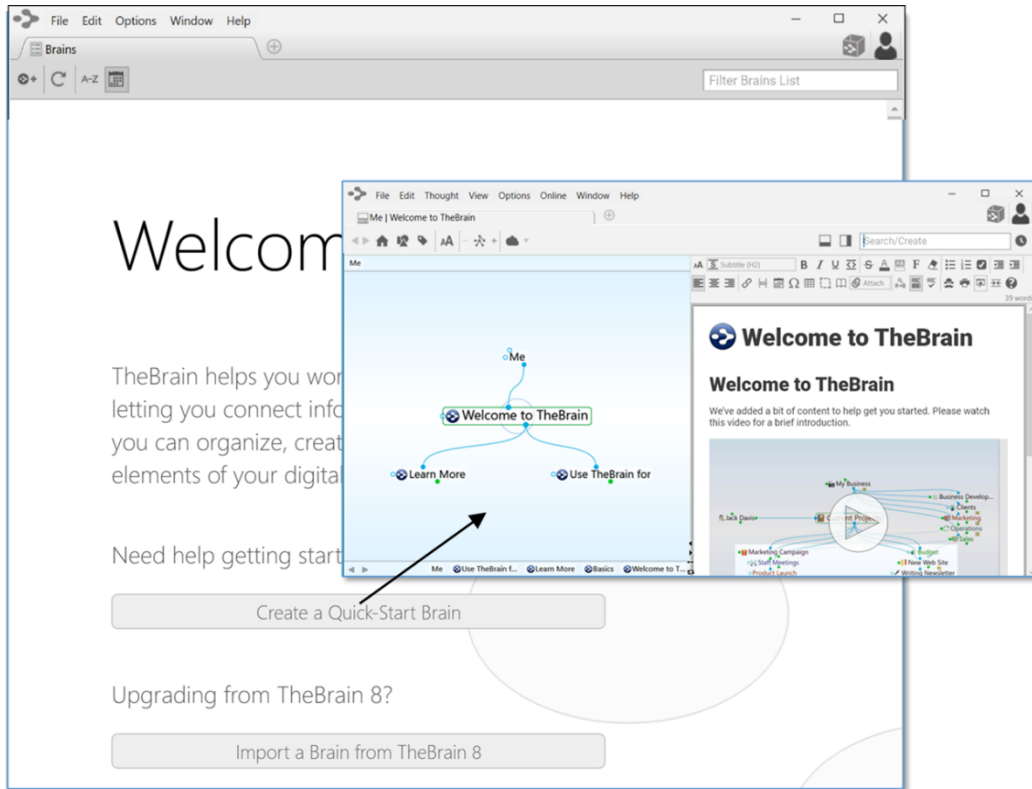


Figure 11. Welcome to TheBrain

Click “Create a Quick-Start Brain” and follow the directions on the screen to enter a personalized name for this brain. The Quick-Start brain is actually a dynamic resource for learning more about using your brains and you’ll find a wealth of useful information in it. Click any of the links to see what is displayed.



You can always create a new Quick-Start brain by selecting the **Create a Quick-Start Brain** command on TheBrain **Help** menu.

Opening Older Brains

When you’re looking at old and new brain files, note that brains created in TheBrain 7 or 8 have filename extensions of **.brain**. Brains created in some earlier versions have a **.brn** filename extension.



To open a **.brn** file that you created in a version **older** than TheBrain 8, first open it using TheBrain 8 and then import the resulting brain in TheBrain 12, as described in the steps below.



Any older Brain must be opened in TheBrain version 8.0.2.2 before it can be imported into TheBrain 12. Version 8.0.2.2 can still be downloaded and installed from TheBrain website at <https://www.thebrain.com/products/thebrain/oldversions>.

To open a brain that you created in TheBrain 8:

1. Open TheBrain.
2. Click the **File** menu, then click the **Import** command.



All dialog boxes can also be navigated via the **Tab** key.

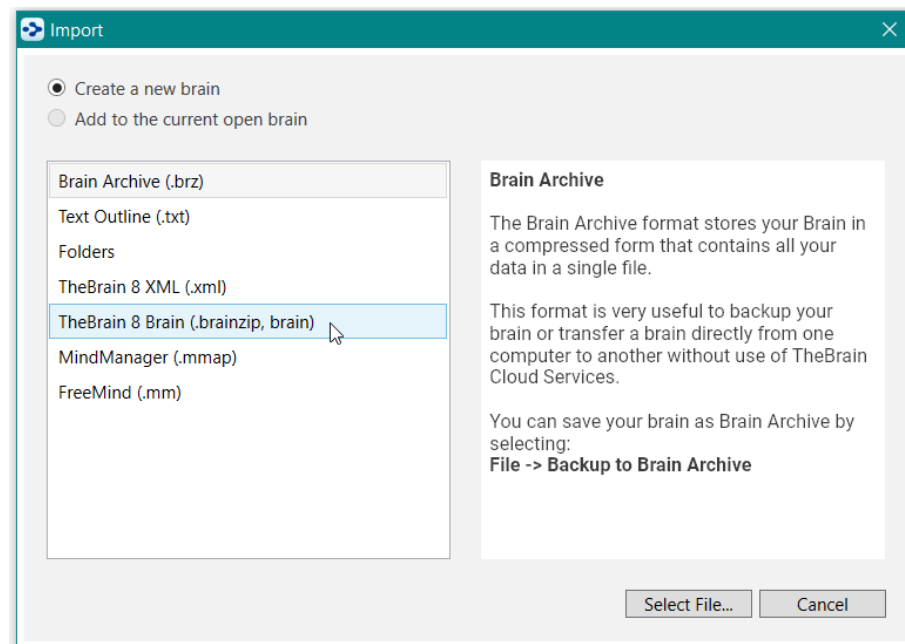


Figure 12. Import Box for Opening an Older Brain

3. Click the **Select File** button, navigate to the brain of your choice, then click the **Open** button when the file is selected. You will see a running progress report.
4. When TheBrain has finished converting, you will see a “Conversion complete” message as shown below. Click the **Import** button.

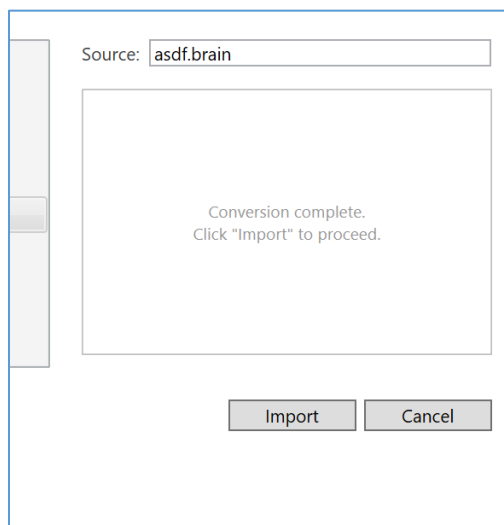


Figure 13. Import Conversion Progress

5. When TheBrain has finished importing, you will see the following dialog box. Click the **Open** button to open the brain you just imported in a new tab of TheBrain window.

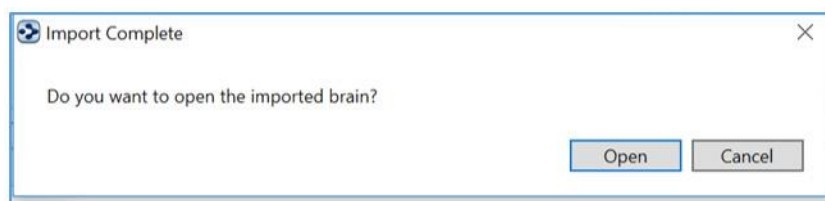


Figure 14. Open the Imported Brain in a New Tab

Suggestions for Transitioning to Your New Brain

Here are some tips for establishing a happy relationship with your brain:



Begin by taking yourself on the guided tour provided in the next section of this guide. As you exit the tour, you'll already have hands-on skills for getting your brain up and running quickly and easily. You may also want to attend one of TheBrain's free online seminars on getting started—TheBrain 101. To learn more about TheBrain 101, go to <http://www.thebrain.com/101>.



Avoid “converting” to a Brain-only environment all at once. Make the transition on a file-by-file basis so that every piece of information your brain contains will be useful.



Build your brain as you go—associating thoughts as they occur naturally.



Avoid the temptation to move large folders into your brain. TheBrain can handle this, but your brain will be cluttered with thoughts you may not need.

Remember that your first brain doesn't need to be your *only* brain or your *last* brain. Experiment! Create a brain just for fun, to try out the possibilities—give yourself room to stretch and explore. Your brain is waiting!



Questions? Contact TheBrain Support Team right from within TheBrain app by choosing **Contact Us** from the **Help** menu in TheBrain toolbar.

A Guided Tour of TheBrain

The best way to build your comfort level with your brain is to build one yourself—with your very own hands. This guided tour will walk you through the basics, pointing out items of interest along the way. There's no need to take notes and you'll never get left behind, because you'll be going at the most strategic pace—your own.



During this tour, you'll be asked to enter specific information to make it easier to refer to items and areas as the tour proceeds. Naturally, when you're on your own, you'll use your own ideas to create brains that reflect your thinking.

Here are the sign posts you'll see along the way:



Enter here—the startup action for this phase of your guided tour



Point of interest—take out your virtual camera



Tip—where you can find more details about this step of your guided tour



Take five—this is a good place to take a break if you want one



Exit here—this marks the end of your guided tour

Let's go!

Part 1: Start Up and Explore the Brain Window

Itinerary: You'll start up TheBrain, create a new brain, and tour through the components of the Brain window.



Start up TheBrain, unless it's already running. You can select TheBrain from the Start menu or the desktop icon. On macOS, TheBrain app can be found in the Applications directory.

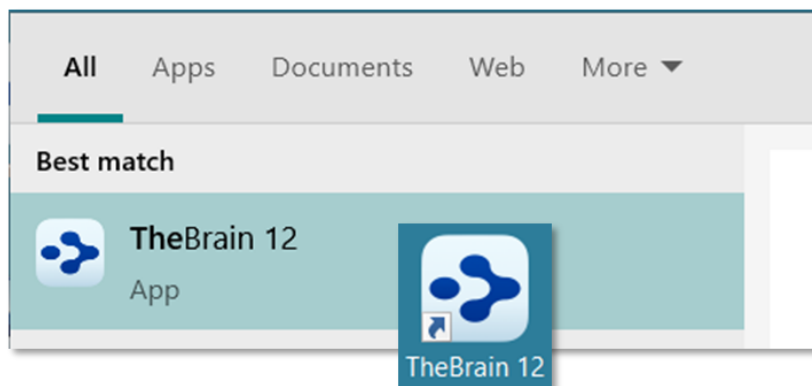


Figure 15. Starting TheBrain

Log in to your Brain account. This enables integration with any subscriptions you may have.

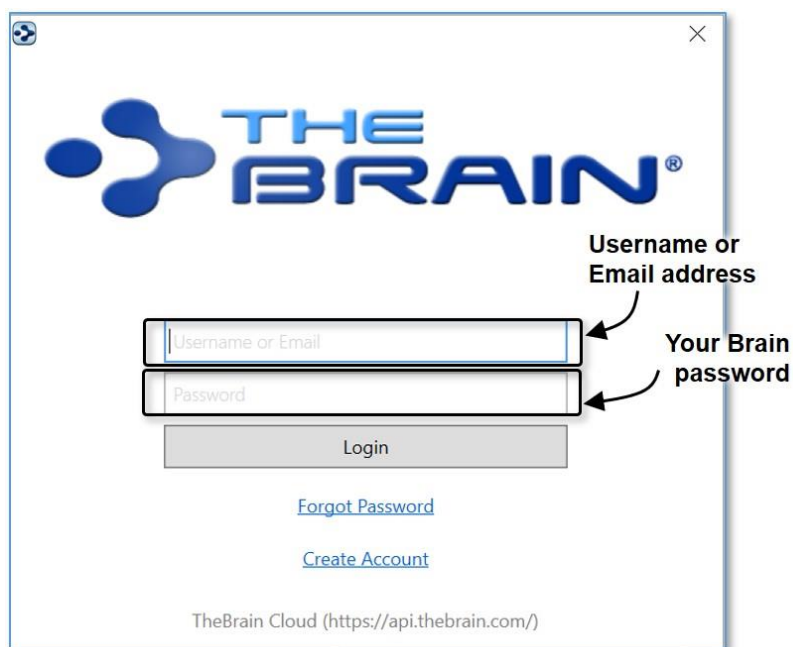


Figure 16. Logging In to TheBrain

1. Click the **File** menu in the menu bar at the top of the window on the welcome screen (or click the **File** menu, then click the **New Brain** command).

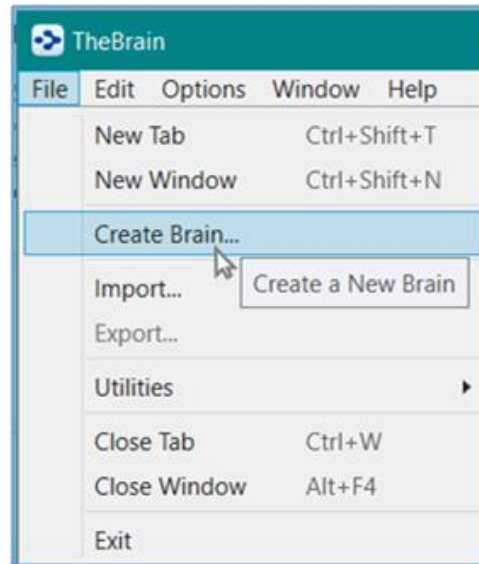


Figure 17. Create Brain Command

2. In the empty field, type: Tour

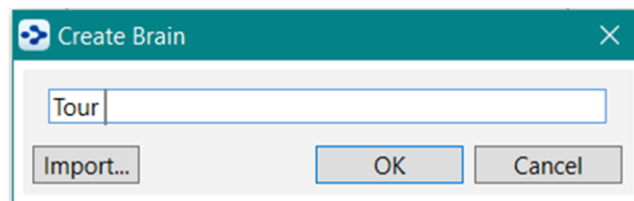


Figure 18. Create Brain Dialog Box

3. Press the **Enter** key or click the **OK** button to finish creating your new brain. It will appear in a new tab named "Tour." Your screen should look similar to the one below. Note that you can minimize, maximize, or restore TheBrain window using standard Windows' techniques.

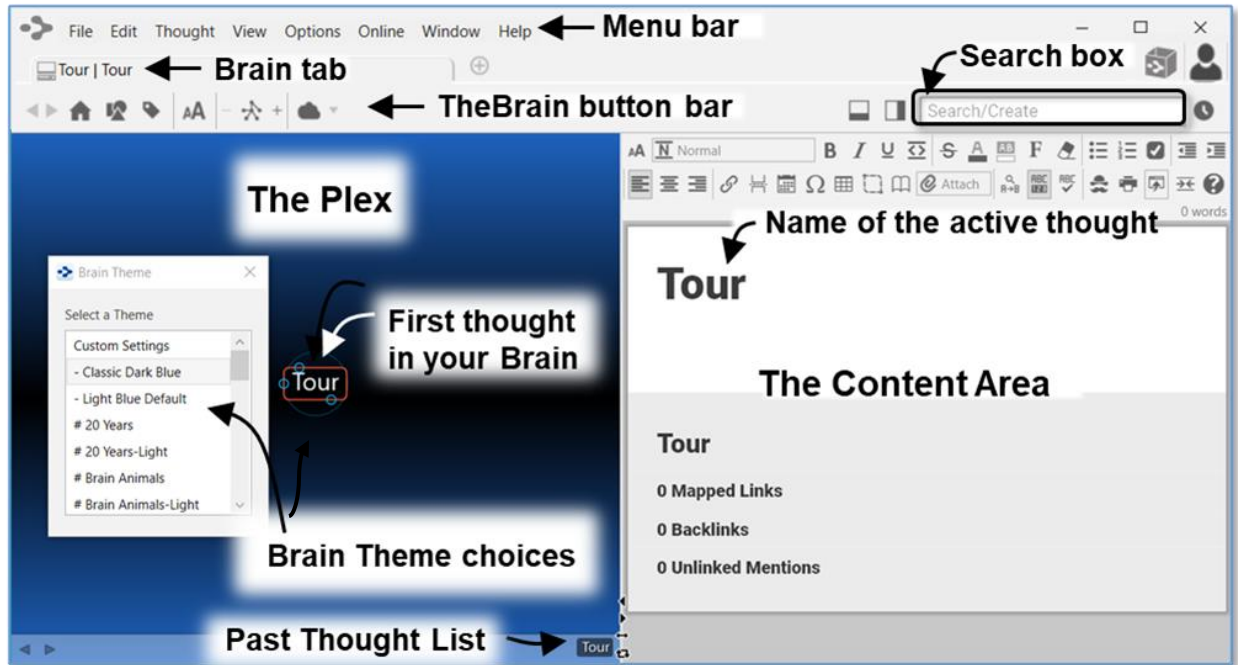


Figure 19. New Brain in the Plex

TheBrain creates your first thought for you. It has the same name as your brain (which you can change later if you want to). Since it's the only thought, it's also the “active thought”—the thought that's currently selected.

4. Take a few minutes to click some of the Brain Themes to see how the background of the Plex changes. Then click the Theme named “- Light Blue Default” to select it. Click the “X” or press the **Esc** key to close the **Brain Theme** box.

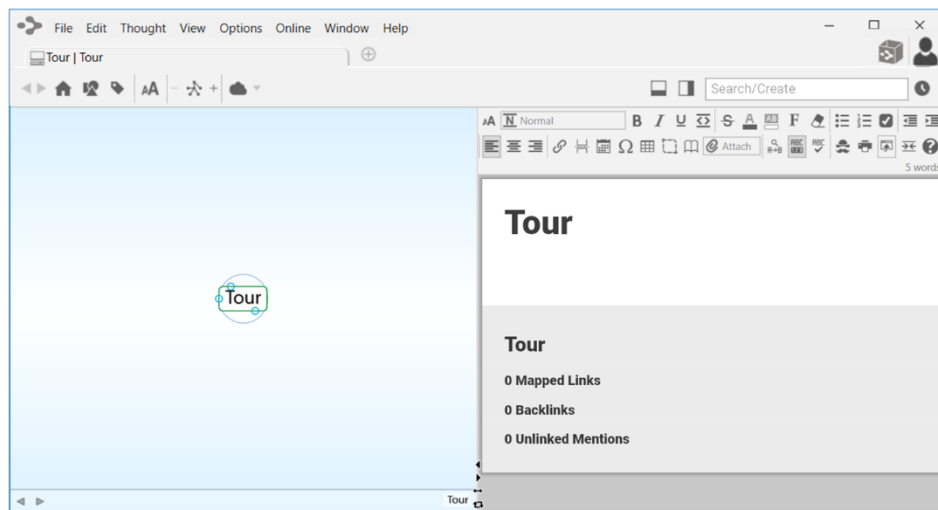


Figure 20. New Brain with “Light Blue Default” Theme Selected



You can always return to the **Brain Themes** box by right-clicking within any blank area of the Plex and selecting **Brain Theme**.



The Brain Toolbar

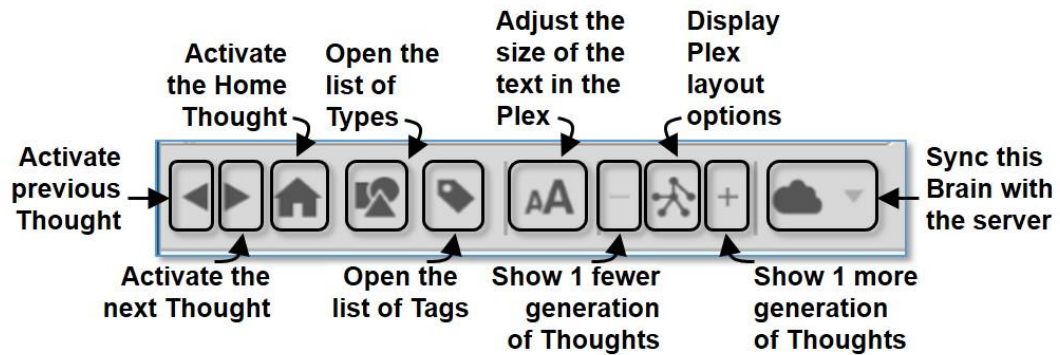


Figure 21. TheBrain Toolbar

1. Point at each one of the buttons in the Brain toolbar so that you see a brief explanation in the pop-up tool tip.



Note that since your Brain has only a single thought so far, some of the toolbar options are currently disabled.



The Brain's Content Area

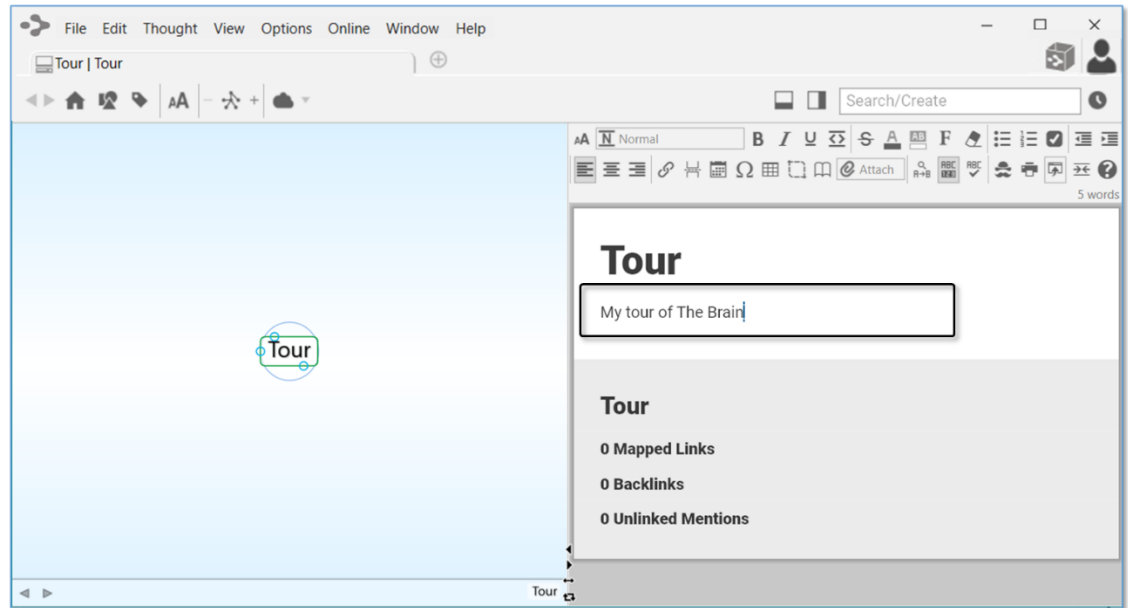


Figure 22. A Note in the Content Area

1. The thought name automatically appears as a heading at the top of the Content Area—you can always change the heading. For now, click in the empty white space of Content Area just below “Tour,” then type: **My tour of TheBrain**. You’ve just created your first note, which is associated with the “active thought”—Tour.



Notes are saved automatically and always stay associated with the active thought, even when you activate other thoughts or close your brain.

2. Experiment with any of the buttons in the Content Area toolbar if you want a quick peek at some of the functionality.



Tip: See the section beginning on page 169 for details about working with the Content Area.

Part 2: Create New Thoughts

Itinerary: You’ll create a single thought, multiple thoughts, a thought from an existing file, and a thought “pin,” and modify the relationship between two thoughts.



Your Tour brain should be on the screen, as you left it in Part 1.

1. The three small circles in the border around the Tour thought are called “gates.” The bottom circle is called the child gate because it provides a gateway towards creating a child thought. Drag the mouse from the child gate down a short distance, then release the mouse button. The **Create Child** dialog box will open.



Tip: If you prefer not to drag the mouse to create a thought, right-click the Tour thought and then click the **Create Child** command on the context menu. This can also be done with a Keyboard Shortcut.

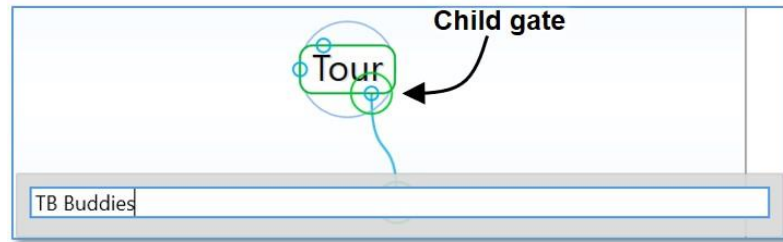


Figure 23. Dragging from the Child Gate



The context menu for the active thought can also be accessed by clicking on the **Menu** key on a Windows keyboard.

2. In the empty field, type: **TB Buddies**

This thought will organize thoughts about people you’re going to talk to about how they use TheBrain, so you can share experiences.

3. Press the **Enter** key. A larger circle appears around a new thought for a few seconds, highlighting it for easy visibility. Your Tour thought now has a child thought named “TB Buddies” (short for “TheBrain Buddies”).



Creating Multiple Thoughts at Once

You can create more than one thought at a time by typing a semicolon to separate each thought.

1. Create four new child thoughts for Tour, all at the same time. To begin, drag Tour’s child gate down a bit, then release the mouse button.
2. In the empty field, type: **Tips; Reminders; To-Do; New Brain Ideas**

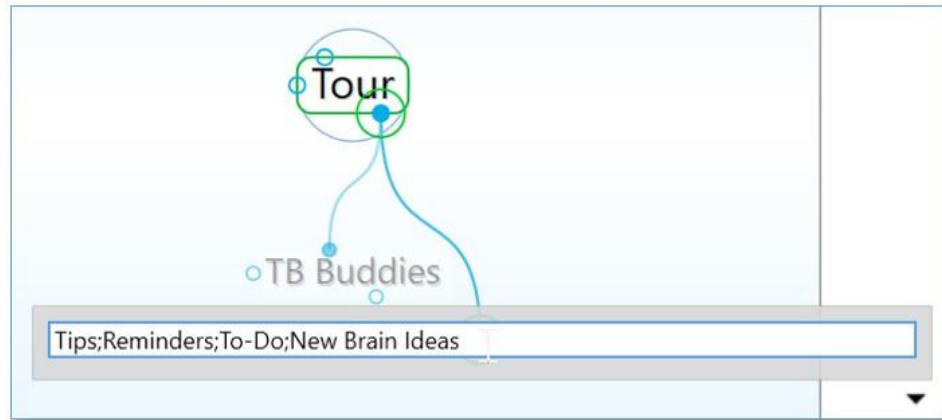


Figure 24. Create Multiple Thoughts at Once



Tip: The semicolon (;) between each thought name tells TheBrain that these are separate thoughts. Typing a space after each semi-colon is optional.

3. Press the **Enter** key.



Note that the new thoughts are arranged in alphabetical order. To change the order of thoughts, right click in the background and select **Arrange Thoughts by...** From here, you can arrange thoughts by Name, Type, and Date Modified, Created or Activated in Latest or Oldest orders. Thought sorting disregards articles such as A, An and The.



Create a Thought by Dragging and Dropping an Existing File

You can create a thought by dragging a file from the desktop or from your file manager (such as File Explorer on Windows or Finder on a Mac). The new thought will have the same name as the file (minus its extension) and it will automatically have the file as an attachment. It will become a child of the active thought. You'll learn more about attachments in the next part of this tour.

1. Choose any file, from your desktop or from any other location. Your original file will not be affected—by default, drag and drop creates a copy of the file.
2. Size the TheBrain window so that you can also see either the portion of the desktop containing the file you're going to use or the window in which the file is listed.
3. Drag the file into the Plex. There's no need to drag it to a specific thought.

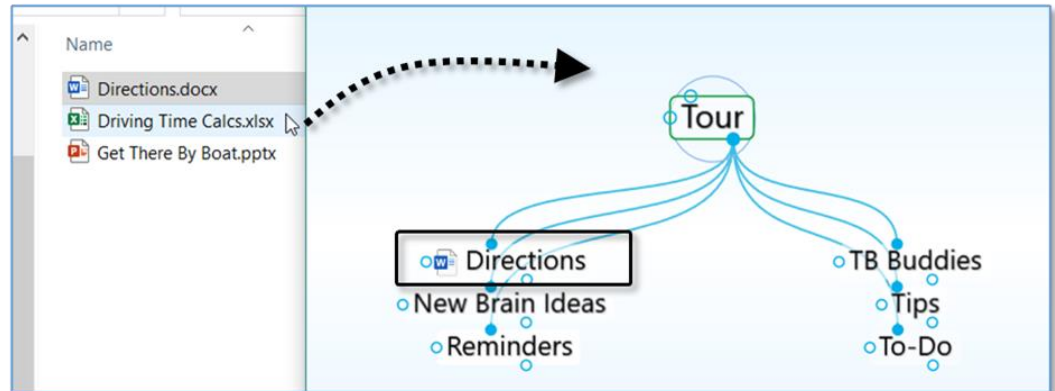


Figure 25. File Dragged into Plex Becomes a Child Thought of the Active Thought

The new thought will appear in the Plex and it will include an icon that represents the type of file. Any time you click this icon in the Plex, the related file will open.



Thought Pins

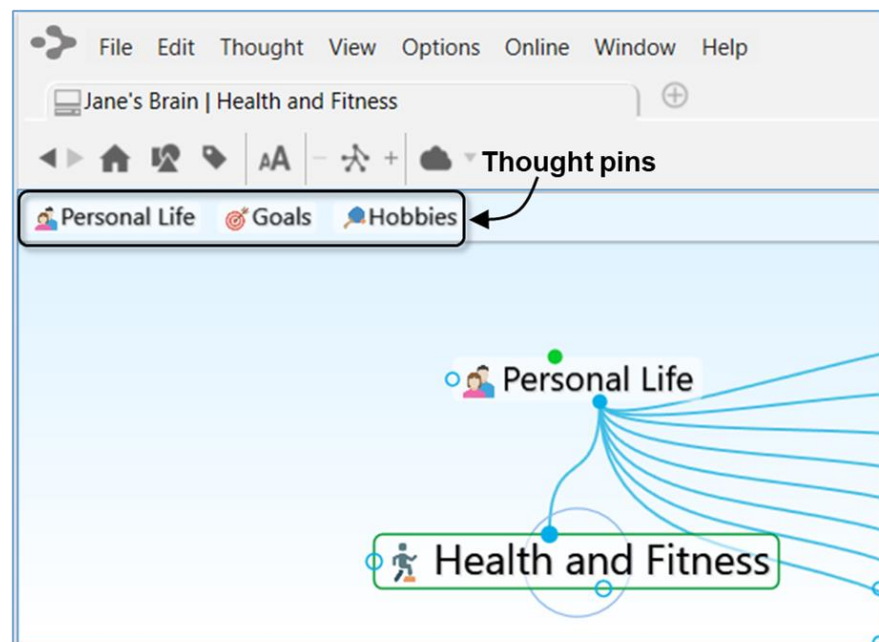


Figure 26. Thought Pins in an Existing Brain

The area at the top of the Plex, just below the Brain toolbar functions like a bulletin board on which you can “pin” thoughts you want to keep at your fingertips. These quick-access shortcuts to thoughts are called “pins.” No matter where you are in the Plex, the pins remain visible.

1. Right-click the thought named “Reminders,” then click **Create Pin** on the context menu.

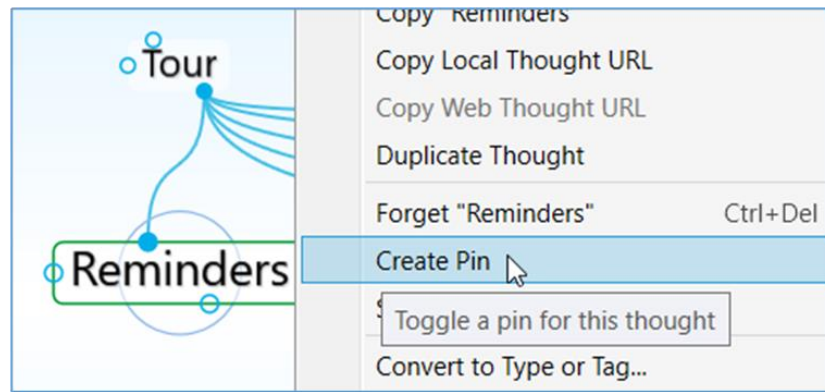


Figure 27. Create a New Pin

2. Click any other thought in the Plex. When you want to return to the Reminders thought, click the Reminders pin to get there instantly.



Relationship Changes

1. Create a new child of Tour named “Experiments.” (Drag from Tour’s child gate down a bit, type: **Experiments** and then press the **Enter** key.) Then click the Tour thought to make it active.
2. Now you’ve decided that the Experiments thought should really have an equal relationship with Tour, and not be one of its children—because you’ll use experimenting as much as touring to develop your Brain skills.

Drag Experiments up to the left side of the Plex so that it is level with Tour, then release the mouse button.

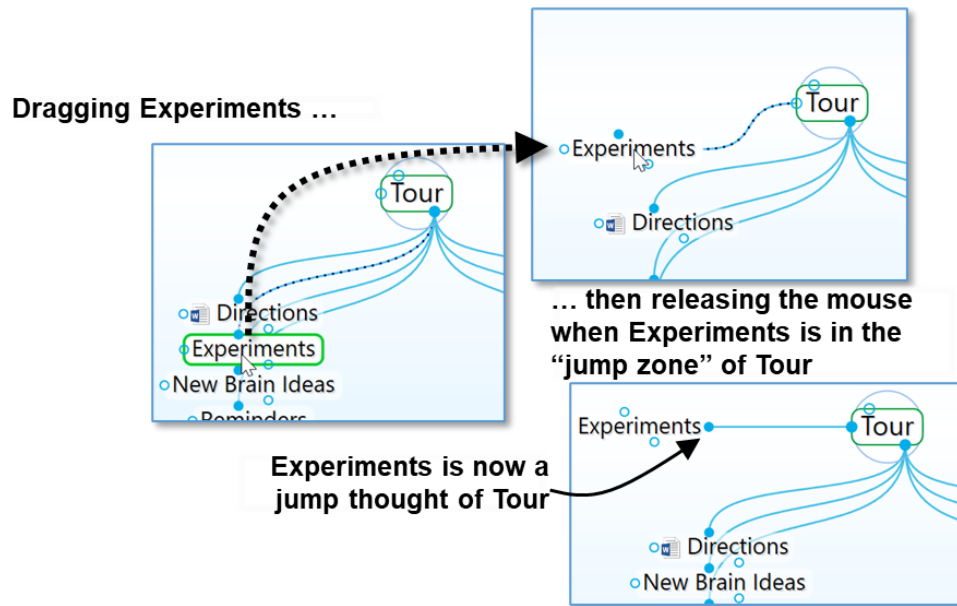


Figure 28. Dragging a Thought to Change its Relationship



Tip: See the section beginning on page 104 for details about changing thought relationships.



This is a good place for a break if you'd like to take one. You can leave your brain open or close the Brain window. Just start up TheBrain again when you're ready to continue.

Part 3: Find, Add Attachments, Link, and Delete Thoughts

Itinerary: You'll find thoughts, add an attachment to a thought, add a web page to a thought, use a thought to open an application, link some thoughts, and delete a thought.



Your Tour brain should be on the screen, as you left it in Part 2. You'll begin by creating a few more thoughts for a little more scenery along the way.

1. Create four new child thoughts under TB Buddies: **John; Jill; Fred; Ann** (Drag from TB Buddies' child gate, then type each name, separated by a semicolon, then press the **Enter** key.)

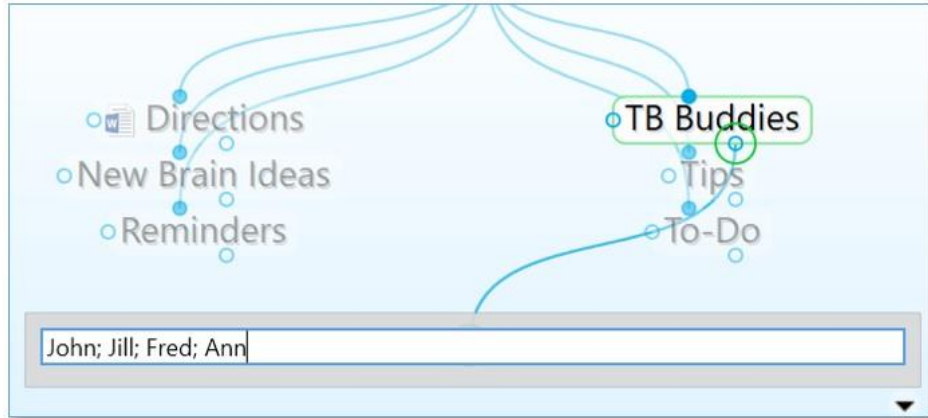


Figure 29. Four New Thoughts

2. Click TB Buddies to make it the active thought. It should be in the middle of the Plex.
3. Enter a note for TB Buddies: **We should compare brains sometime**
4. Point the mouse at the Tour thought and notice how the note you just entered for TB Buddies is still in the Content Area.
5. Click the Reminders pin at the top of the Plex to go quickly to your Reminders thought. Notice that the Content Area only has the thought name heading, since you haven't created content for that thought yet.



Instant Activation

"Instant Activation" is a Brain feature that lets you quickly find a thought by typing a few letters, and choosing from a list of "hits." After you click the thought of your choice, that thought is automatically activated.

Say you're ready to work with Fred's thought—you want to add an attachment to it. With such a small brain, you could click around and find it pretty quickly, or you could speed things up:

1. Click in the Search box in the top-right area of the window and type: **f**

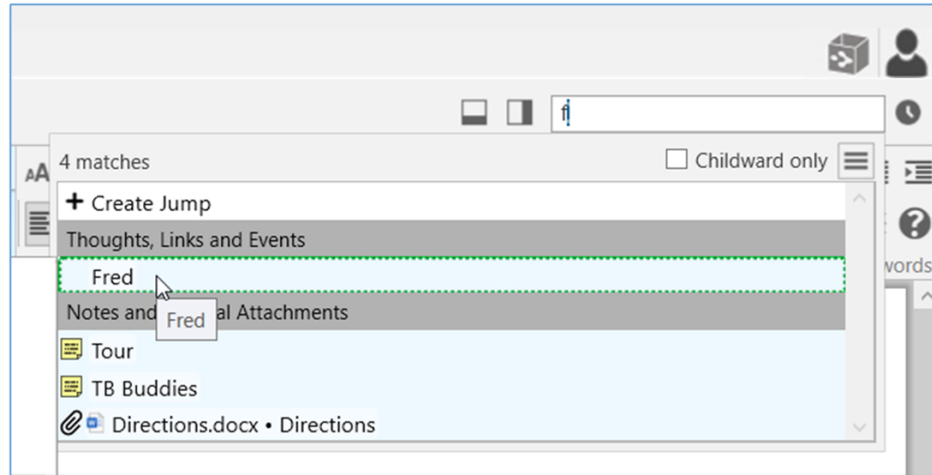


Figure 30. Instant Activation

Because you only have one thought that begins with the letter “f,” it is found instantly. If other thoughts begin with the same letter, you will see them in the results as well. The more characters you type, the more finely-tuned your search will become.

2. Click on “Fred” in the Search box below thoughts, Links, and Events. Fred will be activated.
3. Type the letter “j” in the Search box to search for Jill. Notice that the two thoughts beginning with the letter “j” appear in the list. Click on Jill to activate this thought.



Tip: See the Searching Your Brain section beginning on page 49 for details about more complex searching and the Navigating Your Brain section on page 40 for more on cruising around your brain.



Attachments

1. Back to Fred. Activate Fred by clicking his thought in the Plex.
2. Click the **Attach** button in the Content Area toolbar. As you see below, you can add many kinds of attachments.

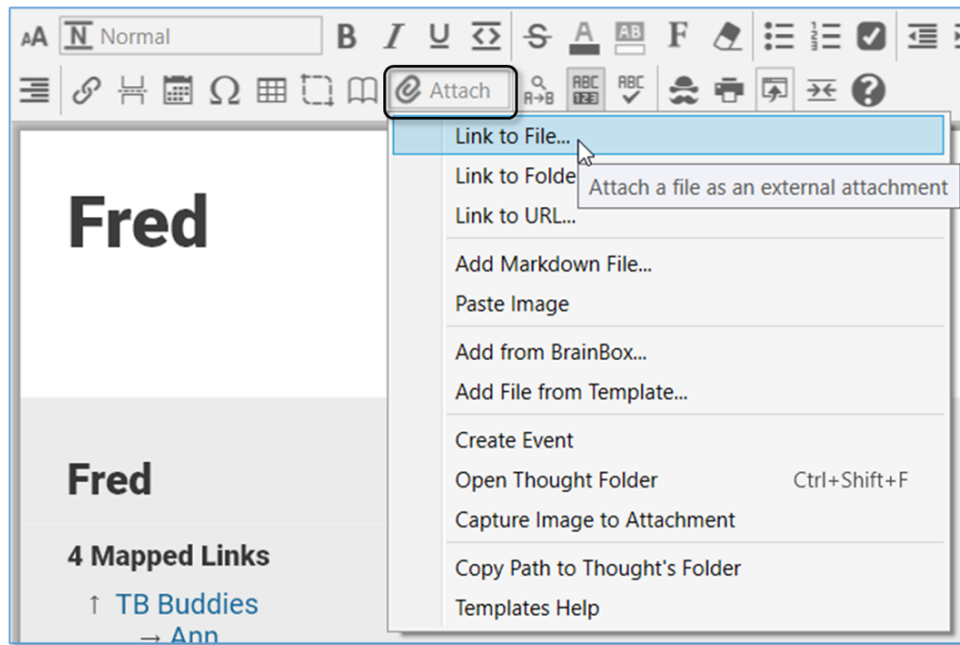


Figure 31. Add an Attachment

3. You can add an existing file or you can create a new one. For now, select an existing file on your computer. To do so, click **Link to File** in the list.
4. Navigate to any file on your computer, then click the **Open** button to attach it to the active thought. If you attach a picture file, you'll see the image itself in the Content Area. Otherwise, you'll see the name and description of the file.

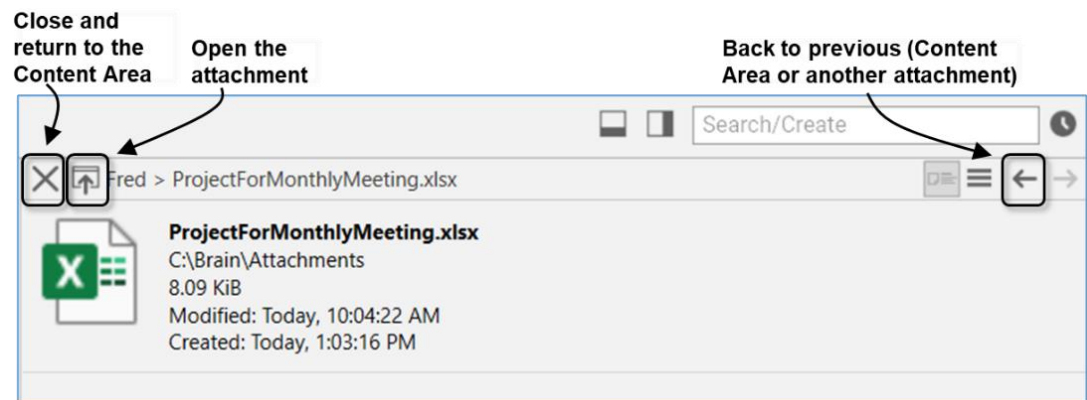


Figure 32. After Attaching a File

5. When you return to the Content Area, you'll see a link to the file you attached. You can click on it whenever Fred is active to access and open the file. You might use this function to add a file you're collaborating on, or a worksheet with data for a project you're completing together.



Web Page Thoughts

1. Activate the John thought.
2. Open your Web browser and navigate to a web page of your choice.
3. Arrange the browser window and the Brain window so that you can see at least part of both of them.
4. Drag from the address bar icon in your browser to an empty area of the Plex, then release the mouse button.

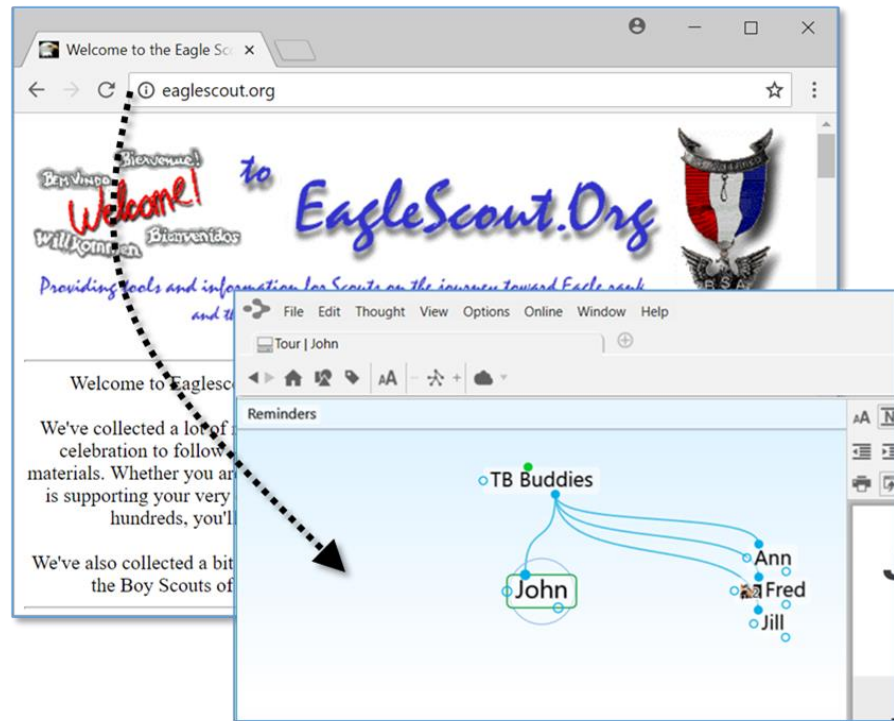


Figure 33. Inserting a Web Page as an Attachment

The web page will be added as a child thought of John. When you click either the thought's icon in the Plex or the link in the Content Area, the web page will launch in TheBrain's built-in browser in the Content Area.



Tip: If you want to add the web page to a thought instead of creating a new child thought, drop the web page on top of the thought. See the Adding and Viewing Thought Attachments section beginning on page 194 for details about attachments.



Creating Attachments from a Thought

1. Activate the New Brain Ideas thought by typing an “n” in the Search box and then clicking on “New Brain Ideas” in the list.
2. Click the **Attach** button in the Content Area toolbar, then click **Add File from Template**.
3. Click **Microsoft Excel Worksheet** (assuming this application is installed on your computer—if not, select any other application in the list). The new document will be named “New Brain Ideas,” matching the active thought.



TheBrain automatically detects file types for many applications that you may have installed on your computer and populates the list of available files to create. You can also add templates for any file that you’d like to use as a basis for new files yourself.

- Click the **Attach** button, select **Template Help**, then click the **Yes** button to open the folder where templates are stored. Copy empty files of the types you want to be able to create from within TheBrain into the folder.
- When you are done, click the **Attach** button again and chose one of the templates you added. **User Templates** will appear in a list directly above all **System Templates**.

Once you select a file type, two things will happen:

- First, a new file will be created and added to the thought (in this example, a Microsoft Excel document named “New Brain Ideas”).
- Second, the file will be automatically opened so that you can work on it (in this case, starting Microsoft Excel).

After you add content to the document and save it, it will be saved internally within your brain. When you activate the same thought, the document can be opened again by clicking it in the Content Area.

4. Close the new document before moving on to the next section.

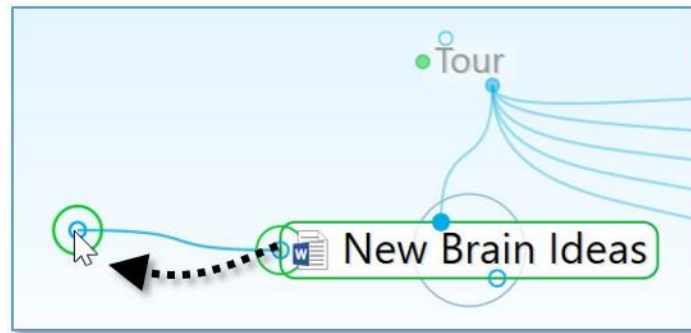


Linking Thoughts

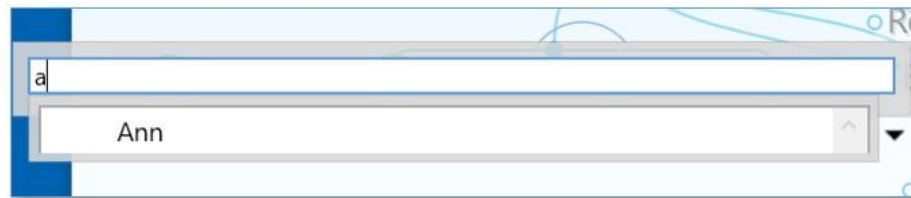
One of the most powerful features of TheBrain is the ability to connect thoughts to each other. Remember, you can connect any thought to any other thought. For example, say one of your TB Buddies, Ann, is full of ideas on how to use your brain. You might want to link her to the New Brain Ideas thought.

1. Activate the New Brain Ideas thought (if it isn’t still active).

2. Drag from the jump gate on the left side of New Brain Ideas as if you are going to create a new jump thought and release the mouse button.



3. Type the first few letters of the thought you want to connect (Ann) in the **Create Jump** dialog box. Notice that the existing thought is displayed in the list below.



4. Either double-click on Ann in the list of found results or click Ann once, then press the **Enter** key.

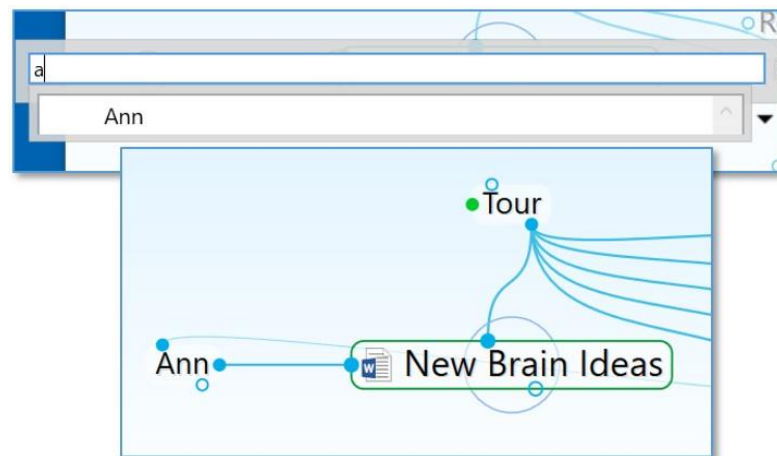


Figure 34. Jump Thought Linked to an Existing Thought

Now that Ann is connected to New Brain Ideas, whenever you look at this thought, her thought will be just a click away. Also, when you are at Ann's thought, the New Brain Ideas thought will be conveniently available.

There are many ways to link existing thoughts. The method above is convenient when the thoughts you want to connect are not both visible, however if the thoughts are both visible, you can simply draw the link between the two, starting from either one of the thoughts' gates. Both the Past Thought List below the Plex and the pins can be used for linking thoughts visually. When you connect two thoughts visually, the resulting relationship will be determined by which gate you selected to start the linking—it does not matter where you release the mouse button over the destination thought.



Forgetting and Deleting Thoughts

If you've entered a thought in error or you simply don't need to keep it around anymore, you can easily remove it from your brain. TheBrain offers two ways to remove thoughts—forgetting and deleting. When a thought is forgotten, it can be remembered later if need be, however, deleting is permanent.

Let's forget the Jill thought.

1. Make TB Buddies the active thought.
2. Right-click the Jill thought.
3. Click the **Forget "Jill"** command on the context menu.

Jill disappears from the display. Now, if you want to show Jill again, turn on Forgotten Thoughts:

- Click the **Options** menu, then click **Show Forgotten Thoughts**.

Any forgotten thoughts will appear faded.

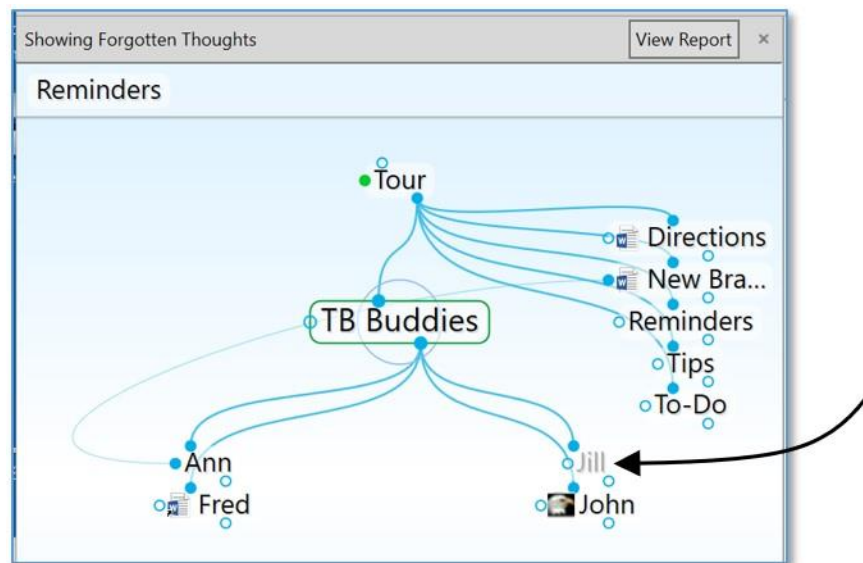


Figure 35. Forgotten Thoughts

A message above the Plex reminds you that forgotten thoughts are showing. You can permanently delete thoughts or remember them individually or all at the same time, which is explained in the Forgetting and Deleting Thoughts section on page 116. To turn off the display of forgotten thoughts, simply click the **X** button next to **View Report** or click the **Show Forgotten Thoughts** command in the **Options** menu to toggle it off.



Tip: If you want to permanently delete a thought without first forgetting it, hold down the **Shift** key (for Windows)/**Alt** key (for Mac) as you right-click on it and then select the **Delete** command.

Concluding Your Tour

If you click the **Home** button in the Brain toolbar, your brain should look something like this:

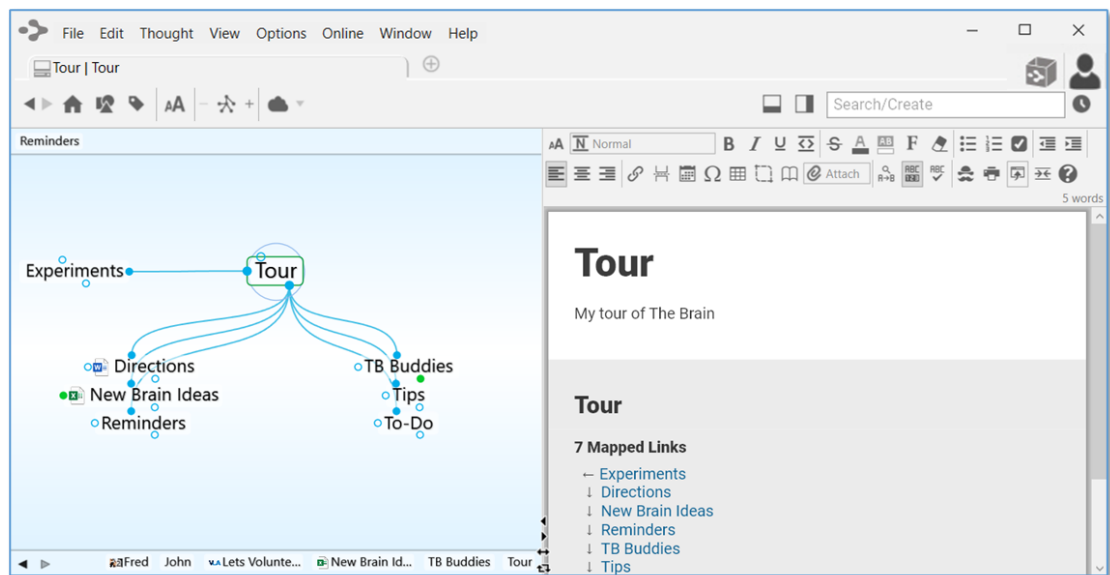


Figure 36. Completed Tour

Where to go from here? You can stay and experiment more with your Tour brain, begin reviewing sections of interest throughout this guide, open the Quick-Start brain, or dive into creating your own brain. You may want to glance at some of the example brains at <https://thebrain.com/apps> for more ideas—but you probably already have plenty of your own!



Tip: If you are ready to dive into beginning your own brain, start by creating a few thoughts for broad categories before you go to the detail level. For example, if your name is Ed, “Ed’s Brain” might be the name of your brain (and your first thought) and its first children might be Work, Family, Hobbies, and Friends.



This concludes your guided tour—thanks for coming along!

Understanding Thought Relationships

There are no rules governing the relationships between thoughts—whatever makes sense to *you* is the way your brain ought to be organized. The three primary relationship types—child, parent, and jump—can be used to express different types of relationships. Sibling is a relationship that is derived from child/parent relationships.

The examples in this section can help you understand the variety of relationships and how they are used. The core concepts behind each type of relationship are as follows:

- **Children:** Child thoughts are usually used to link more specific information or information that represents a sub-category.
- **Parents:** Thoughts linked as Parents are usually used to link more general information. Parents can also be thought of as higher-level categories to classify groups of information. They serve to indirectly connect their child thoughts as siblings.
- **Jumps:** Jump thoughts are usually used to link two pieces of information that are exclusively related, meaning that the two items are related to each other but neither represents a group that the other is a part of.

Let's move on to an example to explore these relationship types. Imagine that you are the owner of a company and you are reviewing personnel files. Each employee has a file. You decide it makes sense to organize your employees by department. Your brain is called My Brain. From My Brain, you create a child thought called My Company (see Figure 37). My Brain is now My Company's parent thought. You create four child thoughts from My Company—Manufacturing, Sales, Service, and Billing. These departments are sibling thoughts of each other.

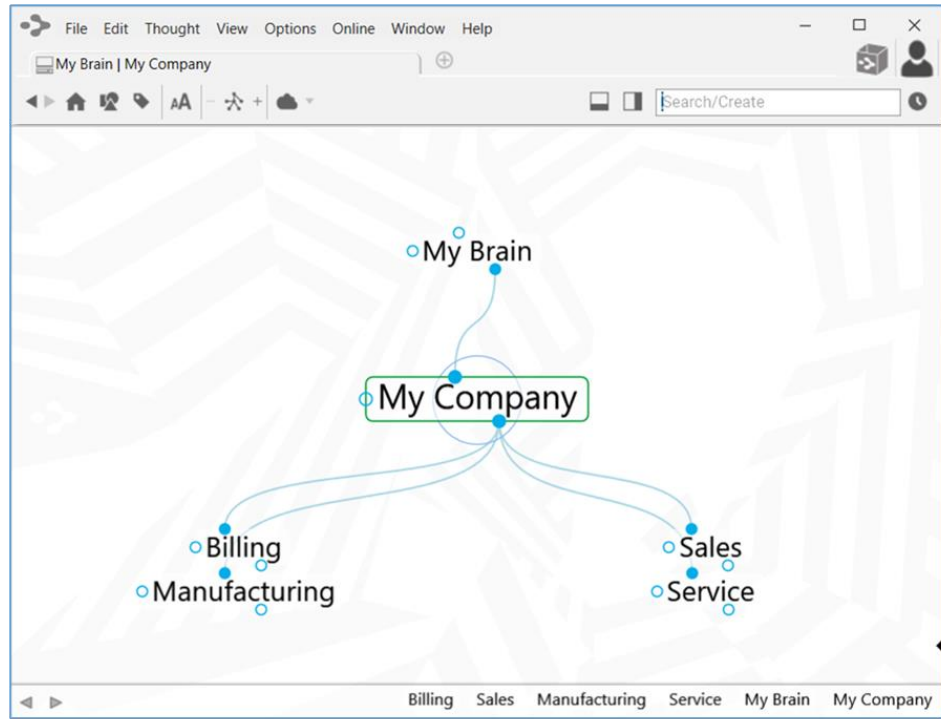


Figure 37. Sample Brain

Now you go to each department and create more child thoughts, one for each employee of the department. If an employee splits time between two departments, you can make him a child thought of both departments—he'll appear in both and you won't have to duplicate his thought. In this example, Bob is a child thought of both Manufacturing and Sales (see Figure 38). This is one of the most powerful features of TheBrain—having one thought under more than one heading.

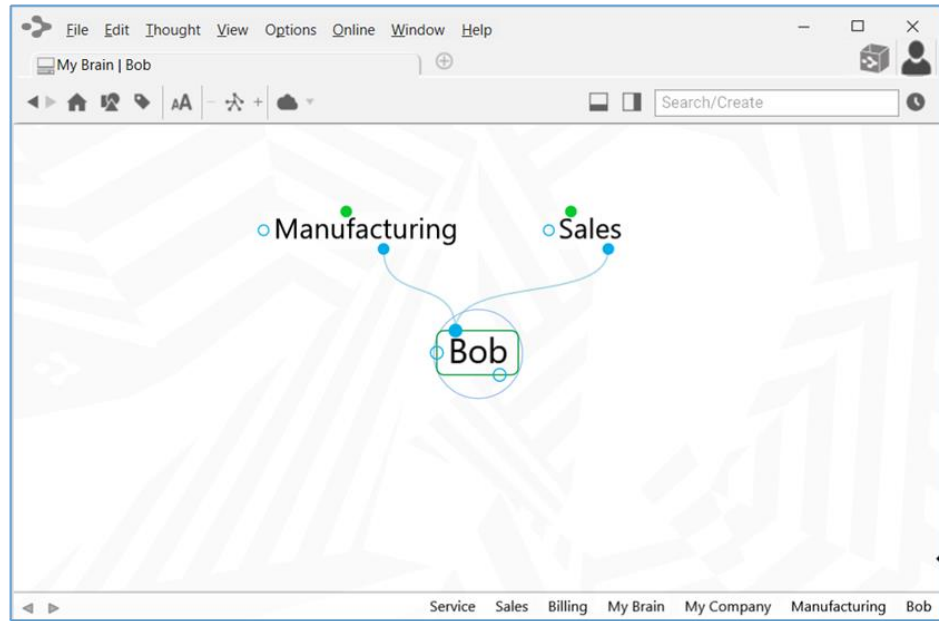


Figure 38. Child Thought with Two Parents

If you own more than one company, but have one accountant for all of them, you might want to make a thought called Accountant and link it as a jump thought to each company, as shown below.

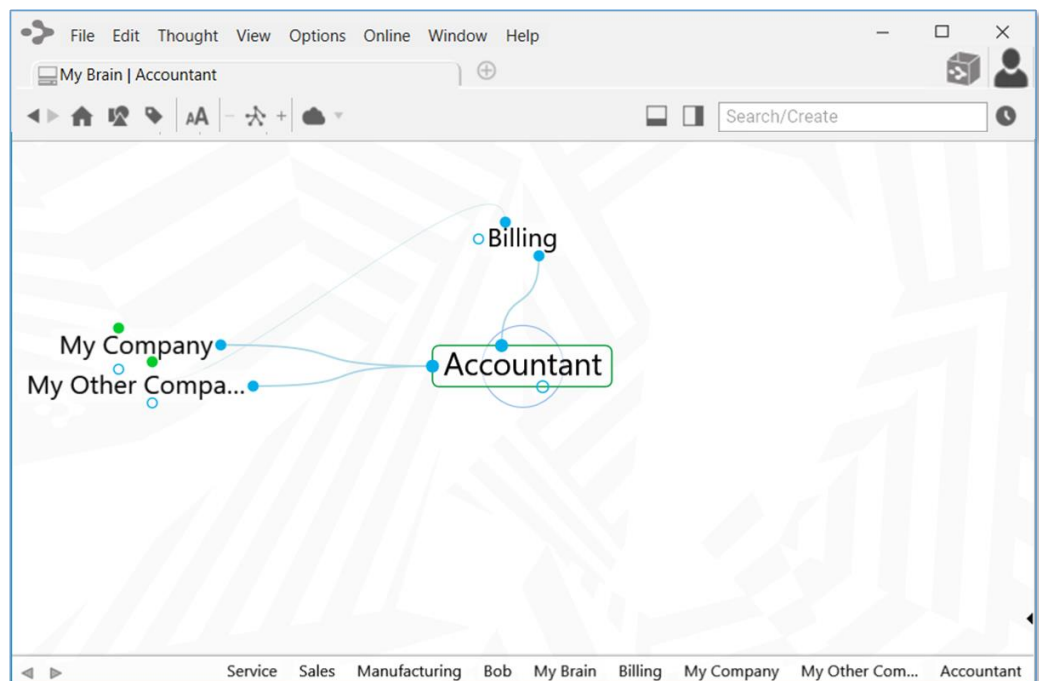


Figure 39. Jump Thoughts to the Active Thought

Imagine that Joe's company has just purchased one of your companies. Since Joe's company now owns this company, Joe's Company becomes a parent (see below).

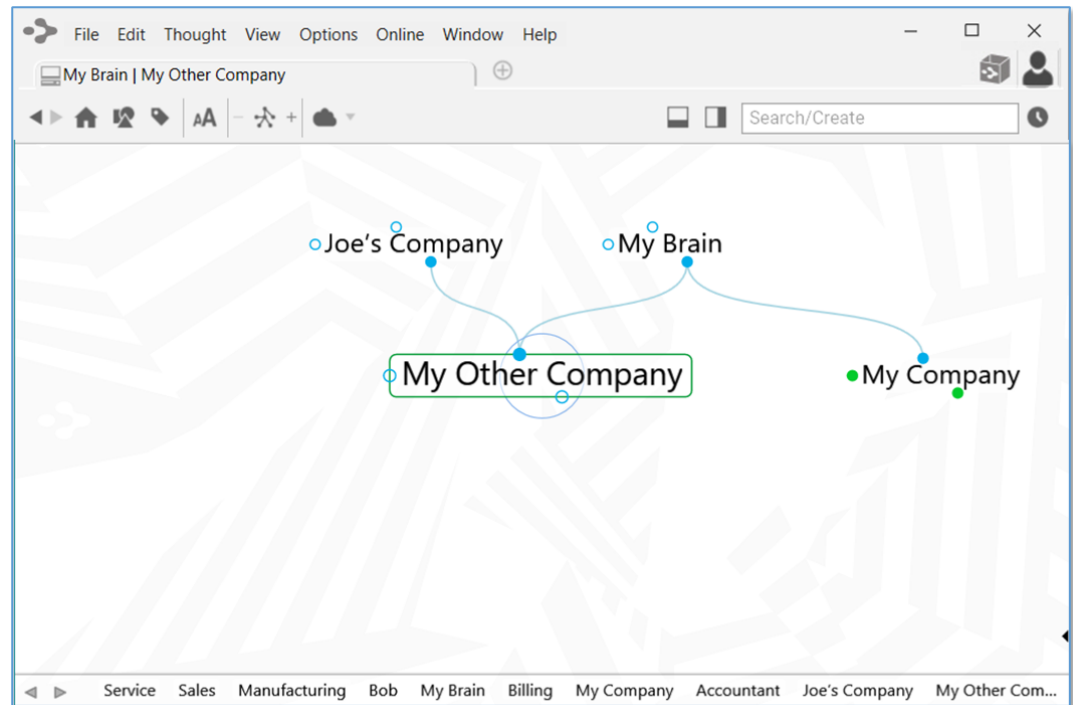


Figure 40. New Parent Thought

Because Joe wants to avoid a conflict of interest, the acquired company (My Other Company) no longer uses the same accountant. So its jump gate is hollow, while its sibling's jump gate (My Company) maintains that Link and is filled.

As you use TheBrain, you will develop a sense of the types of relationships you wish to make between thoughts. It is always easy to change relationships by adding and removing links (see Changing Relationships Using Drag and Drop on page 124).

Families of Thoughts

It is tempting to view thought relationships as families, and indeed these different parts of your brain are types of families, with their ancestry visually spread before you, represented by subjects and categories. But unlike human families, a child thought can be a parent of one of its siblings and a thought can have more than two parents.

The complex relationships you can form in TheBrain are the source of its power. Let's consider sibling thoughts that also share a parent/child relationship.

Let's say you are studying philosophy. You might have a thought called Philosophy. Individual philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle could be child thoughts of Philosophy. Each of these siblings, in turn, may have child thoughts. Aristotle was a student of Plato, so you may want to make Aristotle not only a child of Philosophy, but of Plato, so that when you're working with Aristotle, Plato is only a thought away.

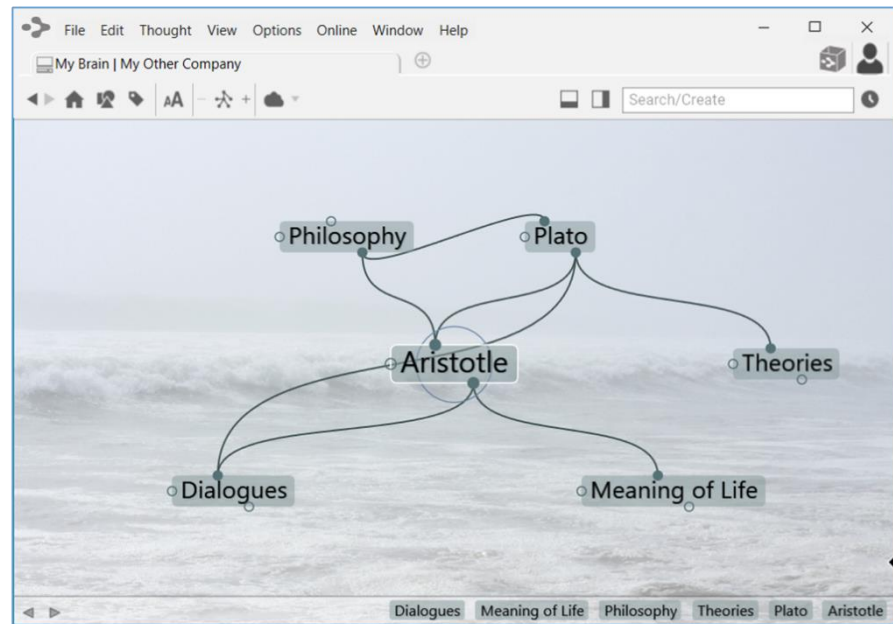


Figure 41. Example of Parent/Child Relationships

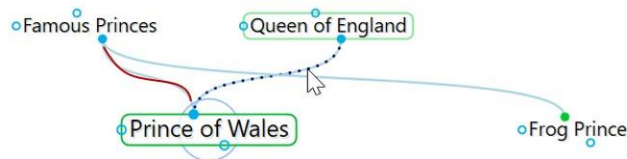
Notice that when Philosophy and Plato are in Aristotle's parent zone, their relationship (Philosophy is a parent thought of Plato) is shown by the line linking the child gate of Philosophy to the parent gate of Plato.

Clearly, TheBrain is a powerful method of organizing ideas and information. No hierarchical file structure can provide as much cross-referenced information at a glance. And our example is pretty basic—a fully developed brain can hold many more relationships and much more information.

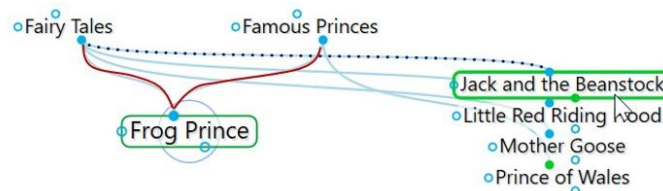
Navigating Your Brain

All thoughts can be connected—directly or indirectly—even thoughts that may seem to have nothing to do with each other can be related through a chain of links.

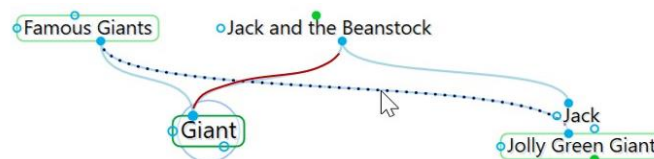
Let's look at an example, say, the Queen of England and asparagus. You have a thought called Queen of England. One of its child thoughts is Prince of Wales, which has a parent thought—Famous Princes—that is also linked to the story of the Frog Prince.



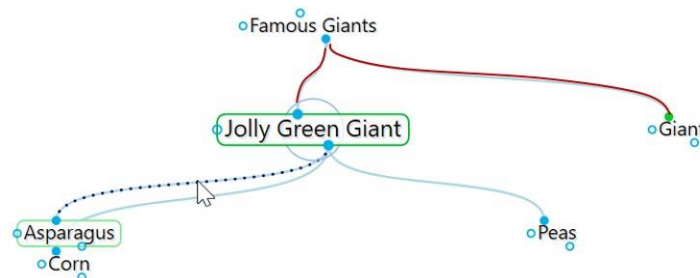
The story has another parent thought called Fairy Tales. A sibling of Frog Prince is Jack and the Beanstalk.



Jack and the Beanstalk has child thoughts called Giant and Jack. Giant has another parent thought called Famous Giants.



Famous Giants has a child thought called Jolly Green Giant. Jolly Green Giant has child thoughts named after canned vegetable products, one of which is Asparagus. Thus, the Queen of England is connected to asparagus!



Depending on the relationship you create between them, thoughts may be closely or distantly related. Thoughts are considered to be closely related when

they are linked directly or are siblings. In the default view of the Plex, only close thoughts of the active thought are always displayed in the Plex. Thoughts that are one additional step (generation) away from the active thought can be displayed by expanding the view. See [Advanced Navigation and Alternate Views](#) on page 160 for information about the different view options.

Opening a Brain

When you log into TheBrain 12, and no brain is open, all local, synced or online brains will be displayed as thumbnails in the **Brains** tab, as shown below. This is assuming that you have already created one or more brains. Clicking on a brain thumbnail opens that brain. Or, hold down the **Ctrl** key as you click to open a brain in a new tab, leaving the Brains tab open.

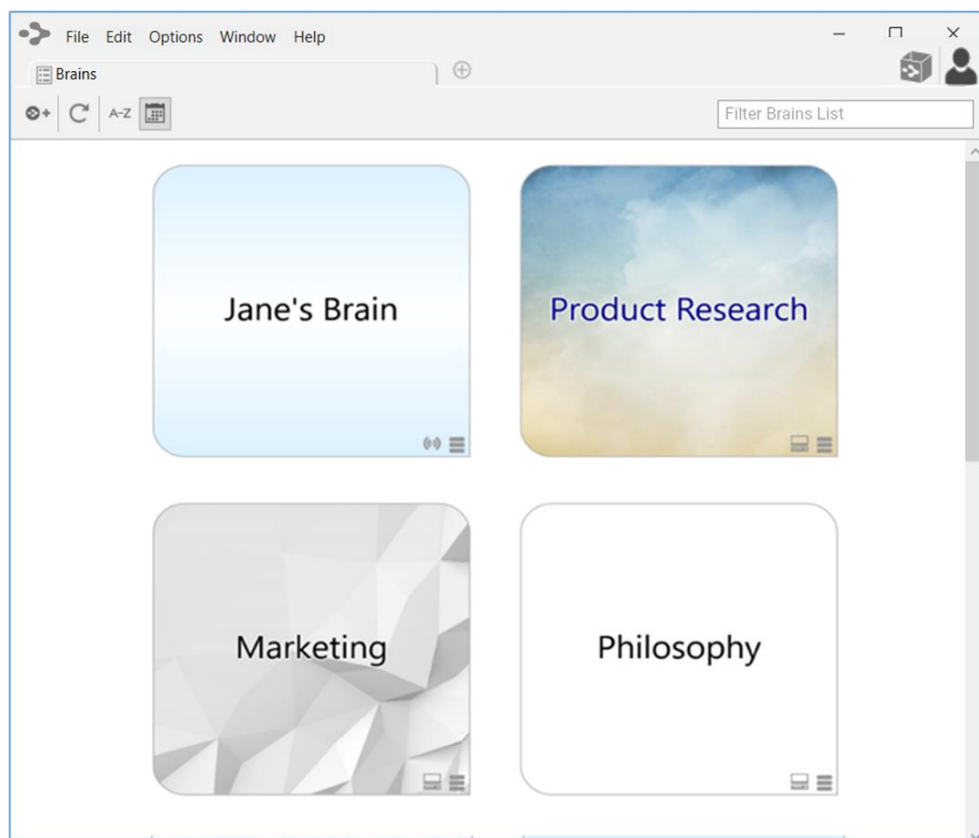


Figure 42. Example of Three Available Brains on the Brains Tab

By default, brains are listed according to how recently they have been accessed. You can also see the list of brains sorted alphabetically using the **Brains** tab toolbar, shown below. All brains that are locally available are shown first, followed by brains that are available online.

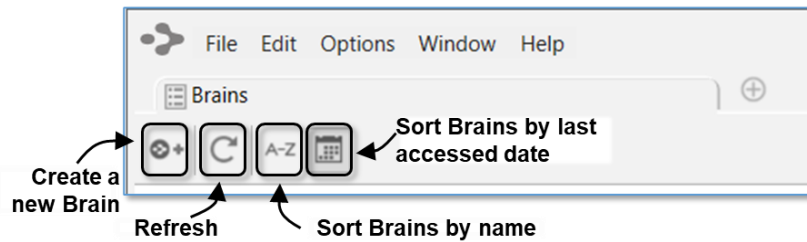


Figure 43. The Brains Tab Toolbar

The status of whether each brain is available locally, online, or both is also displayed. Each brain in the **Brains** tab will have an icon appearing in the lower-right corner of the thumbnail. Right-click on a brain or click on the status icon to display a menu of options for that brain, as shown below. The appearance of the icon(s) help you identify whether the brain is Local, Synced (local and online) or Cloud (Online only).



Figure 44. Icons Indicating Local, Synced, or Cloud

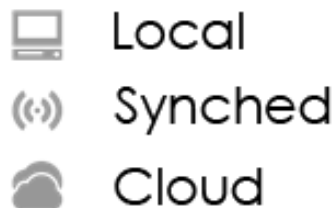


Figure 45. Status Indicator Icons

Opening a Brain that Doesn't Appear in the Brains Tab

If you have a brain from an older version or from a backup, it will not appear in the Brains tab until you import it. Click the **File** menu, then the **Import** command. Choose the type of file you want to import, then click the **Select File** button, navigate to the file of your choice, then click the **Open** button when the file is selected. Click the **Import** button after TheBrain has finished converting the brain.

Managing Brains Using the Tabs

The tabbed interface of the Plex lets you switch instantly between brains or even keep the same brain open in multiple **Brain** tabs or windows.

To re-open the **Brains** tab to display the Brain thumbnails, click the **+** icon to the right of the last tab.

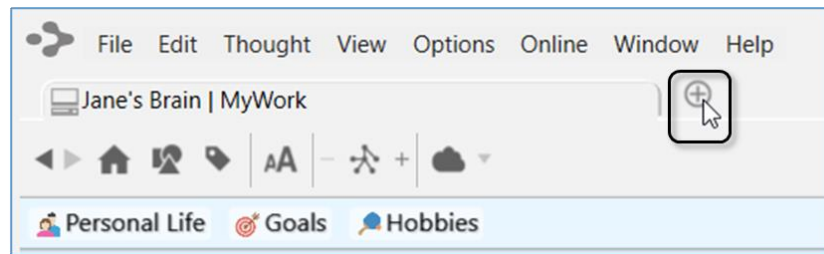


Figure 46. Click the + Icon to Open the Brains Tab



There is no limit to the number of brains you can open at once. Each time you open a brain it will appear in a separate tab. Switch from brain to brain instantaneously by clicking its tab. All tabs and their states are automatically saved and restored when you quit and restart.

- **Float tabs** into their own dedicated window by dragging a tab out of TheBrain application window. This creates a new Brain application window with just a single tab.
- **Merge tabs** into one window by dragging and dropping. Click the tab of one Brain window and drag the tab to another open brain, hovering over the tab area. Then release the mouse button.
- **Open the same brain in multiple tabs** to view and edit multiple areas at a time. This lets you view different areas of your brain at the same time, and, if you like, use a different layout in each tab. Note that tabs are simply views into the same brain data and changes made in one tab affect all other tabs of that brain.
- **Duplicate tabs.** Right-click on a brain tab to duplicate it, showing the same content in a new Brain tab.

Managing Brains Using the Context Menu

You can right-click any brain in the **Brains** tab to display the available options.

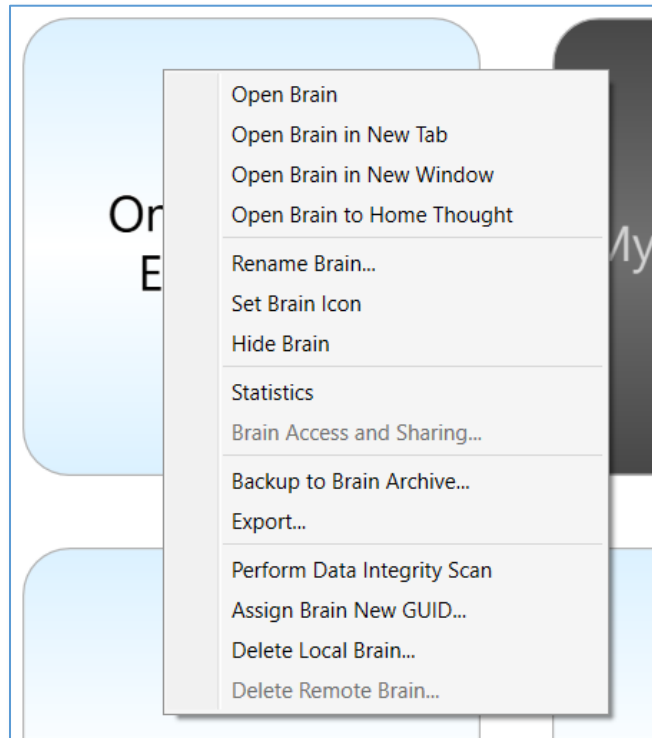


Figure 47. The Context Menu in the Brains Tab

Opening Content Associated with a Thought

As you navigate through your brain, the content associated with the active thought is displayed in the Content Area. Notes associated with the thought are displayed automatically. There are several ways to open an attached file or web page:

- Click on the link for the attachment in the Content Area.
- Click on the attachment icon to the left of the thought's name in the Plex.
- Right-click on the thought, click **Open Attachment** on the context menu, then click the attachment of your choice.

Showing Thought Content on Hover

By default, the content for the active thought displays in the Content Area. If you prefer, you can display content for any thought your mouse pointer hovers over by changing the setting. To do so, click the **Options** menu (**TheBrain** menu on

macOS), click **Preferences**, click the **Behavior** tab, then select the “Update displayed content on mouse hover or keyboard highlight” check box. Close the **Preferences** window when you’re finished.

Previewing Thought Content

Certain types of file attachments are automatically previewed inside of TheBrain. These include web pages, images, text, markdown files, JSON, .html files and PDFs. Simply click on an attachment’s tab and its preview will be shown. In the example below, Tropical Getaways is the active thought and there are two attachments in the Content Area—an image and a PDF.



You can view multi-page PDFs, web pages, and images as a slide show within the Context Area.

- Click the link for an attachment to open a preview of it in the Content Area.
- Click the **Next** or **Previous** arrow in the top-right corner of the attachment to move back and forth between attachments (or back to the notes in the Content Area).
- Click the **Close** button (**X**) to end the preview and return to the notes.
- Click the **Open** button to open the file outside of TheBrain.

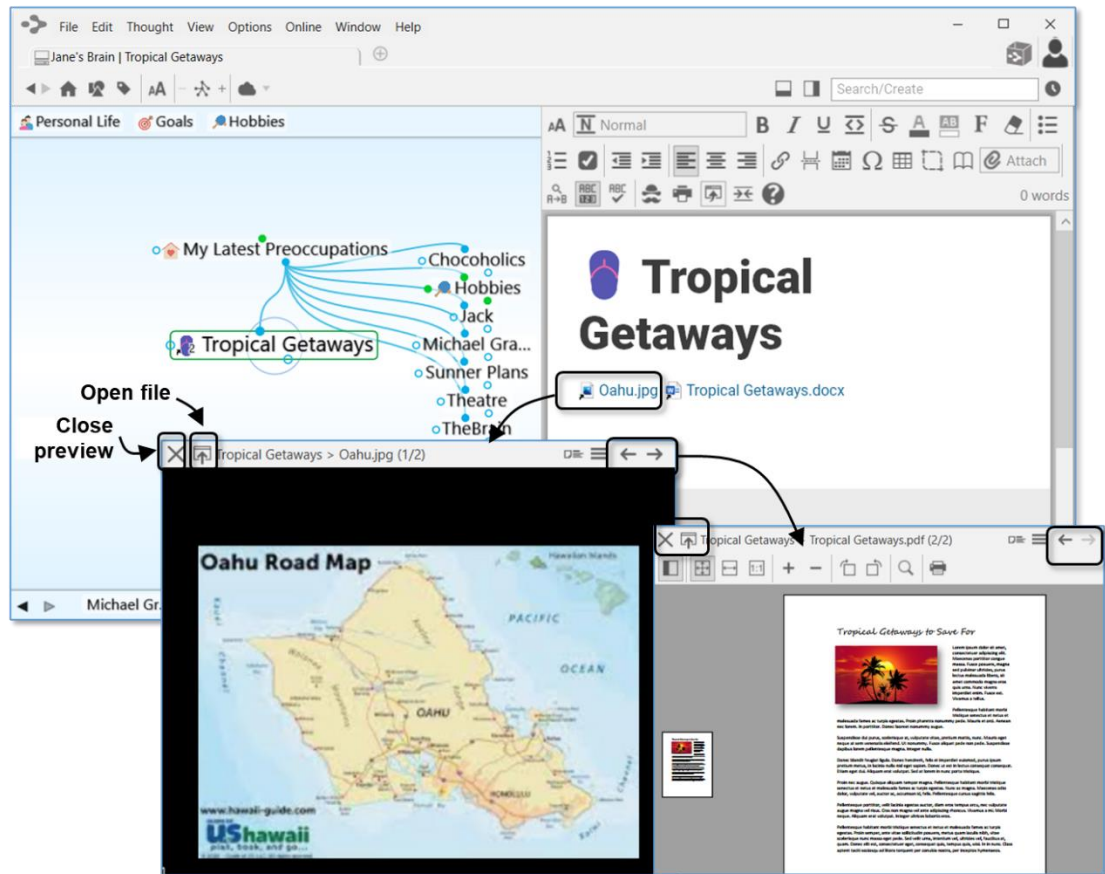


Figure 48. Content Area for the Active Thought

The PDF preview features:

- Supported rendering for each OS
- Support for very large, multi-page PDFs
- Thumbnails of each page, zoom, rotation, search, and printing
- All PDF commands can be mapped to a custom keyboard shortcut

Editing Additional Attachments

Adding additional attachments to a thought, such as .md and .txt files will enable you to also edit these attachments the same as you would a brain note.

Pins

As you saw if you went along on the Guided Tour of TheBrain earlier, pins are shortcuts to thoughts to which you want quick access. They appear at the top of the Plex, just below TheBrain toolbar. No matter where you are in your brain, the pins remain visible.

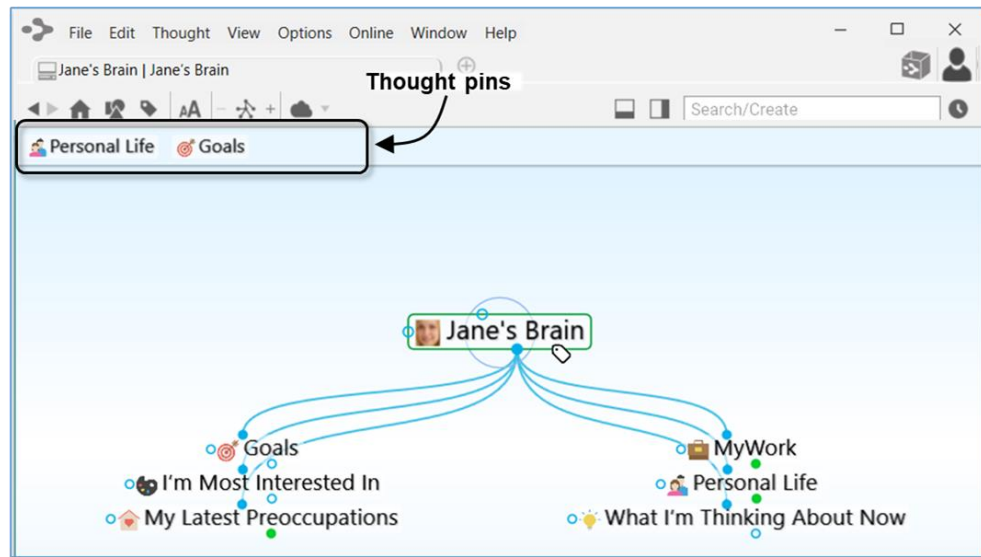


Figure 49. Pins

To create a pin:

- Right-click the thought for which you want to create a pin, then click **Create Pin** on the context menu

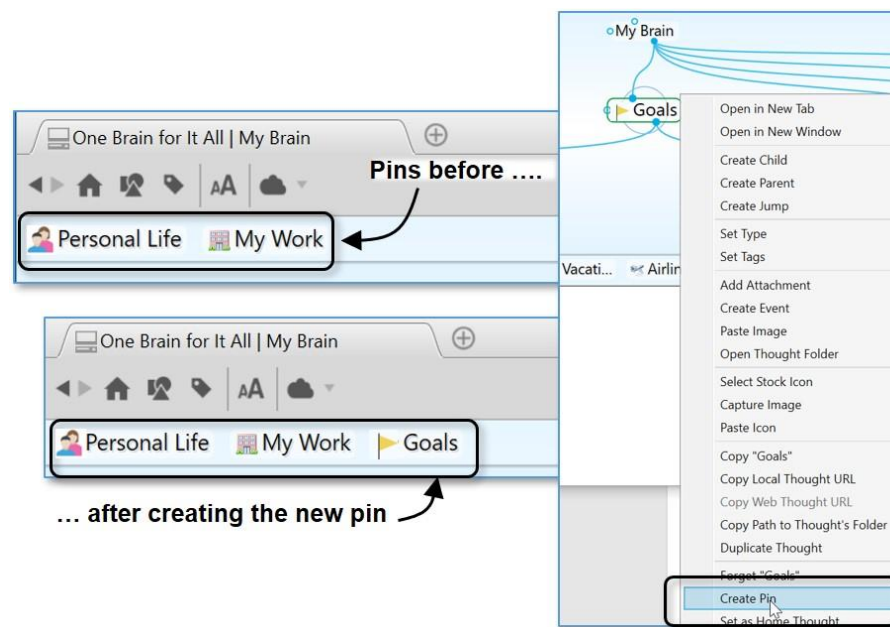


Figure 50. Creating Pins

To remove a pin:

- Right-click the pin or on a thought that has a pin, then click **Remove Pin** on the context menu



Removing a pin does not remove or delete the associated thought; it deletes only the reference to it at the top of the Plex.

To use a pin to link thoughts:

- Drag from one of the thought gates to the pin, or
- Move your mouse pointer over a pinned thought and gates will appear; drag from one of these gates to the thought you want to link

Activating Recent Thoughts: The Past Thought List

TheBrain keeps a running breadcrumb trail of your thoughts based on activation and displays it in the Past Thought List. You can think of the Past Thought List as the visual representation of the phrase, “train of thought”—a scrollable list of thoughts in the order you activated them. The Past Thought List is displayed at the bottom of the Plex window.

Clicking on any thought in the Past Thought List activates that thought. Also, when a new thought is created it appears in the Past Thought List immediately.

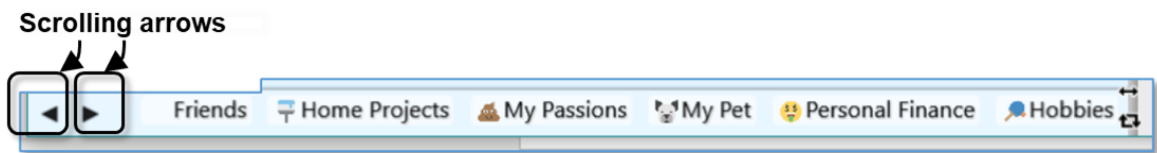


Figure 51. Past Thought List

The left and right arrows to the left of the Past Thought List enable scrolling to see items that don't fit on the display.

The most recently activated thought (the currently active thought) appears at the right end of the list.

To use a thought in the Past Thought List to link thoughts:

- Drag from one of the thought gates to one of the thoughts in the Past Thought List, or
- Move your mouse pointer over a thought in the Past Thought List and gates will appear; drag from one of these gates to the thought you want to link

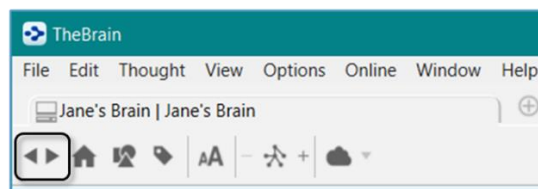
In the example below, Tropical Vacations is going to become a parent of Airline Rewards; the mouse is being dragged from the child gate of Tropical Vacations to Airline Rewards in the Past Thought List.



Figure 52. Creating a Link from the Past Thought List

Using the Back and Forward Buttons:

- In addition to the Past Thought List, you can also use the **Back** and **Forward** buttons, located near the top of the Window, to quickly retrace your steps; these buttons work just like they do in a web browser



- Click the **Back** button to go back to the last active thought
- Once you have clicked the **Back** button, the **Forward** button can be used to re-activate the thought you came from



Back and Forward Mouse Buttons: The back and forward buttons available on some mice (typically on the left side of the mouse near where you place your thumb) may be used to navigate backward and forward in your brain. These mouse buttons perform the same navigation as the **Back** and **Forward** buttons in the Brain toolbar, shown above.

Searching Your Brain

Instant Activation

TheBrain includes powerful search capabilities. The Search box is in the top-right area of the application.

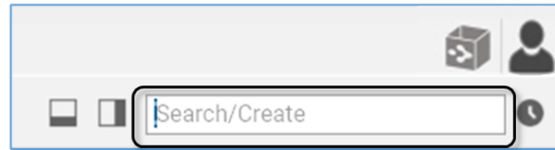


Figure 53. The Search Box

The term “instant activation” refers to TheBrain’s ability to quickly find whatever you’re searching for and activate the related thought. You can easily scan the search results as you type in the Search box. There’s no need to click in the Search box, your cursor is always there by default, unless you are actively typing in the Content Area or another field.

A Content Area Preview will automatically appear for each choice you highlight.

To activate one of these results, click it with your mouse or use the **up-arrow**, **down-arrow**, **page up**, and **page down** keys on the keyboard then press the **Enter** key.

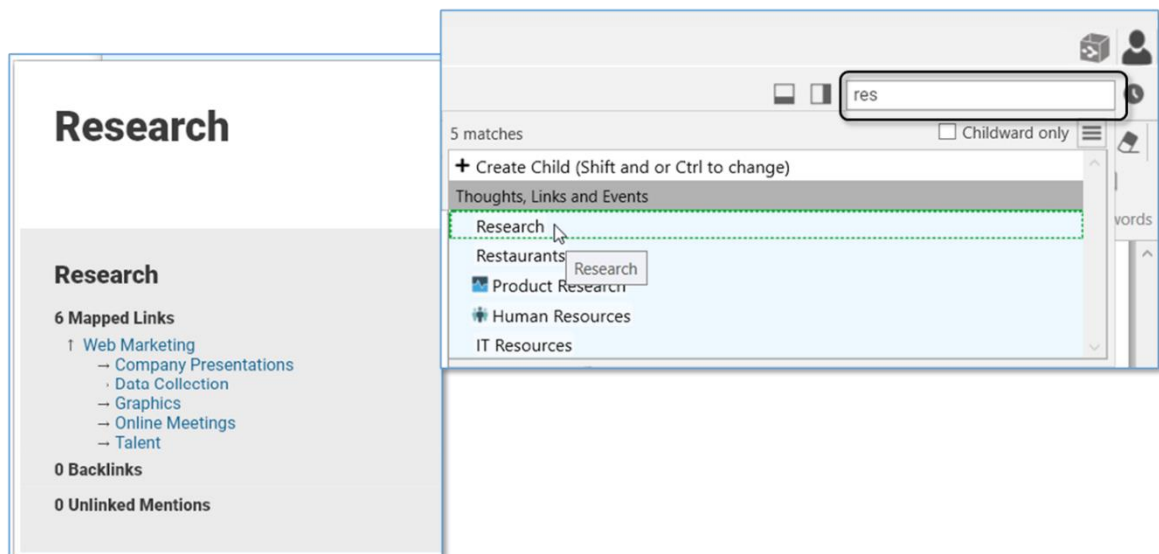


Figure 54. Instant Activate Finds Matches Based on Thought Names, Labels, Notes, and Attachments



Accents are ignored when matching thought names. Also, when two or more matches with the same name are found, the names of their parent or jump thoughts are also displayed so you can differentiate them.

You can search for thoughts by typing the first letter(s) of separate words and the letters can be in any sequence; for example, to find the “Family and Friends” thought you could type “fa fr,” or “fr fa,” or “fa and fri.”



Figure 55. Use First Letters of Separate Words for Instant Activate

Attachments and note search matches are identified with a yellow piece of paper icon for notes and a paper clip icon for Attachments.

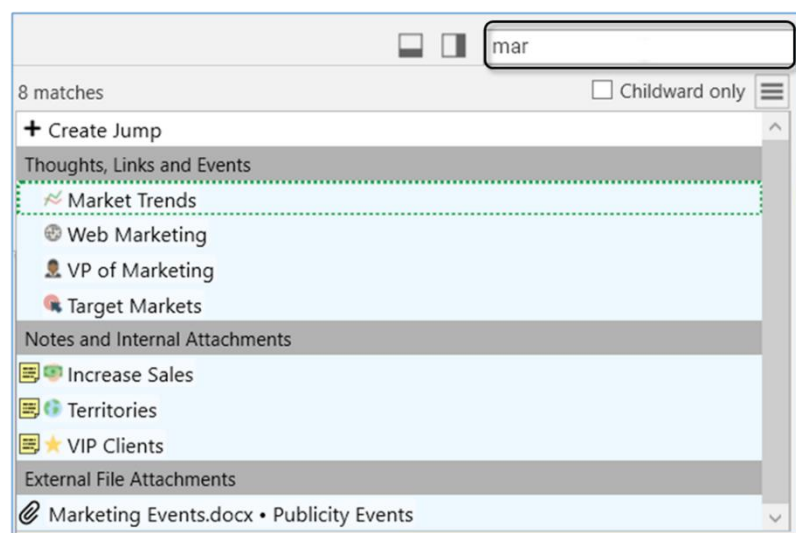


Figure 56. Search Results

When you do a search, the results are sorted with results that match thought names first, then notes, then attachments. Within the thought name matches, they are ranked in groups:

- **Exact Matches**—where the entire name of the thought matches the entire query
- **Starting Matches**—where the entire query occurs at the start of the thought name
- **Continuous Matches**—where the entire query occurs anywhere in the thought name
- **Matches**—where every term in the query occurs somewhere in the thought name

Within each group, thoughts that have been activated in the last 30 days will be shown first, ordered with the most recently activated first. Thoughts that have not been activated within 30 days are sorted alphabetically.

Searching within Attachments



Your searches automatically include matches based on the contents of attachments. If the text you're searching for exists within documents including PDFs, Word, Excel, PowerPoint and many other file formats, the documents containing the text will be found.



On Windows, TheBrain utilizes Windows Desktop Search to provide search results to Brain notes and file attachments.



TheBrain integrates with Spotlight on macOS to provide search results from within file attachments. No setup or additional steps are required to enable this functionality.



For searches in TheBrain to return accurate results, Windows Desktop Search or Spotlight will need to have access to the location where your brains are being stored. For more information on your brain storage, see page 75.

Using Search to Search the Web

Say you're searching for something and come up with no hits. For example, you're on a neighborhood committee and you've volunteered to look into an issue with squirrels. You type "squirrels" in the Search box. No results? Press the **F4** key to search the web.

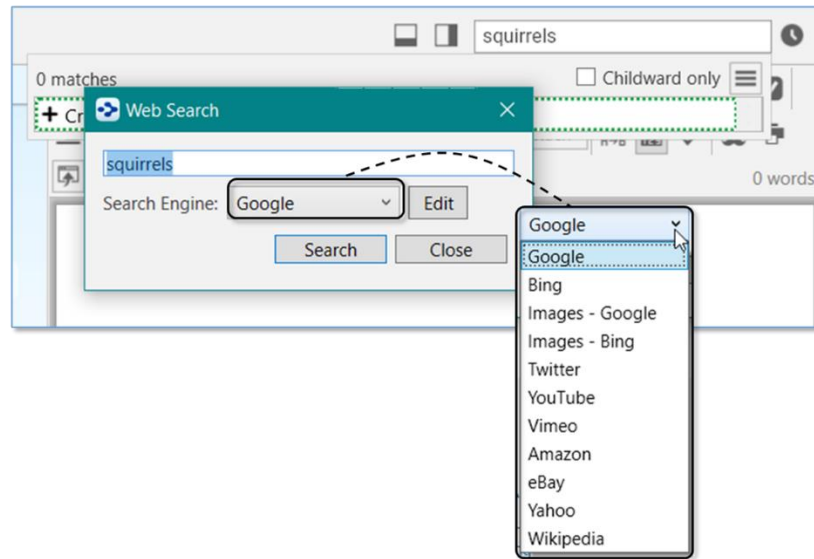


Figure 57. Search Engine Choices

- Click the drop-down arrow if you want to select a different search engine, then click the **Search** button to begin searching the web based on what you've typed.
- When you find a site you like, you can add it to any thought in the usual way. The **Web Search** box will close automatically after you click the **Search** button.

To modify, add, or reset search engines:

- Click the **Edit** button in the **Web Search** box.

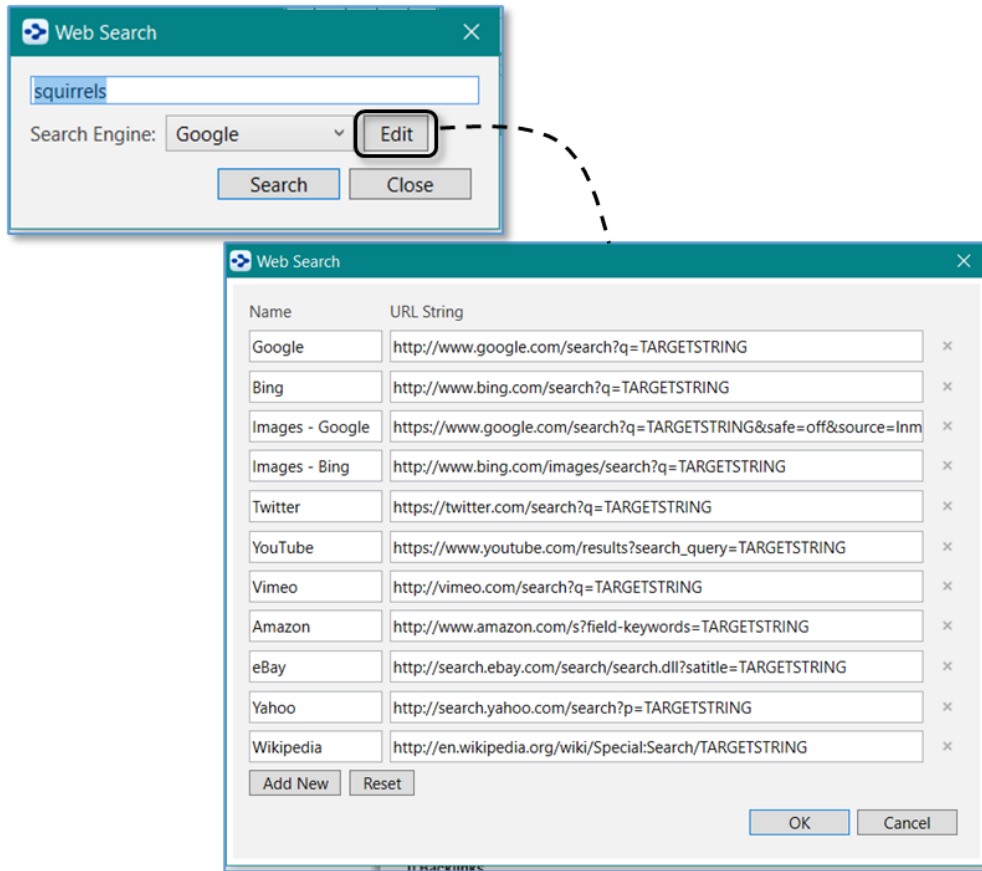


Figure 58. Editing Search Engine URLs

To customize the search engine choices:

- Click and edit any URL string to customize it, or
- Click the **Add New** button to enter a name that isn't already in the list, or
- Click the **Reset** button to return to TheBrain's default choices

Click the **OK** button to save your customizations or click the **Cancel** button to close the box without making changes. The original **Web Search** box will still be open, still showing the text you were searching for.

Additional Search Functionality

Search has several additional capabilities that are automatically enabled.

- You can find and execute commands from the Search box. To begin, type a forward slash (/) in the Search box. An alphabetical list will appear. The list will be fine-tuned to match what you type.

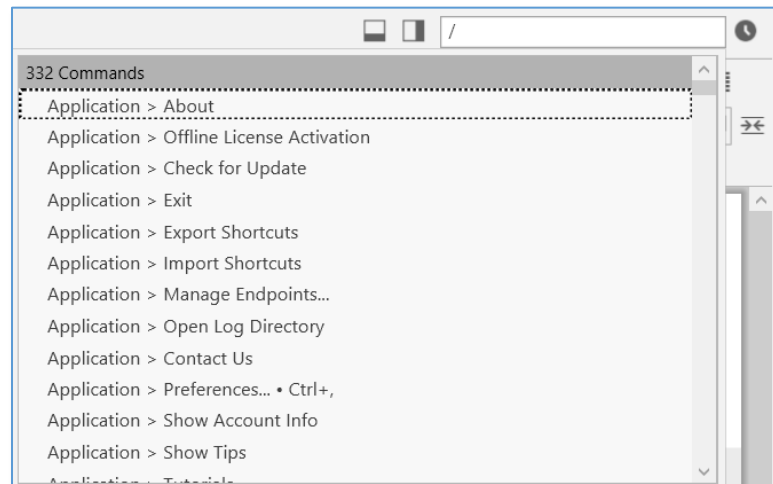


Figure 59. Executing a Command from the Search Box

- External attachments are included in search results
- Search using automatic acronyms (ex. find "New York Stock Exchange" by typing "nyse")
- Search for thoughts starting with punctuation. You may use this as a shortcut to provide fast access to thoughts that you always start with a certain type of punctuation. For example, you could use this for people (@Mike, @Sally, @Debbie, etc.) or projects (#Ridgeline, #Palmdale, #Westly, etc.)

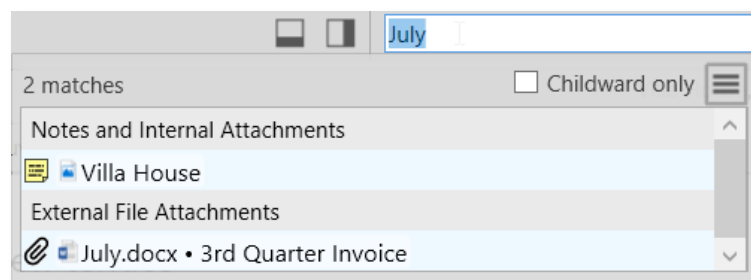


Figure 60. Search Finding External Attachments

Customizing Your Brain's Environment

You may choose to use your brain just as it's offered "out of the box" or you may choose to change some of the environmental settings to suit your personal preferences.

TheBrain's Default Settings

Without making any changes, here's what your brain looks like:

- The area where your thoughts appear (the Plex) will be the color and design of one of TheBrain's "Themes." The initial theme is randomly selected and you can change it at any time.
- The left half of TheBrain window will display your thoughts and the right half of the window will display the "Content Area" which holds notes and any other items you will attach to your thoughts—files, web pages, Events, etc.
- Your thoughts will be displayed in "Normal" view, meaning that you will see only the direct parents, children, jumps, and siblings of the active thought.

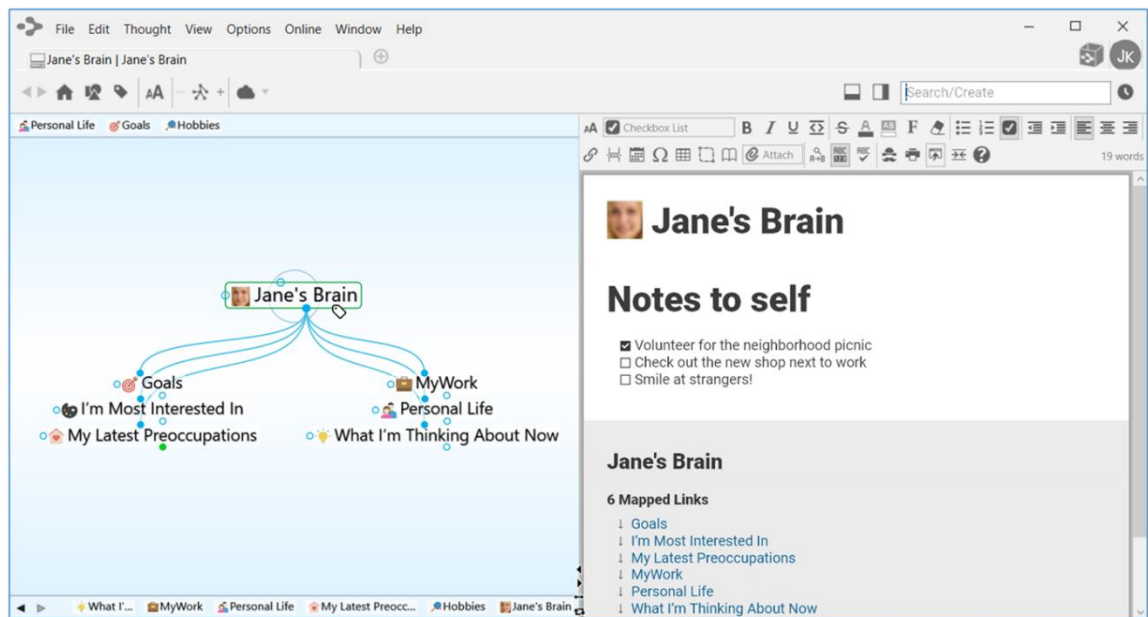


Figure 61. TheBrain Window with Default Settings

Using Smart Splitter to Arrange TheBrain Window

The smart splitter controls let you manage where the Plex and Control Area display relative to each other in TheBrain window.

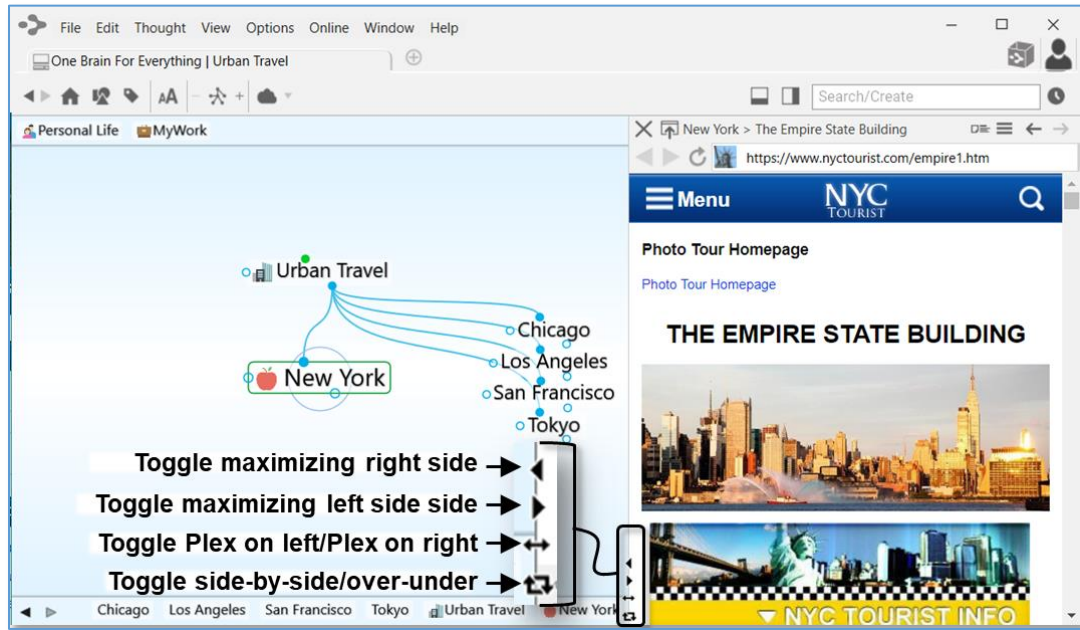


Figure 62. Smart Splitter

- Click the individual left- and right-arrows (or up- and down-arrows if the window is in “over-and-under” mode) to maximize the area the arrow is pointing towards (either the Plex or the Content Area).
- Click the double-headed arrow icon to toggle the Plex to the right or left side of the Content Area.
- Click on the two-arrow icon that forms a box to toggle between seeing the Plex and Content Area “side-by-side” or “over-and-under.”
- You can also point at the border between areas and click and drag when the double-headed arrow appears to move the border.

Moving Thoughts in the Plex

When the default settings are in use and the Plex is in “Normal” view, you can move the thoughts in the Plex up or down by dragging (up or down) in any blank area of the Plex background.

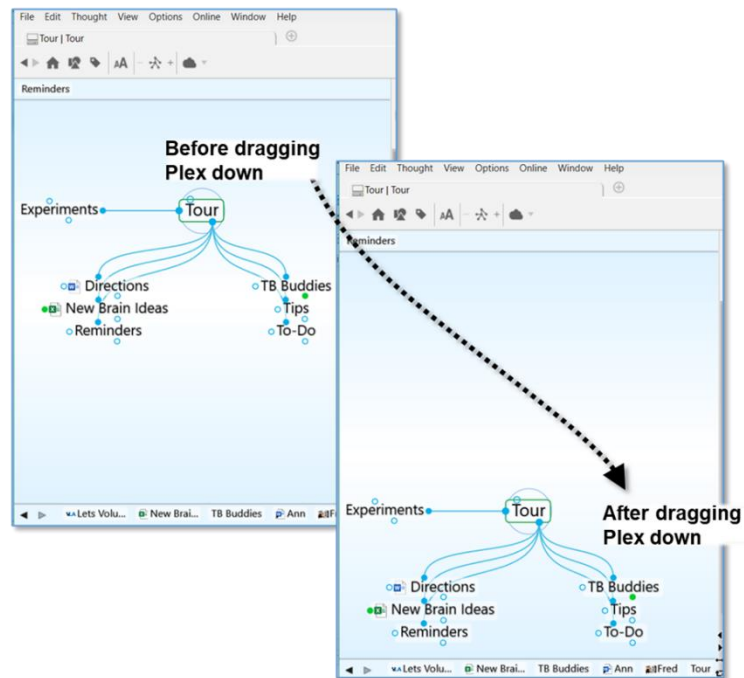


Figure 63. Dragging the Plex Vertically

Resizing the Thoughts in the Plex

The Plex is the heart and soul of TheBrain. You can change the size of thoughts in the Plex by using TheBrain toolbar or your keyboard and mouse.

To change the size of thoughts using the toolbar:

- Click the **AA** button to activate the slider, then click and slide the bar up or down to grow or shrink the size of your thoughts.

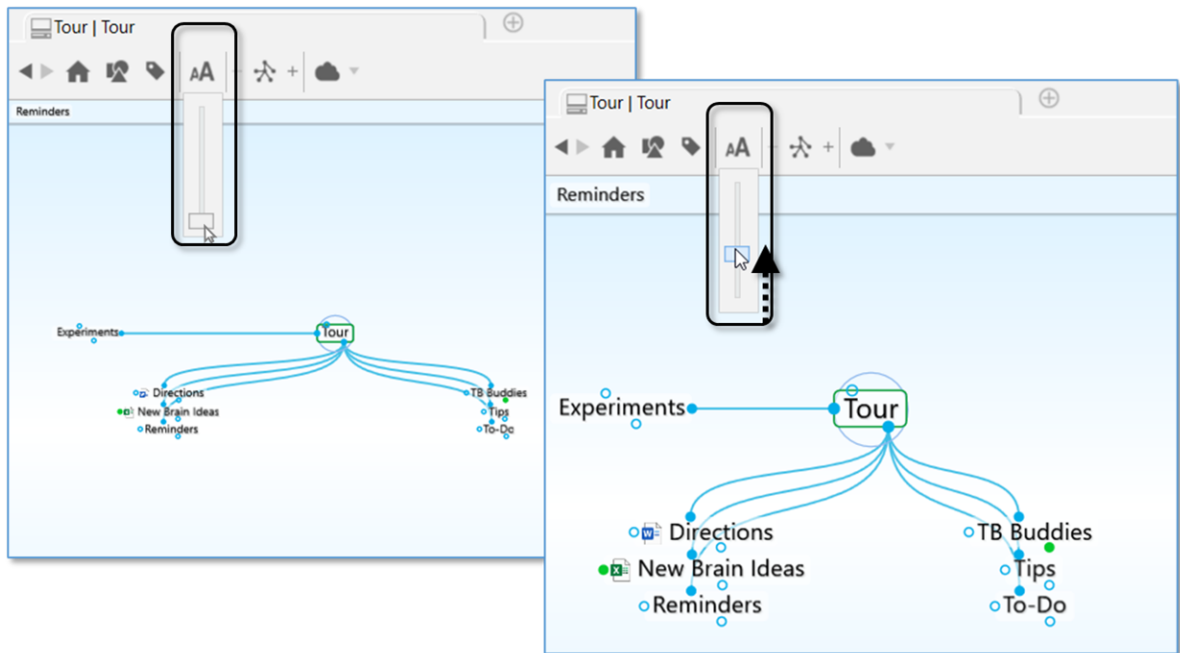


Figure 64. Resizing Thought Size with the Slider

To change the size of thoughts using the keyboard, mouse, or trackpad:

- Hold **Cmd** (macOS)/**Ctrl** (Windows) on your keyboard and scroll up or down on your mouse wheel or trackpad while your mouse pointer is in the Plex.

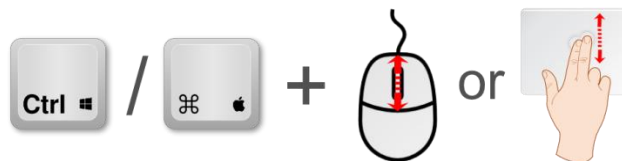


Figure 65. Resizing with the Mouse or Trackpad

- Hold **Cmd** (macOS)/**Ctrl** (Windows) on your keyboard and press **-** to make thoughts smaller or **+** to make thoughts larger.



Figure 66. Resizing with the Keyboard

- Pinch to zoom on a macOS Trackpad.

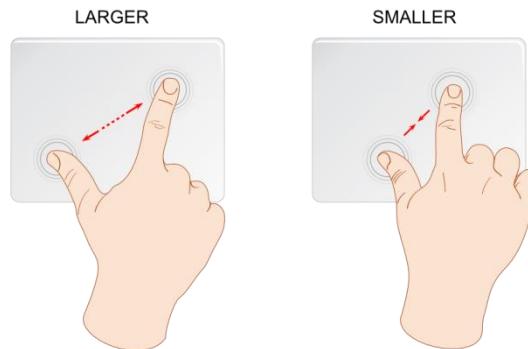


Figure 67. Resizing on a Trackpad

Customizing Your Brain's Appearance

Selecting a Theme

The Themes feature lets you choose from many built-in designs to customize the look of your brain, including the appearance of the Plex and notes in the Content Area. You can change many of the default colors and the style of notes associated with the Theme, then save the look of your brain as a new Theme. This lets you quickly switch from one saved Theme to another.

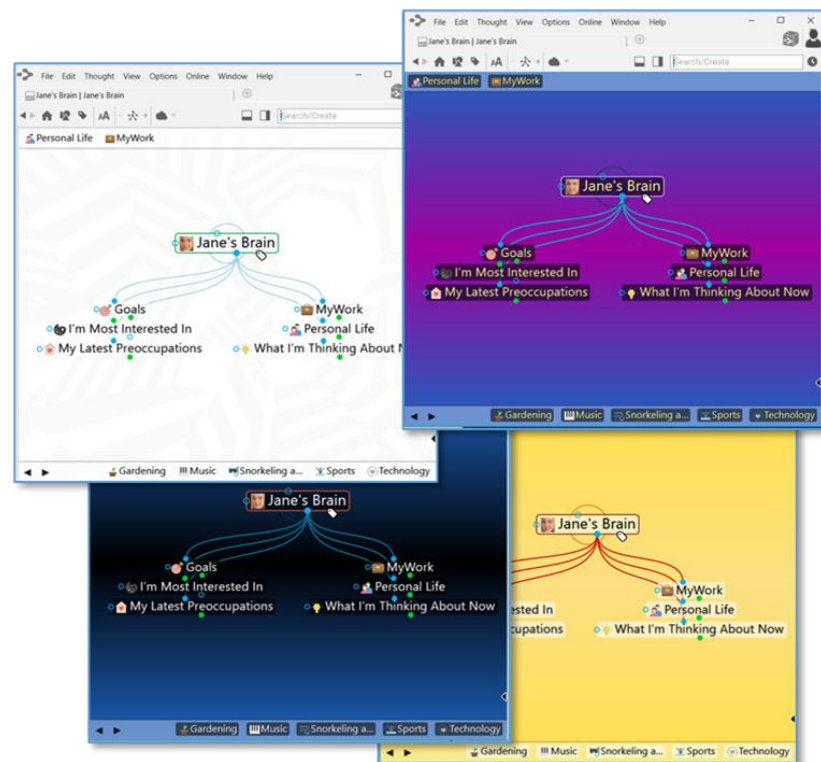


Figure 68. Sample Themes

To select a Theme:

1. Either click the **Options** menu in TheBrain toolbar (**TheBrain** menu on macOS) or right-click any blank space in the Plex.
2. Click the **Brain Theme** command.

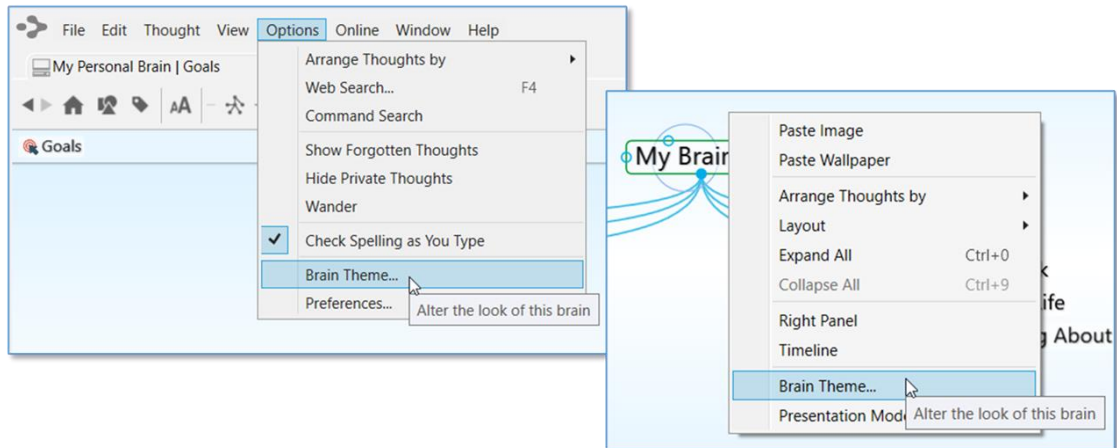


Figure 69. Accessing the Brain Theme Dialog Box

In the **Brain Theme** box, you'll see a scrollable list of available themes in the left panel and **Colors** and **Options** tabs in the right panel. Click on any Theme to see how it looks in the Plex.

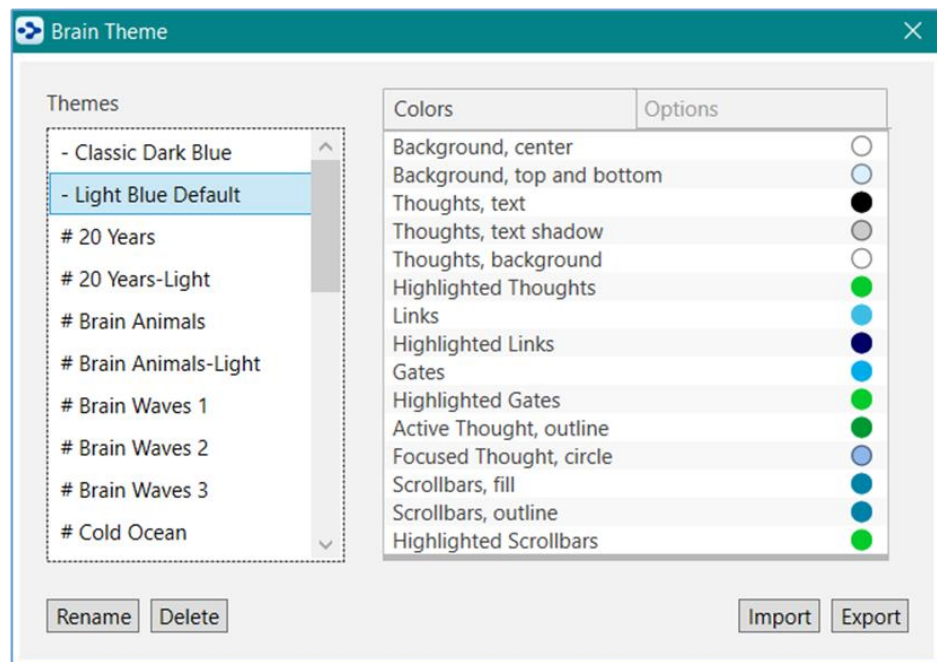


Figure 70. The Brain Theme Dialog Box

Customizing a Theme's Colors



Have the **Brain Theme** box open when you want to customize a Theme (right-click a blank area of the Plex, then click the **Brain Theme** command).

The default colors for virtually all items in the Plex vary based on the selected Theme. The current color for each item is shown in the circle to the left of the item's description. Scroll through the list in the **Colors** tab to get an idea of all of the items that can be changed.

To change the colors in the selected Theme:

1. Click the item whose color you want to change to display your choices.

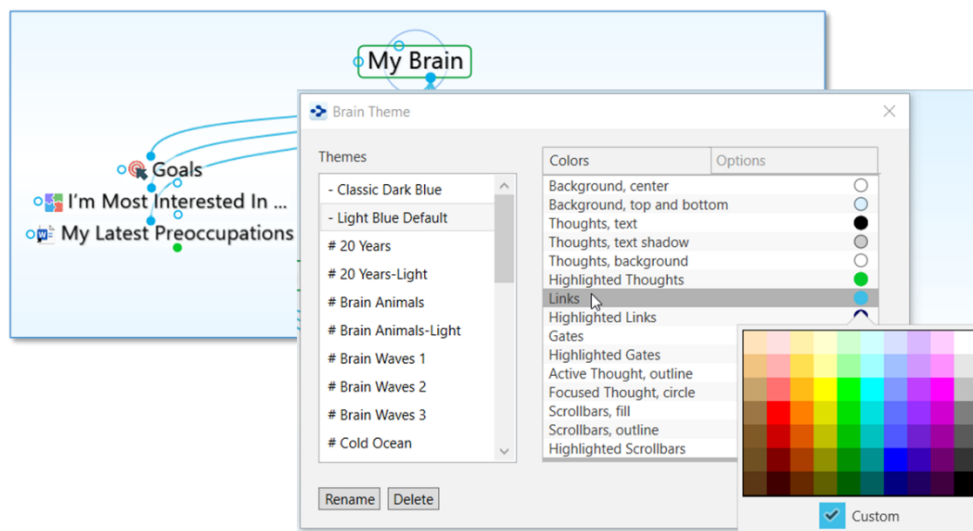


Figure 71. Color Choices in the Colors Tab

2. Click the color of your choice, click outside of the box of colors to close it, then click Close (**X**) (or press **Esc**) to close the **Brain Theme** box.

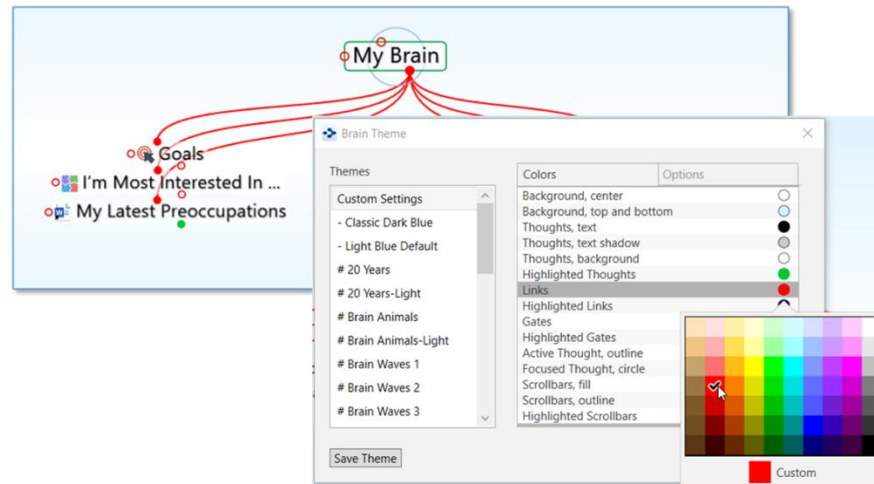


Figure 72. New Selected Color for Links



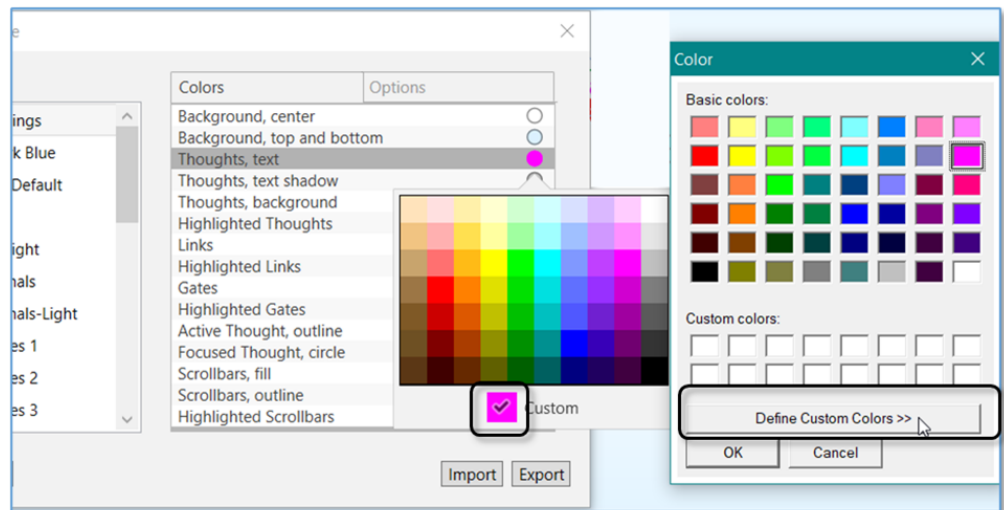
Note that while you can change the color of the shadow for thought text using the theme's **Color** tab settings, you can toggle whether or not text shadows are displayed using the **Look & Feel** tab of the **Preferences** window (as explained in the Look & Feel Preferences section on page 80). By default, text shadows are displayed.

When you are happy with your color selections, click the **Close** button (X) in the **Brain Theme** box.

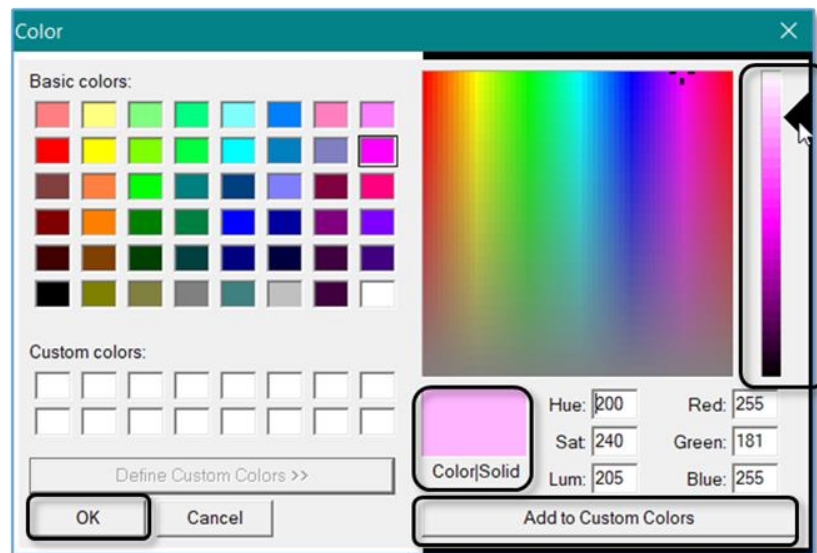
Defining and Selecting Additional Colors

You can add additional customized colors if you don't see the exact shade you want.

1. In the color selection box, click the color that's closest to what you want, then click the box next to "Custom," then click the **Define Custom Colors** button.



2. The **Color** window will expand to provide a slider to fine-tune the shade. You can also select a different color and fine-tune it or type in specific RGB or HSL numbers. Click the **Add to Custom Colors** button when you're happy with the sample color, then click the **OK** button.



Selecting a Custom Image for the Plex

If you want to use an image of your own instead of using one in the Themes list of the **Brain Theme** box, it's very easy to do so.

To select your own background image:

1. Click the **Options** tab in the **Brain Theme** box, then click the **Wallpaper** check box.

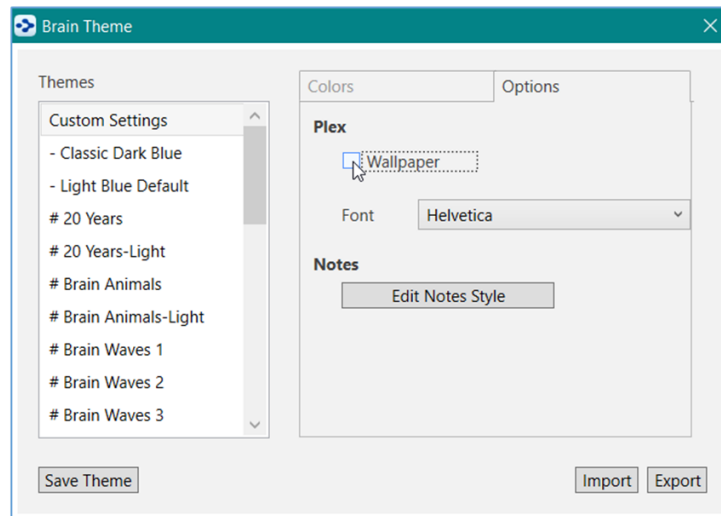


Figure 73. Options Tab in the Brain Theme Dialog Box

2. In the **Select image file as the wallpaper** window, navigate to the location of your image file, click on it, and then click the **Open** button. Supported wallpaper file formats include .jpg, .gif, and .png.
3. Click the **Close** button (X) in the **Brain Theme** box to save your new image for the Plex.

To replace, remove, or copy a wallpaper image:

- To replace the image, click the **Select** button next to the **Wallpaper** check box to navigate to a different image.
- To remove the image, click the **Wallpaper** check box to toggle off the check mark and remove the image from the Plex.
- To copy a wallpaper image to your clipboard, click the **Copy Wallpaper** button

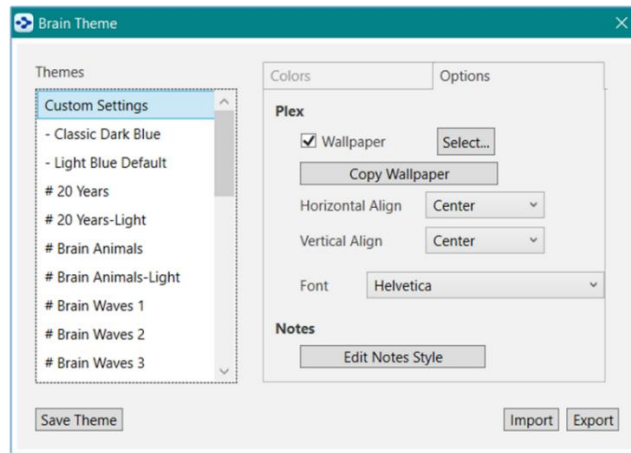


Figure 74. Replacing or Removing Wallpaper

To dynamically select new Wallpaper from a web site:

1. Go to a web site that offers Wallpaper files, right-click the design of your choice, then select **Copy** on the context menu.
2. Return to your brain, right-click in any blank area of the Plex, then select **Paste Wallpaper** on the context menu.

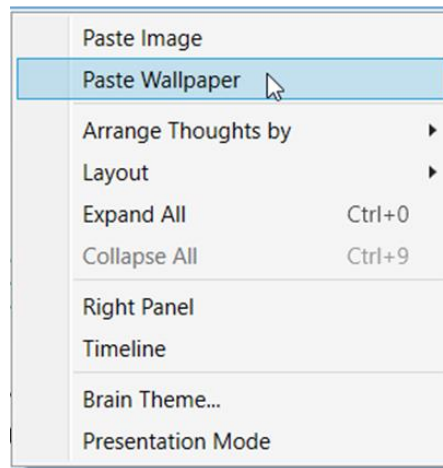


Figure 75. Context Menu on the Plex

Changing the Default Text Font in the Plex

By default, the font for text that appears in the Plex is Helvetica. You can change it to any font installed on your machine:

1. Click the **Options** tab in the **Brain Theme** box, then click the drop-down button for **Font**.

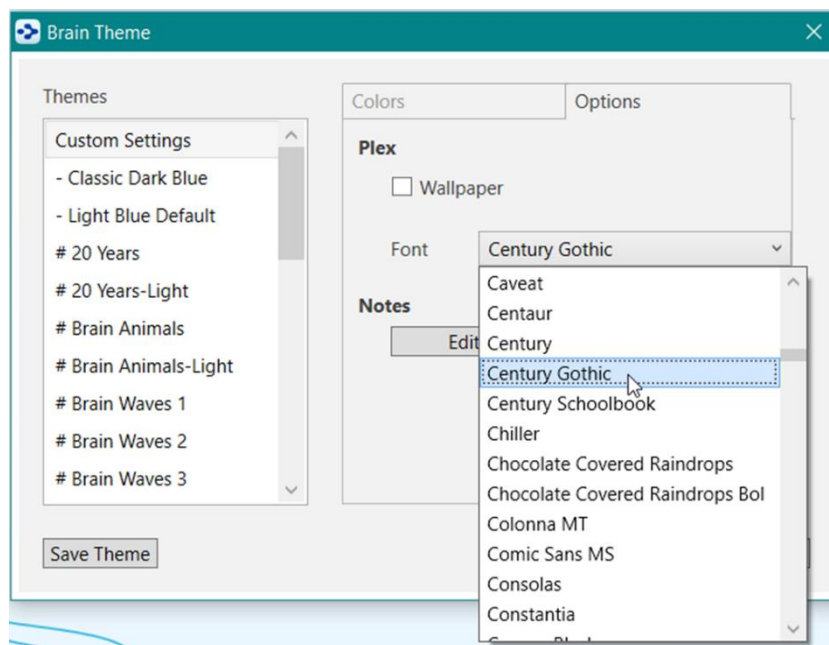


Figure 76. Changing the Font for Plex Text

2. Click the font of your choice. You will see the text in the Plex update automatically.

Changing Default Attributes in the Content Area

You can select custom colors for your notes' text, links, page, edge, and background. You can also change the font, size, weight (boldness), and other attributes for the heading and body text you include in the Content Area—either before or after you add it. Prebuilt Styles are also available, which you can use as-is, or modify. You'll see instant previews of the changes you make, before you apply them. And, of course, you can change your changes anytime.

By default, the notes in the Content Area of your brains appear in a style called "Modern," which is a sleek and clear combination of font, color, and size.

To begin selecting different style attributes for notes:

- Click the **Edit Notes Style** button on the **Options** tab in the **Brain Theme** box, or
- Click the **Notes Style** button in the Content Area toolbar

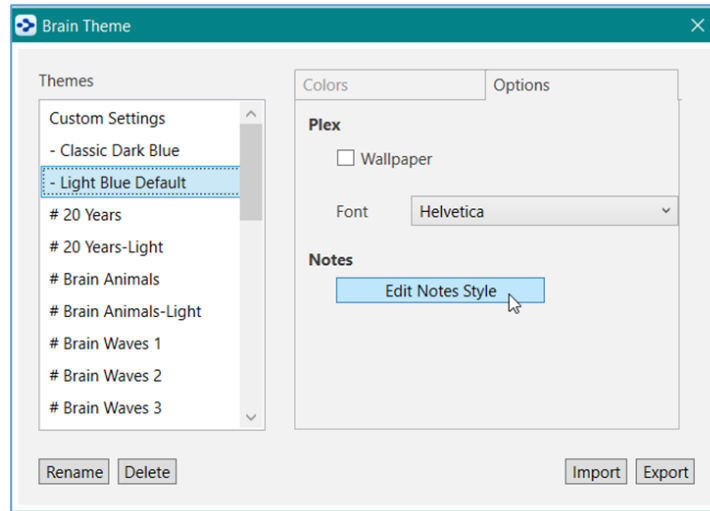


Figure 77. Changing the Style of Notes



You can also access the **Edit Notes Style** dialog box from the Context Area toolbar. See *Choosing a Notes Style* beginning on page 180.

To change the appearance for headings:

1. Click on an example heading for the level you want to change. For example, click on "Title Example Text" to change the top-level heading.
2. Select an attribute from the context menu. Selecting **Font**, **Weight**, **Color**, or **Letter Spacing** will take you to an additional set of choices.

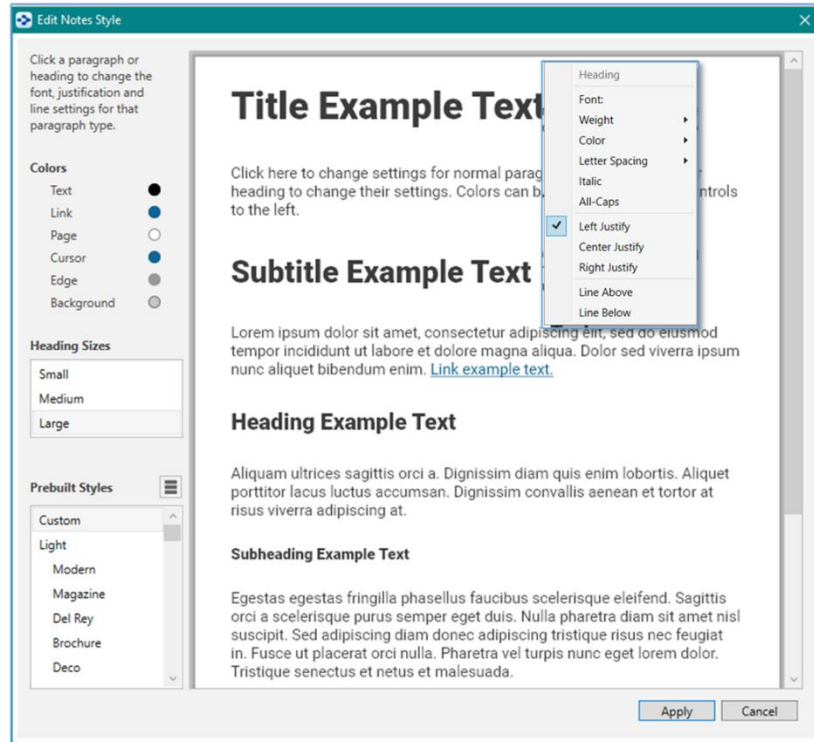


Figure 78. Style Options for Content Area Text

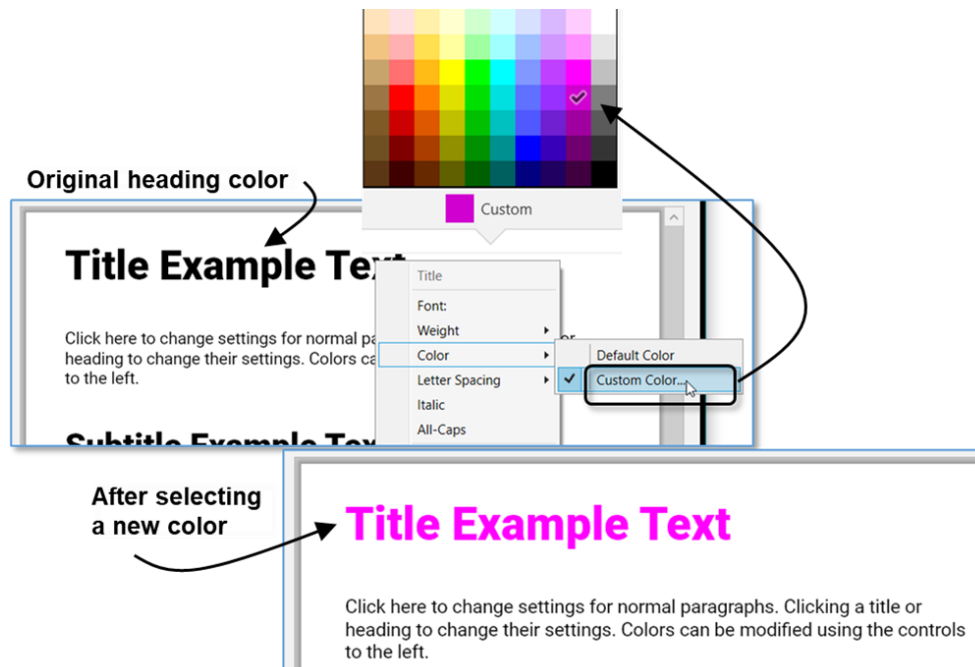


Figure 79. Before and After Changing a Heading Color Style

To select a heading color that isn't in the palette:

- Click **Custom** at the bottom of the color palette, click **Define Custom Colors**, select a color you like, then click the **OK** button.



Figure 80. Options for Fine-Tuning Heading Text Color

To change the size of headings:

- Click **Small**, **Medium**, or **Large** in the **Heading Sizes** list. The sizes will adjust automatically, based on the level of each heading.

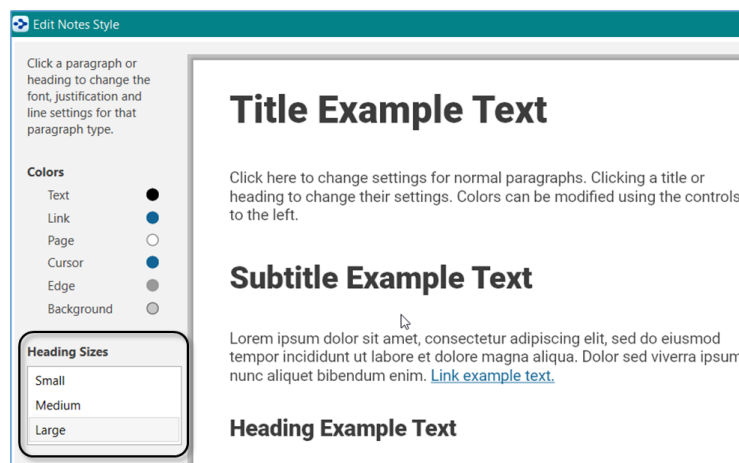


Figure 81. Options for Changing Heading Size

To change the color of non-heading text and other Content Area parts:

1. Click the round color sample in the left panel for the element you want to change.
2. When the palette opens, click the new color of your choice, or click **Custom** to select a different color. The example text will immediately reflect your choice. The palette stays open so that you can see what different colors look like when applied.
3. Click outside the palette to close it, when you're ready.

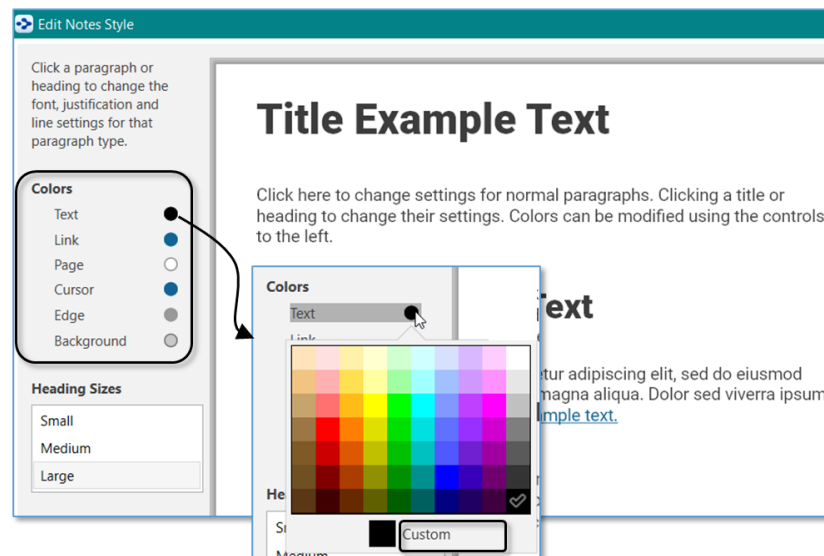


Figure 82. Selecting a New Color for Body Text in the Content Area

To change the font or weight of non-heading text:

1. Click within any non-heading body text, then choose either **Font** or **Weight** in the context menu.
2. To change the font, select a choice in the scrollable list that appears—you'll find over 1,000 options. Each has a sample of how it will appear.
3. Press **Esc** or click outside of the list to close the box if you don't want to make a selection.

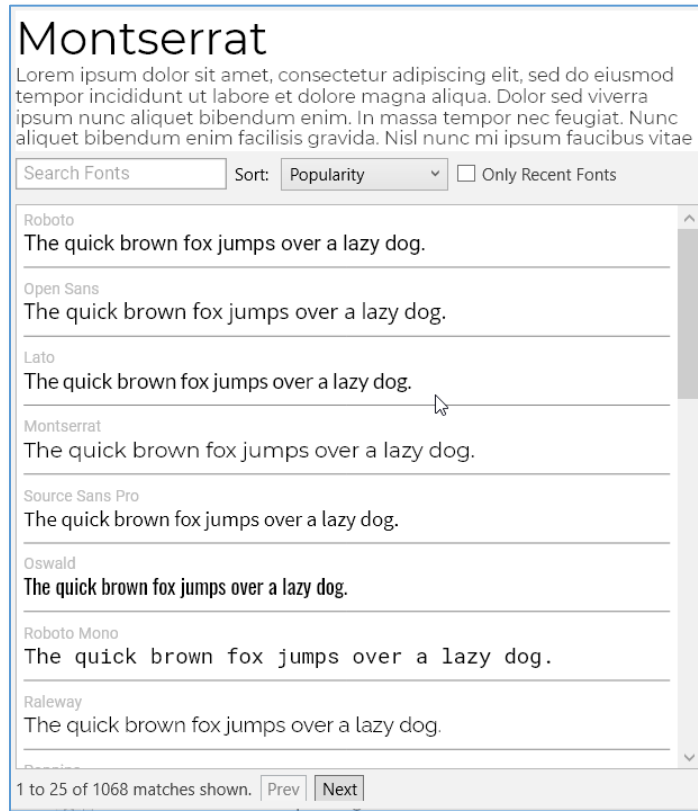


Figure 83. Changing the Font of Content Area Body Text

3. To change the weight (the thickness/boldness of the characters), select a choice from the list the appears.

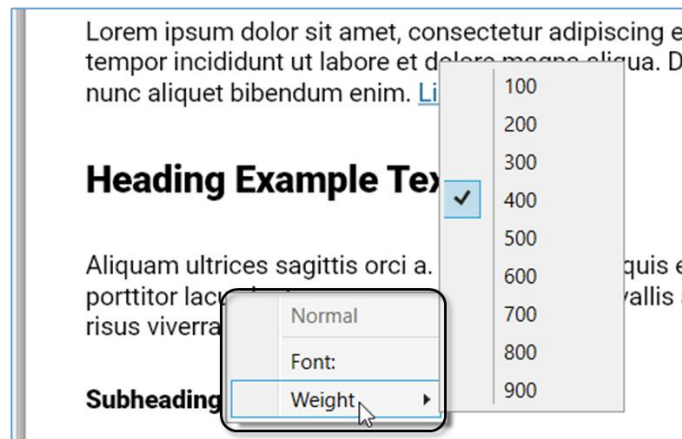


Figure 84. Changing the Weight of Content Area Body Text

Viewing and Selecting Prebuilt Styles

A handy way of seeing combinations of options for the Content Area is to visit the Prebuilt Styles—if you see one you like, apply it to your brain and see the results

instantly. The list of Prebuilt Styles is grouped into **Light**, **Dark**, and **Fun** sections.

As you click each Prebuilt Style, you'll see the Example Text instantly reflect the look.

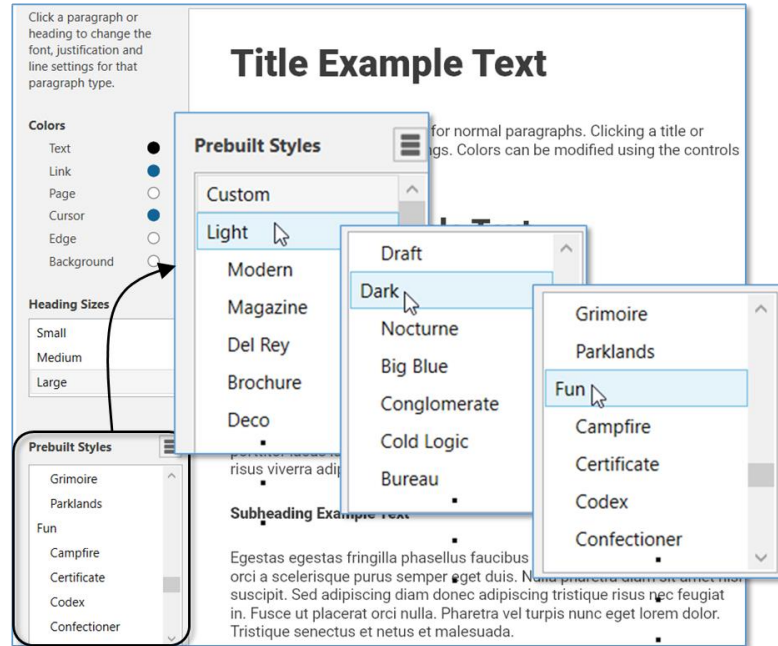


Figure 85. Selecting a Prebuilt Style

Copying, Pasting, Importing, and Exporting Styles

You can copy, paste, import, and export styles, making it easier to create new styles. Click the Actions button to display the Copy, Paste, Import, and Export options for Styles.

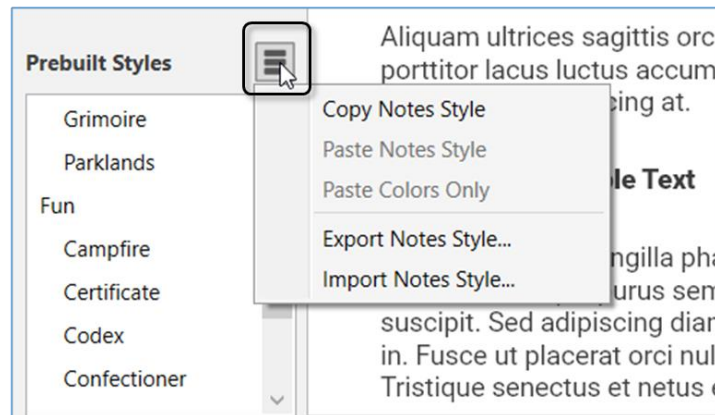


Figure 86. Selecting a Prebuilt Style

- **Copy Notes Style**—Click when you want to apply the current notes formatting in another brain.
- **Paste Notes Style** (available if a note style has been copied)—Click after you've opened the brain to receive the style.
- **Paste Colors Only** (available if a note style has been copied)—Click after you've opened the brain to receive the color choices in the copied style.
- **Export Notes Style**—Click **Save** after navigating to a location of your choice for saving the style file. The filename will look like this: Style-2021-08-13.nstyle (except with the actual date you exported the file).
- **Import Notes Style** (available if a note style has been exported)—with the receiving brain open, choose this option, navigate to the location of the .nstyle file, click **Open** when the file is selected, then click the **Apply** button.

Saving Your Changes

When you are happy with your Content Area choices, click the **Apply** button, then close the **Brain Theme** box to return to your brain.

Reverting to the Original Theme's Default Settings



As soon as you make any changes to a Theme, "Custom Settings" will be selected in the Themes list.

To switch back to the original settings for any Theme, select the Theme name in the Themes list within the **Brain Theme** dialog box.

Saving Themes

1. Make sure the tab with the brain that has the Theme you want to save is active in the Plex.
2. Unless the **Brain Theme** box is already open, either click the **Brain Theme** command on the **Options** menu or right-click a blank area of the Plex, then click the **Brain Theme** command.
3. Click the **Save Theme** button, click **Save as New** (so you don't overwrite the original Theme), then type a name for your new theme in the field.

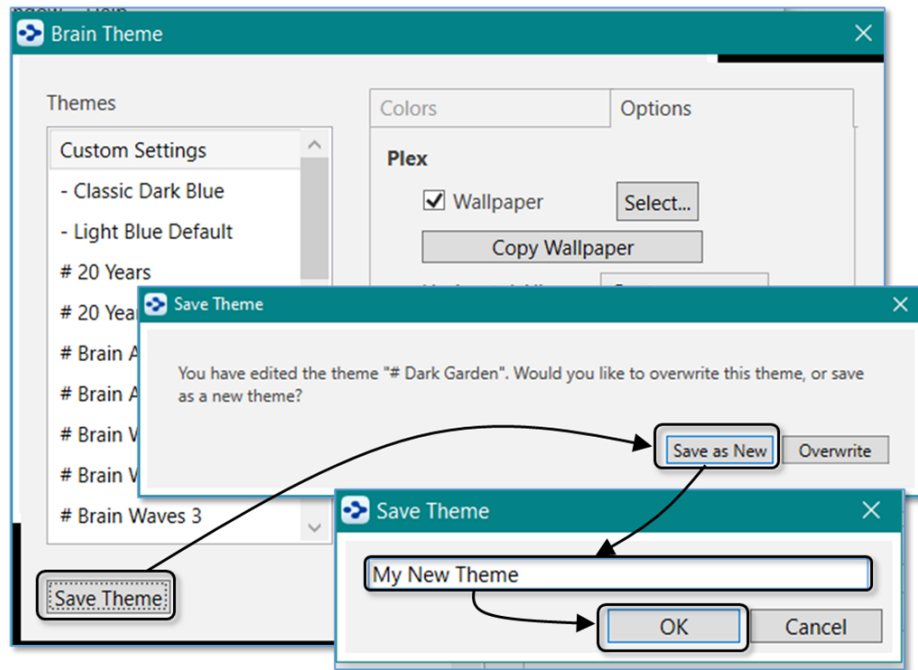


Figure 87. Save a Theme

4. Click the **OK** button. Your new Theme will be inserted into the list of Themes, ready for use in your other brains.

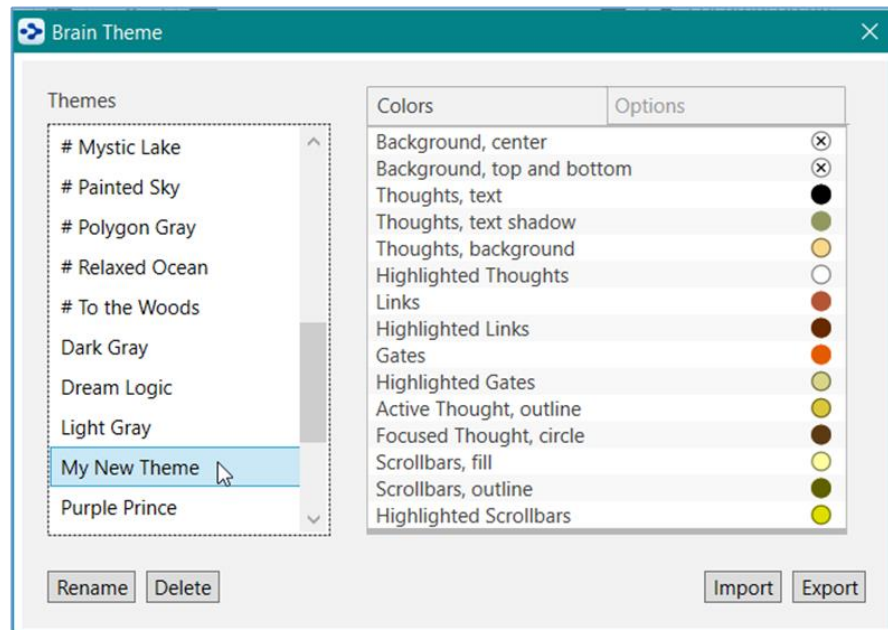


Figure 88. Newly Saved Theme in the Themes List



Your saved Theme will also include customizations you have made in the **Edit Notes Styles** window.

Renaming a Theme

1. In the **Brain Theme** box, click the Theme you want to rename, then click the **Rename** button.
2. Type or revise the current name, then click the **OK** button (or press the **Enter** key).

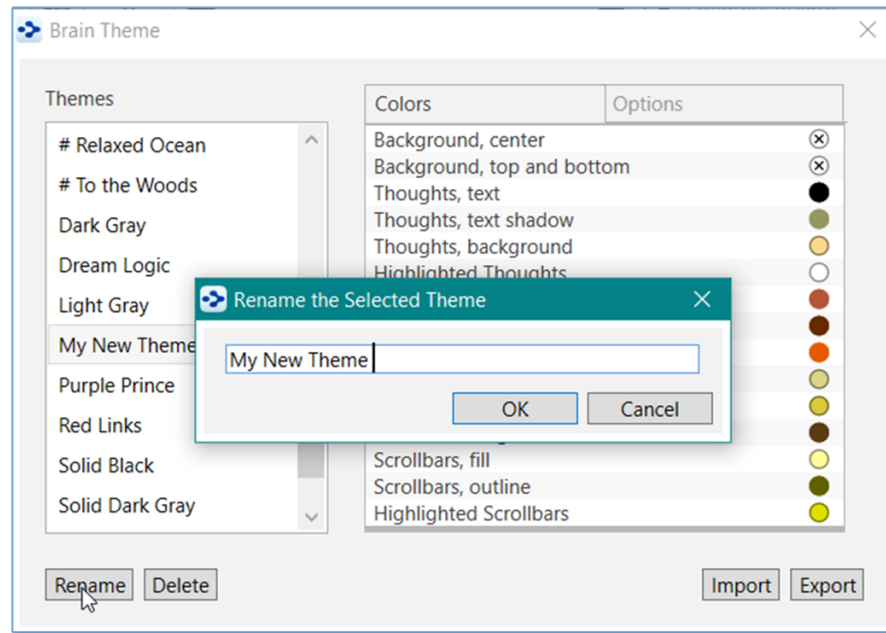


Figure 89. Renaming a Theme

3. Click the **Close** button (X) to close the **Brain Theme** box.

Deleting a Theme

1. In the **Brain Theme** box, click the Theme you want to delete, then click the **Delete** button.



Clicking on a Theme that you want to rename will activate this Theme in your brain. You may want to save your current Theme first (if it has been customized) before renaming another, existing Theme.

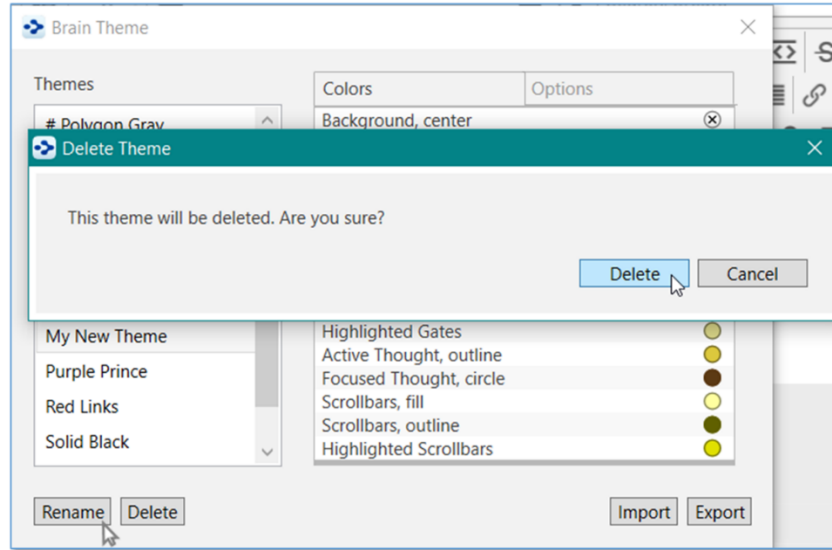


Figure 90. Deleting a Theme

2. Click the **Delete** button to confirm that you're sure you want to delete the Theme.
3. Click the **Close** button (X) to close the **Brain Theme** box.

Importing and Exporting Themes

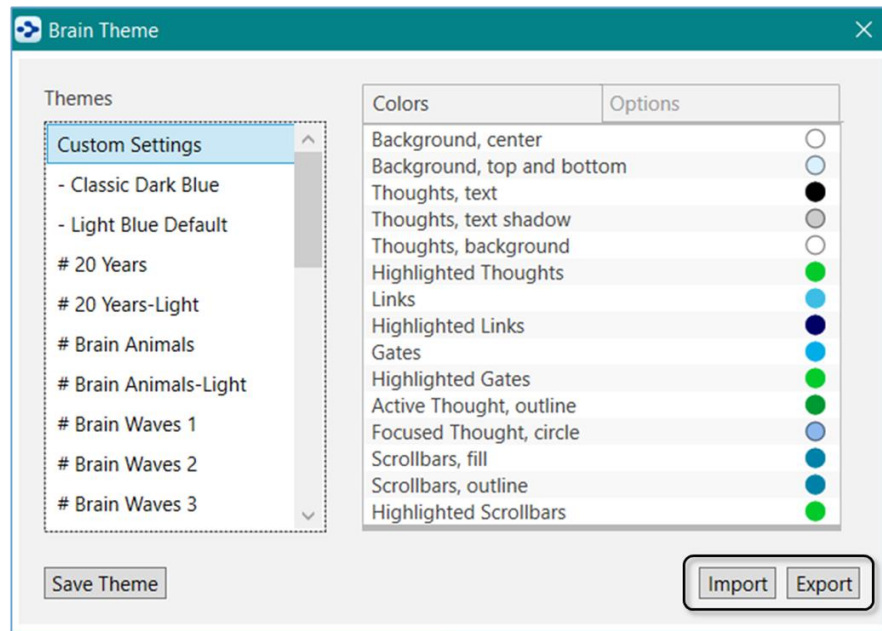


Figure 91. Importing or Exporting a Theme

To import a Theme:

- Click the **Import** button, navigate to the location of the .BrainTheme file you want to import, select it, then click the **Open** button.

To export a Theme:

- Make sure the Theme you want to export is in the active brain tab.
- Click the **Export** button, navigate to the location where you want to save the Theme, then click the **Save** button.
- Click **OK** in the confirmation box.

Dark Mode

The Dark Mode changes the windows, menus, icons and other user interface elements to be predominantly dark grey. Dark Mode allows you to focus on your work with subtle colors and fewer distractions.

- To switch to Dark Mode, click the **Options** menu, then click the **Preferences** command (on macOS, the **Preferences** command is located in the **TheBrain** menu). On the **Look and Feel** tab, select Dark under the **User Interface** setting.
- After you give permission, TheBrain will restart and apply the change.

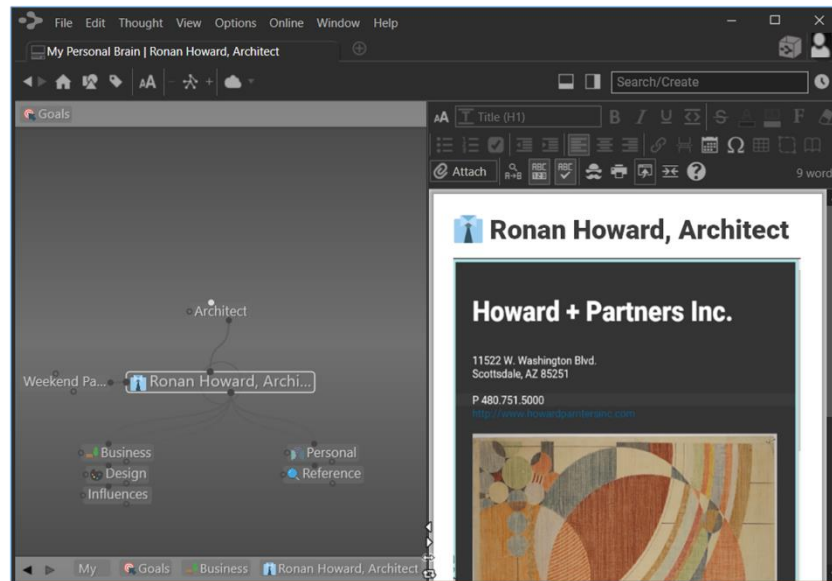


Figure 92. TheBrain in Dark Mode

- You may want to modify your Brain Theme to complement the darker interface and tones.

- On macOS, the Dark Mode setting will follow your OS automatically.

Setting Other Preferences

TheBrain's **Preferences** dialog box is where you'll find many of the settings for adjusting how your brain works, both mechanically and visually. Preference settings affect how TheBrain works globally—no matter which brain is open when you make your choices.

To open the **Preferences** dialog box:

- Click the **Options** menu, then click the **Preferences** command (on macOS, the **Preferences** command is located in the **TheBrain** menu)

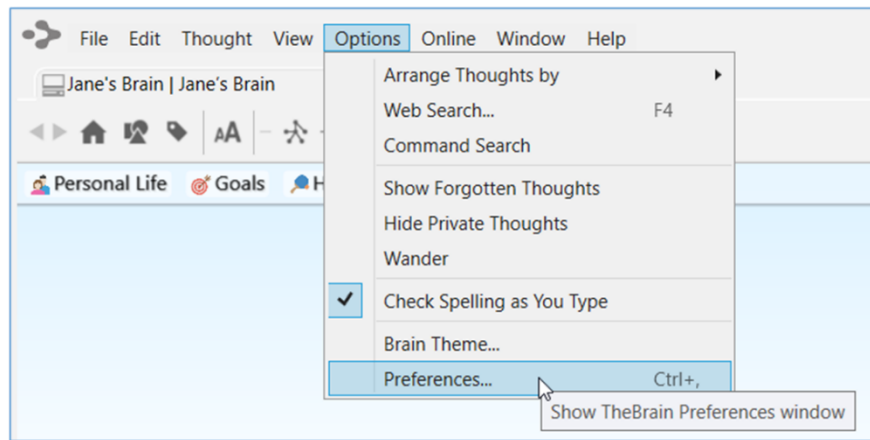


Figure 93. Accessing Preferences

TheBrain **Preferences** are organized into these categories:

- Look & Feel
- Behavior
- Notes Editor
- System
- Keyboard
- Experimental

Look & Feel Preferences

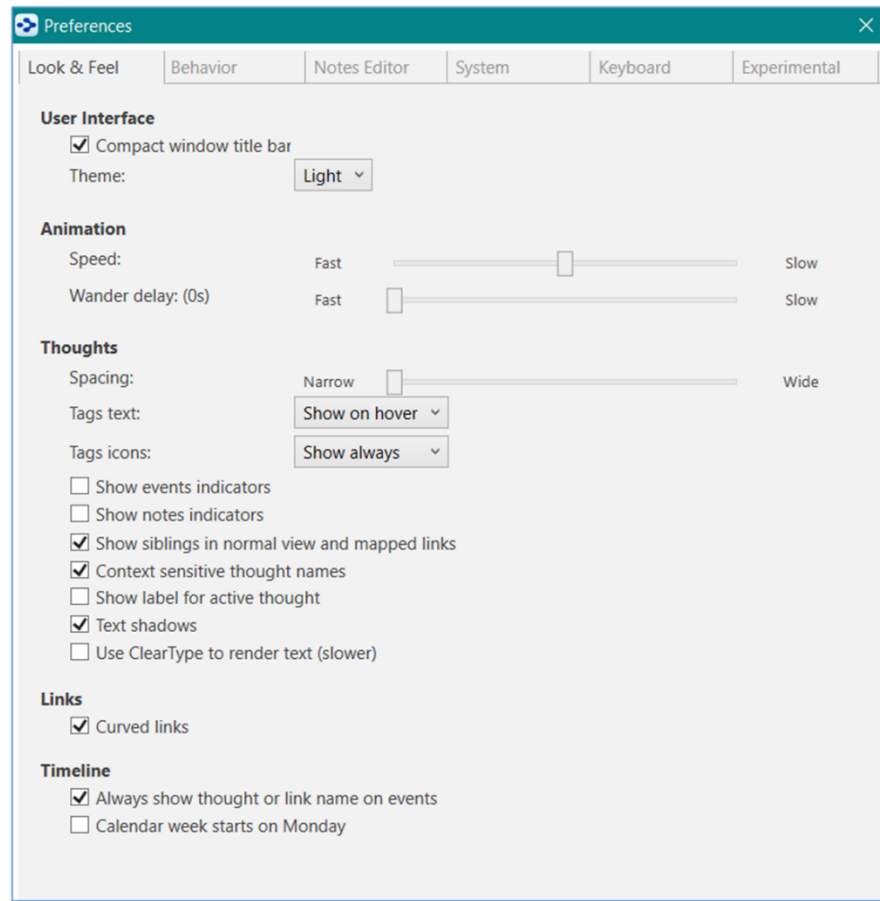


Figure 94. Look & Feel Preferences

User Interface

| Preference | Description |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Compact Window Title Bar | Moves the File, Edit, Thought, View, etc. menu items up into the frame of the app. |
| Theme | Switch between Light and Dark Mode. |

Animation

| Preference | Description |
|--------------|--|
| Speed | Drag the slider right to reduce or left to increase the speed with which a thought becomes active when you click it in the Plex. |

| Preference | Description |
|---------------------|---|
| Wander Delay | Wandering is an option to step randomly through TheBrain, to let you see thought associations. Drag the slider to specify the amount of delay (in seconds) between thought activations. The delay is shortest by default. |

Thoughts

| Preference | Description |
|--|---|
| Spacing | Drag the slider to decrease or increase space between thoughts. The wider the spacing, the larger and more spaced out the thoughts will be. |
| Tags text | You can choose not to show, only show Tag text on hover (mouseover), or always show. |
| Tags icons | You can choose not to never show, only show Tag icons on hover (mouseover), or always show. |
| Show events indicators | Event icons will appear in the bottom-right area of thoughts that include events. This preference is off by default. |
| Show notes indicators | Note icons will appear in the bottom-right area of thoughts that include notes. When this is selected, you can hover over the icons for an instant view of the corresponding note. This preference is off by default. |
| Show siblings in normal view | This preference is on by default. |
| Context sensitive thought names | Context sensitive thought names are explained on page 102. This preference is on by default. |
| Show label for active thought | This preference is off by default. |
| Text shadows | This preference is on by default. |
| Use ClearType to render text (slower) | Applies a crisper display of thought names, but may require more system resources. |

Links

| Preference | Description |
|---------------------|--|
| Curved Lines | When selected, links will be curved lines and when not selected, links will be straight lines. This preference is on by default. |

Timeline

| Preference | Description |
|---|--|
| Always show thought or link name on events | This preference is on by default. |
| Calendar week starts on Monday | When checked, Monday will be the first day of the week. Unchecked, Sunday will be the first day. |

Behavior Preferences

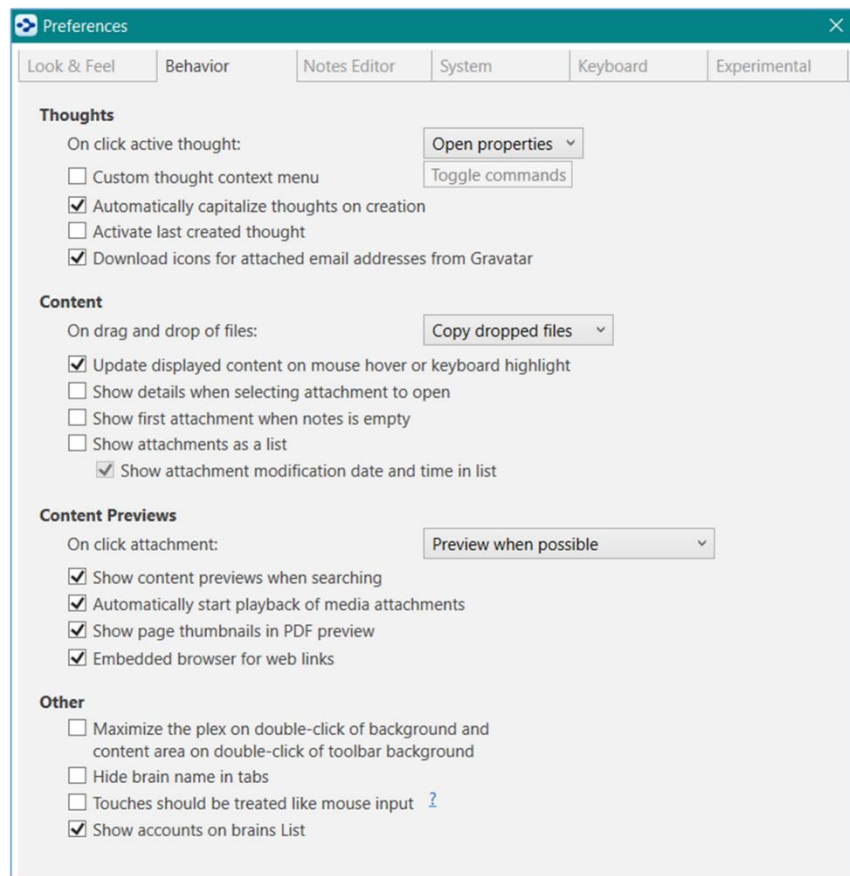


Figure 95. Behavior Preferences

Thoughts

| Preference | Description |
|--|--|
| On click active thought | By default, the thought's properties will display when the active thought is clicked. The other option is to do nothing. |
| Custom thought Context Menu | Click on Toggle Commands and uncheck options that you would like to have hidden. |
| Automatically capitalize thoughts on creation | The first letter of the name of the thought will be automatically capitalized. This preference is on by default. |
| Activate last created thought | A thought will become the active thought as soon as it's created. This preference is off by default. |
| Download Icons for Attached Email Addresses from Gravatar | This preference is on by default. |

Content

| Preference | Description |
|---|--|
| On drag and drop of files | By default, files will be copied when dragged and dropped. The other options are that they will be either moved or linked. |
| Update displayed content on hover | This preference is off by default. |
| Show details when selecting attachment to open | This preference is off by default. |
| Show first attachment when notes is empty | Preference is on by default. |
| Show attachments as a list | Attachments will show in the same area instead of on separate tabs within the Content Area. This preference is off by default. |
| Show attachment modification date and time in list | Will display the file modification date/time when files are viewed as a list |

Content Previews

| Preference | Description |
|----------------------------|--|
| On click attachment | Select between 'Preview when possible' or 'Always open in default application' |

| Preference | Description |
|--|--|
| Show content previews when searching | This preference is on by default. |
| Automatically start playback of media attachments | This preference is on by default. |
| Show page thumbnails in PDF preview | This preference is on by default. |
| Embedded browser for web links | Linked web pages will open in TheBrain's built in browser. |

Other

| Preference | Description |
|--|--|
| Maximize on double-click of Plex background or content tab background | Double-clicking either the Plex or Content Area background will maximize that part of the brain and the other part will be hidden. This preference is off by default. |
| Hide brain name in tabs | Removes the brain name from appearing in the tabbed interface. |
| Touches should be treated like mouse input | The way the plex interprets touch events can be altered using the preference. More information on this setting is available at https://www.thebrain.com/docs/touches-info |
| Calendar week starts on Monday | This preference is off by default and the Calendar week starts on Sunday. |

Notes Editor

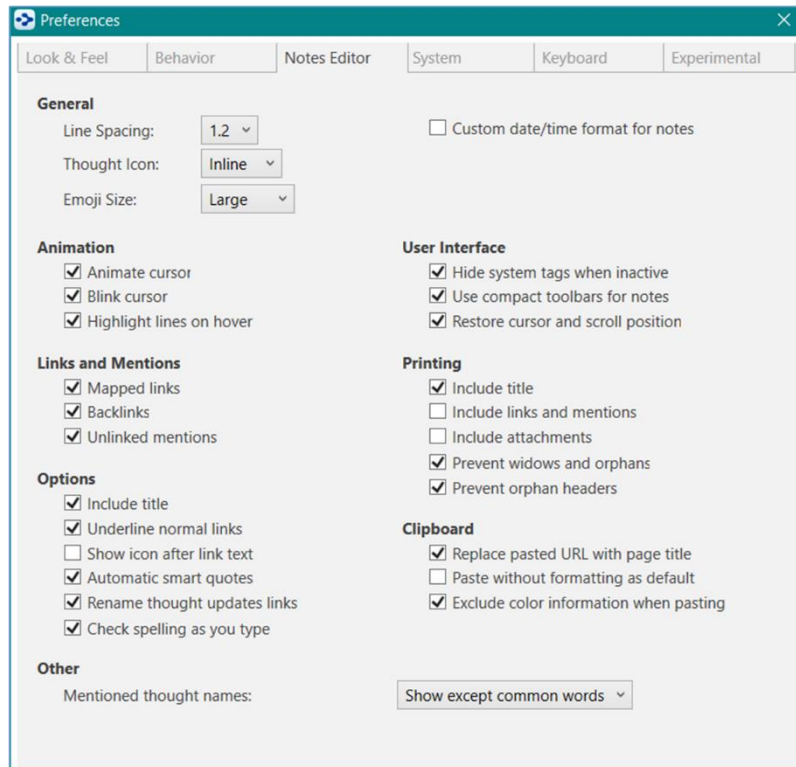


Figure 96. Notes Editor Preferences

General

| Preference | Description |
|---------------------|--|
| Line Spacing | Set notes line spacing |
| Thought Icon | Choose between Hide, Above, Below, and Inline—the default icon placement is inline |
| Emoji Size | Set emoji size to Small, Medium, or Large |

Animation

| Preference | Description |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Animate Cursor | Cursor will visibly animate when clicking to different locations in notes. |
| Blink Cursor | Cursor in notes will blink to indicate its location. |
| Highlight lines on hover | Hover over any line in the notes and it will be highlighted. |

Links and Mentions

| Preference | Description |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Mapped links | This preference is on by default. |
| Backlinks | This preference is on by default. |
| Unlinked mentions | This preference is on by default. |

Options

| Preference | Description |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Include title | This preference is on by default. |
| Underline normal links | This preference is on by default. |
| Show icon after link text | This preference is off by default. |
| Automatic smart quotes | This preference is on by default. |
| Rename thought updates links | This preference is on by default. |
| Check spelling as you type | This preference is on by default. |

Custom date/time format for notes

Use the following format options to customize the appearance of your date/time stamp in notes:

| Characters | Result |
|------------|--|
| d | The day of the month, from 1 through 31. |
| dd | The day of the month, from 01 through 31. |
| ddd | The abbreviated name of the day of the week. |
| dddd | The full name of the day of the week. |
| h | The hour, using a 12-hour clock from 1 to 12. |
| hh | The hour, using a 12-hour clock from 01 to 12. |
| H | The hour, using a 24-hour clock from 0 to 23. |
| HH | The hour, using a 24-hour clock from 00 to 23. |
| K | Time zone information. |
| mm | The minute, from 00 through 59. |

| | |
|------|--|
| M | The month, from 1 through 12. |
| MM | The month, from 01 through 12. |
| MMM | The abbreviated name of the month. |
| MMMM | The full name of the month. |
| ss | The second, from 00 through 59. |
| t | The first character of the AM/PM designator. |
| tt | The AM/PM designator. |
| yy | The year, from 00 to 99. |
| yyyy | The year as a four-digit number. |
| z | Hours offset from UTC, with no leading zeros. |
| zz | Hours offset from UTC, with a leading zero for a single-digit value. |
| zzz | Hours and minutes offset from UTC. |
| : | The time separator. |
| / | The date separator. |

User Interface

| Preference | Description |
|---|--|
| Hide system tags when inactive | Markdown tags will appear when notes have focus, but will not display when the Plex has focus. |
| Use compact toolbars for notes | Some Content Area buttons will be grouped into dropdown lists—all tools will be available via the More Notes Editor Actions button. |
| Restore cursor and scroll position | This preference is on by default. |

Printing

| Preference | Description |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Include title | This preference is on by default. |
| Include links and mentions | This preference is off by default. |
| Include attachments | This preference is off by default. |

| Preference | Description |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Prevent widows and orphans | This preference is on by default. |
| Prevent orphan headers | This preference is on by default. |

Clipboard

| Preference | Description |
|---|------------------------------------|
| Replace pasted URL with page title | This preference is on by default. |
| Paste without formatting as default | This preference is off by default. |
| Exclude color information when pasting | This preference is on by default. |

Other

| Preference | Description |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Mentioned thought names | Choose between never showing, showing except for common words, and showing all. The default preference is to show mentioned thought names except for common words. |

System Preferences

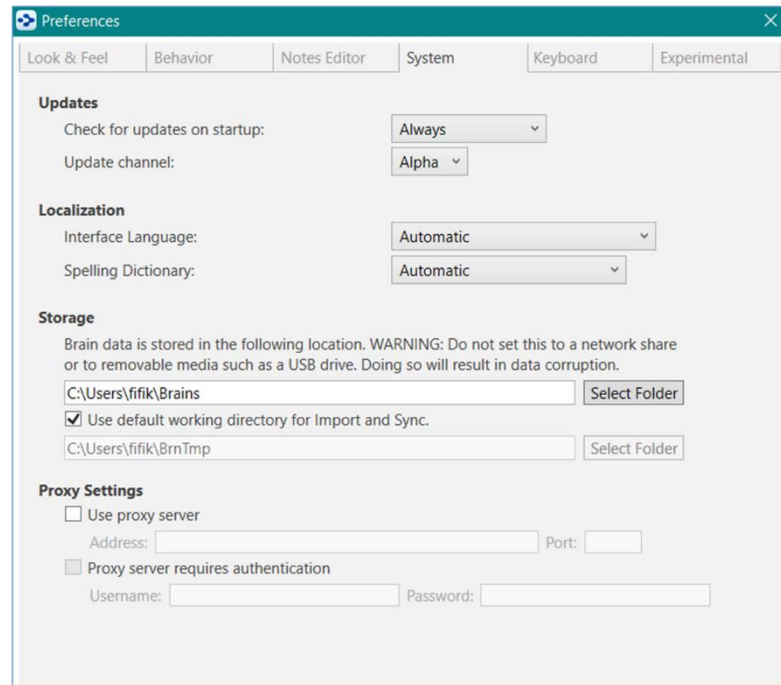


Figure 97. System Preferences

Updates

| Preference | Description |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Check for updates on startup | Notification of updates on startup. Always, Only free updates or Never. |
| Update Channel | This preference affects which kind of updates you'll see as available when you click the Check for Update command on TheBrain's Help menu. The default is Stable and the other choices are Beta and Alpha. |

Localization

| Preference | Description |
|----------------------------|---|
| Interface Language | The default is Automatic. |
| Spelling Dictionary | The default is Automatic and there are many other languages to choose from in the drop-down list. After you select another language, you'll be prompted to exit TheBrain and restart so that your change can take effect. |

Storage

| Preference | Description |
|----------------|---|
| Storage | The location of your brain data. The default is to use the default working directory for Import and Sync. |

Proxy Settings

| Preference | Description |
|--|---|
| Use proxy server and proxy server requires authentication | If you are unable to synchronize your brain with TheBrain Cloud due to a proxy server or restricted ports on your network, the Proxy settings can be used to customize the synchronization process. Check with your network administrator for the appropriate information for these fields. By default, the Use proxy server preference is off. |

Keyboard Preferences

Most Brain commands can be accessed by keyboard commands, which you can customize based on your preferences. You can even export your settings to share them with others or to transfer them from one computer to another.

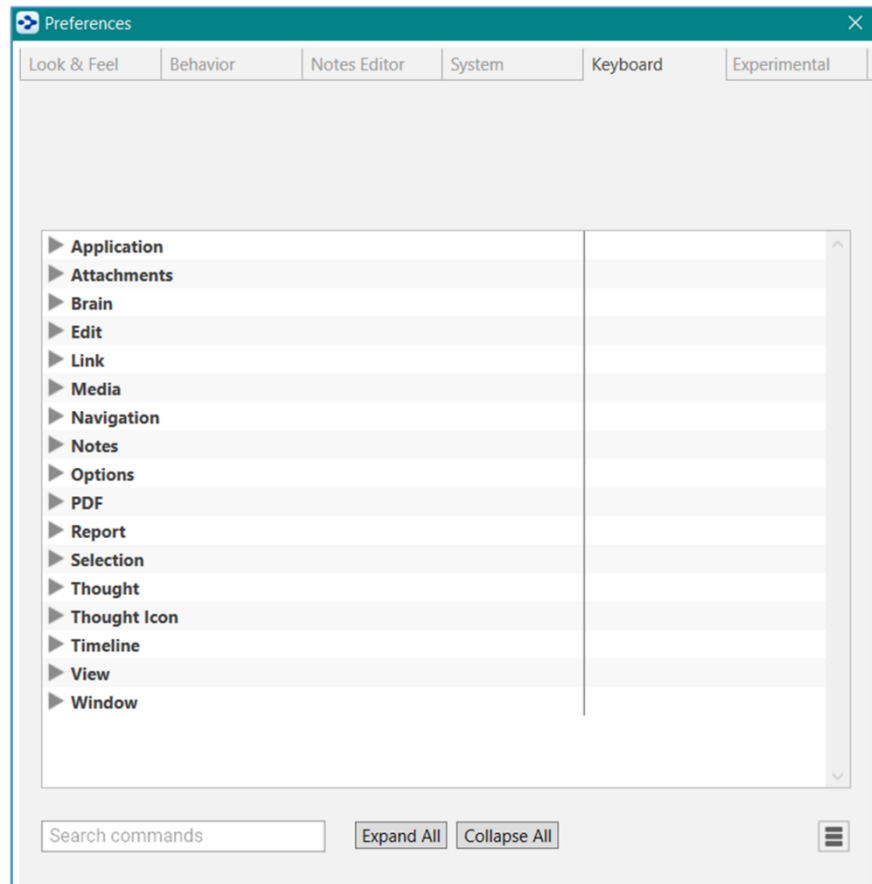


Figure 98. Keyboard Preferences

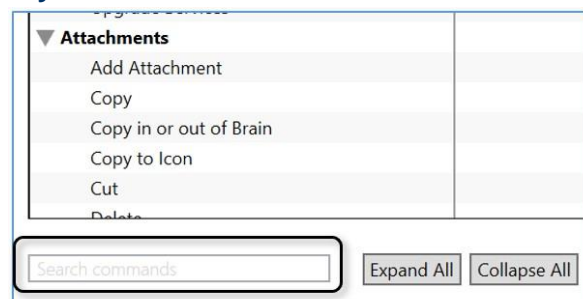
Using the Keyboard Preferences Tab

To do this ...

Find a command quickly

Do this ...

Begin typing the command in the Search commands field in the bottom-left corner of the **Keyboard** tab of the **Preferences** window.



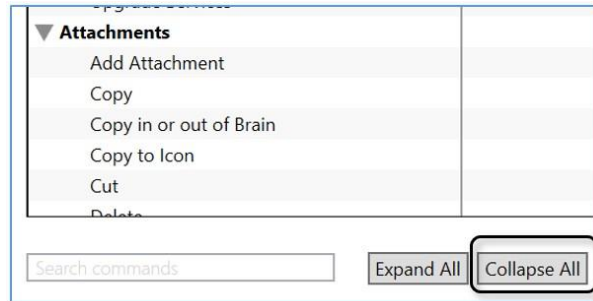
As you type, the list will shorten to match what you've typed. When you see the command you're looking for, note its shortcut or click it to define a new shortcut.

To do this ...

Collapse the list to see only major headings

Do this ...

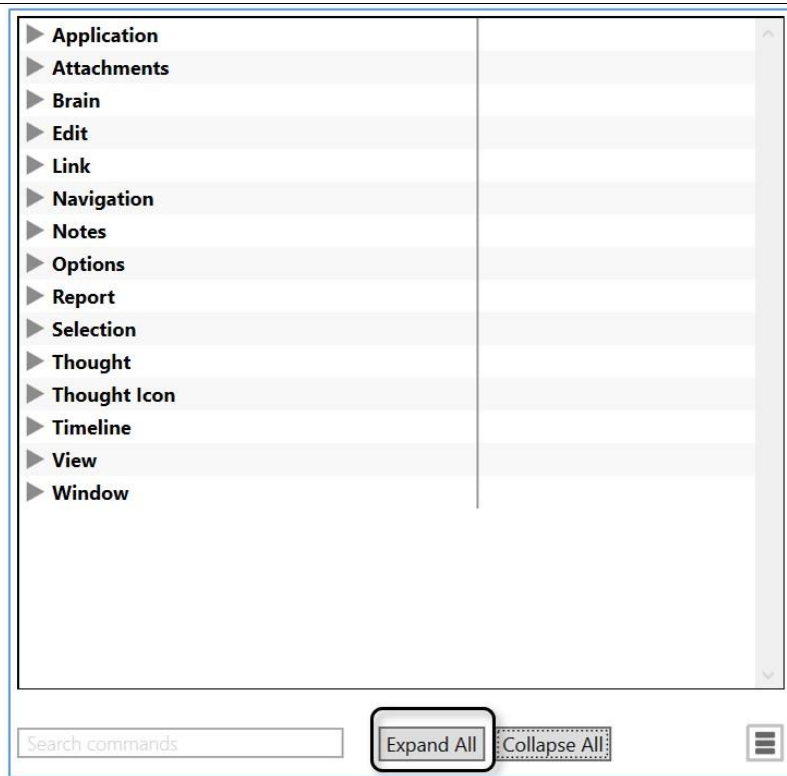
Click the **Collapse All** button.



You can also collapse an individual heading, for example "Application," to collapse or expand just that section.

Restore the full list

Click the **Expand All** button.



To do this ...

Import shortcuts

Do this ...

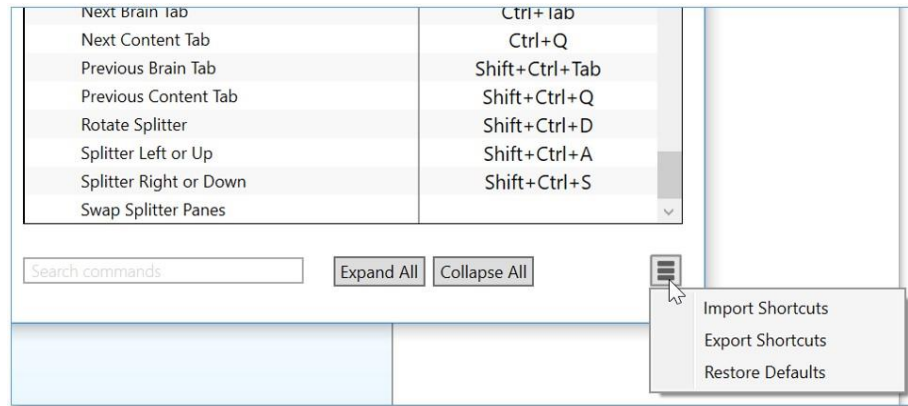
Click the **Actions** menu button in the bottom-right corner of the **Keyboard** tab, then click the **Import Shortcuts** command.

To do this ...**Export shortcuts****Do this ...**

Click the **Actions** menu button in the bottom-right corner of the **Keyboard** tab, click the **Export Shortcuts** command, select a location for the file, then click the **OK** button. The file will be named "KeyboardShortcuts.txt."

Restore default shortcuts

Click the **Actions** menu button in the bottom-right corner of the **Keyboard** tab, then click the **Restore Defaults** command.

**To define a new shortcut:**

1. In the left column, expand a category of interest.
2. Click the command for which you want to create a shortcut. The row containing the command will be highlighted and an instruction will appear under the **Preferences** tabs.

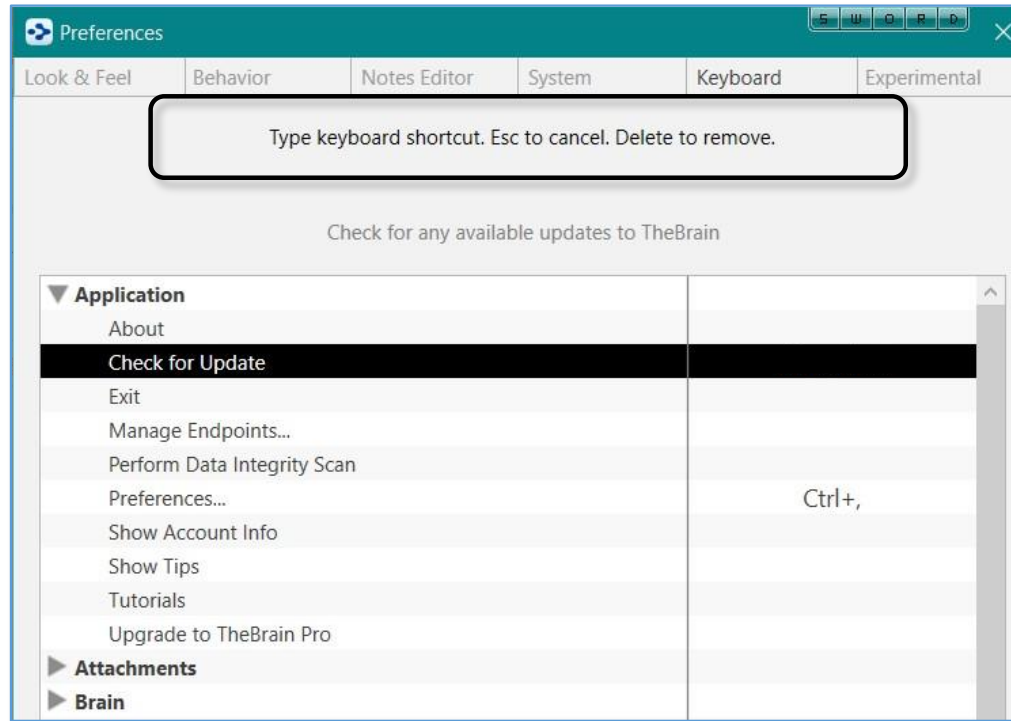


Figure 99. Creating a New Shortcut

- With the command of your choice highlighted, press the function key or keyboard combination of your choice. For example, you might choose to assign the “Check for Update” command to **Ctrl+Shift+U**.



You can't assign keys that are already used for common operations (such as **Ctrl-C**) nor can you use letter or number keys by themselves. The **Alt** key can be used as a standalone modifier

Your new shortcut will display in the list. You can delete the shortcut by pressing the **Delete** key while the command is highlighted.

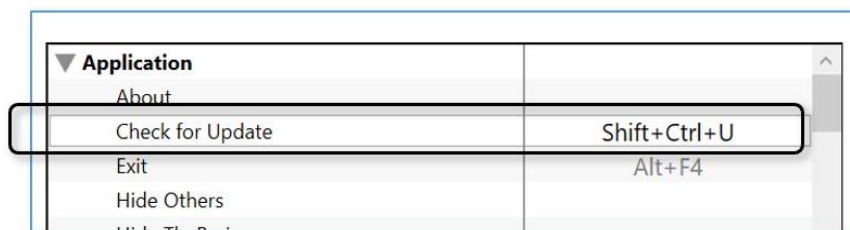


Figure 100. The New Shortcut in the List

If the keyboard shortcut you selected is already in use for another action, you will have the option to “steal” the shortcut for the current selection, or cancel the request and select a different keyboard combination.



Figure 101. Replacing an Existing Shortcut



Default Shortcuts for Windows

| Application Commands | Shortcut |
|---------------------------------|---------------------|
| Exit | Alt+F4 |
| Preferences | Ctrl+, |
| Edit Commands | Shortcut |
| Copy | Ctrl+C |
| Copy as Text | Shift+Ctrl+C |
| Cut | Ctrl+X |
| Paste | Ctrl+V |
| Paste without Formatting | Shift+Ctrl+V |
| Redo | Ctrl+Y |
| Select All | Ctrl+A |
| Undo | Ctrl+Z |
| Navigation Commands | Shortcut |
| Activate Tag | Ctrl+G |
| Activate Type | Ctrl+E |
| Backward | Alt+Left |
| Expand/Collapse Current Thought | Space |
| Forward | Alt+Right |
| Navigate Down | Down |
| Navigate Enter | Enter |
| Navigate Escape | Esc |
| Navigate Left | Left |
| Navigate Right | Right |
| Navigate to Pin 1 | Ctrl+1 |

| Navigation Commands | Shortcut |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Navigate to Pin 2 | Ctrl+2 |
| Navigate to Pin 3 | Ctrl+3 |
| Navigate to Pin 4 | Ctrl+4 |
| Navigate to Pin 5 | Ctrl+5 |
| Navigate to Pin 6 | Ctrl+6 |
| Navigate to Pin 7 | Ctrl+7 |
| Navigate to Pin 8 | Ctrl+8 |
| Navigate Up | Up |
| Notes Commands | Shortcut |
| Bold | Ctrl+B |
| Collapse All | Ctrl+[|
| Collapse All Except Here | Shift + Ctrl+I |
| Expand All | Ctrl+] |
| Expand/Collapse Toggle | Ctrl+\ |
| Find & Replace | Ctrl+F |
| Find Next | F3 |
| Find Previous | Shift+F3 |
| Insert Date/Time | Ctrl+D |
| Insert/Edit Thought or Web Link | Ctrl+K |
| Italic | Ctrl+I |
| Open in Browser | Alt+Ctrl+O |
| Pop up Table of Contents | Ctrl+T |
| Print | Ctrl+P |
| Replace Next | Ctrl+F3 |
| Replace Previous | Shift+Ctrl+F3 |
| Take Action | Ctrl+L |
| Underline | Ctrl+U |
| Options Commands | Shortcut |
| Web Search | F4 |
| Thought Commands | Shortcut |
| Create Child | F6 |

| Thought Commands | Shortcut |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| Create Jump | F8 |
| Create Parent | F7 |
| Forget | Ctrl+Del |
| Open Folder | Shift+Ctrl+F |
| Show Thought Properties | Ctrl+Enter |
| Thought Icon Commands | Shortcut |
| Select Stock Icon | Alt+Ctrl+I |
| View Commands | Shortcut |
| Collapse All | Ctrl+9 |
| Expand All | Ctrl+0 |
| Mind Map | Shift+Ctrl+3 |
| Normal | Shift+Ctrl+1 |
| Outline | Shift+Ctrl+2 |
| Zoom In | Ctrl+= |
| Zoom Out | Ctrl+- |
| Window Commands | Shortcut |
| Close Tab | Ctrl+W |
| Close Window | Alt+F4 |
| Keyboard Focus to Notes | Ctrl+N |
| Keyboard Focus to Search | Ctrl+S |
| New Tab | Ctrl+T |
| New Window | Shift+Ctrl+N |
| Next Brain Tab | Ctrl+Tab |
| Previous Brain Tab | Shift+Ctrl+Tab |
| Rotate Splitter | Shift+Ctrl+D |
| Splitter Left or Up | Shift+Ctrl+A |
| Splitter Right or Down | Shift+Ctrl+S |



Default Shortcuts for macOS

| | |
|--------------|-------------------------|
| Create Child | Alt+Command+Down |
|--------------|-------------------------|

| | |
|----------------|-------------------------|
| Create Parent | Alt+Command+Up |
| Create Jump | Alt+Command+Left |
| Rename | Alt+Enter |
| Focus on Plex | Cmd+S |
| Focus on notes | Cmd+N |
| Search Web | Cmd+E |

Experimental Preferences

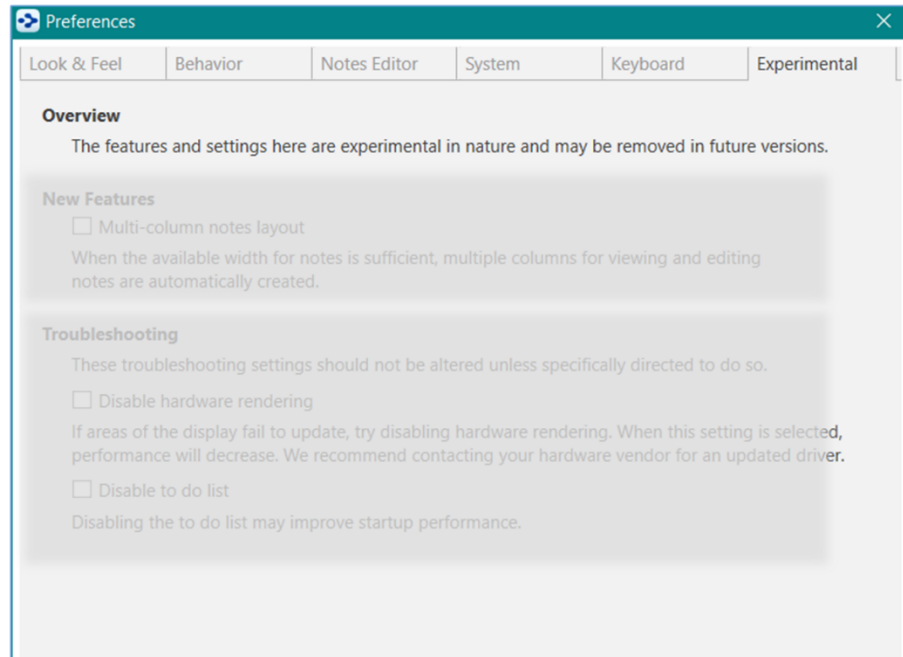


Figure 102. Experimental Preferences

The features and settings on the **Experimental** tab will change from time to time and may be removed in future versions of TheBrain.

Creating Thoughts

Creating a Single Thought

There are many ways to create a thought, but most start with the same step—choosing the thought with which the new thought will have a relationship. You will use the chosen thought as a starting place when creating the new thought.

Generally speaking, you'll create child thoughts more often than parents or jumps. There are certainly exceptions, but usually, using a "top-down" approach is helpful if you are just getting started: Create children (and jumps, as appropriate) and let parents happen naturally.

Once you have activated the thought that will have a relationship with your new thought, use any of these techniques to begin creating a new thought:

- Drag from the thought's parent, child, or jump gate

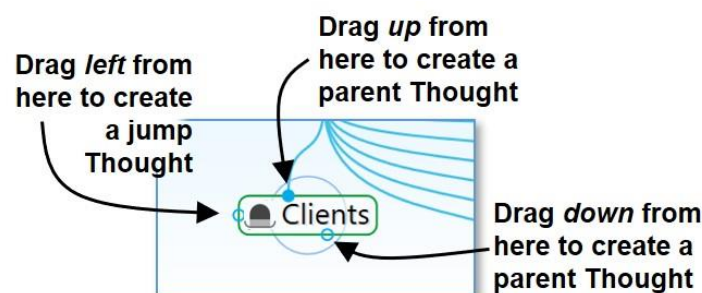
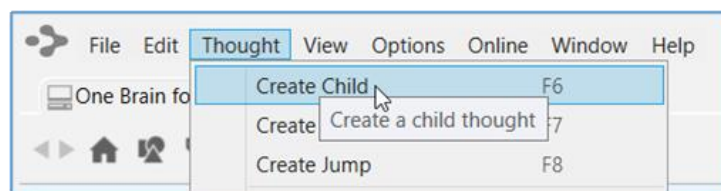
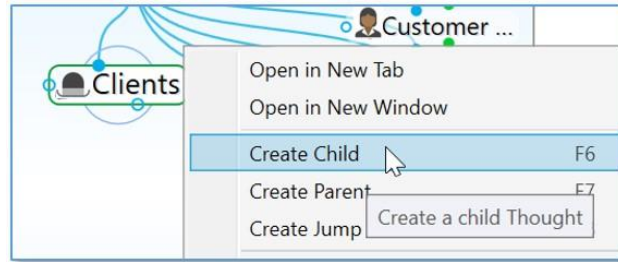


Figure 103. Gates to Drag for Creating Thoughts

- Or click the **Thought** menu, then click the **Create Child**, **Create Parent**, or **Create Jump** command



- Or, right-click the thought, then click the **Create Child**, **Create Parent**, or **Create Jump** command



- Or use a keyboard shortcut:



On Windows, press the **F6** key (for a child thought), **F7** (for a parent thought), or **F8** (for a jump thought)



On macOS, press the **Option+Cmd+Down Arrow** (for a child thought), **Option+Cmd+Up Arrow** (for a parent thought), or **Option+Cmd+Left Arrow** (for a jump thought)

No matter which of the above methods you use to begin creating your new thought, the next thing you'll see is the **Thought Creation** dialog box with the cursor blinking in the field for typing in the name of your new thought.

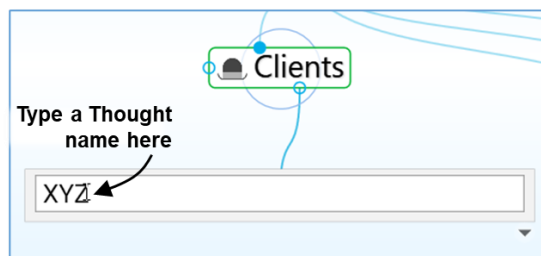


Figure 104. Thought Creation Dialog Box

1. Type the name of your new thought in the field provided.
2. Press the **Enter** key or click in a blank area of the Plex to save your new thought (or press the **Esc** key to cancel the process and close the box).



Automatic initial-capitalization: If you type a thought name using all lowercase letters, the first letters of words will be capitalized for you automatically. TheBrain uses “smart rules” to determine which words should be lowercase (such as “a,” “and,” and “of”). For example, if you’ve typed “visit the statue of liberty” the thought name will automatically become “Visit the Statue of Liberty.” This feature is active, by default, but you can turn it off in the **UI** tab of the **Preferences** dialog box.

If spellcheck is turned on in the Content Area toolbar, thought names will also be spellchecked in the **Thought Creation** dialog box as well as in the **Thought Properties** dialog box.

Displaying Thought Properties and Details

- To expand the thought creation box to include the **Type** and **Tags** buttons (explained in the Thought Types and Tags section beginning on page 139), click the down-arrow in the bottom-right corner
- To display a thought's details (create/modify dates and ID) after the thought is created, click the down-arrow in the bottom-right corner
- To hide the thought's details, click the up-arrow in the bottom-right corner

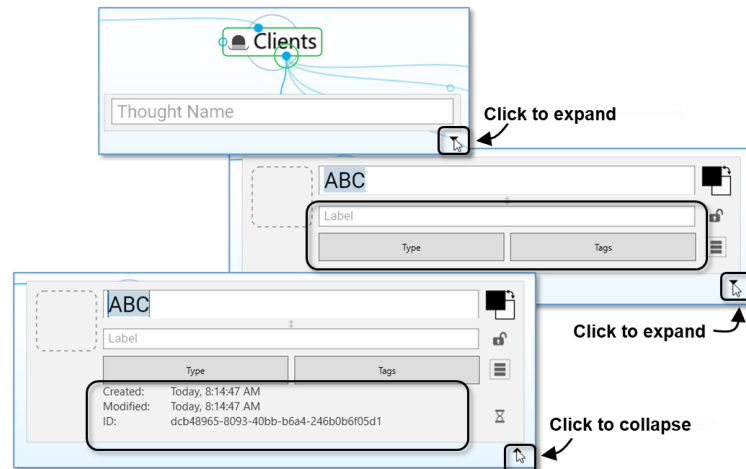


Figure 105. Showing and Hiding Thought Properties and Details

Creating Multiple Thoughts at Once

TheBrain offers a timesaver (affectionately known as the “semi-colon trick”) for creating more than one thought at a time.

- Type a **semicolon (;)** to separate multiple thought names in the **Thought Creation** dialog box

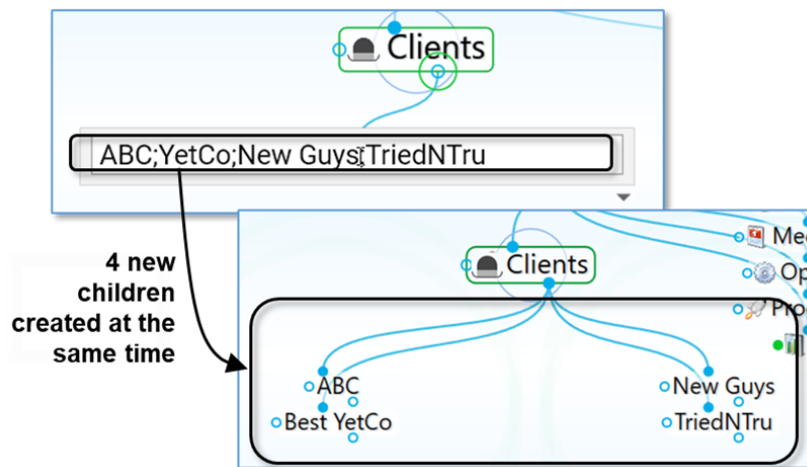


Figure 106. Creating Multiple Thoughts

Creating Context-Sensitive Thought Names Using Commas

It's always good to be specific with your thought names. TheBrain has some time savers to help you if you have repetitive information that needs to be added to your brain. For example, say you have thoughts for each of your clients, each of whom has a billing department. You'd like a child thought named "Billing Info" for each of your client thoughts. However, you may not want to have identical thought names because when you see these thoughts later you won't be able to tell them apart without looking at their parents.

To remedy this potential dilemma, when you type the name of the new thought, start or end the name with a comma. The parent thought name will be added automatically. When this thought is displayed, its name will vary depending on the context in which it's viewed. If the client thought is active, the client's name will be hidden and it will appear as just "Billing Info." But when you activate this thought, the full name along with the client's name will appear.

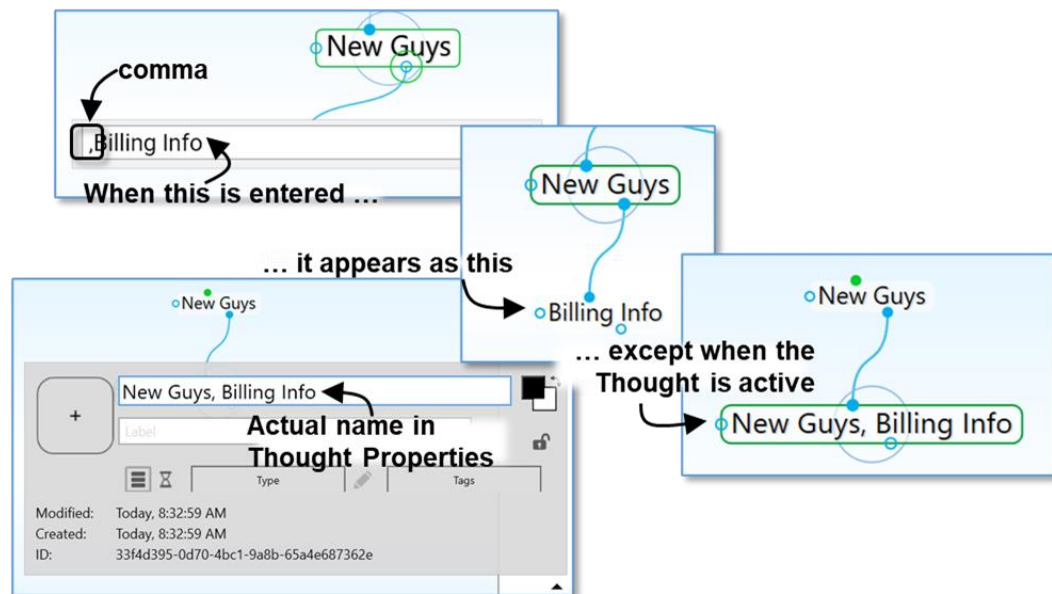


Figure 107. Sub-Category Thoughts

The thought will display its full name when it is active or when hovering over it with the cursor. When its parent thought is active, you'll see only the portion of the name that does not repeat the parent's name. Ensuring that each of your thoughts has a unique name will help you find and identify them more easily.



Tip: The part of the thought's name that is hidden is context sensitive. Say for example that you wanted to have a single place to see the billing information for all your clients. You might create a thought called "Billing Info" and then link to the billing information thoughts for each of your clients, such as "New Guys, Billing Info." If you do this, when Billing Info is active "New Guys, Billing Info" will appear as just "New Guys," whereas when New Guys is active, that same thought will appear as Billing Info. Try it—you'll see how this can be very useful. When thoughts are displayed in alphabetical order, the current view of the context sensitive name will determine its position.

Using Parentheses to Assist with Thought Sorting

Adding parentheses around the first part of thought name will skip that part for sorting purposes (unless there is a tie) when thoughts are grouped alphabetically.

- To enable this feature, a thought name must have both an open parenthesis as the first character and a close parenthesis later in the thought name. Whitespace will be trimmed, and there must be some thought name left after that. (Later parenthesis will be ignored.)

- Note that this is mutually exclusive to Hidden Ordering Prefixes starting with a dot. You can only have one or the other.

Example: if your thoughts are grouped alphabetically, the following group of thoughts named:

(The) Beatles
Belle & Sebastian
(The) Bee Gees
(The) Beach Boys

would display as:

The Beach Boys
The Beatles
The Bee Gees
Belle & Sebastian

Creating Orphan Thoughts

When you create a thought in your brain, you usually first decide what relationship it will have with an existing thought, but sometimes you just want to create something without making a relationship.

To create a thought independently of other thoughts, type into the Search box. If no search result is returned, hit enter and the new thought will be created as an Orphan. This works well especially when you are looking for something and discover you haven't yet put it into your brain.



Tip: You can also create an orphan thought by pressing **F9** on Windows or **Opt+Cmd+Right**.

| | |
|----------------------|--------|
| Copy ID to Clipboard | |
| Create Child | F6 |
| Create Jump | F8 |
| Create Orphan | F9 |
| Create Parent | F7 |
| Create Thought | Ctrl+Q |

Figure 108. Default Keyboard Shortcut for Create Orphan

Create Thoughts from Search, Notes or Events

You can create a new thought instantly from the Search box or within Notes or Events. Say you'd like a "Monthly Meetings" thought to be a child of "My Work," but you're not sure whether you already have a thought with that name. You can begin by searching, and if it doesn't already exist, no need to retype the name.

To create a new thought using search:

1. Activate the thought that should be the parent, child, or jump thought of the new thought.
2. Click in the Search box at the top-right corner of the window, then type the name of the thought you're looking for, or want to create if it's not found.
3. If the thought doesn't already exist and you want to create it:
 - Press the **Enter** key to create it as a child of the active thought, or
 - Hold down the **Shift** key as you press the **Enter** key to create it as a parent of the active thought, or
 - Hold down the **Ctrl** key as you press the **Enter** key to create it as a jump thought of the active thought, or
 - Hold down the **Ctrl** key as you press the **Shift** key, then click on **Create Orphan** to create it as an orphan thought

Your new thought will be the active thought.

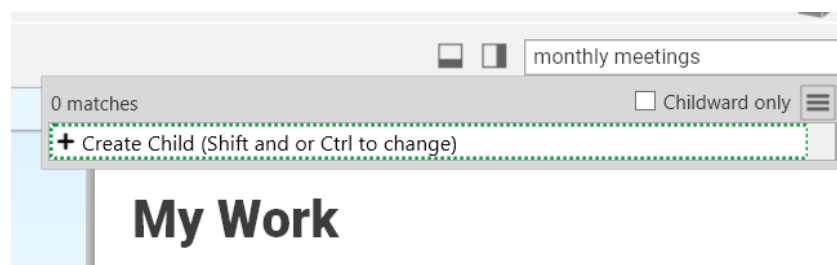


Figure 109. Creating a Thought from the Search Box

To create a new thought when searching finds an existing thought:

1. Press the **up-arrow** key. This highlights the default option—Create Child. Note that pressing the **Enter** key before pressing the **up-arrow** key activates the existing thought.

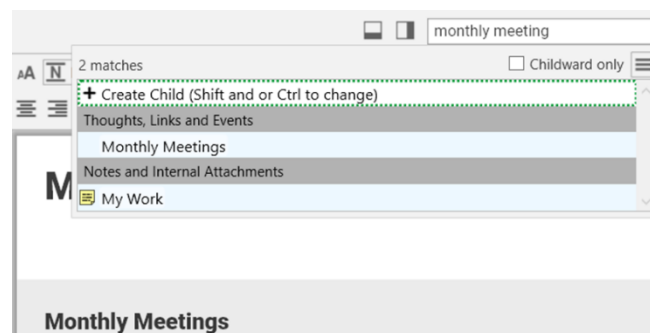


Figure 110. Creating a Thought from the Search Box when the Thought is Found

2. Use any of the same key combinations for creating a new thought from the Search box when a thought isn't found.

To create a new thought from within a note:

1. Select the text within the note for which you want to create a child, parent, or jump thought.
2. Right-click the selected text, then click the **Insert Thought or Web Link** command. Optionally, you can revise the text in the new box that appears, if you want a different name for the new thought.
3. Select a relationship for the new thought:
 - Press the **Enter** key to create it as a child of the active thought, or
 - Hold down the **Shift** key as you press the **Enter** key to create it as a parent of the active thought, or
 - Hold down the **Ctrl** key as you press the **Enter** key to create it as a jump thought of the active thought

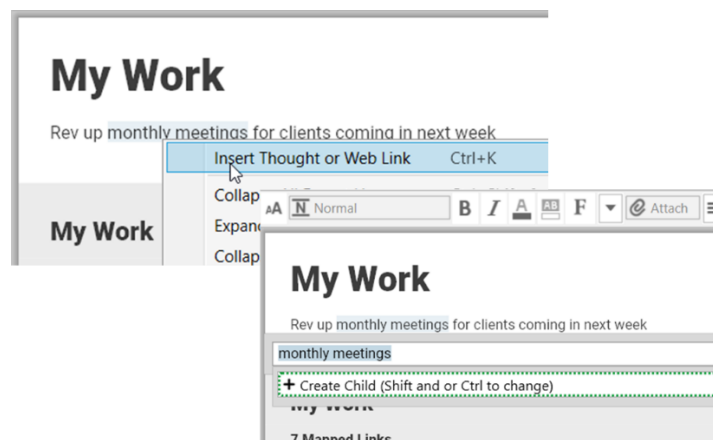


Figure 111. Creating a Thought from a Note

To create a new thought from within an Event:

1. Open an existing Event or click and drag from the start to finish times in the timeline to create a new Event.
2. Type a name for the new thought where you see “No thought or link” at the top of the Event box. A new orphan thought will be created with that name.

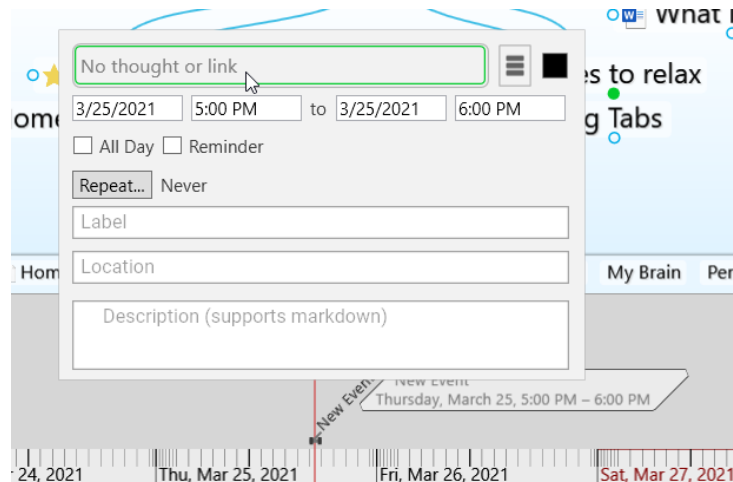


Figure 112. Creating a Thought from an Event

Changing the Display Order of Thoughts

You can use TheBrain's hidden ordering system to change the default alphabetical ordering of thoughts in the Plex to any order you prefer. To do this, type a period and a number as the first characters of any thought name. These characters will not be displayed in the Plex. For example, try creating the following group of child thoughts in one area:

- .01 Zebra
- .02 Walrus
- .03 Aardvark

The thoughts will appear in the order of Zebra, Walrus, Aardvark (without the periods or numbers), rather than alphabetically. You can always delete or revise the numbers in the **Thought Properties** dialog box.

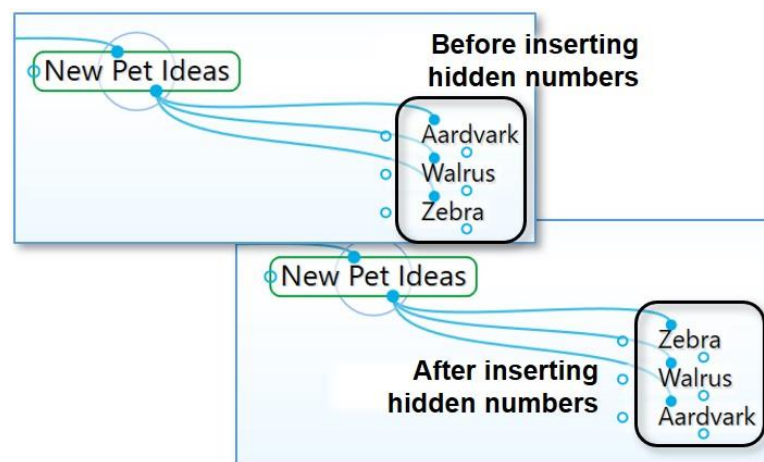


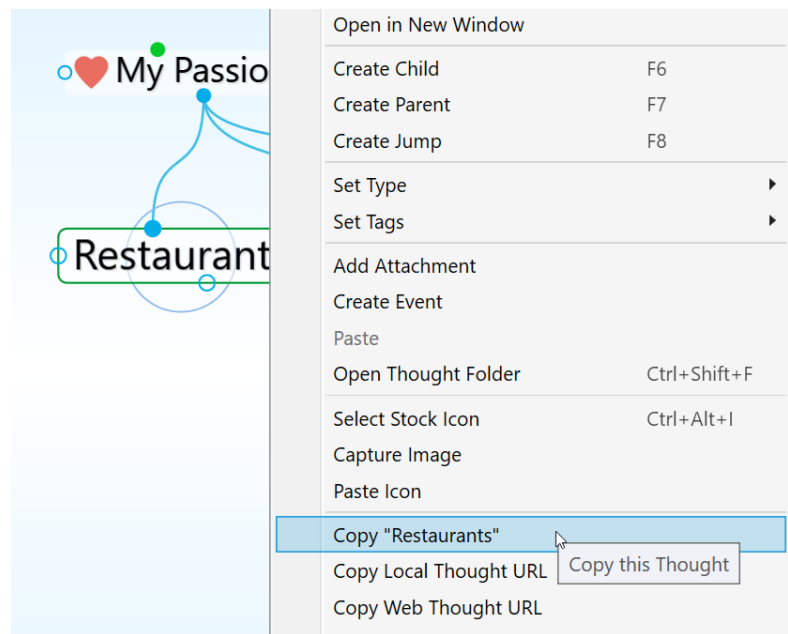
Figure 113. Changing Thought Order

Copying Thoughts Within and Between Brains

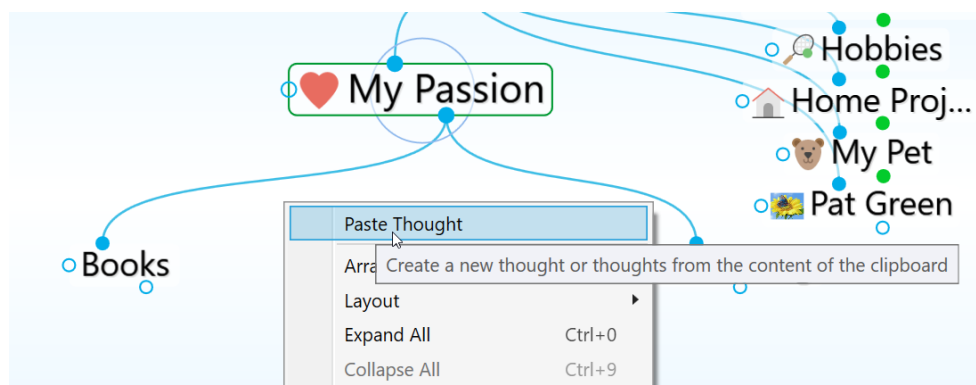
Thoughts, including all of their notes, properties, events, and attachments, can be copied and pasted between brains or duplicated within a brain. When thoughts are copied, associated thought types and link types are automatically copied as well.

To copy a thought within the same brain:

1. Right-click the thought to be copied and then click the **Copy “name of thought”** command on the context menu.



2. Activate the thought that will be the parent of the newly copied thought.
3. Right-click within any blank area of the plex and click **Paste Thought(s)** on the context menu.



4. The copied thought will automatically be linked as a child of the active thought and it will also retain all of its original relationships.

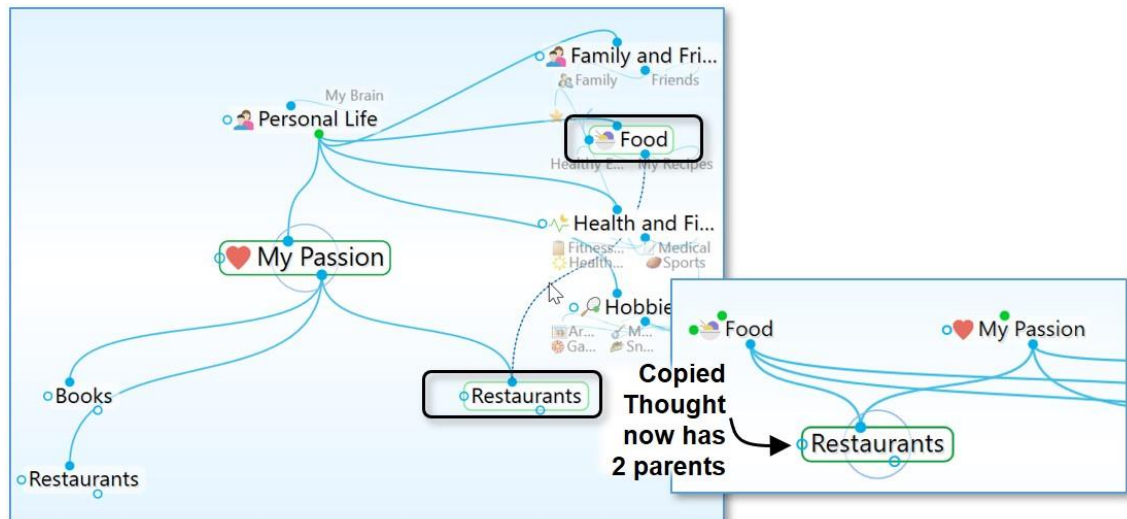


Figure 114. Copied Thought with Two Parents

To create a duplicate of a thought:

If you just want to make a duplicate of a single thought without retaining any of its links, you can use the **Duplicate Thought** command.

1. Right-click the thought to be duplicated and then click the **Duplicate Thought** command on the context menu.
2. The duplicated thought will appear as a child of the original, as shown in the figure below.

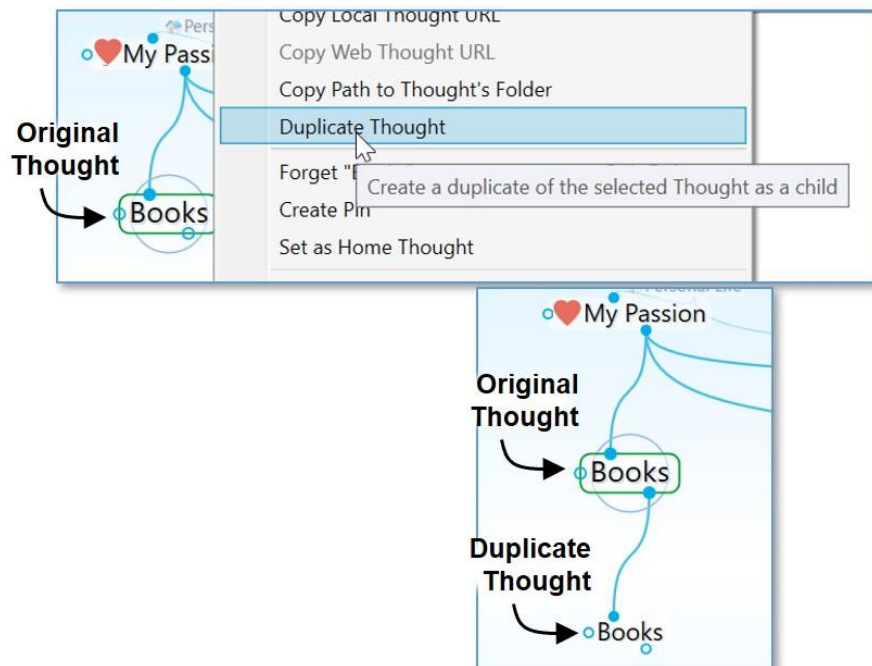


Figure 115. Duplicating a Thought

To copy a thought to another brain:

1. Right-click the thought to be copied and then click the **Copy “thought name”** command on the context menu (or activate the thought, click the **Edit** menu, and then click the **Copy** command).
2. Open the brain into which you want to copy the thought.
3. Right-click on the background of the Plex and then click the **Paste Thought** command on the context menu (or click the **Edit** menu and then click the **Paste Thought** command).
4. The thought will be pasted into the brain and linked as a child of the active thought. It will include any attachments, thought Types, notes, or other attributes it had in the original brain.



If you have selected multiple thoughts, they can all be copied at once using the same technique. Right-click anyplace within the Selection panel to open the context menu. See *Selecting Multiple Thoughts* beginning on page 113 for complete instructions about selecting multiple thoughts.

Merging Thoughts

You can automatically merge multiple thoughts that refer to the same thing. You can combine the links, attachments, and notes so that the resulting thought has all of the information from those multiple thoughts.

To merge thoughts:

1. **Ctrl+click** on two or more thoughts that you want to merge into a single thought. The thought names will automatically appear in the Selection panel.
2. Right-click in the Selection panel, then click **Merge (n) Thoughts**.

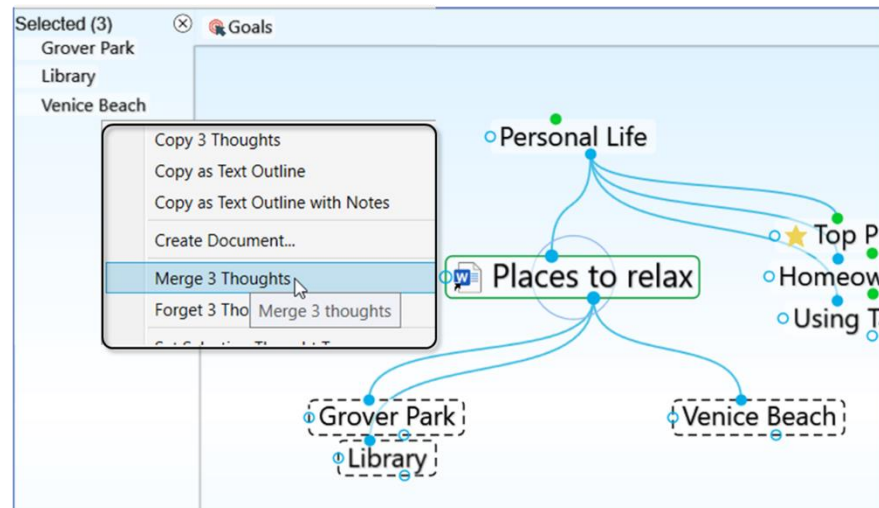


Figure 116. Merging Three Selected Thoughts into One

When you activate the new thought, you'll see all content that was in each of the standalone thoughts. The name of the new thought becomes a combination of the formerly separate thoughts, in alphabetical order.

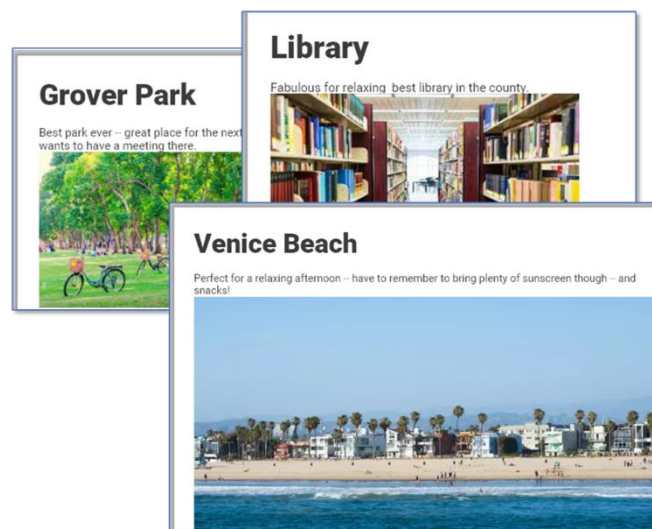


Figure 117. Original Content Area of Three Thoughts before Merging

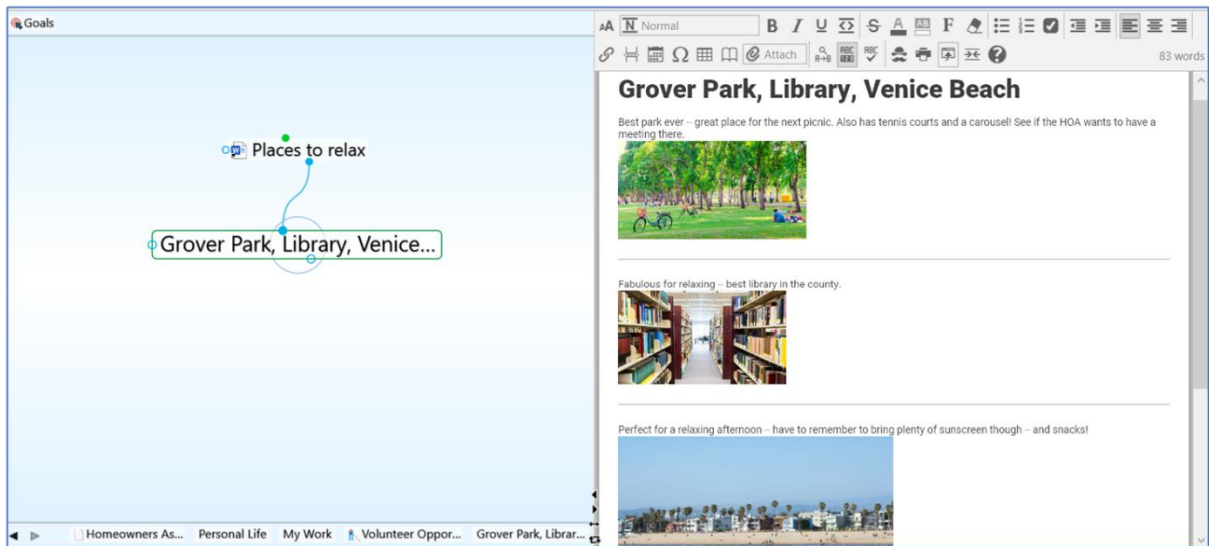


Figure 118. After Merging

Undoing and Redoing Actions

Changing your mind about your actions is easy. You can undo up to 100 actions during your current session. Actions that have been undone can also be re-executed using the **Redo** command.

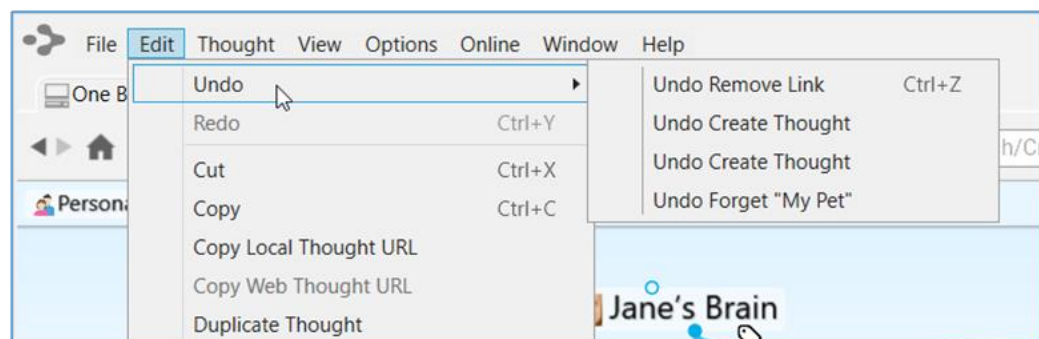


Figure 119. Undo and Redo Commands

To undo an action:

1. Click the **Edit** menu and then click the **Undo** command. The list on the secondary menu displays your most recent action first.
2. To undo your most recent action, click the first item in the secondary menu. To undo multiple actions, select the oldest action to be undone from the list. All actions above that action will also be undone.

To redo an action you have undone:

1. Click the **Edit** menu and then click the **Redo** command. If there are multiple items that can be redone, a secondary menu will be displayed.

2. Click the action of your choice. As in the list of actions that can be undone, the list is in most-recent-action-first order. All actions above the item you click will also be undone.



The Undo and Redo lists are cleared when you sync your brain (including an auto sync) and when your brain is closed.

Editing Thoughts and Links

Renaming Thoughts

You can easily rename any thought in its **Thought Properties** dialog box. When you rename a thought, any references to it from other notes are automatically updated with the new name.

- Click the thought to make it active, then click it again. You may also click the **Show Thought Properties** command in the **Thought** menu or **Alt**-click a non-active thought. In the **Thought Properties** dialog box, make any edits you want, then press the **Enter** key or click in the Plex.

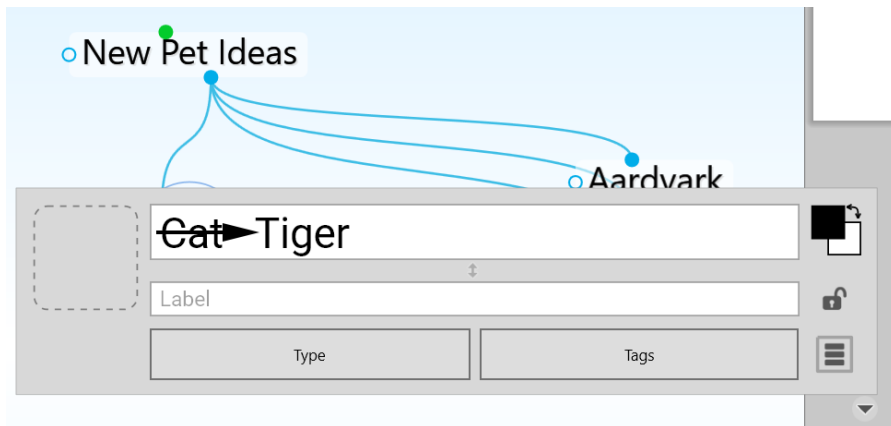


Figure 120. Renaming a Thought

Selecting Multiple Thoughts

You can select multiple thoughts in three ways:

- Hold down the **Ctrl** key as you click each thought you want to select, or
- Hold down the **Ctrl** key as you drag to form a box around the thoughts, or
- Hold down the **Ctrl** key as you click a gate to select all the thoughts connected to that gate

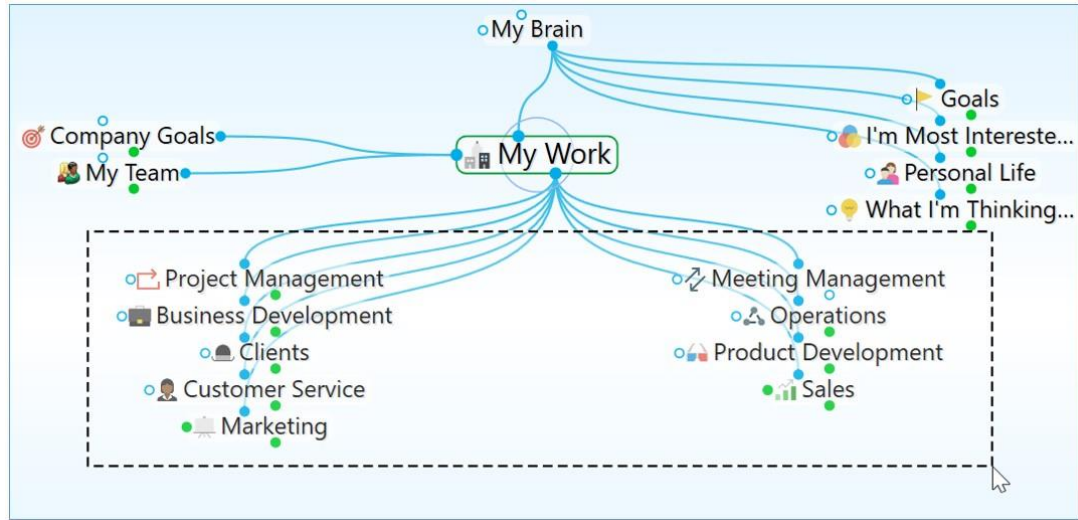


Figure 121. Selecting Multiple Thoughts by Ctrl-Dragging



Selected thoughts are then added to TheBrain's Selection panel for making mass edits on large groups of thoughts at one time.

After the multiple thoughts are selected, you can apply actions—link, unlink, forget, set thought type, and other actions you would apply to an individual thought—to the selected thoughts en masse. When multiple thoughts are selected, they are listed in a Selection panel on the left side of the Plex and they are highlighted in the Plex itself.

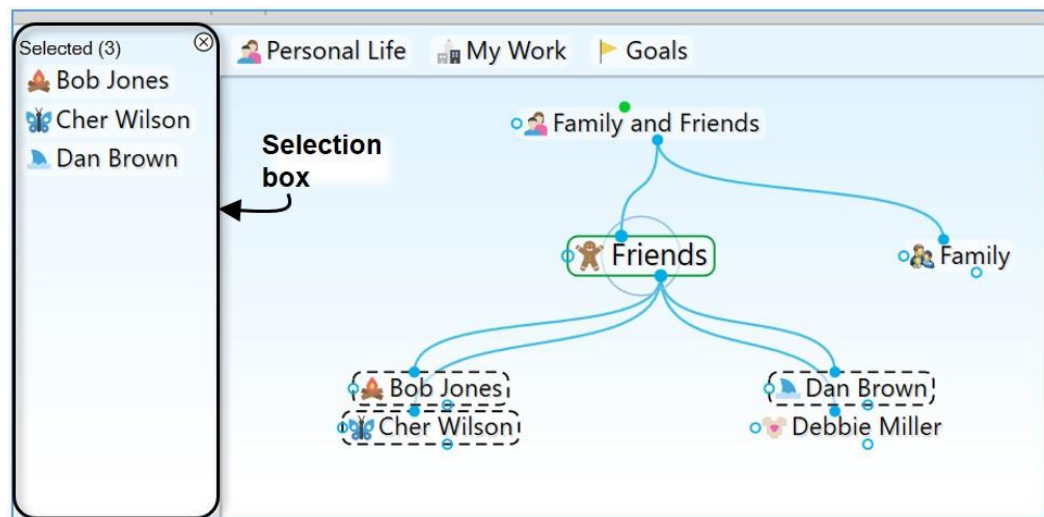


Figure 122. Selection Panel and Selected Thoughts

To de-select individual thoughts:

- Hold down the **Ctrl** key as you click a thought (either in the Plex or in the Selection panel) to de-select just that thought.

To close the Selection panel and de-select all thoughts:

- Click the **Close** button (X) in the top-right corner of the Selection panel. The button will turn red as you point to it and after the box is closed the thoughts will no longer be selected in the Plex.

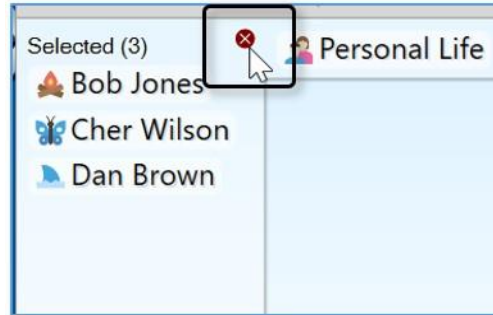


Figure 123. Closing the Selection Panel

To perform actions on selected thoughts:

- Right-click in an empty area of the Selection panel and select the action of your choice on the context menu. The entries in this menu are also displayed in the **Edit** menu.

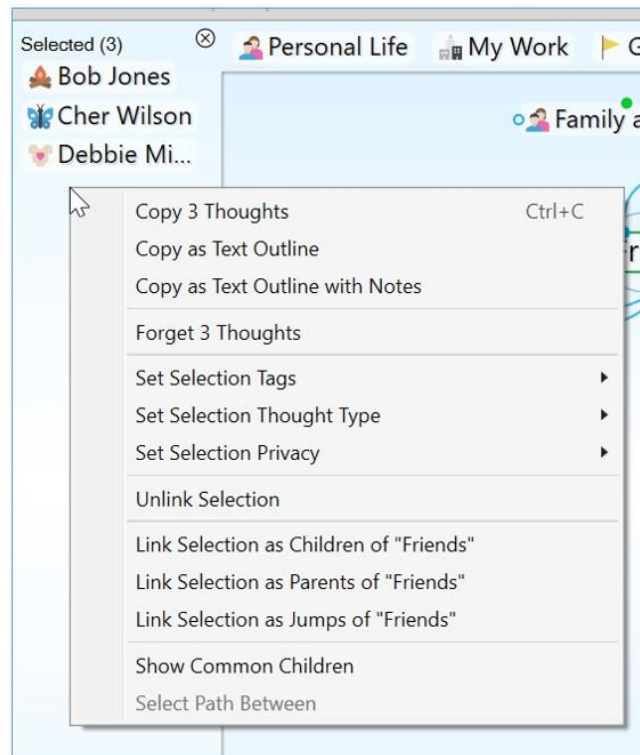


Figure 124. Selection Panel Context Menu

Other Selection Uses

Once you have created a selection, you can also use it for other things besides what you see in the menu. For example, you can limit searches to selected thoughts. In the example below, only “Debbie Miller” is found because it is the only thought name beginning with “D” that is currently selected.

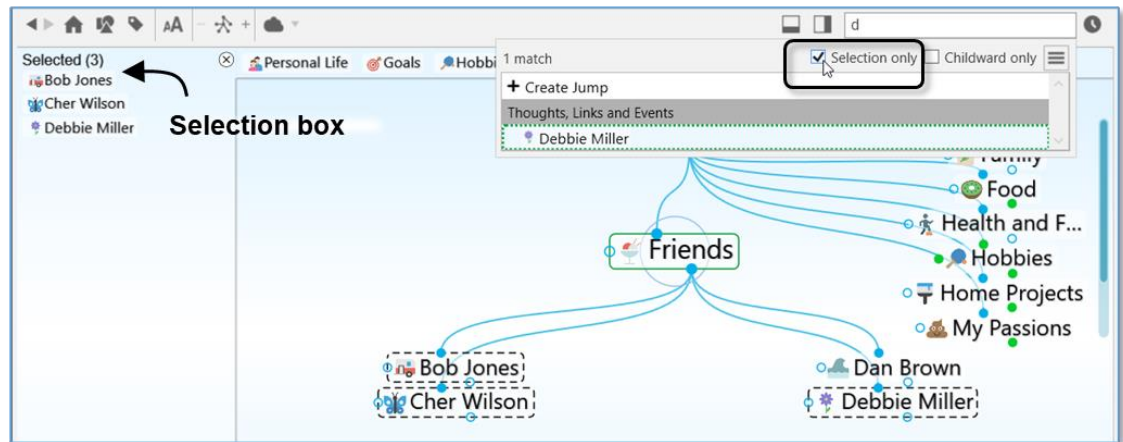


Figure 125. Limiting Searches to Selected Thoughts

Forgetting and Deleting Thoughts

When you no longer need a thought, it can be forgotten or deleted. A forgotten thought may be remembered and restored later, or deleted. A deleted thought is gone forever. This is similar to the Recycle Bin/Trash feature on your desktop which stores your deleted files until you choose to remove them permanently.

To forget a thought:

- Right-click the thought to be deleted, then click **Forget Thought Name** in the context menu, or
- Click the active thought to be forgotten, click the menu button in the **Thought Properties** dialog box, then, click the **Forget Thought Name** command.

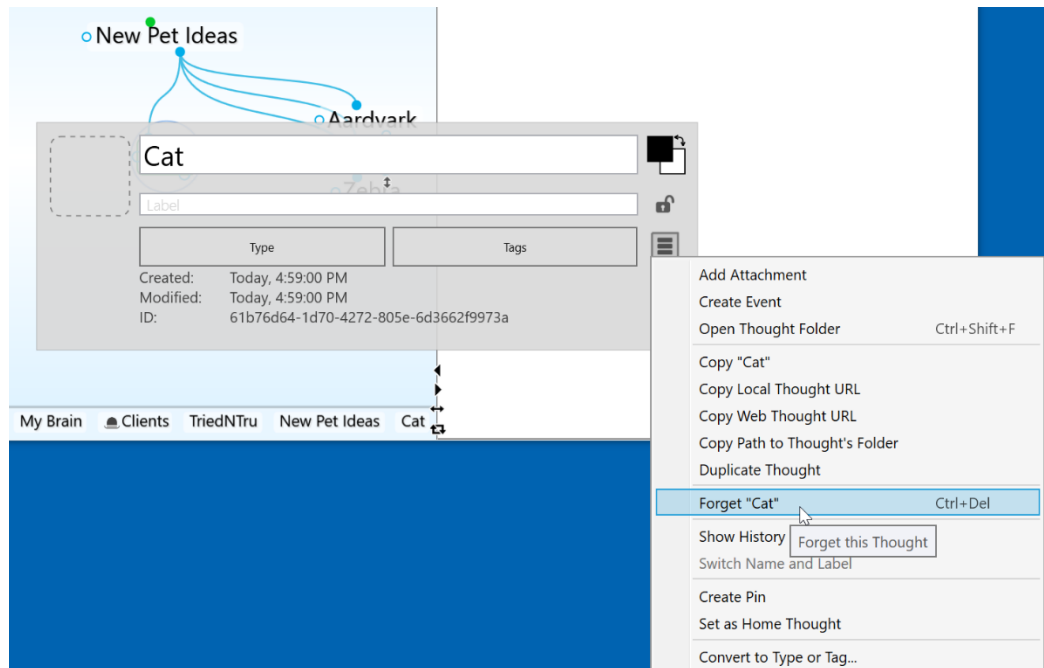


Figure 126. Forgetting a Thought in its Thought Properties Dialog Box

Once a thought has been forgotten it will disappear from the display. If you want to access it again later temporarily, you can do so by turning on the display of forgotten thoughts. You can also permanently delete forgotten thoughts or you can remember them.

To access forgotten thoughts:

1. Click the **Options** menu, then click the **Show Forgotten Thoughts** command. Any forgotten thoughts will appear grayed out in the Plex.

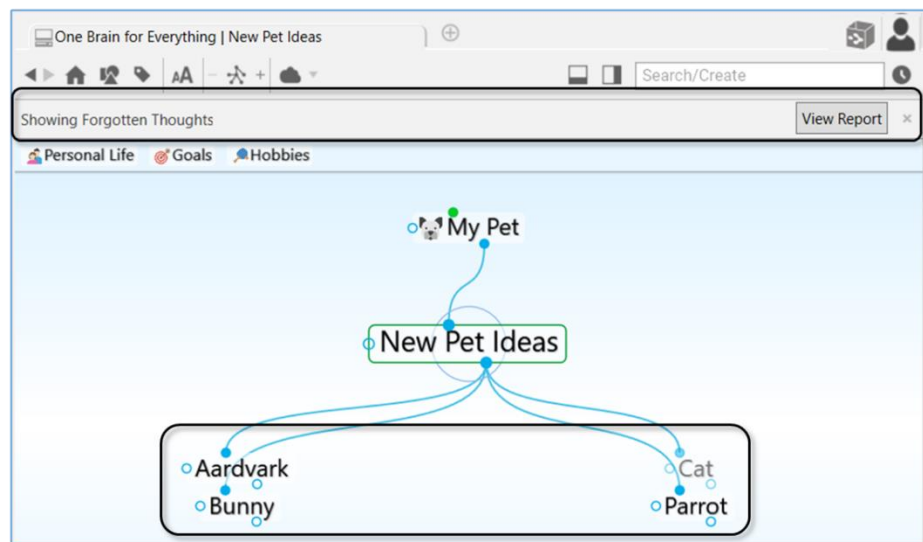


Figure 127. Forgotten Thoughts in the Plex

2. Notice the “Showing Forgotten Thoughts” message above the pins. This reminds you why some thoughts are grayed. You can use forgotten thoughts just like normal thoughts as long as they are displayed. Click the **View Report** button to work directly with the forgotten thoughts.

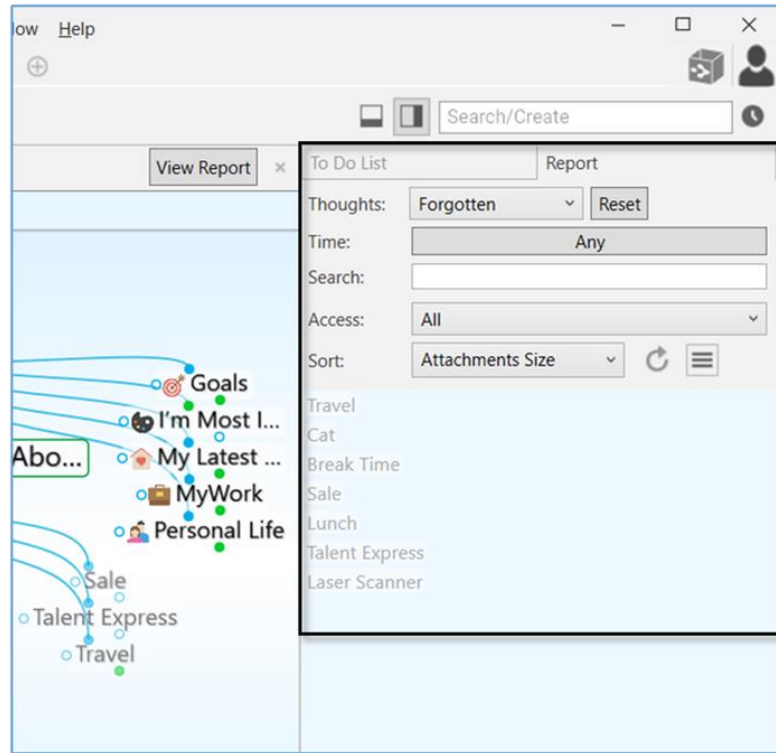


Figure 128. Forgotten Thoughts in the Report Tab

3. You can click on a thought in the **Reports** tab to activate it.

To delete all forgotten thoughts using the Reports tab:

- Click the **Reports** tab menu button, then select **Forgotten** from the Thoughts drop down menu. You can then click on the context menu button and select **Delete Forgotten Thoughts**. Alternatively, you can use the **Ctrl** key to select multiple individual forgotten thoughts and then delete only those.

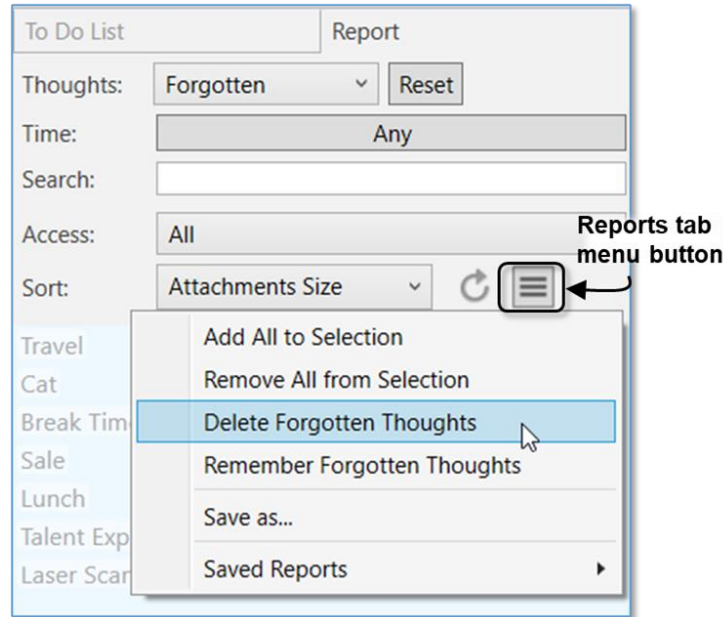


Figure 129. Using the Report Tab to Delete All Forgotten Thoughts

- You can click the **Refresh** button on the **Reports** tab to update the list.



Closing the **Forgotten Thoughts** dialog box hides the forgotten thoughts. You can also reinstate forgotten thoughts by clicking the **Remember All** command in the **Reports** tab menu. You can also reinstate an individual forgotten thought by right-clicking in the Plex, then clicking the **Remember *thought name*** command on the context menu.

It is generally recommended to forget thoughts when you don't need them so that you can easily retrieve them if you change your mind. If you are sure you will *never* need a thought again and you do not want to be able to remember it in the future, you can delete it immediately without forgetting it first.

To delete a thought instantly:

1. Hold down the **Shift** key (for Windows)/**Alt** key (for Mac) as you right-click the thought to be deleted. The context menu will be displayed, showing the **Delete *thought name*** command in place of the **Forget *thought name*** command.

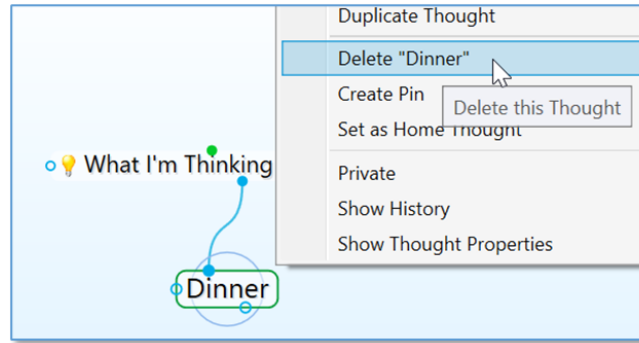


Figure 130. Shift-Right-Click Context Menu for a Thought

2. Click the **Delete *thought name*** command. The thought will be permanently deleted. See Selecting Multiple Thoughts on page 113 for forgetting or deleting multiple thoughts at once.



When a file attachment is deleted, the file is placed into an internal trash folder in case the delete needs to be undone. When undo is cleared, the trash is emptied. The files are then moved to the OS trash/recycle bin so you have further opportunity to recover the file if needed.



Tip: If you delete something by accident you can still recover it if you use the **Undo** command immediately.

Unlinking Thoughts

To unlink thoughts:

- Right-click the link, then click the **Unlink** command on the context menu



Tip: If you are moving a thought from one place to another by linking and unlinking it, it is generally easier to do the unlinking after you have done the linking. This avoids making the thought into an “orphan,” a thought with no relatives.

If you have difficulty telling which link you are pointing at with the mouse, just look at the highlighted thoughts. When the mouse pointer is over a link, it is highlighted along with the two thoughts it connects. This makes it easy to tell which thoughts will be unlinked if you click on the link.

In addition to being able to unlink thoughts one link at a time, you can also select multiple thoughts to unlink several of them at once. To do so:

- Select the thoughts you want to unlink by holding down the **Ctrl** key and clicking on each one, or **Ctrl** drag a box around thoughts in the same area
- Activate the thought from which you wish to unlink the selected thoughts
- Right-click in the Selection panel and select the **Unlink Selection** command

Linking Existing Thoughts

As noted previously, links are *power*. Not only do links allow for associations that group thoughts conceptually, they allow information to be stored in and accessible from numerous places.



A single thought may have relationships with multiple thoughts. For example, you may want a thought named “Aunt Mary” to be a child of your “Mentors” thought and also a child of your “Family” thought. If your Aunt Mary is also helping you plan your next vacation, her thought may also be a child or jump thought to your “Vacation” thought. The possibilities are endless.

There are several ways to link to existing thoughts, as described in the following sections.

Link to a Thought Visible in the Plex

When the thoughts you want to link are both visible in the Plex, you can simply drag from the desired gate of one thought in the Plex to another thought in the Plex. Note that the thought you drag from or to does not have to be the active thought.

In the Normal view, the display of thoughts is limited to close relations. You may find it useful to expand the view when linking thoughts, because you can see more thoughts at once.

Link by Dragging to a Pin

You can Link to a thought that is not visible in the Plex if it has a pin. Simply drag from the appropriate gate to the pin. When you want to link a thought to many other thoughts, create a pin of the thought so you can quickly link to it. A pin’s gates appear when you point at the pin with the mouse.

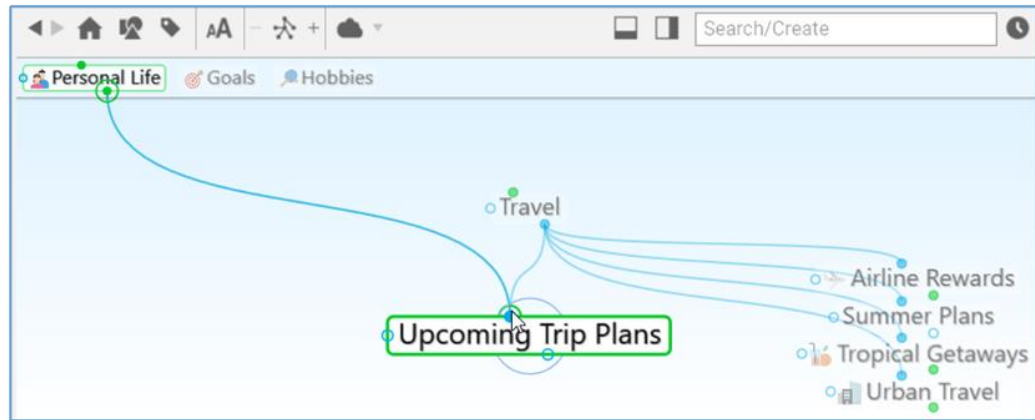


Figure 131. Link by Dragging to a Pin

The relationship you establish by linking a thought to a pin is between the thoughts; if you delete the pin, the Link between the thoughts is still intact.

Link by Dragging to the Past Thoughts' List

You can link a thought in the Plex to a thought in the Past Thought List. Like pins, gates for a thought in the Past Thought List appear when you point at the past thought with the mouse.

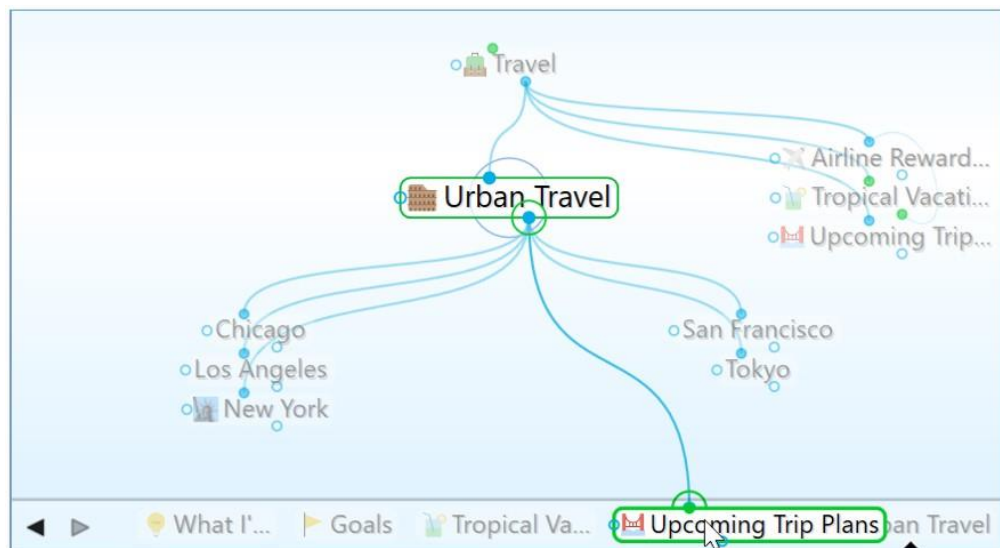


Figure 132. Link by Dragging to a Thought in the Past Thoughts' List

Link by Selecting a Thought in the Existing Thoughts List

You can also link by using the **Thought Creation** dialog box:

1. Make the thought you want to link from the active thought, then start creating a thought by dragging or using the **Thought** menu. The **Thought Creation** dialog box appears.

2. Type the first few letters of the name of the thought you want to link to. Double-click on the thought you want to link when you see it in the **Existing Thought List** that appears below (or click it once, then click in the thought name field and press the **Enter** key).

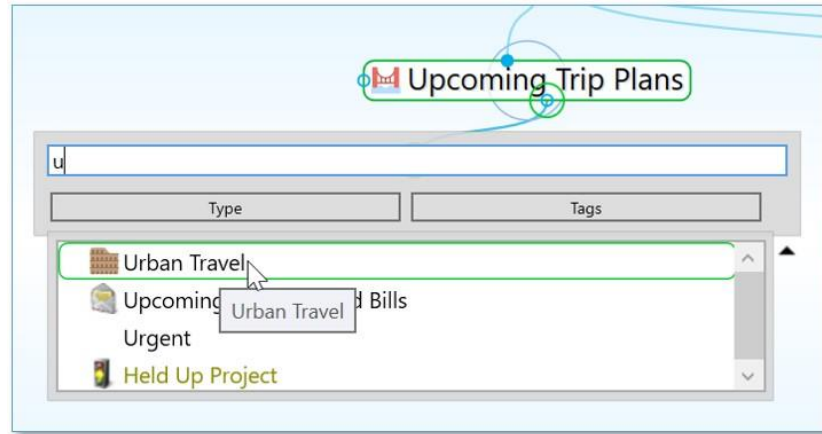


Figure 133. Create a Link by Starting to Create a Child Thought

Link Using the Selection Panel

Thoughts in the Selection panel can be linked to the active thought using the Selection menu:

1. Select the thought or thoughts you want to link using **Ctrl**-click or by holding down the **Ctrl** key as you drag a box around the thoughts if they're next to each other.
2. Activate the thought in the Plex to which you want to link.
3. Right-click the Selection panel, then click the link command of your choice in the context menu.

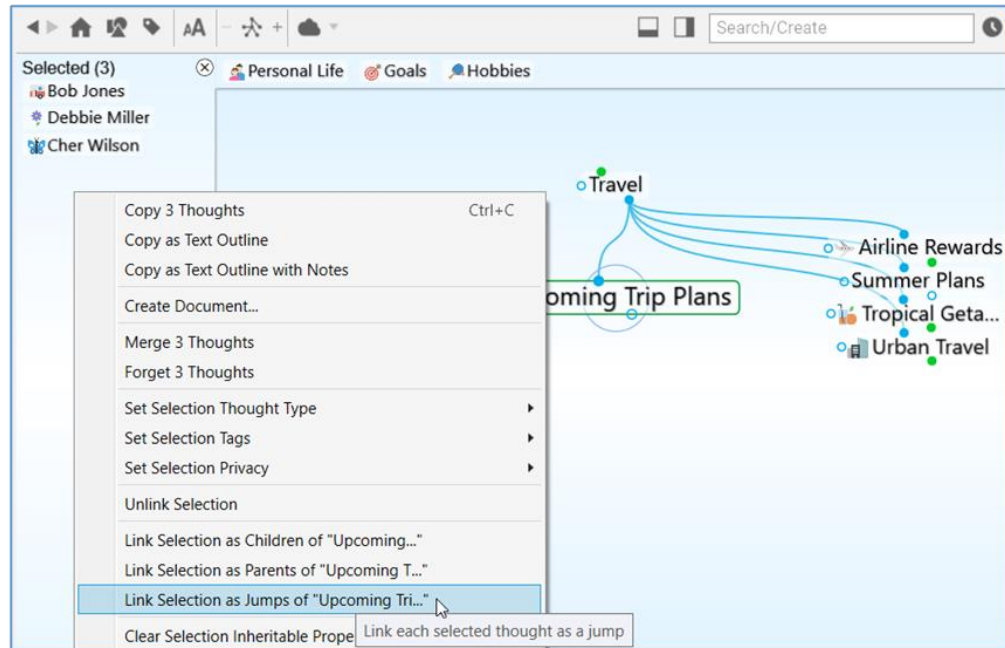


Figure 134. Linking Using the Selection Panel

Cancel Creation of a Link

Press the **Esc** key while dragging a link to abort the process. (The mouse button should still be held down while you press **Esc**.)

Changing Relationships Using Drag and Drop

Say that you decide that your “Product Promotions” thought shouldn’t really be a child of your “Customer Service” thought. Instead, it should be the child of “Business Development.” You can quickly change relationships between thoughts in a single step: Hold down the **Shift** key while linking a thought to a new parent. All of the current parents will be unlinked automatically. Note that even if a thought has more than one parent, all of the former parents will be unlinked.

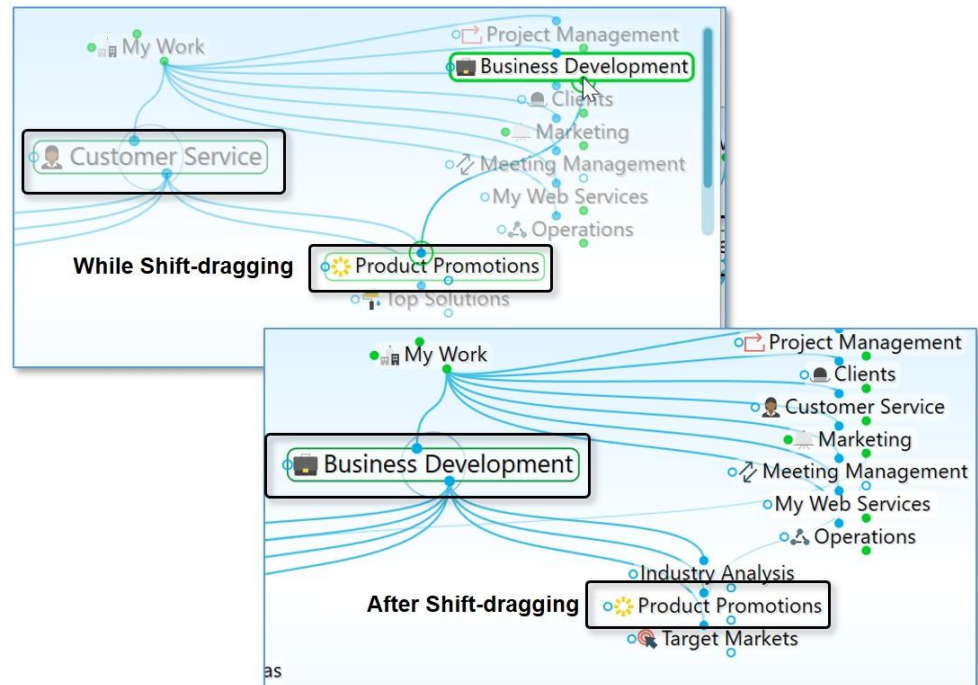


Figure 135. Shift-Dragging to Change Relationships

Customizing Thought and Link Properties



You can change the colors of thoughts and links globally using the **Brain Theme** dialog box (see the Customizing Your Brain's Appearance section on page 60). This section explains how to view and manage the properties of individual and selected thoughts and links. Changed settings override the global defaults.

Changing the Properties of a Thought

To open the Thought Properties dialog box, use any of these methods:

- Click the active thought, or
- Click the thought once to select it, then a second time to open the box, or
- **Alt**-click the thought (whether or not the thought is active), or
- Right-click the thought, then click **Show Thought Properties** on the context menu, or
- Click the thought to select it, click the **Thought** menu in the menu bar, then click the **Show Thought Properties** command

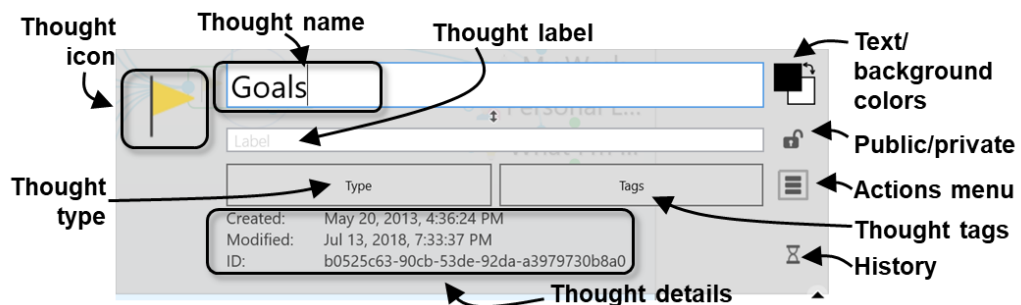


Figure 136. Thought Properties Dialog Box

Press the **Enter** key or click anywhere outside of the dialog box to close it and save any changes.

You can use the **Thought Properties** dialog box to:

- Rename a thought
- Add or edit a thought Label
- Add or change a thought Type
- Add or change a thought Tag

- Mark the thought as Private or Public
- Customize the thought text or background color (just this thought; global changes are done in the **Themes** window)
- Add or change the thought's icon
- Review the thought's creation/modification history and ID. The ID is not normally needed but may be useful when troubleshooting.
- And, using the **Thought Properties** Actions Menu button (three horizontal lines):
 - Forget the thought
 - Create a Pin
 - Set as the Home thought

Changing the Colors of a Thought

While thought colors are set globally in the **Brain Theme** box, you can override these settings for individual thoughts. To begin, activate the thought, then click on it or **Alt**-click on any inactive thought.



Note that the individual changes you may make to thoughts, such as their color and background, override the settings in the **Brain Theme** box.

To change the text color of a thought:

- In the Thought Property box, click the upper color square, click the color of your choice, then click outside of the box of colors.

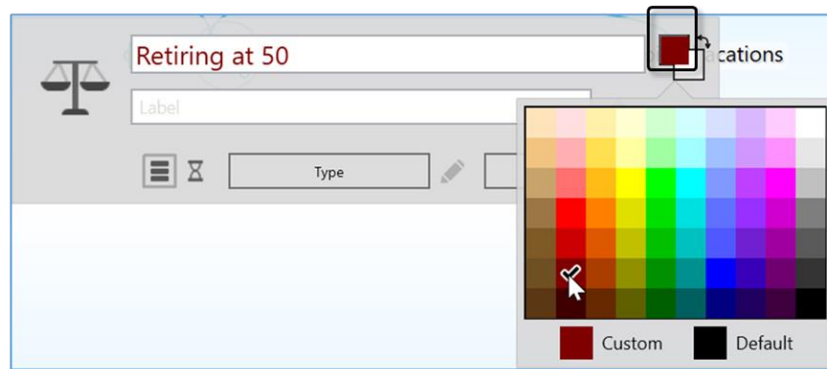


Figure 137. Text Color in the Thought Properties Dialog Box

To change the background color of a thought:

- Click the lower color square, click the color of your choice, then click outside of the box of colors.

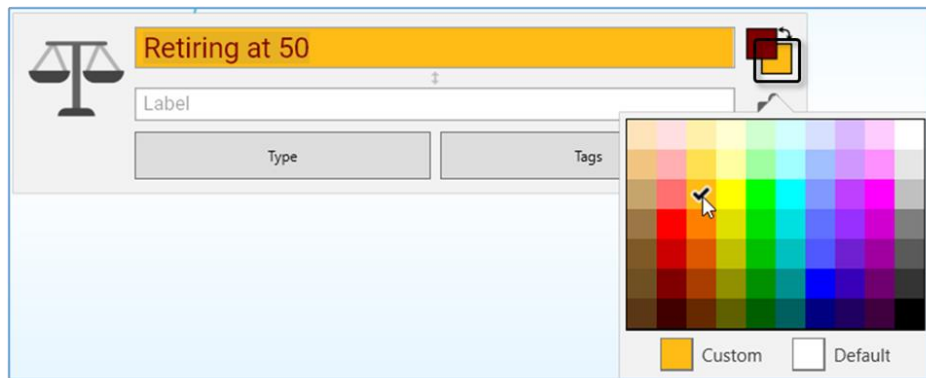


Figure 138. Background Color in the Thought Properties Dialog Box

To swap a thought's text color with its background color:

- Click the double-headed arrow next to the two color sample squares in the top-right area of the **Thought Properties** dialog box.

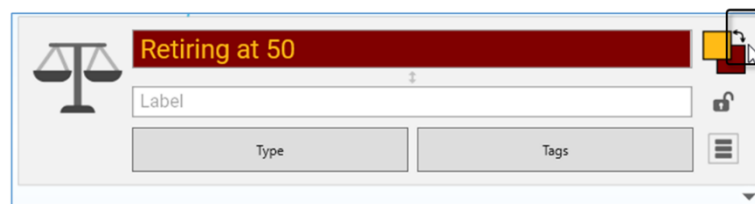


Figure 139. Swapping Text and Background Colors



You can use the same techniques to fine-tune new colors for thought text and background as you can use to define colors globally in the **Brain Theme** box. Please see the Defining and Selecting Additional Colors section on page 63 for details.

Adding a Label to a Thought

Labels are hints that appear below thoughts when you point the mouse at the thought.



Figure 140. A Thought Label

To add a label during thought creation:

1. While typing a new thought name, add a pipe symbol (|) and anything after will become the thought's label.

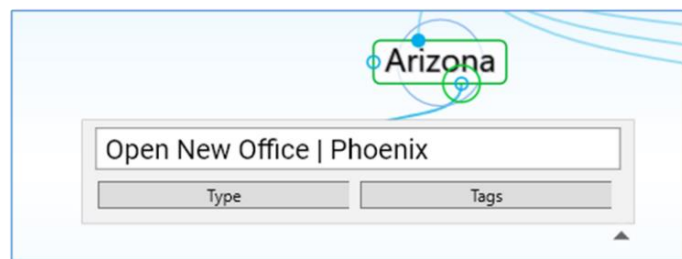


Figure 141. Adding a Pipe Symbol During Thought Naming

To add a label to an existing thought:

1. Activate the thought, then click on it or **Alt-click** on any inactive thought.
2. Type the text for the label in the **Label** field, then press the **Enter** key. When you point at the thought, the label text will appear in a box below the thought.

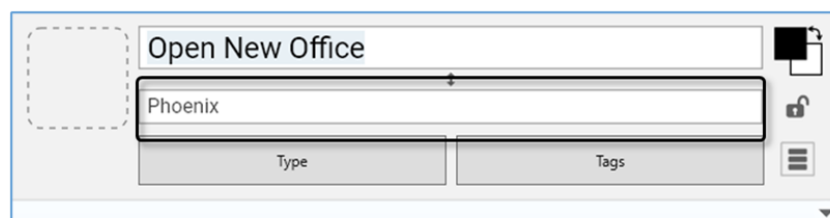


Figure 142. Label Field in Thought Properties Dialog Box

Swapping a Thought's Name with its Label

You can swap a thought's name with its label by clicking the **Switch** button in the **Thought Properties** dialog box. This can be very useful when the default label and name are assigned based on a URL and the automatic naming isn't optimal for your purposes.

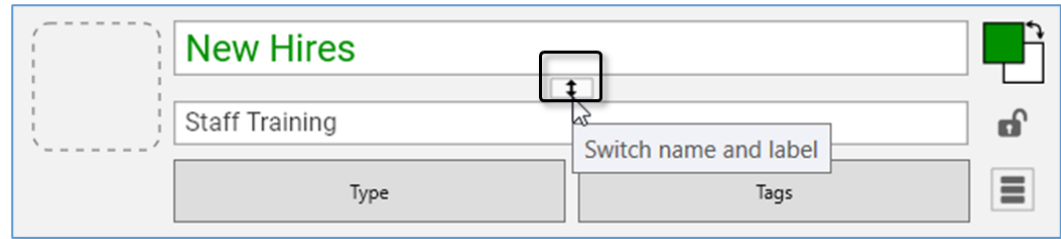


Figure 143. Swapping Label and Thought Names

Adding a Picture to a Thought

In any thought, you can attach an icon from TheBrain's built-in selection, an image from a file of your own, an image from notes or attachments in the active thought, or a screen capture. These pictures provide a visual boost to your brain. When you point to the icon next to the thought, the picture zooms to a larger size automatically.

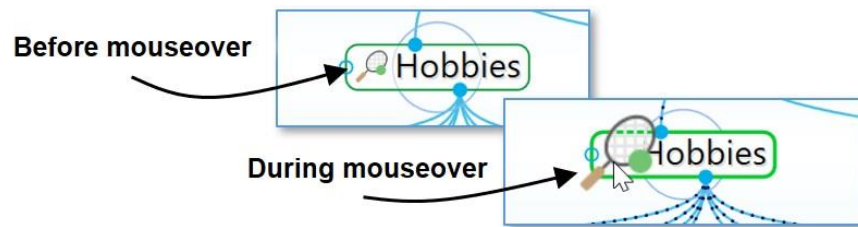


Figure 144. A Thought Icon

To insert an icon from TheBrain's built-in icon library:

1. Click the thought icon box in the upper left of the **Thought Properties** box, then click the **Select Stock Icon** command.

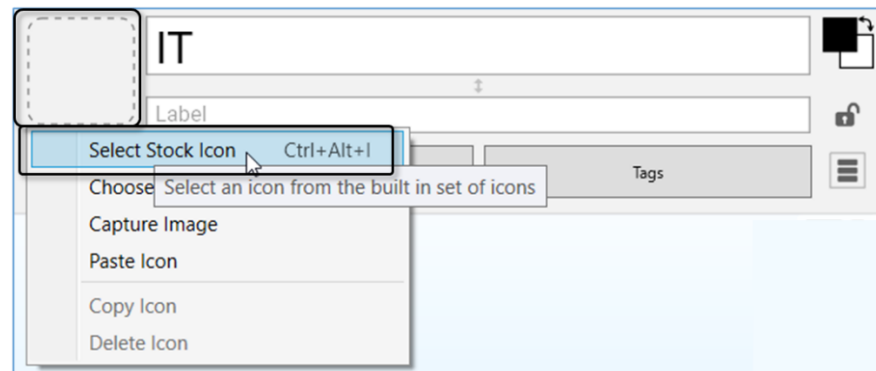


Figure 145. Select an Icon from the Built-in Library

2. With the Browse radio button selected, click any of the categories in the left panel. (See the TheBrain Icons section on page 238 for more about icon choices.) Click an icon of your choice to add it to the thought. The **Thought Properties** dialog box will close automatically when an icon is selected.

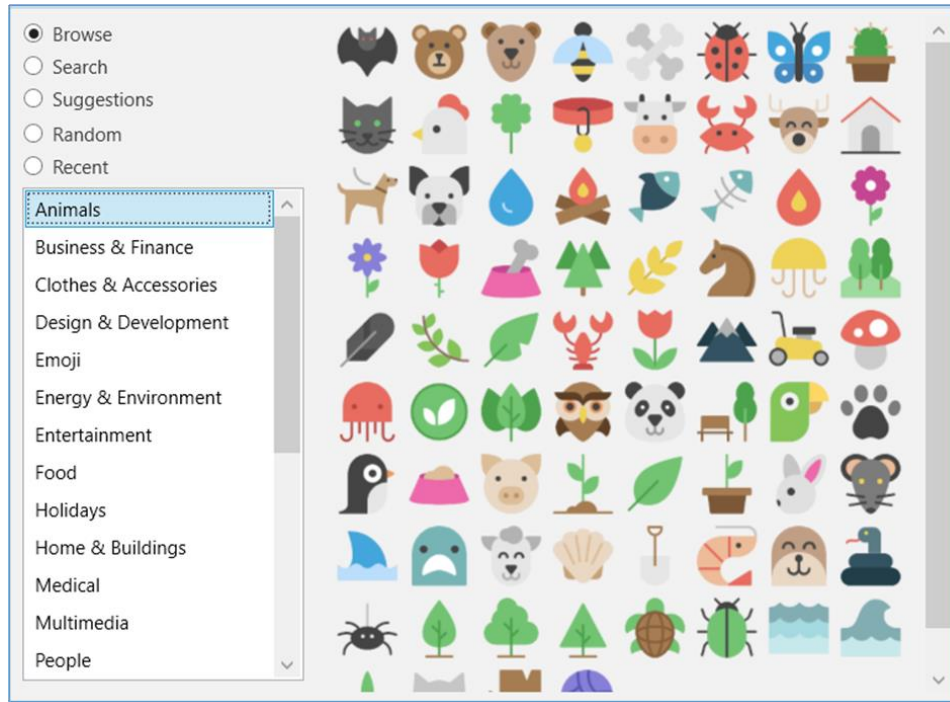


Figure 146. Icon Choices

To insert an image from a file as a thought icon:

1. Click the thought icon box, then click the **Choose File** command.

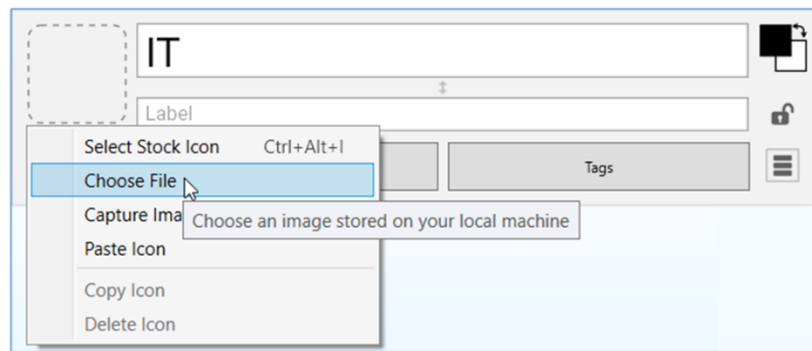


Figure 147. Choose a File to Use as an Icon

2. Navigate to the file of your choice, then click the **Open** button. Supported file formats for images include .jpg, .png, and .gif.

To create a thought icon from an image in the Content Area:

- Click the image to select it, right-click it, then click the **Copy to Icon** command in the context menu.

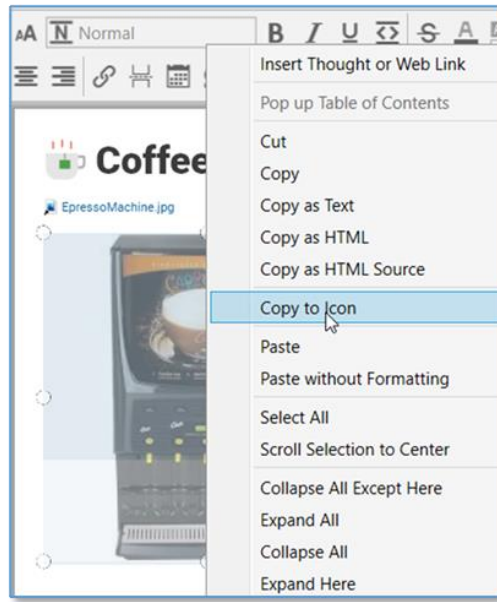


Figure 148. Copy to Icon Command in the Image's Context Menu

To create a thought icon from one of its attachments:

- Right-click the attachment, then click the **Copy to Icon** command in the context menu.

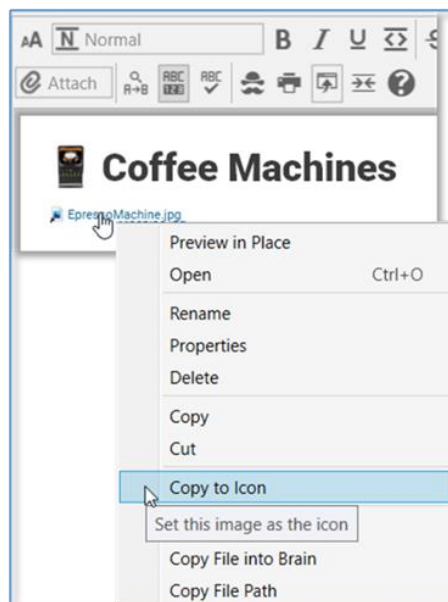


Figure 149. Copy to Icon Command in the Attachment's Context Menu

The new icon will appear to the left of the thought name at the top of the Content Area and on the active thought in the Plex.

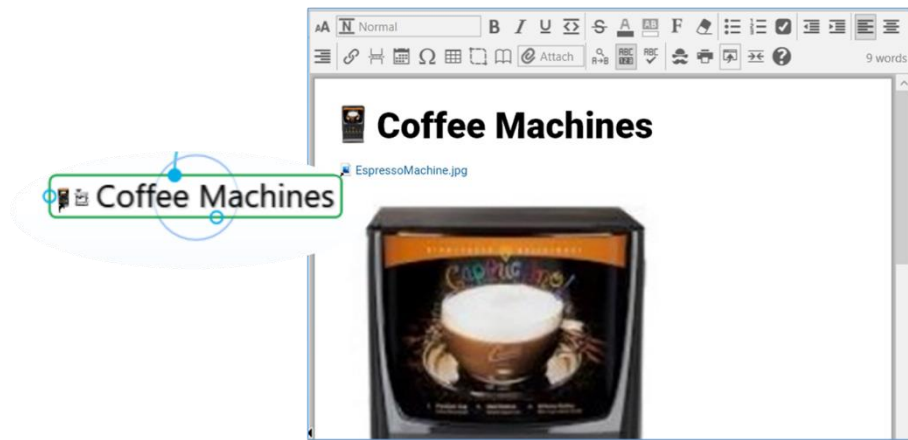


Figure 150. Thought with its New Icon

To insert a screen capture of an image as a thought icon:

1. Make sure the screen item you want to capture is visible, then activate the thought and click on it or **Alt**-click on any inactive thought.
2. Click the thought icon box, then click the **Capture Image** command.

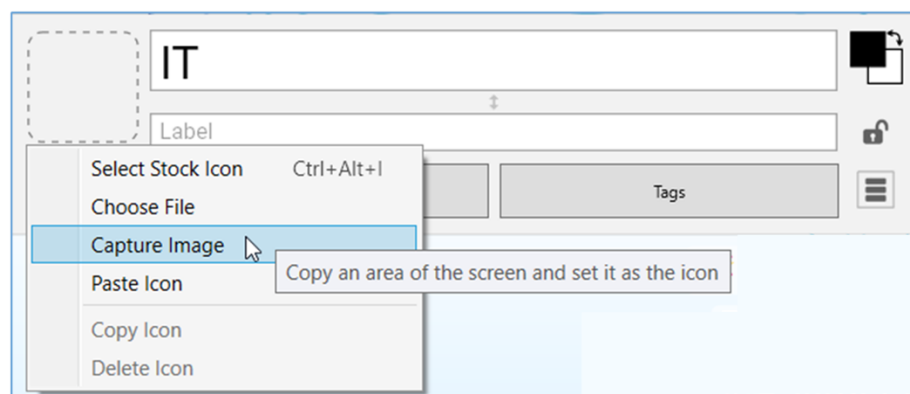


Figure 151. Capture Something on the Screen to Use as an Icon

3. Your brain will be hidden temporarily and red cross hairs will appear on the screen. Drag a rectangle around the area to be captured by dragging the mouse in a diagonal line from one corner of the rectangle to the opposite corner, then releasing the mouse button.

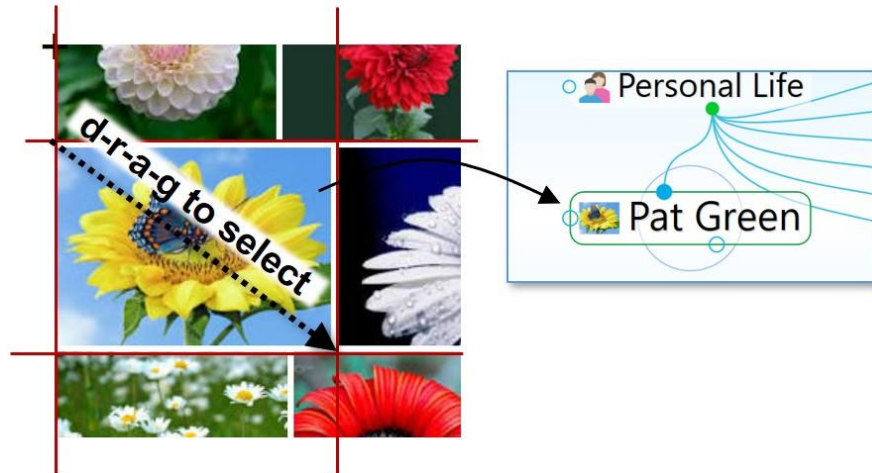


Figure 152. Using the Crosshair to Capture an Image

4. When you release the mouse, the image will be in the Icon area of the **Thought Properties** dialog box.



Tip: To capture from the Brain window itself, press the **Tab** key to toggle its visibility. You will see the crosshairs and you can drag to select the area of your choice.



While the captured item will become a picture, the source can be anything—a company logo, a photo, or part of an Excel worksheet or PDF file.

To paste an image you copy from somewhere else:

1. Copy the image using standard techniques. For example, you may right-click an image on a web page, then click the **Copy Image** command.
2. After the image is copied, from the **Thought Properties** dialog box, click the thought icon box or right-click on a thought in the Plex and select the **Paste Icon** command.

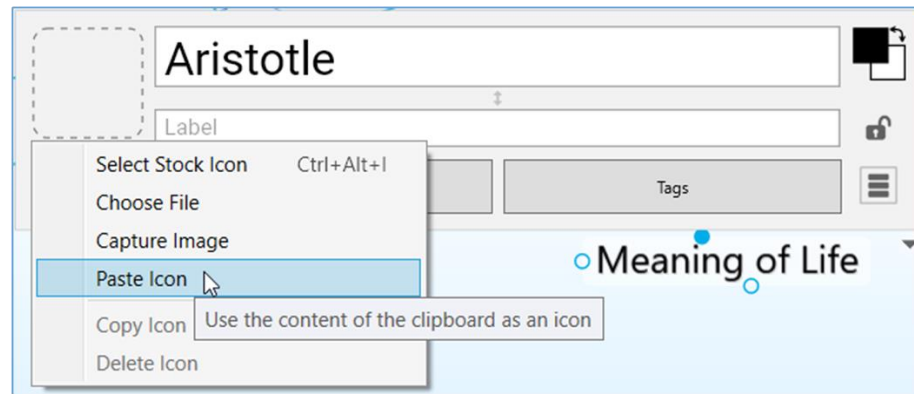


Figure 153. Capture Something You've Copied to Use as an Icon

To copy an image from the thought to someplace else:



Images you capture can be copied and pasted as attachments, pasted into notes or the Plex, or used as icons.

1. Click the thought icon box, then click the **Copy Icon** command.

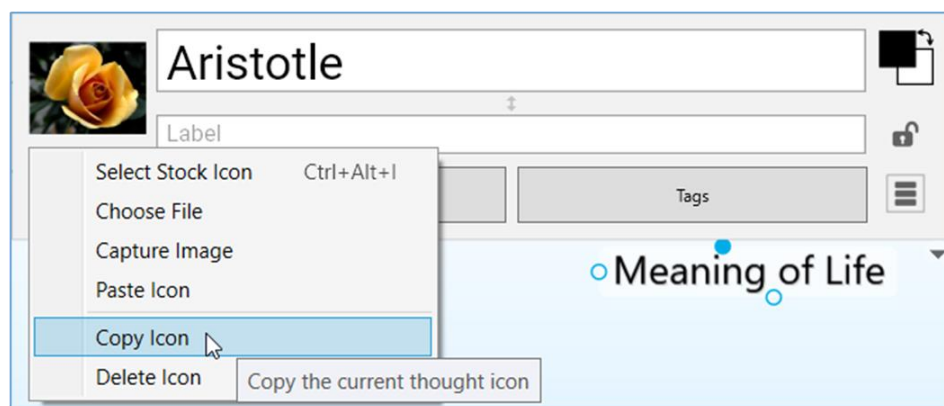


Figure 154. Copy the Icon to Use Elsewhere

2. The icon you copied can be pasted elsewhere, such as in a thought's Content Area or elsewhere on your computer.

To change a thought's icon, repeat the steps above. The icon will be replaced.

To delete a thought's icon:

- Click the thought icon box, then click the **Delete Icon** command.

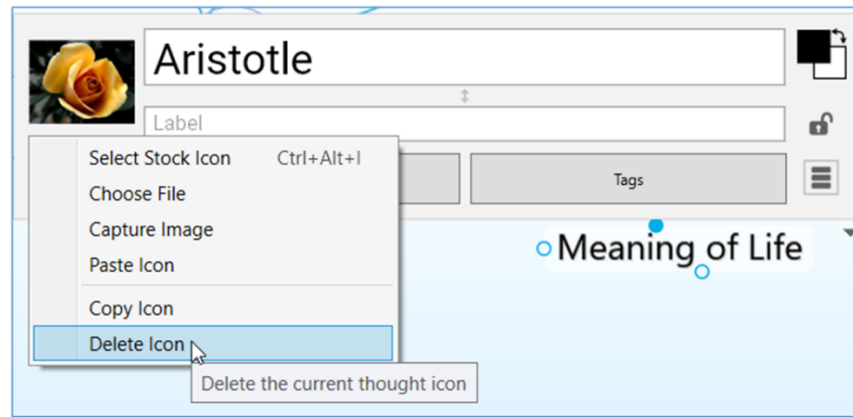


Figure 155. Removing a Thought Icon

Display of Inherited Properties

All inherited properties, such as from a thought type's icon, label or colors, are displayed in the properties dialog.

Thought types or tags are also clearly indicated.



Figure 156. Properties Dialog Improvements

Making Thoughts Private

Thoughts may be marked "Private." Private thoughts will appear with a small lock icon shown below and to the right of the thought. The lock appears whether the Private thought is active or not. If you make your brain publicly viewable on the web, private thoughts remain hidden from view by read only visitors. To mark a thought as "Private," click the lock icon in the **Thought Properties** dialog box.

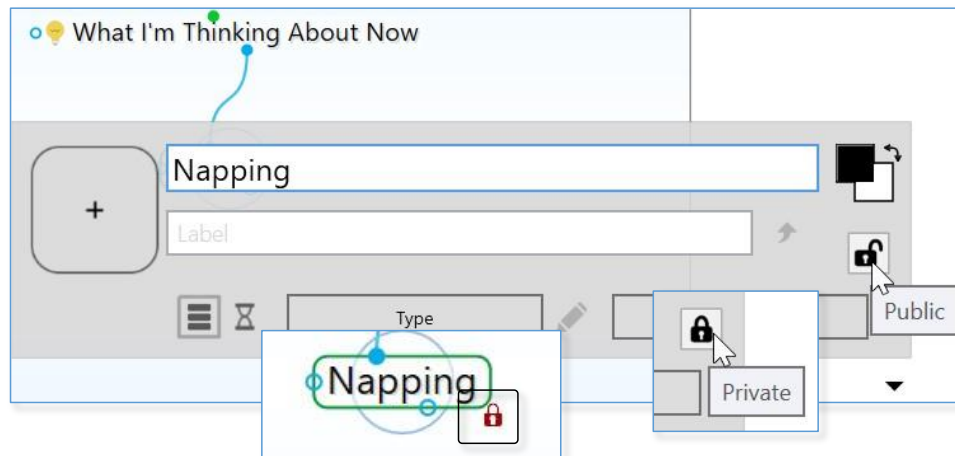


Figure 157. A Private Thought

Using Thought URLs

Each thought in TheBrain is available via a unique URL. A thought URL can be used to create links to thoughts from external third-party applications or from other brains. Thought URLs can also be used within TheBrain as another way to connect thoughts via links within notes or as attachments to thoughts.



Thought URLs can be added as hyperlinks in many third-party applications so that when the link is activated, TheBrain will go to the referenced thought.

To copy a thought URL:

- Right-click the thought (or click the **Edit** menu), then click the **Copy Local Thought URL** command.

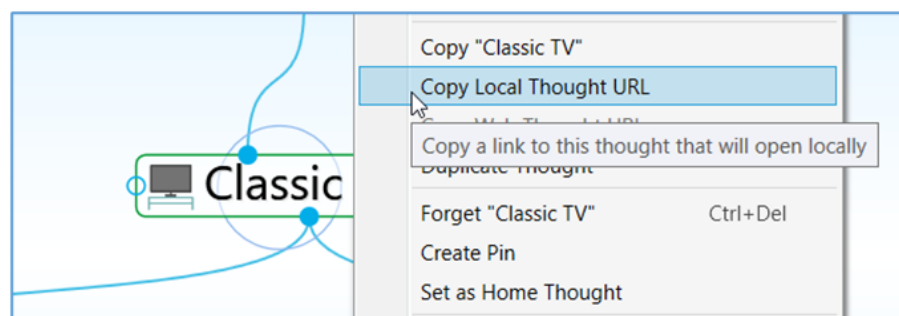


Figure 158. Copying a Thought URL

To paste a copied thought URL so it will be another thought's attachment:

1. Activate the thought to which it should be copied (which may be in the original brain or any active brain), then right-click the thought (or click the **Edit** menu).

- Click **Add Attachment** and select the **Paste Web Link** command. The URL will be added to the thought as an attachment.

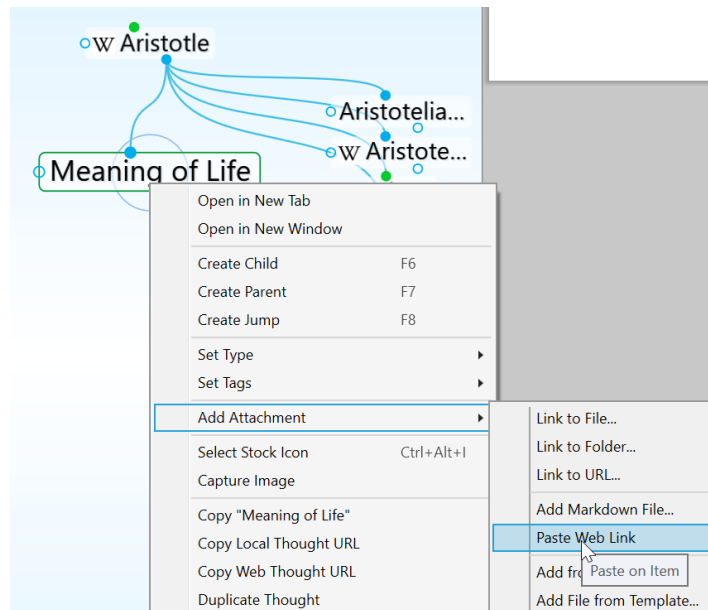


Figure 159. Pasting a Thought URL

To paste a thought URL after it has been copied so that it becomes a hyperlink in a note:

- In the note, select the text that will be the link using one of the two methods below:
 - If the text happens to be the name of a thought you want to link to, it will have a dotted underline—click within the underlined text
 - If the text isn't the name of a thought, just drag through it to select it
- Click the **Insert Thought or Web Link** command in the Content Area toolbar (or right-click and select it from the context menu).
- Select the thought in the drop-down list, then click outside of the list to close it and create the link.

When you click the link, the thought will open and you can click its attachment(s) to view them in the Content Area.

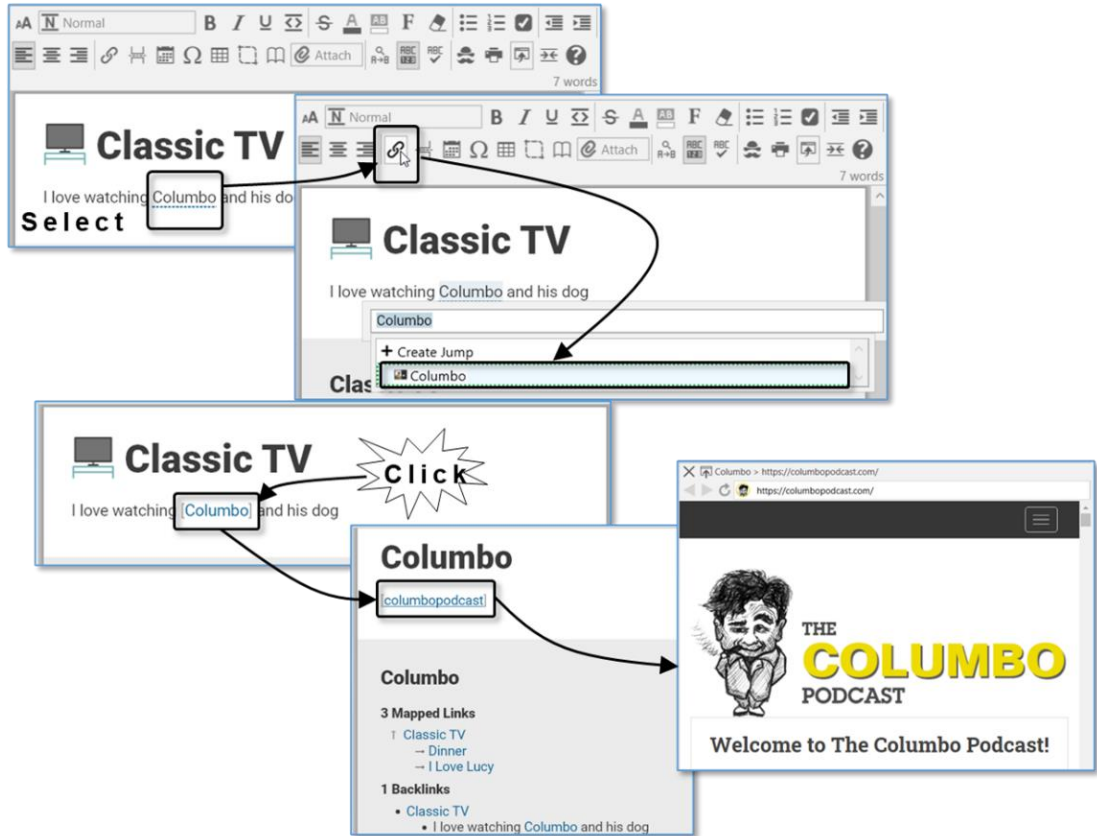


Figure 160. Inserting a Hyperlink in a Note

Thought Types and Tags

If you have several thoughts with which you want to share common attributes, such as color and an icon, you may want to create a thought type so that these attributes can be easily applied to many thoughts. This is one use of thought types.

For example, you may want to create a “person” type for all thoughts that represent people in your brain. This type might have a label— “Person”—and a specific color and icon so that all people in your brain stand out and can be easily recognized.



Type thoughts can be edited by activating them and using the **Thought Properties** dialog box, just as you would for any other thought. You can assign attributes, such as icons, notes, and attachments, to type thoughts.



Figure 161. Three “Person” Type Thoughts

Once a type has been applied to a set of thoughts, it can also be used to create reports of all thoughts of that type.

When a type has been assigned to a thought, that thought is said to be an “instance” of the type. For example, if you have a thought named “Jane” of the “Person” type, the Jane thought is said to be an instance of the Person type.

Creating a Thought Type

To create a thought type:

1. Activate the thought you want to be the first instance of the new type, then click the thought to open its **Thought Properties** dialog box.
2. Click the **Type** button, then click the **New Type** command. Alternatively, you can right-click the thought, click the **Set Type** command, then click the **New Type** command.
3. Enter the name of the type you want to create, then press the **Enter** key. Click outside of the **Thought Properties** dialog box to close it.
4. If you used the context menu to create the new type, the type will appear as a thought in the Plex. Type thoughts are special and have an oval border when active and inactive to distinguish them from other thoughts.

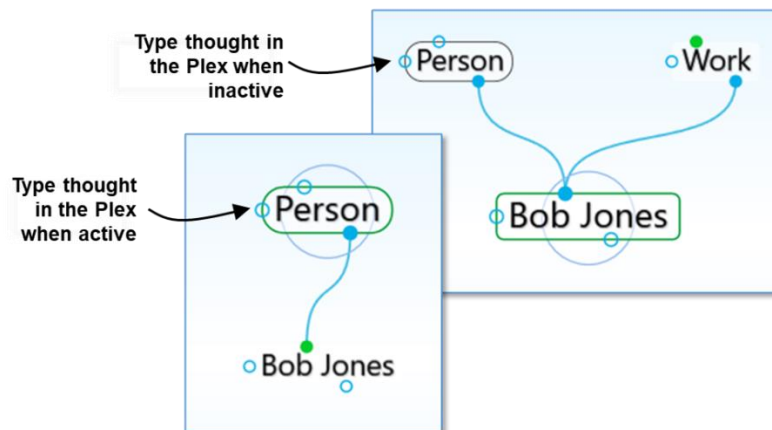


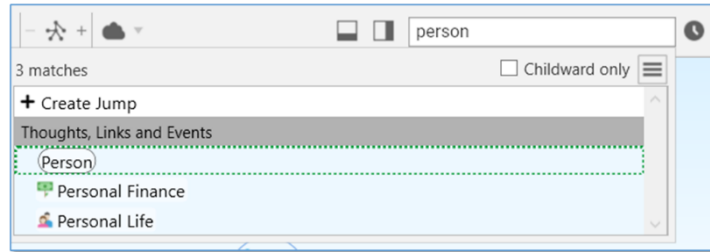
Figure 162. An Active Type Thought (“Person”)

To do this ...

Locate and Activate a Type thought

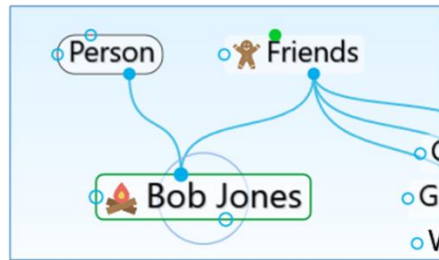
Do this ...

Enter the Type's name in the Search box as you would to search for any other kind of thought, then click the matching result in the drop-down list.



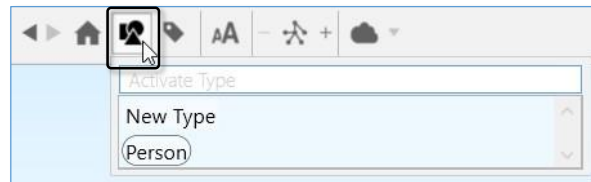
OR

Activate any thought associated with that type, and click on the Parent thought Type if it is visible.



OR

Click the **Activate Type** button in the menu bar, then click the type of your choice or begin typing the name of the type to locate it quickly if the list is long.



Delete the active Type thought

Click the active Type thought to open its **Thought Properties** dialog box, click the menu button, then click the **Delete thought name** command.

Note that unlike normal thoughts, types cannot be forgotten and remembered. Deleting a type removes it from your brain permanently.

| To do this ... | Do this ... |
|---|---|
| Set a thought's Type | <p>Use any of these methods:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Open the thought's Thought Properties dialog box, click the Type button, then click the type of your choice, or ▪ Right-click the active thought, click the Set Type command, then click the type of your choice, or ▪ Click the Thought menu when the thought is active, click the Set Type command, then click the type of your choice ▪ Link the thought as a child of the type |
| Set a thought's Type during thought creation | Click the Set Type button in the Thought Creation dialog box, then click the type of your choice. |
| Remove a Type from a thought | <p>Use any of these methods:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Open the thought's Thought Properties dialog box, click the Type button, then click the Untyped button, or ▪ Click on the checked Type to unselect it, or ▪ Right-click the active thought, click the Set Type command, then click the Untyped button, or ▪ Click the Thought menu when the thought is active, click the Set Type command, then click the Untyped button ▪ Unlink the Thought as a child of the type |
| Create new thoughts linked to the active Type thought | Drag down from the Type thought's child gate and continue creating the thought as usual. |
| Create a Super Type | Drag up from the parent gate of a Type thought, then continue creating as usual or link to another existing Type thought. |
| Reuse a Type in another brain | Copy and paste type thoughts from one brain to another the same way you copy and paste other thoughts. |



Tip: To arrange your display by thought types, right-click on the Plex background, click **Arrange Thoughts by**, then click **Type**.



Attributes that are assigned to a thought type are inherited by all instances of the Type but will be overridden if there are attributes assigned directly to the thought itself. For example, if you have a thought named “Jane” of the type “Person,” you can assign an icon of a smiley face to the Person type and it will appear next the Jane thought and all other instances of the Person type. But, if you then assign a picture of Jane as the icon for that thought, the picture will appear on that thought (only) instead of the smiley face. Likewise, a label assigned to a specific thought would override the label of any thought type assigned to that thought.

Super Types

TheBrain supports multiple levels of types for advanced modeling. Just like a thought can have a type, each type may in turn have a super type. To set a super type, open a thought type that should have the super type, then click the **Type** button. The new type will be a parent (or super) type of the active type. The attributes assigned to a super type are inherited by its sub types and instances.

Super types can be used when there is a category of thoughts which is a subset of a larger category. For example, the thought type “Person” could be the super type of the type “Executive.”



To see how to find groups of thoughts that share one or more of the same Type, please see the Producing Reports section beginning on page 218.

Using Thought Tags

If there are multiple attributes you would like to add to your thoughts, you can create thought *Tags*. Tags are useful for flagging thoughts that you want to be able to reference as a group, without them having to share a common parent. For example, you may want to create a “To do” Tag so you can get a list of all of these thoughts very quickly.



Tag thoughts can be edited by activating them and using the **Thought Properties** dialog box, just as you would for any other thought. You can assign attributes, such as icons, notes, and attachments, to Tag thoughts.

Thoughts can have one or many Tags at the same time. Tag thoughts are global for a brain and displaying Tag text and icons can be toggled on and off in the **Look & Feel** tab of the **Preferences** window.

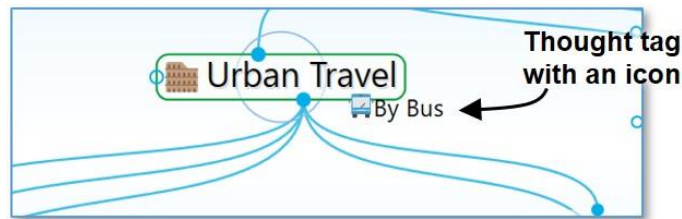


Figure 163. A Thought with a Tag

To create a thought Tag:

1. Activate the thought to which you want to attach a Tag, then click the thought to open its **Thought Properties** dialog box.
2. Click the **Tags** button, then start typing a name for your new Tag. Alternatively, you can right-click the thought, click the **Set Tags** command, then click the **New Tag** command and start typing a name for your new Tag. You can also create multiple Tags at the same time by typing a semi-colon between each Tag name, just as you can do to create multiple regular thoughts at the same time.
3. Press the **Enter** key. Click outside of the Tags list to close it, then click outside of the **Thought Properties** dialog box to close it. The new Tag will be attached to the active thought.

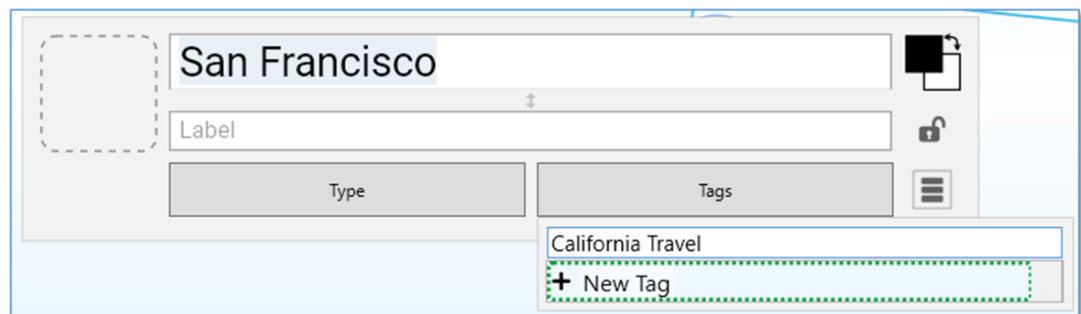


Figure 164. Creating a New Tag



Alternatively, you can right-click the thought or click the **Thought** menu, click the **Set Tags** command, then click the **New Tag** command and start typing a name for your new Tag. Press the **Enter** key when you've finished.



You can also assign one or more Tags to a thought (regular or Type thoughts) while you're creating the thought by clicking the **Tags** button in the **Thought Properties** or **Thought Creation** dialog box.

Assigning and Removing Tags

You can assign and remove Tags using the same general technique as for creating them. The only difference is that instead of typing a new name, you select (to attach) or deselect (to remove) the Tag name(s) in the list.

As shown below, currently assigned Tags are preceded with a check mark. Click an assigned Tag to remove it and click any Tag in the list to assign it to the active thought. This makes it easy to assign and remove multiple Tags at a time.

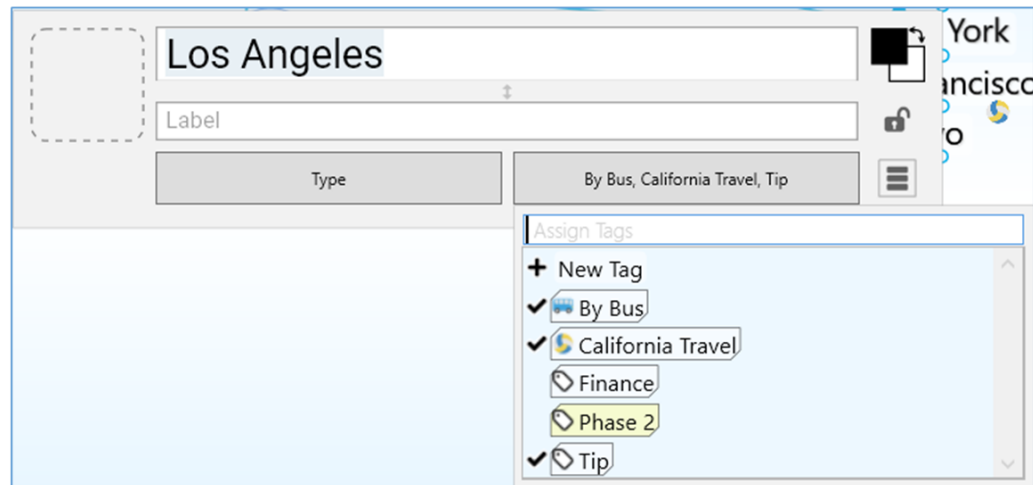


Figure 165. Assigning and Removing Tags

Assigning Tags to Multiple Tags at One Time

If you want to assign Tags to multiple thoughts at once, first select them, then right-click in the **Selection** tab. Click the **Set Selection Tags** command, then click the **New Tag** command or on any of the Tag names in the list.

Deleting a Tag

1. Click the **Tags** button on the toolbar, then click the Tag of your choice to activate it.

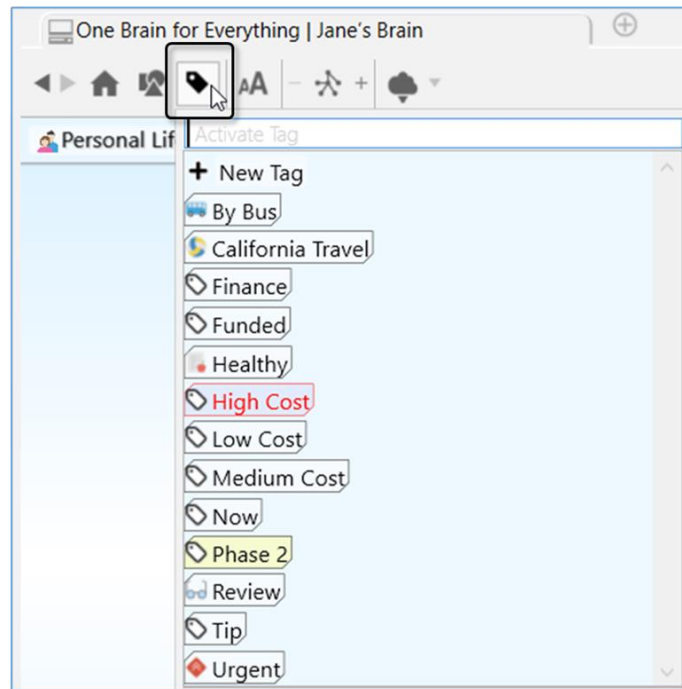


Figure 166. Opening the Tags List

2. Either right-click the thought or click the **Thought** menu, then click the **Delete “Thought name”** command. You can also open its **Thought Properties** dialog box, click the menu button, then click the **Delete “Thought Name”** command.

To delete multiple Tags at one time:

1. Click the **Tags** button on the toolbar to display all Tag names in your brain.
2. **Ctrl**-click each Tag you want to delete. The Tag is added to the **Selection** tab to the left of the list.

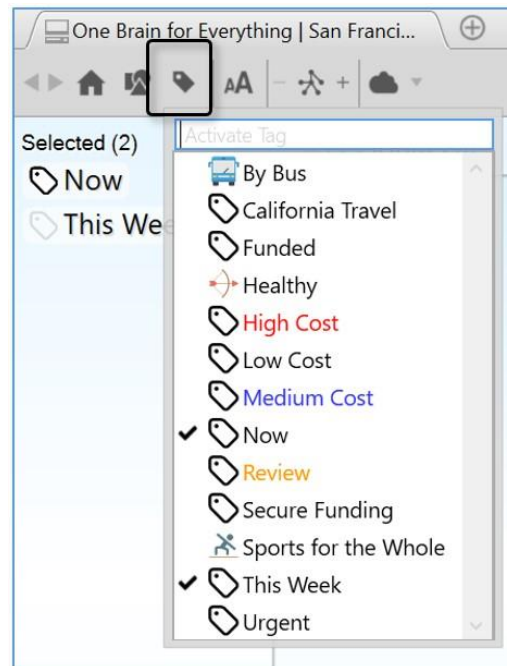


Figure 167. Deleting Multiple Tags List

3. When all the Tags you want to delete are selected, right-click in the Selection tab, then click the **Delete (#) Thoughts** command. (Remember that Tags are also thoughts themselves.)



Unlike normal thoughts, Tags cannot be forgotten and remembered. Deleting a Tag removes it from your entire brain permanently.

Renaming and Adding Attributes to a Tag

You can change the properties of Tags, just as you change the properties of regular thoughts—colors, icons, an attachments.

1. Click the **Tags** button on the toolbar, click the Tag of your choice, then click the Tag thought to open its **Thought Properties** dialog box. You can also click any tag that is visible in the plex to navigate to that tag thought.
2. You can make the same customizations as you can to any thought while you're in the Tag's **Thought Properties** dialog box. When you're finished making revisions, press the **Enter** key.



Renaming a Tag changes the Tag throughout your entire brain.

Displaying Thoughts Based on Their Tags

You can show all thoughts with the same Tag by using Search:

- Begin typing the Tag name in the Search box, then click the Tag name when it appears. Tags may be indicated with any icon that has been assigned to them. When you click the Tag name in the Search hit list, all thoughts assigned to that Tag will be displayed in the Plex.

Tag Abbreviations

Along with adding icons to Tags and customizing their names with color, you can also attach an “abbreviation” for the full Tag name. Abbreviated forms of the name can serve as hints for what the Tags represent while giving the Plex a cleaner appearance.



In the **Look & Feel** tab of the **Preferences** window, you can change the Tags text setting to “Show always” if you want the abbreviations to show. Hovering over a thought with Abbreviated Tags or Tag icons will then display the full Tag name.

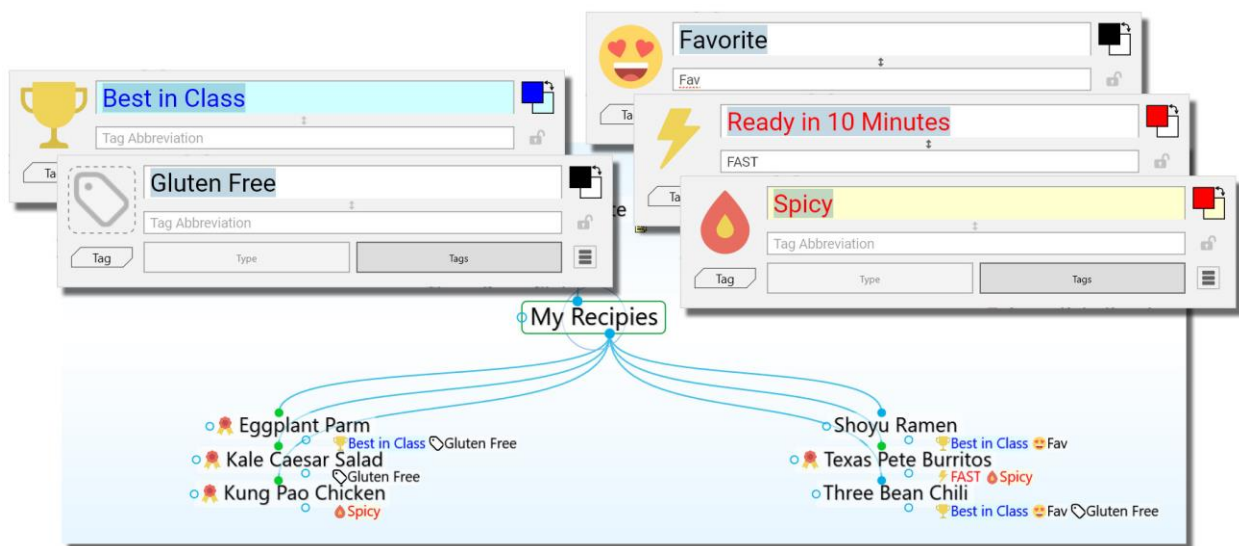


Figure 168. Tag Icons and Abbreviations

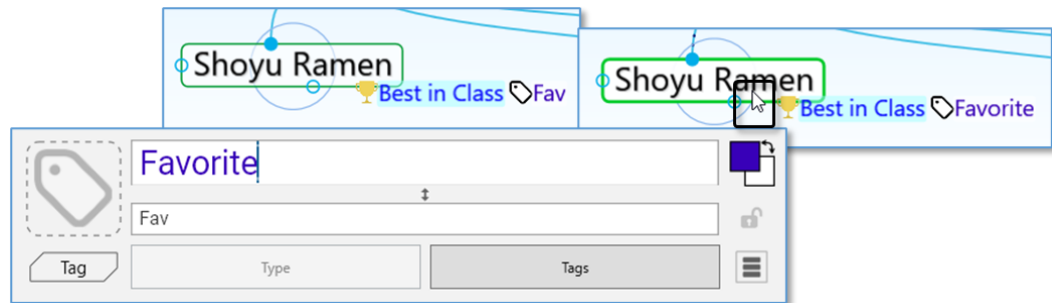


Figure 169. Pointing at a Thought Hides the Abbreviation and Shows the Full Name

To enter a Tag abbreviation:

- In the Tag's **Thought Properties** dialog box, type the abbreviation in the field below the Tag's name, then press the **Enter** key.

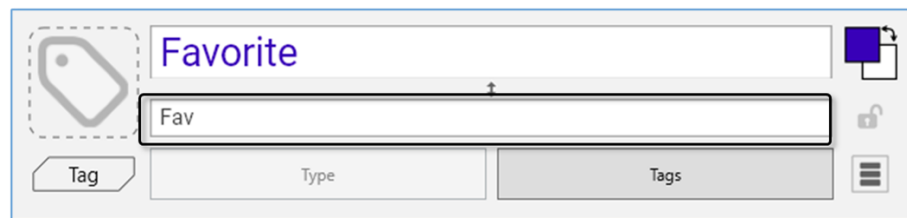


Figure 170. Creating a Tag Abbreviation

Additional Thought Type and Tag Features

Visible Thought Types and Tags

Types and tags can be visible in the plex. Want to see a type or tag as a child thought? Just link any existing type or tag thought as a child, or as a jump. Optionally, types are visible as parent thoughts as well.

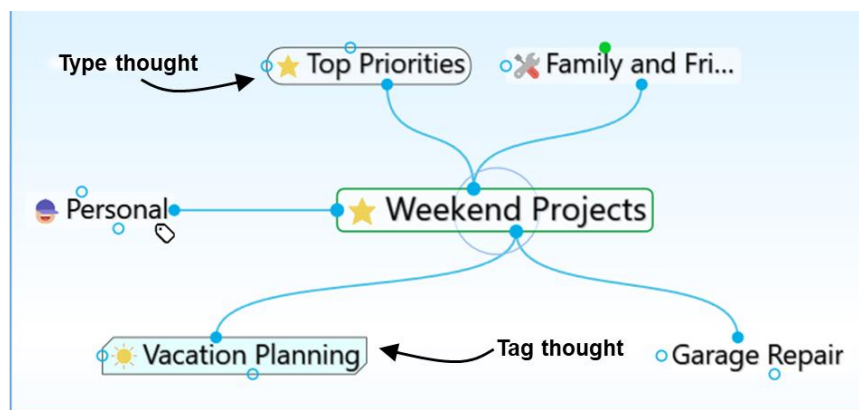


Figure 171. Visible Parent Type and Child Tag

Linkable types and tags eliminate the need to create two thoughts when you want to show all instances of a type or tag within the plex.

- Types are visually distinguished by rounded sides.
- Tags are visually distinguished by chamfered (diagonal) corners.

Hiding Visible Thought Types

Thought types being visible in the plex is optional.

- To prevent a thought type from being visible in the plex, right click on a thought type and uncheck the option for **Visible when Parent of Active Thought**

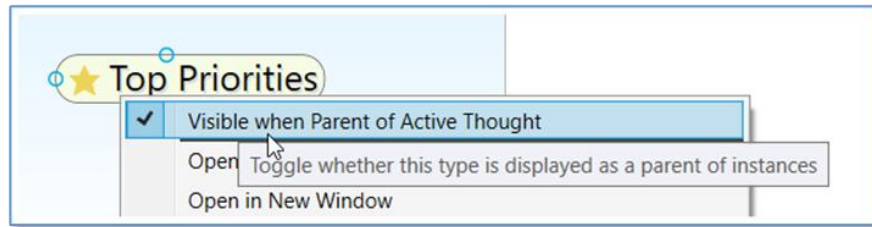


Figure 172. Toggling the Visibility of a Thought Type

- This setting can also be modified globally by clicking on **File**, selecting **Utilities** and clicking on **Make All Types Visible/Hidden as Parents**

Converting to Type or Tag

You easily change a normal thought into a type or tag at any time:

- Right-click on a thought and select **Convert to Type or Tag**

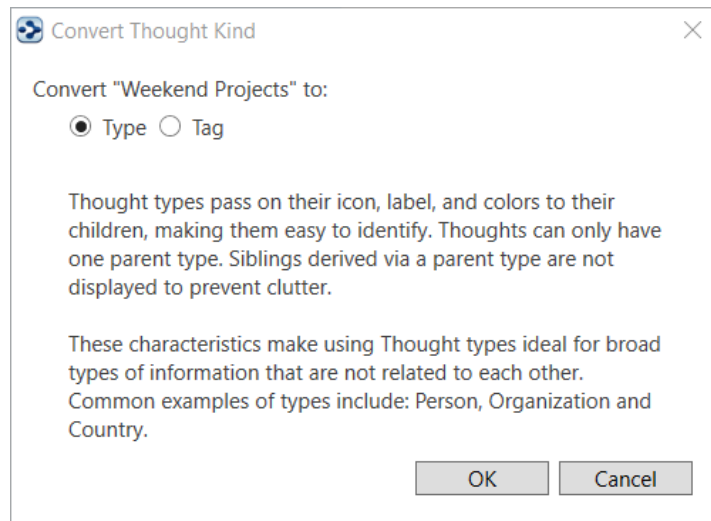


Figure 173. Convert to Type or Tag

- Tags and types can easily be changed into a normal thought

Replacing a Tag

You can easily move a thought through a project cycle or simply re-classify its tag attributes. To quickly replace a thought's tag:

- Right-click on a tag to open its context menu.
- Select the option **Replace Tag with** and select another tag.

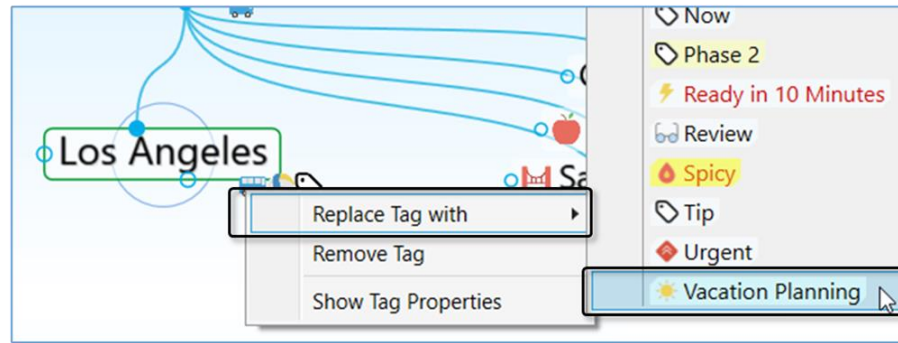


Figure 174. Replacing a Tag

Nested Tags

Tags can be organized under each other so they are easier to organize, navigate and apply.

- Link two existing tags with a parent/child relationship to sub-categorize
- You may also open a tag's properties to assign it as a sub category of another tag
- Nesting can include multiple tags and multiple layers

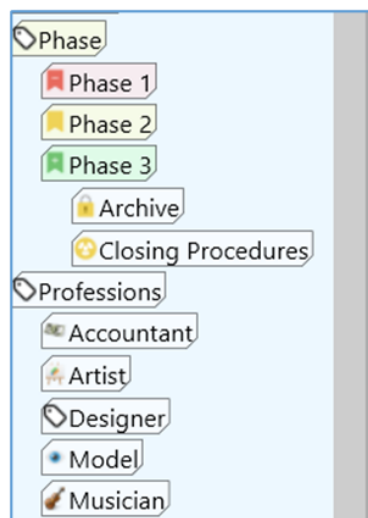


Figure 175. Nested Tags

Changing the Properties of a Link

Links between thoughts are normally unnamed. You can name a link by giving it a “label.” Just like thoughts, links can have Types, notes, and Attachments. You can control the way they appear in order to clarify relationships or just to create a more pleasing view of your brain, based on your personal preferences. You can also manipulate links in order to add or change relationships between your thoughts.

Just as each thought has its own **Thought Properties** dialog box, each link has its own **Link Properties** dialog box.

To open the Link Properties dialog box, use any of these methods:

- Double-click the link, or
- Click the link once to select it, then a second time to open the box, or
- **Alt**-click the link (whether or not the link is connected to the active thought), or
- Right-click the link, then click **Properties** on the context menu, or
- Click the link to select it, click the **Link** menu in the menu bar, then click the **Properties** command

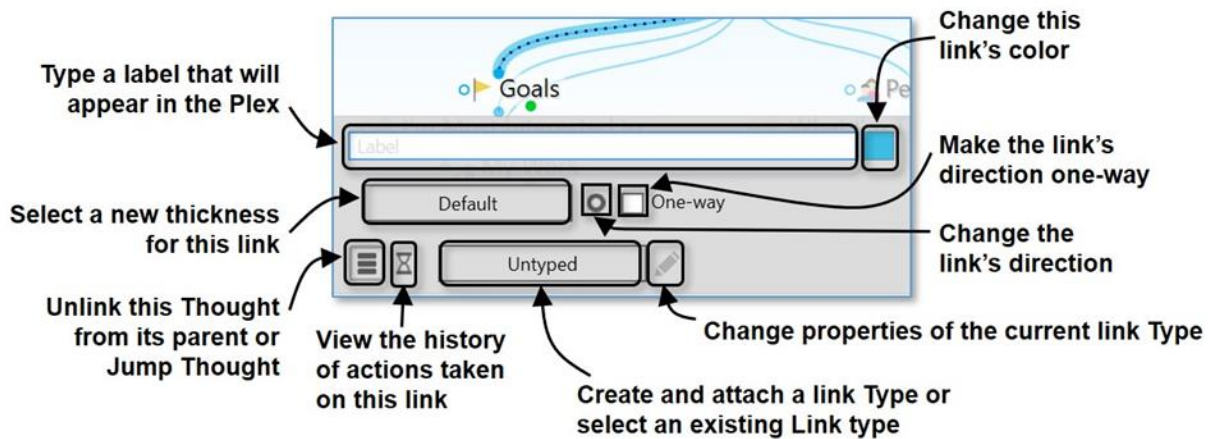


Figure 176. Link Properties Dialog Box

To add a label to a link:

1. Open the **Link Properties** dialog box for the link, then type a label name in the **Label** field.

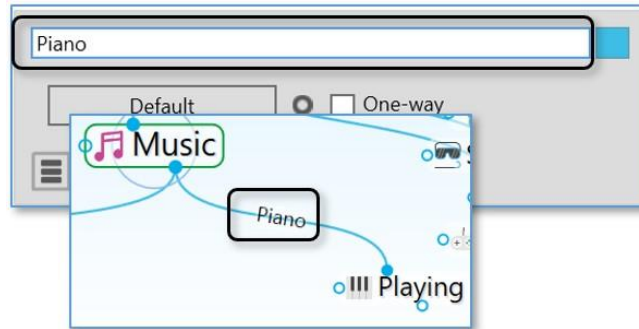


Figure 177. Adding a Label to a Link

2. Press the **Enter** key, or click outside of the **Link Properties** dialog box to close it. The label will appear on the link and will be enlarged when the mouse points at the link.

To change the color of a link:

1. Open the **Link Properties** dialog box for the link, then click the color box.
2. Click the color of your choice in the color palette, click outside of the palette to close it, then press the **Enter** key, or click outside of the **Link Properties** dialog box to close it.

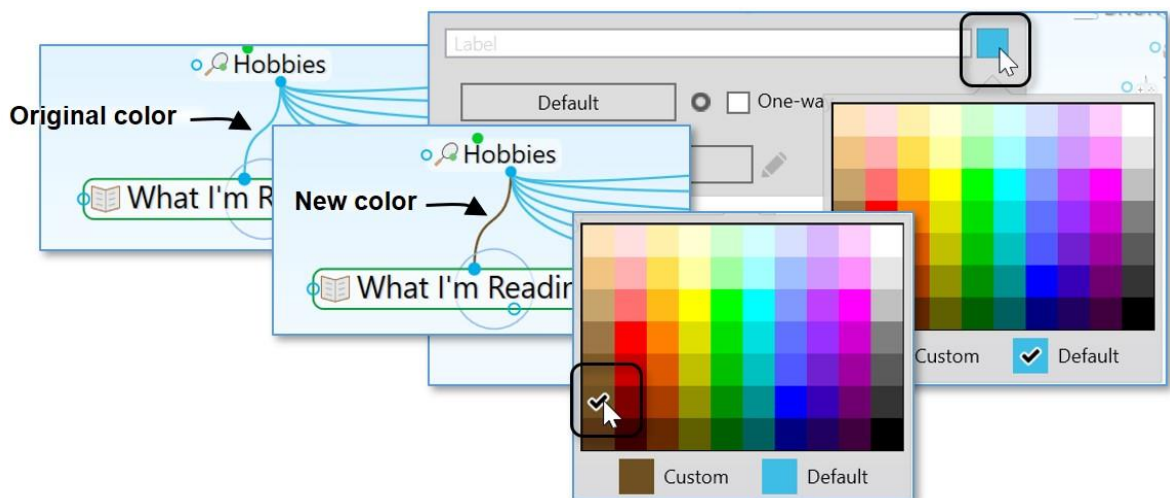


Figure 178. Changing the Color of a Link



This changes the color for the individual link. You can set link colors globally in the **Brain Theme** box (please see the Customizing a Theme's Colors section on page 62 for details).

To change the width of a link:

- Open the **Link Properties** dialog box for the link, click the **Default** button, click the width of your choice, then click outside of the **Link Properties** dialog box to close it.

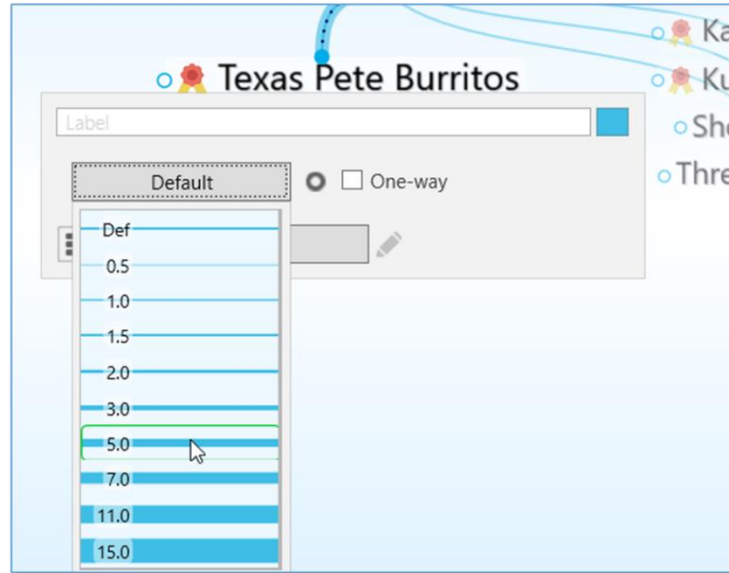


Figure 179. Changing the Width of a Link



Tip: You might want to thicken links to illustrate the strength of particular relationships between thoughts.



Link Types

Link types are used to assign commonly-used relationships between thoughts that share a label, color, and width so they can be easily recognized. Link properties and types will be retained even if the two linked thoughts change their relationship but remain linked (for example, if a child thought becomes a jump thought of the original thought).

In addition to setting their color, you can add labels to link types and you can change the width of the link to call special attention to relationships.

1. Open the **Link Properties** dialog box for the link, then click the **Type** button.



This button will display “Untyped” if there is currently no Type assigned to the link and it will display the type name if there is already a Type assigned.

2. If there's an existing Type in the list that you want to use, click on it to select it. Otherwise, click on **New Type**, then type the name for the new link in the field that will be displayed.

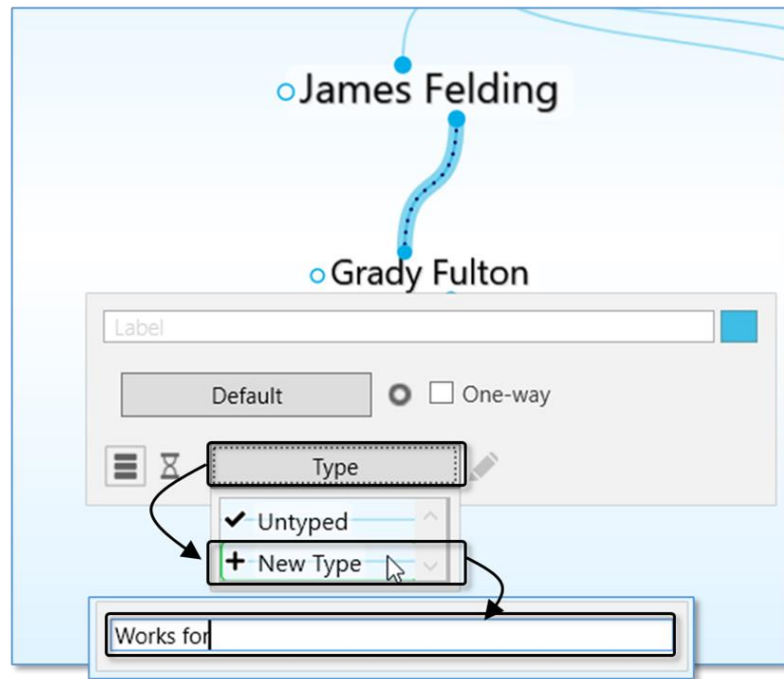


Figure 180. Creating a New Link Type

2. Press the **Enter** key to close the **Link Properties** dialog box.

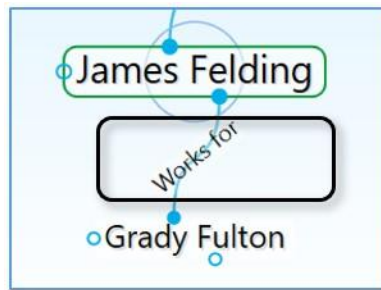


Figure 181. Appearance of a Link Type in the Plex



If a Link has both a Type and a label, the *label* will show in the Plex. While the Type won't be displayed in the Plex in this case, it can still be used to find all thoughts connected to links of that Type.



Tip: Point the mouse at a Link Type or label to magnify it in the Plex.

Deleting Link Types

1. Open the **Link Properties** dialog box for the link that has the Type you want to delete, then click the **Edit** button to open the **Type Properties** box.
2. Click the menu button then click the **Delete** command.

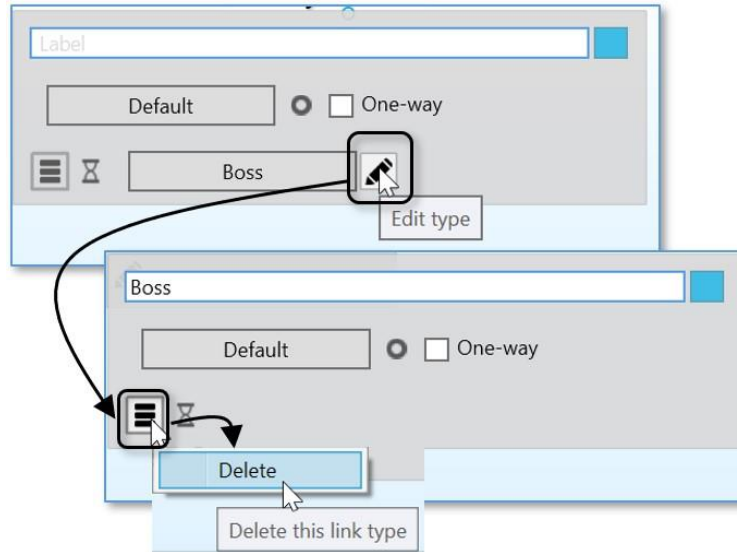


Figure 182. Deleting a Link Type



To see how to find thoughts that share one or more of the same link Type, please see the Producing Reports section beginning on page 218.

Showing Link Direction

By default, links do not show a directional arrow. You can add directional arrows that will appear on the link that points to or from the source thought.

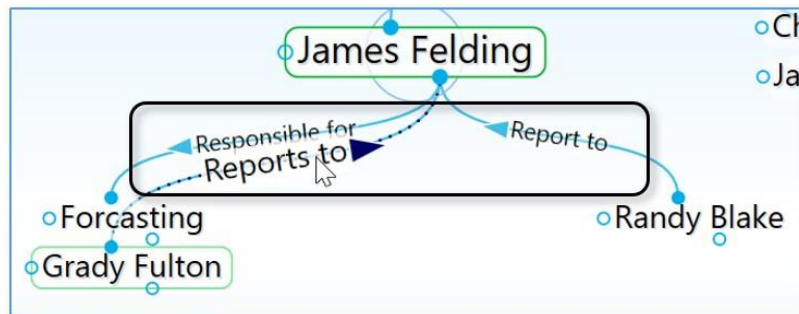


Figure 183. Directed Links

- A directed link shows an arrow in the middle of the link. If the link has a label or a Type, the arrow will be next to the text. The arrow is magnified when the mouse hovers on it. Directional arrows can provide visual cues that are particularly useful when there's a link label. For example, for the link label

“Inspired” (shown below), the link’s directional arrow shows that “Hank Williams” was a source of inspiration for Elvis. This is also very useful when you want to represent flows between items like financial relationships.

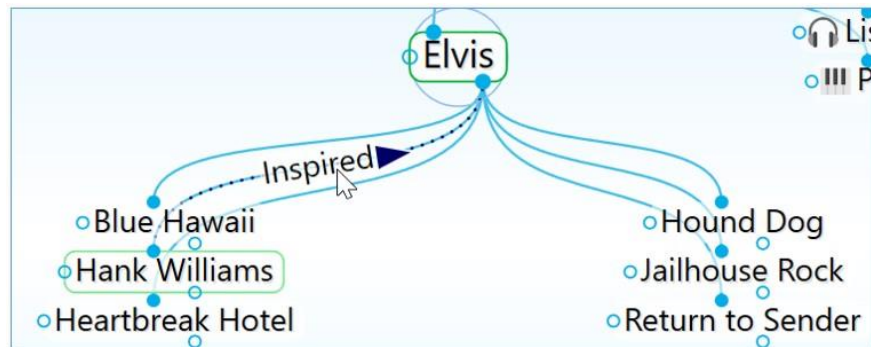


Figure 184. Hank Williams Inspired Elvis

To set link direction:

1. Open the **Link Properties** dialog box for the link to which you want to add direction. Then:
 - Click the icon to the left of the **One-way** check box to switch between non-directed, directed, and directed in the reverse.

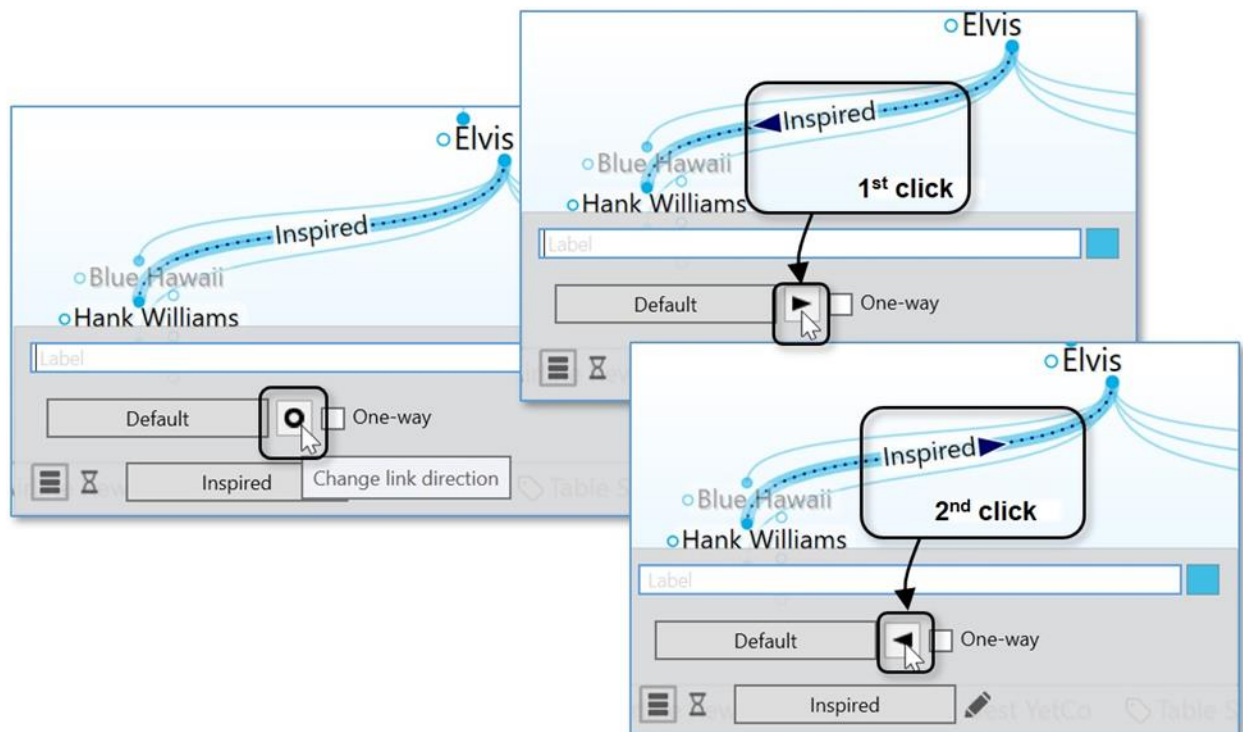


Figure 185. Setting the Direction of a Link

Using One-Way Links

- One-way links appear when the source of the link is active and the source thought is already visible.
- One-way links are indicated by an arrow with a rectangle at its base.

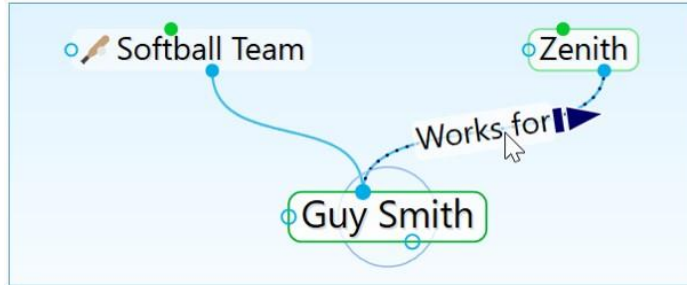


Figure 186. One-Way Link

One-way links are useful where *thought A* is relevant when *thought B* is active, but *thought B* is not relevant when *thought A* is active.

For example, you may want to see what company a person worked for when the person is the active thought. However, for a large company with thousands of employees, you may not want to see all of the employees when that company is the active thought. Creating a “works for” link type and making it one-way is a good way to do this.

To make a Link one-way:

1. Open the **Link Properties** dialog box for the link to which you want to add direction. Then:
 - Select the **One-way** check box to make the selected link one-way. Note that one-way links cannot be non-directed.

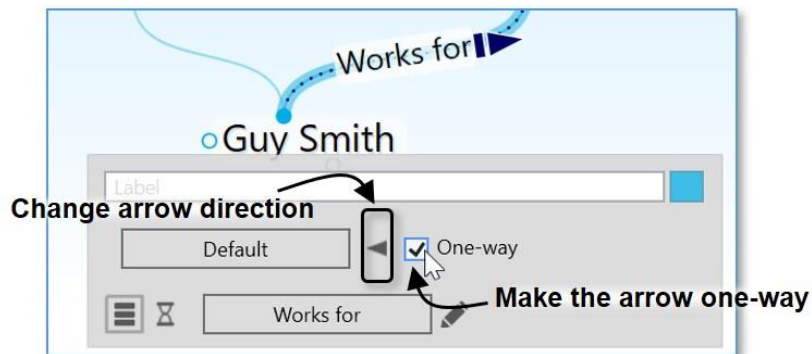


Figure 187. Selecting Link Direction

To set Link direction for link Types:

You can also set link direction for link types. The direction of a link type is inherited by instances of the type and can be overridden by the instance.

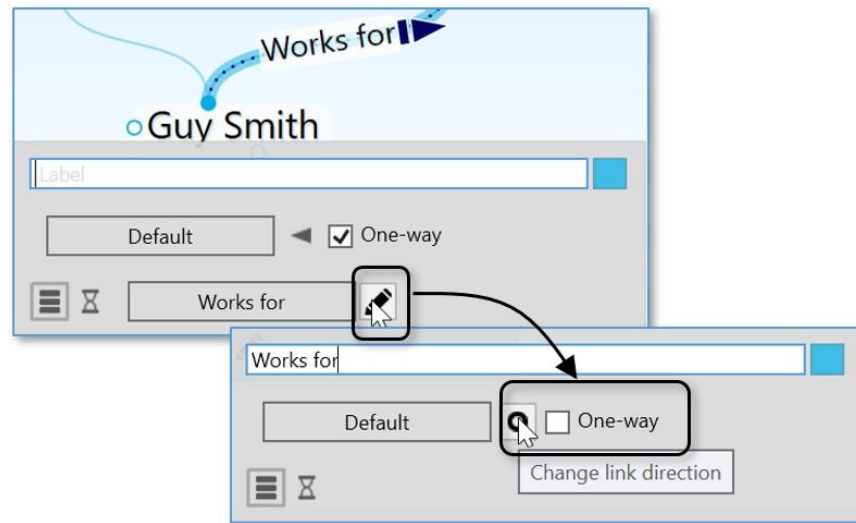


Figure 188. Selecting a Link Type Direction

Advanced Navigation and Alternate Views

Changing How You View Your Thoughts



There are three views for displaying your thoughts:

- **Normal view:** For focusing on the active thought and displaying information pertaining to its parent thoughts above, child thoughts below, and jump thoughts to the left.

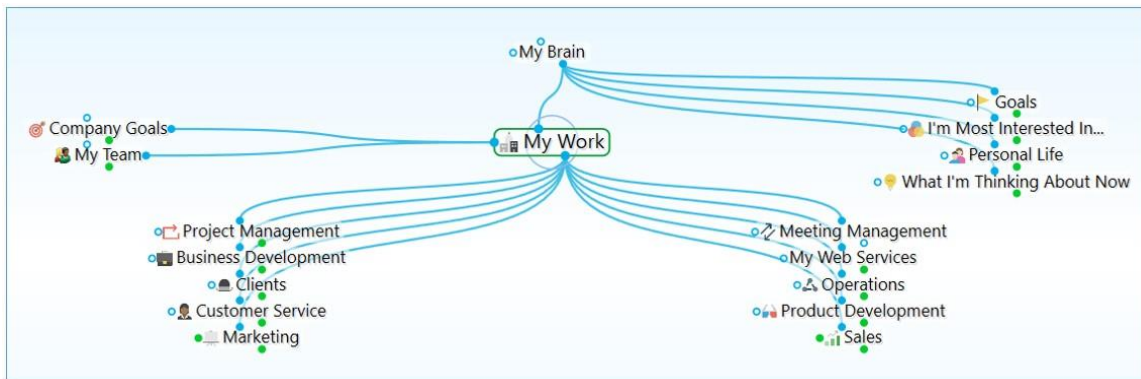


Figure 189. A Brain in Normal View

- **Outline view:** For a more expanded, primarily hierarchical view of your thoughts.

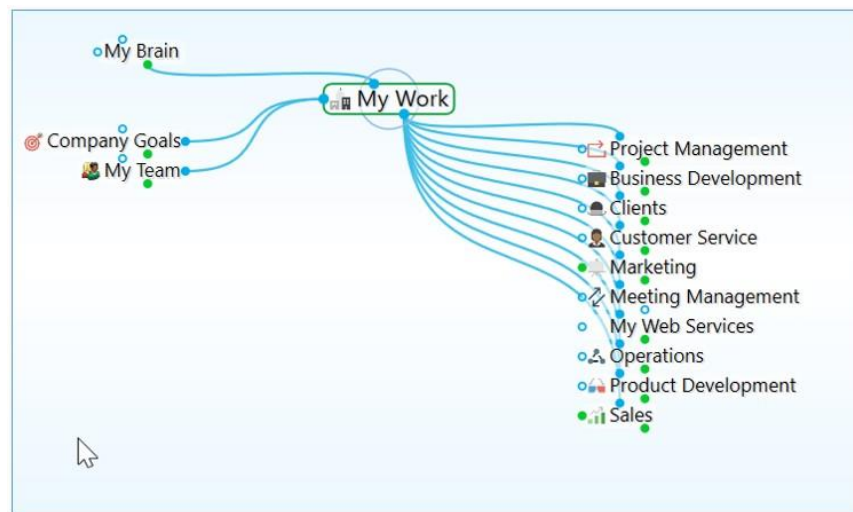


Figure 190. A Brain in Outline View

- **Mind Map view:** For a horizontally expanding symmetrical layout.

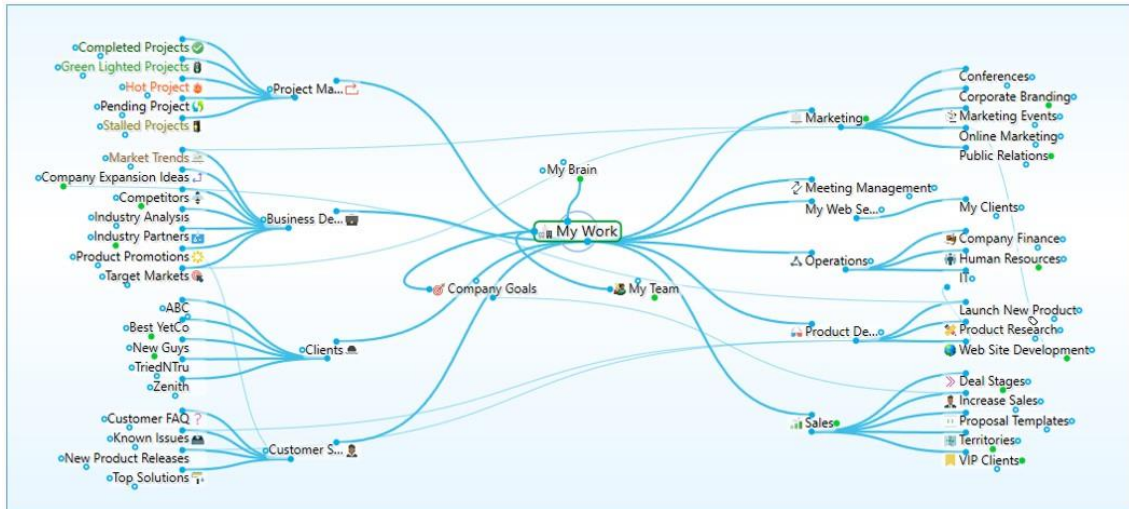


Figure 191. A Brain in Mind Map View and Expanded



In addition to selecting a view, you can expand and collapse the display of thoughts in all views to show more or fewer generations.

TheBrain automatically remembers the last view you used and selects it by default. For example, if you select Outline view and then close TheBrain, the next time you open it, Outline view will be active.

Three ways to change to a different view:

- Click the **Layout** button in TheBrain toolbar, then click the view of your choice, or
- Right-click in the Plex, click the **Layout** command, then click the view of your choice, or
- Click the **View** menu in the menu bar, then click the view of your choice

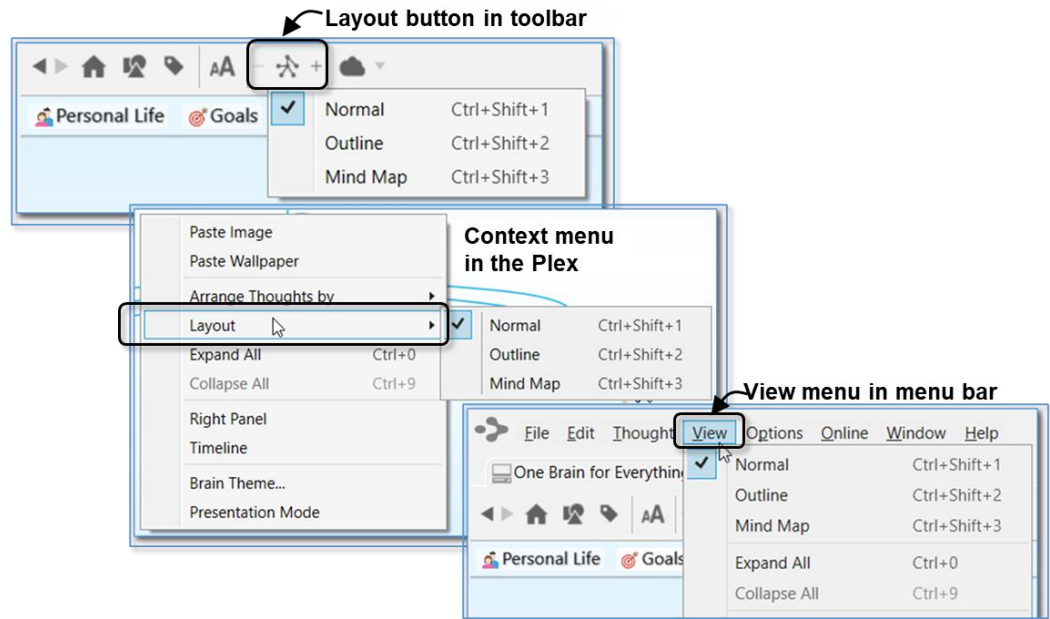


Figure 192. Three Ways to Select a View



Tip: The check mark in the menu identifies the current view.



A rule of thumb for when you might use each view is to use Normal view when you're creating thoughts and navigating the Plex, use Outline view when you want to see a more traditional structure, and to use Mind Map view for viewing and analyzing the "big picture."

Using Outline View

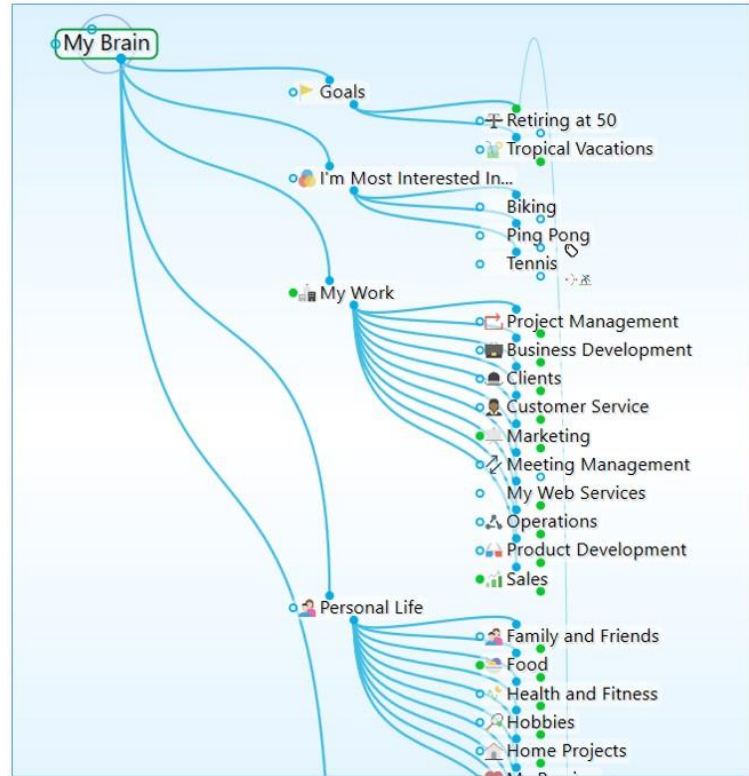


Figure 193. Plex in Outline View

Providing a clean, organized way of looking at your thoughts, Outline view enables a fast, easily understood overview of the active area of your thought network. The level of detail can go as deep as you want while maintaining an ordered view.

When the Plex is in Outline view, you can show or hide generations of children for individual thoughts. To see if a thought has child thoughts that aren't currently showing, point the mouse at the thought.

- On mouseover, a plus sign (+) icon will appear above the top edge of the thought's outline if there are child generations to display. Click the + icon to expand and show that thought's children.
- On mouseover, a minus sign (-) icon will appear below the bottom edge of the thoughts' outline if child thoughts can be collapsed or hidden. Click the - icon to hide that thought's children.

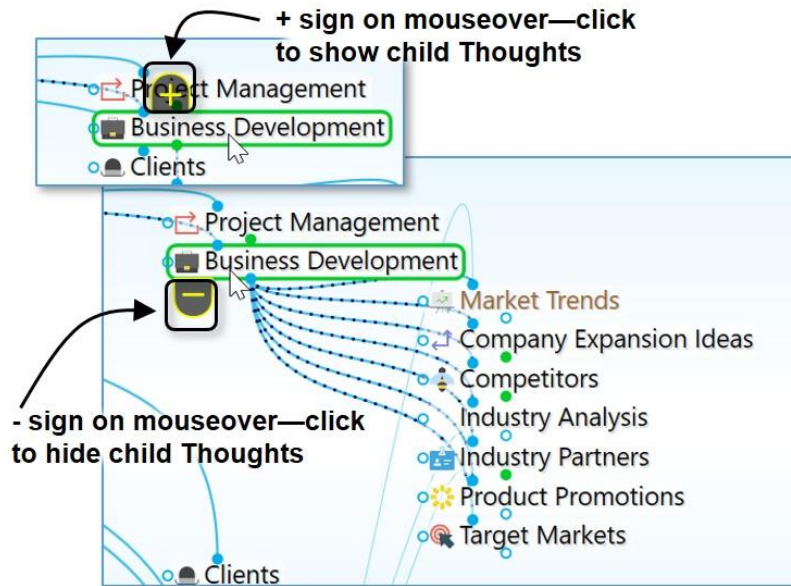


Figure 194. Showing/Hiding Additional Generations of Individual Thoughts

Using Mind Map View

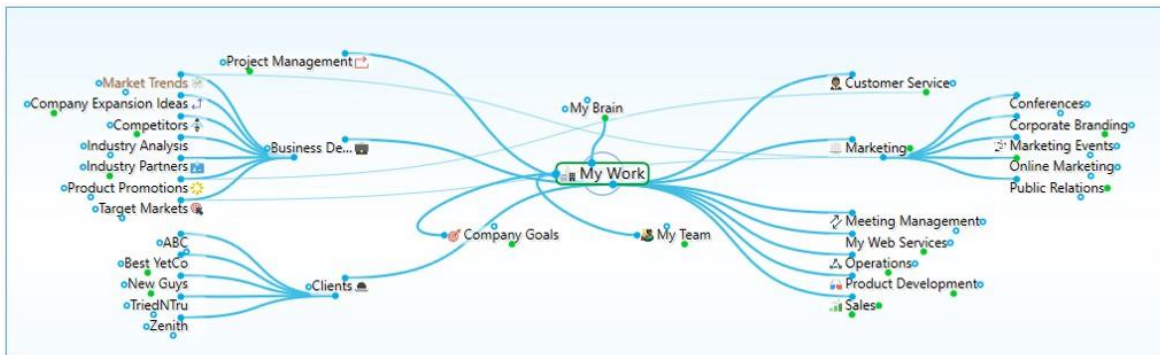


Figure 195. Mind Map View

The Mind Map view allows switching the focused thought without changing the layout for when you want to view and alter various pieces of content while keeping the view mostly static. Traditional mind map layouts can be created instantly from any thought.

To navigate to another thought in your Plex while in Mind Map view, right-click the desired thought and select **Activate Thought**.

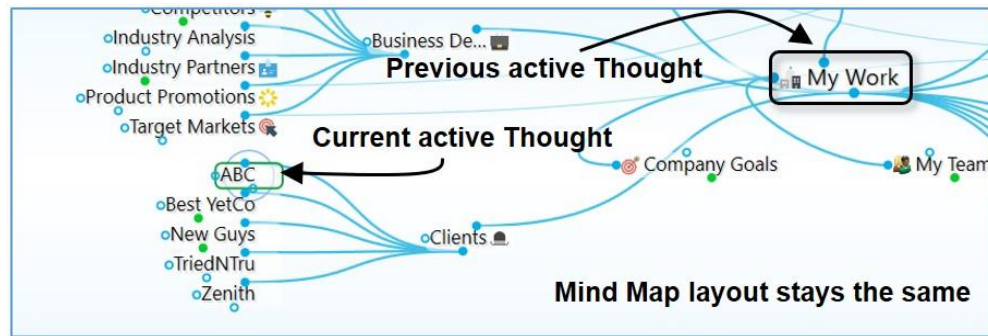


Figure 196. Changing the Active Thought without Changing the Layout



As with Outline view, when the Plex is in Mind Map view, you can show or hide generations of children for individual thoughts by pointing the mouse at a thought, then clicking the plus sign (+) or minus sign (-) icon to show or hide the thought's children.

Expanding and Collapsing Generations



Besides expanding and collapsing individual thoughts in Outline view or Mind Map view, as explained in the previous section, you can also expand and collapse generations of all thoughts in all views.

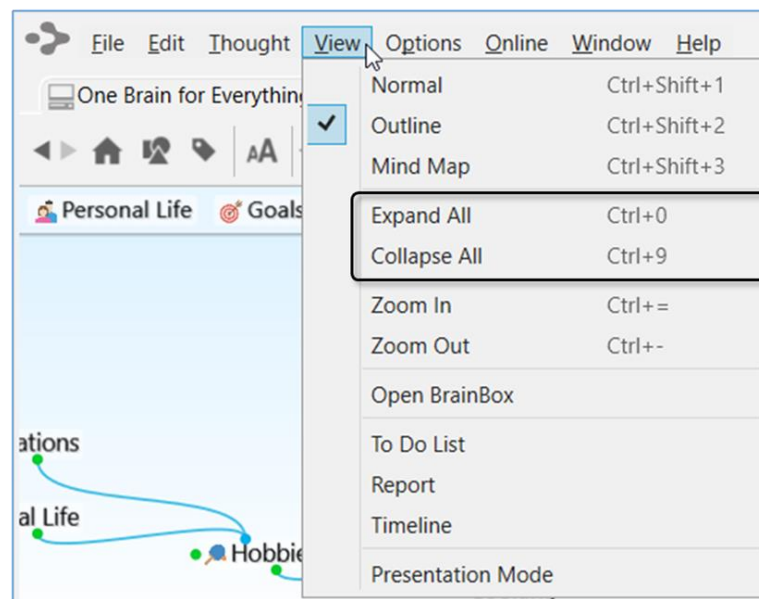


Figure 197. Expanding or Collapsing from the View Menu

In Outline and Mind Map view, you can also use the buttons on the toolbar to expand or collapse all visible thoughts by one generation.

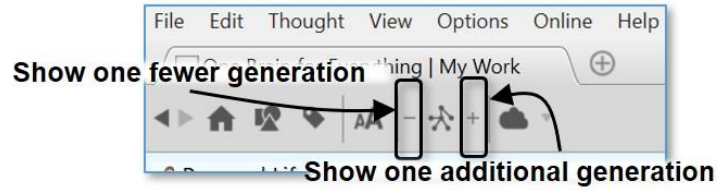


Figure 198. Expanding or Collapsing by One Generation



In Normal view, the **Expand** and **Collapse** by one generation on the toolbar work the same way as the **Expand All** and **Collapse All** commands on the **View** menu.

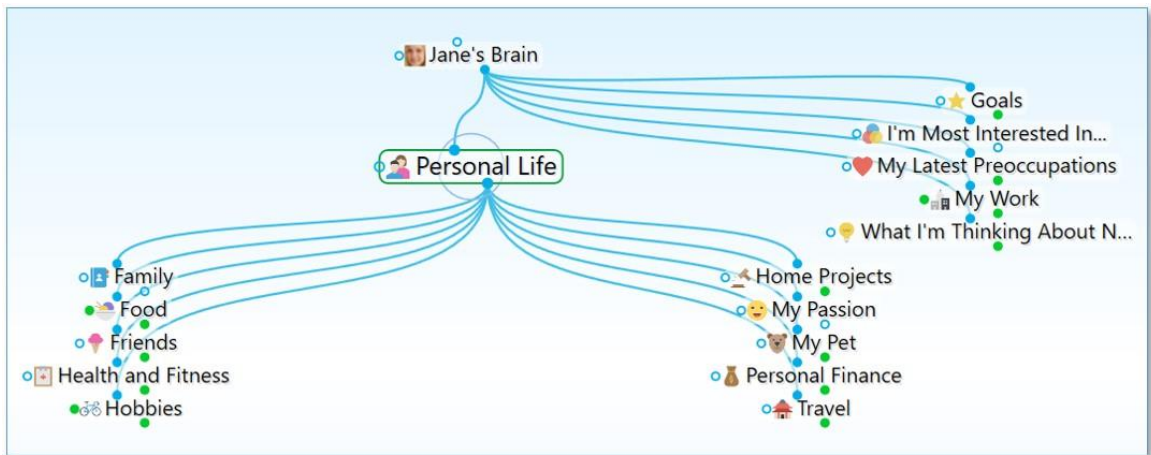


Figure 199. Jane's Brain in Normal View with All Collapsed

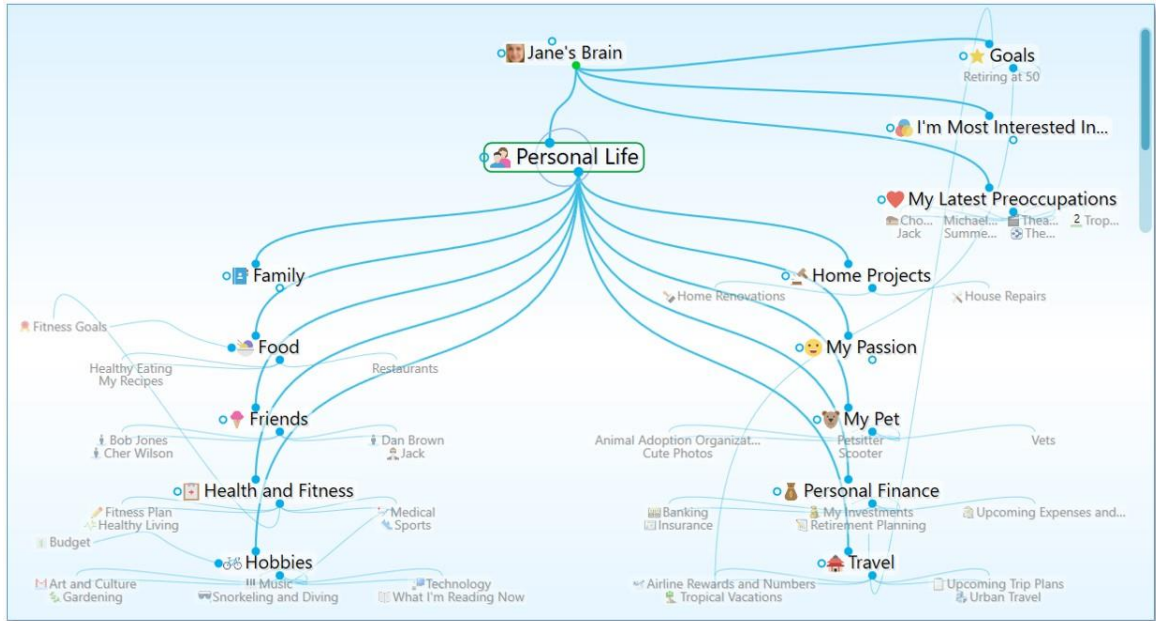


Figure 200. Jane's Brain in Normal View after Expanding All



Tip: The vertical scroll bar on the right side of the Plex indicates that there are more sibling thoughts in that area which not currently visible.

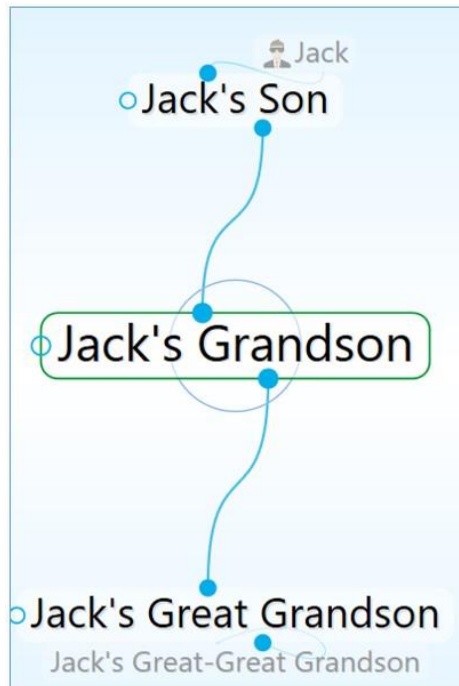


Figure 201. 5 Generations of Thoughts

Presentation Mode

Presentation mode makes your brain full-screen, hiding the title bar, menu bar, toolbar and Brain tabs. On both Windows and macOS the taskbar and dock are also hidden. Presentation mode is an excellent viewing option when using your brain for effective and focused discussions.

- Enter Presentation Mode by selecting it from the View menu
- Keyboard shortcuts can be used for functionality that is hidden from the current view, such as switching amongst open Brain tabs without exiting Presentation Mode
- Just start typing to search and the controls appear and disappear as needed.

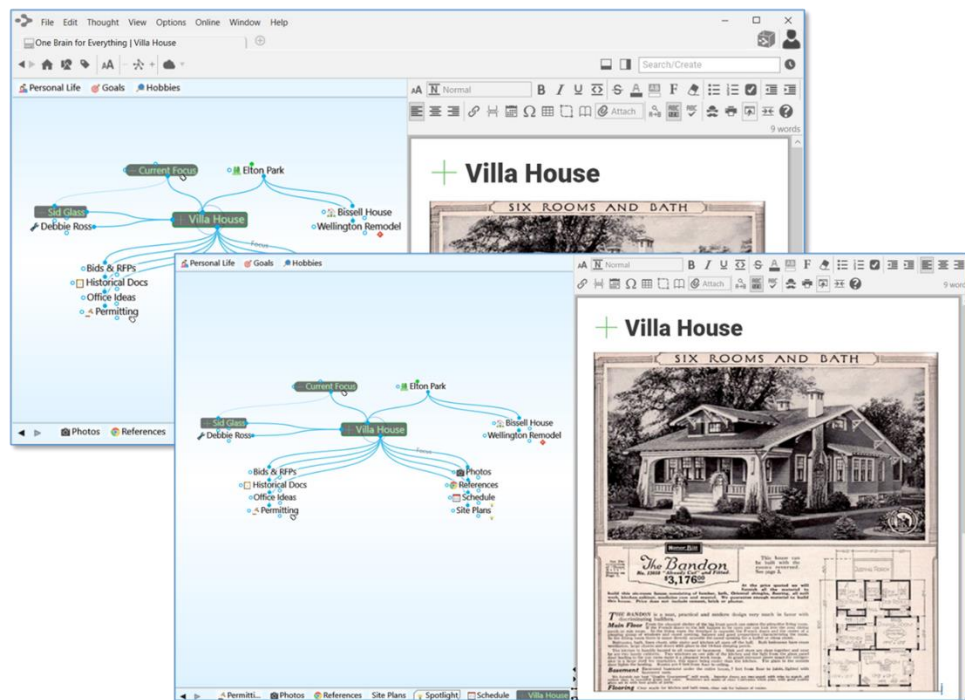


Figure 202. Before and after switching to Presentation Mode

The Content Area

You can think of the parts of TheBrain's Content Area as personal assistants who are ready to help when asked. You can give any of them the day, week, or year off if you choose not to use their services, but they're all standing by, ready to assist you—at the click of your mouse.

The Content Area keeps all of your thought-specific notes and attachments. Attachments can be files, web pages, pictures, and more.

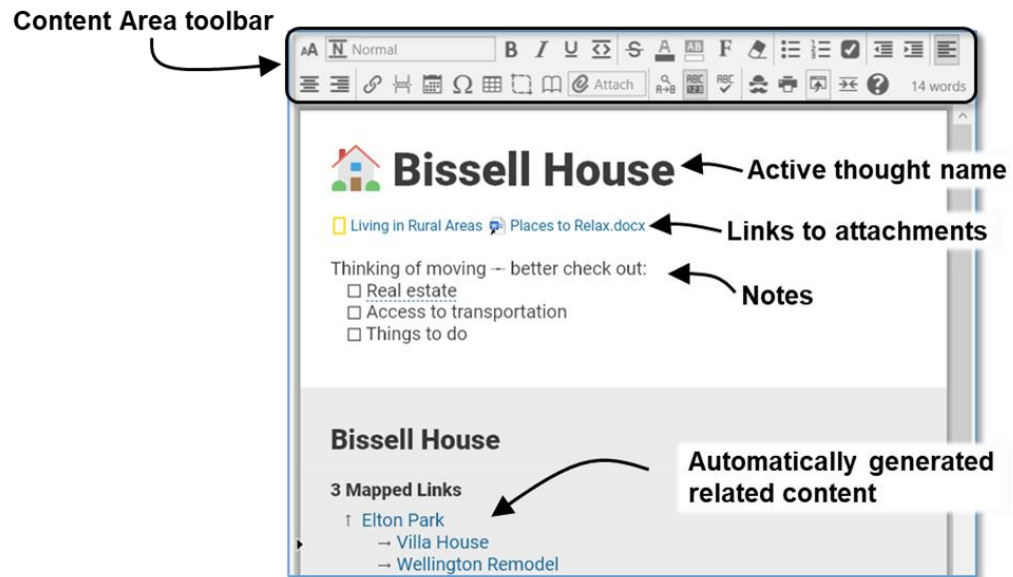


Figure 203. TheBrain's Content Area

Content Area Overview

Here are some handy things to know about the Content Area:

- By default, the Content Area shows content attached to the active thought. If the active thought has no content, the Content Area shows only the thought's name and related content (or placeholders for related content to come). However, if you want to see the content for thoughts you point at with the mouse, select the "Update displayed content on hover" option in the **Behavior** tab of the **Preferences** window. (Please see the Behavior Preferences section on page 82 for more information about setting global user interface preferences.)
- A red border highlights the Content Area when the content belongs to a moused-over thought.

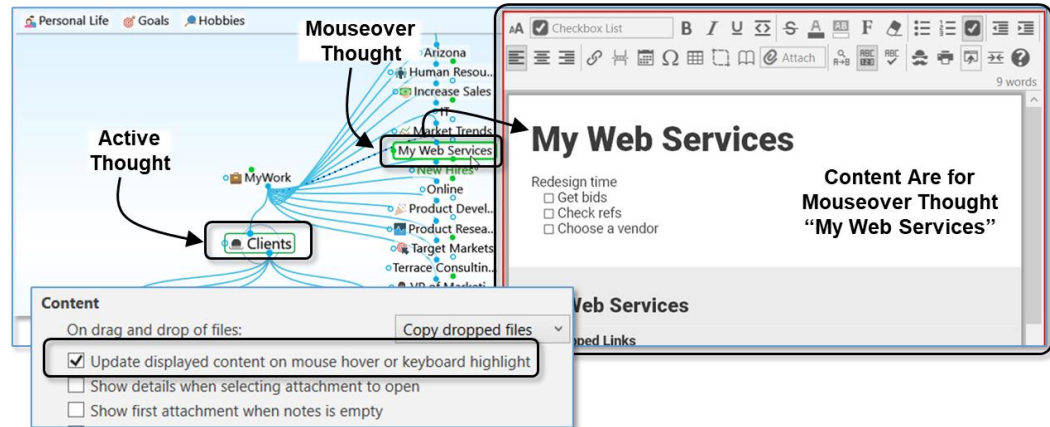


Figure 204. Content of an Inactive Thought after Behavior Preference is Changed



Preferences are global; whatever options are selected when one brain is active will also be selected in your other brains. Of course, you can change your preferences at any time.

- With one click, you can move the Content Area to any side of the Plex—above, below, left, or right. See the Using Smart Splitter to Arrange TheBrain Window section on page 56 for details. While you're working on content you might find it convenient to maximize the Content Area.

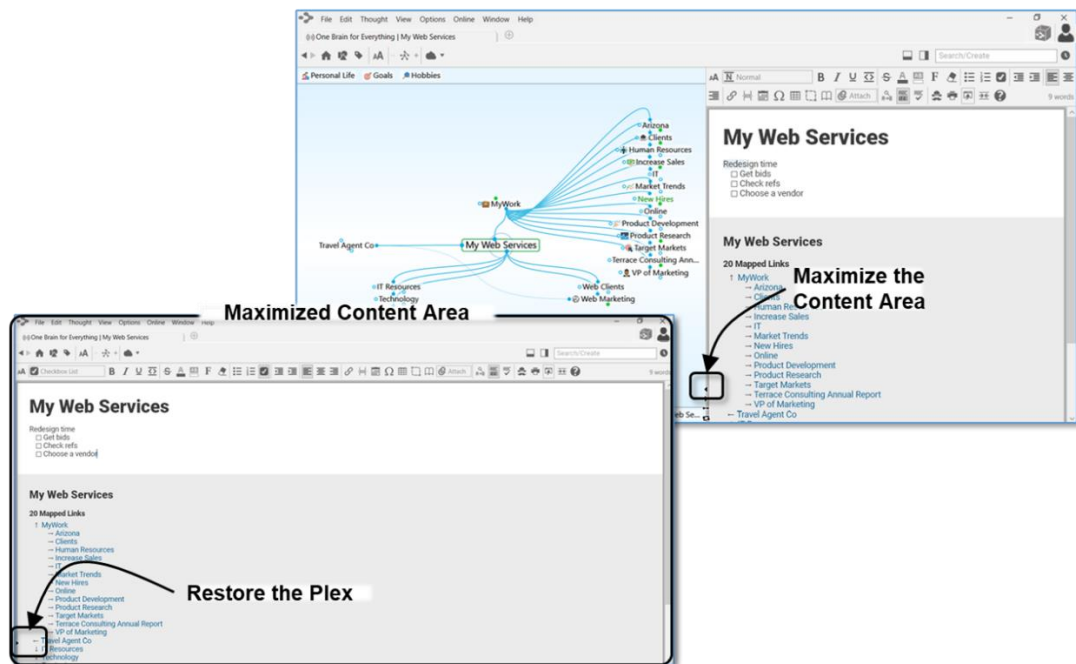


Figure 205. Maximizing the Content Area

- The size of the Content Area depends on the size of TheBrain window, but when the Plex and the Content Area are side-by-side, you're in control of how

much of the available space each area occupies. Just point the mouse at the line between the two areas and when the double-headed arrow appears, drag left or right to change the proportions.

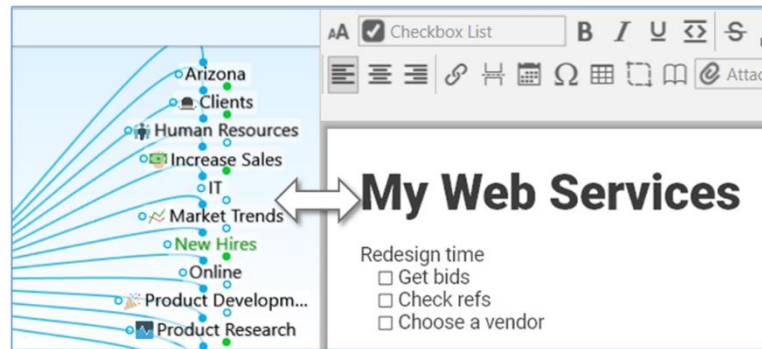


Figure 206. Making the Content Area More Wide or Narrow



Tip: To work with the Content Area in a separate window, click the **New Window** command on the **File** menu. Then, maximize the Plex in one window and the Content Area in the other. Changes you make in one window will be reflected in the other because you're working with the same brain, however, the windows won't be in synch. In other words, making a thought active in one window won't make it active in the other.

Creating and Formatting Notes

Take a note, capture your ideas, or create your next literary masterpiece!

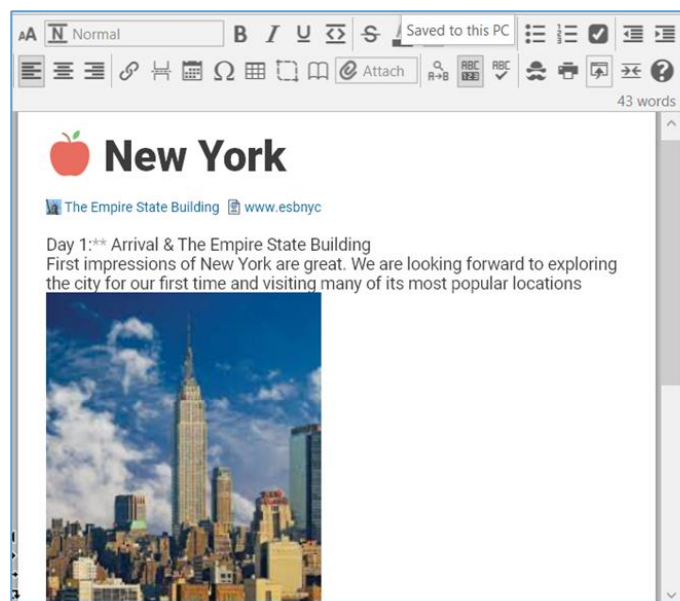


Figure 207. A Note-Worthy Note

The Content Area Toolbar

The Content Area toolbar is quite robust—don't feel like you have to use every feature for every note. You'll see many of the tools you're familiar with from word processing and email applications. And when you want your note to look "just so" you'll have an excellent array of options at your fingertips.

Depending on how wide you've made your Content Area, you may see the fully expanded toolbar or the compact version. Either way, you'll have access to all tools via buttons providing access to the additional commands. By default, unless the Content Area is stretched wide, the compact version of the toolbar will be displayed.



Tip: To show the expanded toolbar even if the Content Area isn't very wide, deselect the "Use compact toolbars for Notes" check box in the **Notes Editor** tab of the **Preferences** window. (Please see the Behavior Preferences section on page 82 for more information about setting global user interface preferences.)

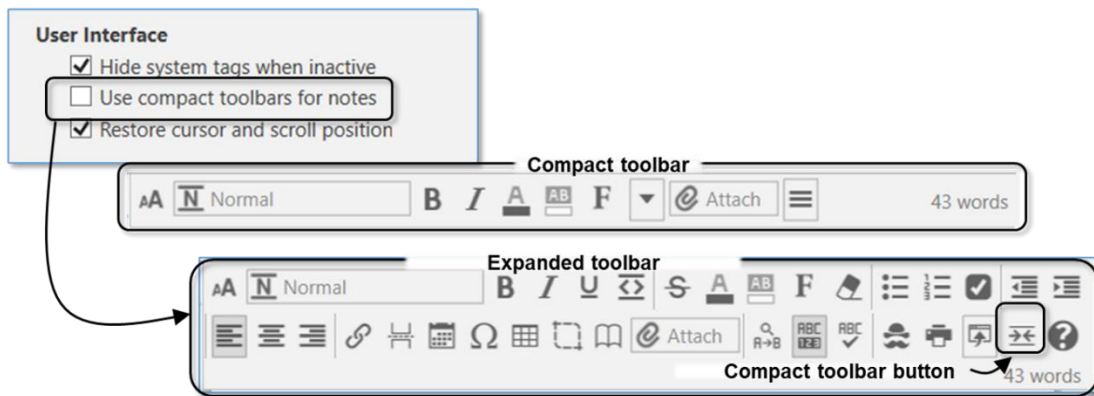


Figure 208. Compact and Expanded Versions of the Content Area Toolbar

Unlike earlier versions of TheBrain software, the Content Area toolbar is always on display when the Content Area is open, but does not have your cursor focus.

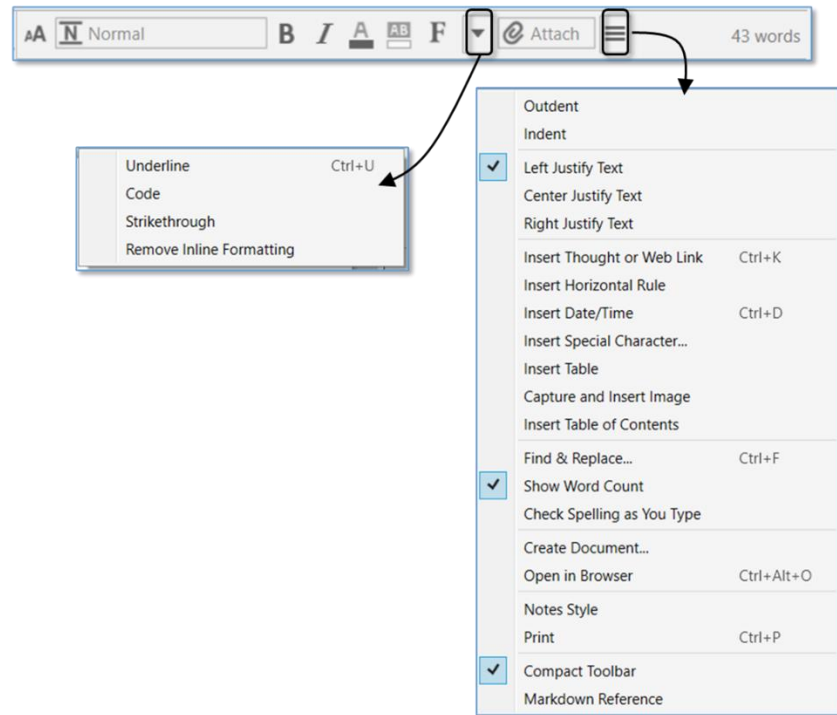


Figure 209. The Compact Content Area toolbar

Here are the buttons that show when the expanded Content Area toolbar is displayed. The annotations point out special buttons you may not see in other text editors.

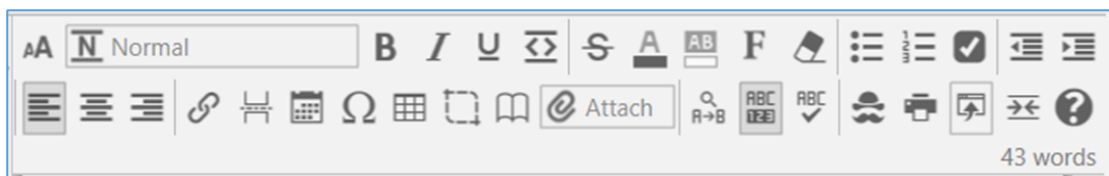


Figure 210. Buttons on the Expanded Content Area toolbar



All notes features are always available no matter which Content Area toolbar—compact or expanded—is displayed.

Toolbar Buttons

Content Area toolbar buttons (in order of appearance):

- **Text Size** – Use the text size slider to resize the notes
- **Paragraph Style** —choose from:
 - Title (H1)
 - Subtitle (H2)

- Heading (H3)
- Subheading (H4)
- Normal
- Code
- Unordered List
- Ordered List
- Checkbox List
- **Bold**, *Italic*, Underline and Code
- Strikethrough, Foreground Color, Background Color, Font and Remove **Formatting**
- Unordered, Ordered and Checkbox **Lists**
- Outdent and Indent
- Left, Center and Right **Justify Text**
- **Insert** Web Link, Horizontal Rule, and Current Date/Time
- Special Character, Table, and Capture and Insert Image
- Insert Table of Contents and Create and Attachment
- Find and Replace, Show Word Count, and Spellcheck as You Type
- Note Style, Print, and Export
- Compact Toolbar and Markdown Reference

Markdown Editor

Notes in TheBrain 12 are created using a next-generation Markdown editor. This improved version of Markdown enables more capabilities than standard editors for a superior editing experience.

- Unlike other Markdown editors, TheBrain enables direct rendering of formatting, images, and more without requiring a "preview" window.
- Text-based, inline code formatting: Ability to type text that converts into formatting, such as:
 - “[] ” (or “- ”) to create a checkbox – “+ ” for a pre-checked checkbox
 - ** for bold
 - “* ” at the start of a line to create a bullet list
 - Block quotes using “>”

Toolbar-based formatting: Not familiar with Markdown? A toolbar that works just like you're used to that will also help you learn the text equivalents.

Use the guide below for more clarity on how you can utilize Markdown by typing directly into the notes:

Input:

```
# Title
## Heading
### Sub-Heading
Normal
Code

**Bold**
*Italic*
Underlined

-Strikethrough-
^Superscript^
~Subscript~
:{Red Text:(style="color:#ff0000").}: and :{Blue Text:(style="color:#6070ff").}:
Yellow Highlight:(style="background-color:#ffffa0"):
Merriweather Font:(style="font-family:Merriweather"):
```

- * Unordered List
- * Unordered List
- * Unordered List

1. Ordered List One
2. Ordered List Two
3. Ordered List Three

- + Checked List
- + Checked List
- Unchecked List
- Unchecked List

> *One Indent*

> > *Two Indent*

Left Justify

:-: Center Justify

--: Right Justify

Horizontal Rule

Link to www.thebrain.com

Link to [Another thought](brain://CznU6cG0m0CoFLsUcCnLfg/Anotherthought)

Table:

|Row 1, Column 1|Row 1, Column 2|Row 1, Column 3|

|Row 2, Column 1|Row 2, Column 2|Row 2, Column 3|

Output:

Title

Heading

Sub-Heading

Normal

Code

Bold
Italic
Underlined

~~Strikethrough~~
^Superscript^
~Subscript~
Red Text and Blue Text
Yellow Highlight
Merriweather Font

- Unordered List
- Unordered List
- Unordered List

1. Ordered List One
2. Ordered List Two
3. Ordered List Three

☒ Checked List

☒ Checked List

☐ Unchecked List

☐ Unchecked List

One Indent

Two Indent

Left Justify

Center Justify

Right Justify

Horizontal Rule

Link to [www.thebrain.com](#)
Link to [Another Thought](#)

Table:

| | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Row 1, Column 1 | Row 1, Column 2 | Row 1, Column 3 |
| Row 2, Column 1 | Row 2, Column 2 | Row 2, Column 3 |

Figure 211. Results of Inline Markdown Formatting

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Entering Notes

To enter a note, activate the thought to which the note pertains, then click in the open area of the Content Area and begin typing. The Content Area toolbar will remain displayed whenever the Content Area is visible.



Notes are saved automatically when another thought is activated and will be saved when closing a brain and prior to an unlikely crash in the application.

You can use all of the standard techniques you use in other text editors when you type, revise, and format TheBrain notes:

- Automatic word wrap controls line endings. Press the **Enter** key to begin a new paragraph.
- Either apply formatting as you go or select existing text before you apply formatting such as bold, italics, underlining, and color.
- Standard text selection techniques:
 - Drag the mouse through text to select it, or
 - Click at the beginning of the text, then hold down the **Shift** key as you click at the end of the text to select all text in between, or
 - Double-click to select an entire word, triple-click to select an entire line
- To apply formatting to an entire paragraph, such as lists—bulleted, numbered, or check marked—just click anyplace within the paragraph. There's no need to first select the entire paragraph.
- Standard keyboard shortcuts—such as **Ctrl-C** for **Copy**, **Ctrl-V** for **Paste**, and **Ctrl-A** for **Select All**—work as you would expect in notes. (On macOS, the standard **Command** key shortcuts also work.) You can copy and paste within notes and between TheBrain and other applications.
- To toggle a check box on or off, follow a link, or open an attachment in the Content Area, press the **Ctrl+L** keyboard shortcut.



One special feature for TheBrain notes is that if **no** text is selected and you select a formatting command such as bold, highlighting, or change in typeface or font size, the formatting will apply to the entire word in which the cursor is currently blinking.



Tip: You can press **Ctrl-Z** (or click the **Edit** menu, then click the **Undo** command) to immediately undo your most recent action in notes.

Using Drag and Drop within Notes

You can move images, links, and text in a note via drag and drop. You can also drag note content to external applications.

- To move text, first select the text, then drag the selection
- To move an image or link, start dragging it, then drop it when the cursor is where you want the image or link to be

Press the **Escape** key to stop dragging.

Tab Key Functionality in the Notes Editor

When you're typing in the Notes editor, the **Tab** key performs different functions based on:

- Where the cursor is
- Whether text is selected



As in most text processing software, holding the **Shift** key while pressing the **Tab** key reverses the direction of the action. For example, wherever pressing **Tab** shifts text to the right, pressing **Shift+Tab** shifts text to the left.

If no text is selected and the cursor is within or at the start of a paragraph:

- The **first line** of the paragraph (whether it is one line or many) is indented approximately five spaces each time the **Tab** key is pressed.

When the cursor is in a list item (bullets/check boxes/numbered lines):

- The entire list entry is indented approximately five spaces each time the **Tab** key is pressed.

When the cursor is in a title, subtitle, heading, or subheading:

- The level of the heading is decreased each time the **Tab** key is pressed. The heading level is increased each time **Shift+Tab** is pressed. For example, to change a Heading 4 to a Heading 3, you would click in the text and press **Shift+Tab**. (Heading 3 is a "higher level" than Heading 4.)

When the cursor is in a table:

- Pressing the **Tab** key moves the cursor to the next cell.



Tab characters can't be inserted into the middle of a line of text. If you want to align text into columns, it's most efficient to format using a table.

Collapsing and Expanding Notes Sections

You can collapse sections of your notes based on headings, tables, and list items. This helps you navigate through large documents more easily. Collapsing lets you focus on a particular area while writing or reviewing content. When you're ready, you can expand any or all sections.

Two ways to expand or collapse Notes sections:

- Hover over the area to the left of the notes, then click the down-arrow to the left of the section to collapse the entire list. This symbol will become a right-arrow which you can click to expand the section.

Or

- Right-click in the area where there are notes, then click an option of your choice. Optionally, before you right-click, click in a specific section if you want to collapse or expand just that section.

Choices on the context menu include: **Collapse All Except Here**, **Expand All**, **Collapse All**, **Expand Here**, and **Collapse Here**.

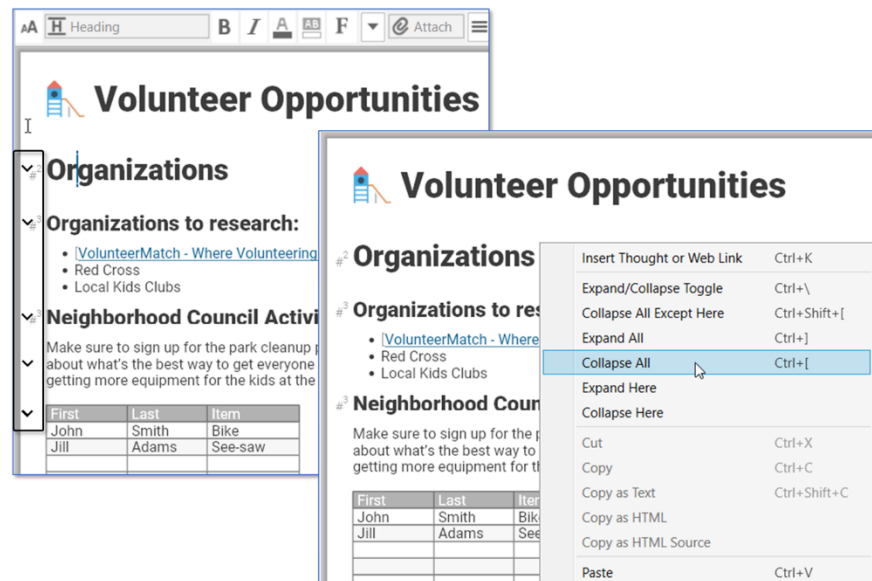


Figure 212. Options for Expanding or Collapsing Note Sections

Choosing a Notes Style

You can choose the style of the notes in the brain that's open by clicking the **Notes Style** button in the Content Area toolbar. The style you choose applies globally to all notes in a single brain, so you can choose a style that matches the look of each of your brains. You can use a different style for each different brain in TheBrain window.



Notes style and formatting will be preserved if you copy and paste a note's content from one thought into another. To easily copy an entire note, right click anywhere inside the note to use the **Select All** option.

From the note's context menu, you can also select Copy as Text or Copy as HTML for pasting into other applications.

- To select a style, click in the **Notes** tab, click the **More** button, then click the **Notes Style** command (or just click the **Notes style** button if the toolbar is expanded), then click a style of your choice from the **Edit Notes Style** box.

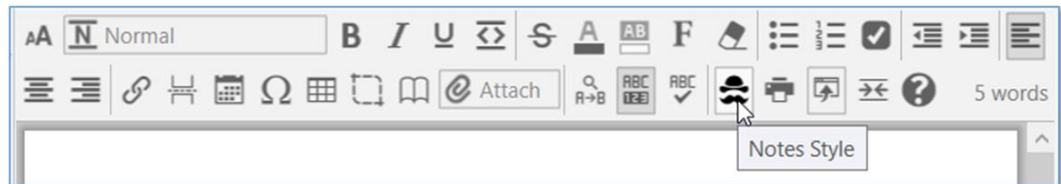


Figure 213. Setting the Notes Style

Note Styles also follow a “responsive web design guidelines” approach which is a fancy way of saying that any note you create will look great whether it is viewed on a 30” monitor or a 4” mobile device.



You can also apply a Notes Style to a Theme, so that it will be in place when you use that theme with another brain. The techniques for fine-tuning the various Style attributes are the same, whether you start in the Content Area or the **Brain Theme** dialog box. For details about viewing and changing the appearance of notes in the Content Area, please see Changing Default Attributes in the Content Area beginning on page 67.

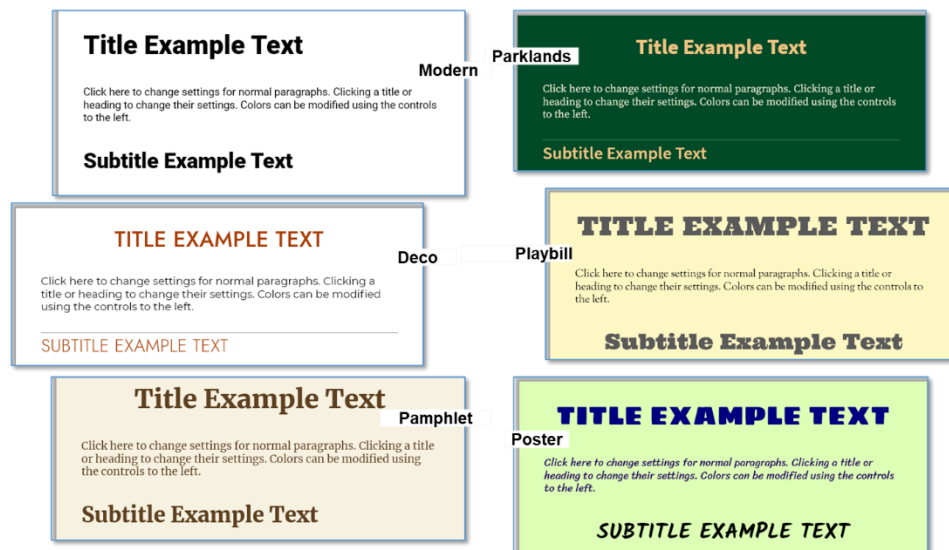


Figure 214. Appearance of Some Notes Styles

Each Note Style has a set of paragraph styles that help you format your notes consistently. If you don't choose a paragraph style, the text is automatically attached to a paragraph style named "Normal."

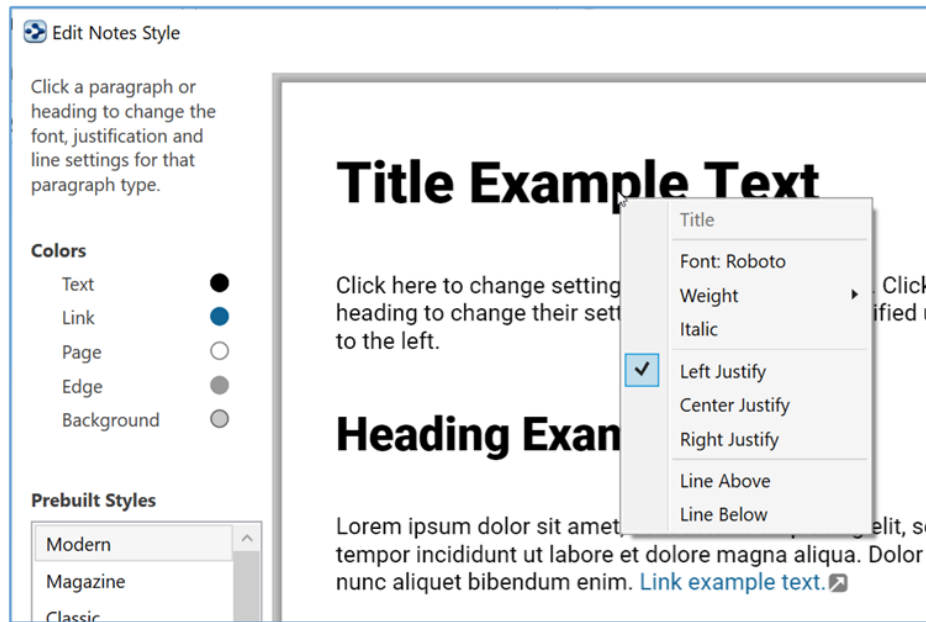


Figure 215. Paragraph Styles



Paragraph styles apply to entire paragraphs. To select one, just click anywhere with the paragraph, then click the paragraph style of your choice. If you change to a different Notes Style, the text will change accordingly, based on the paragraph styles you've selected.

Changing Text Size in Notes

In addition to changing the size of text by choosing different notes and paragraph styles, you can quickly adjust text to a size that is most comfortable for you. It's as easy as clicking the **AA Text Size** button, then dragging the slider up or down!

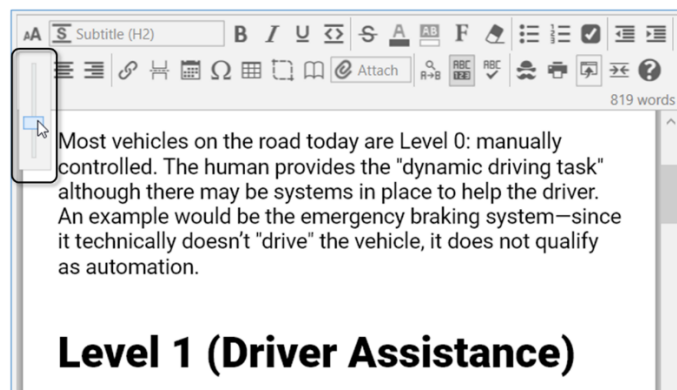


Figure 216. Slider for Making Note Text Larger or Smaller

Paragraph Alignment

Quickly adjust paragraph alignment to left, center or right. Place your cursor anywhere in a paragraph and click on the desired justification.

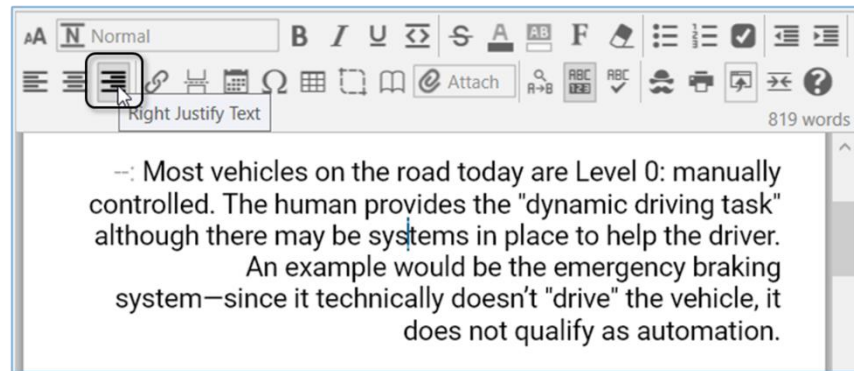


Figure 217. Paragraph Alignment

Custom Font Family for Selected Text

Place your cursor anywhere in a paragraph, then click the **Font** button to select from of over 900 font families. Fonts are consistent across platforms, so your notes will look the same on Windows, macOS and mobile devices.

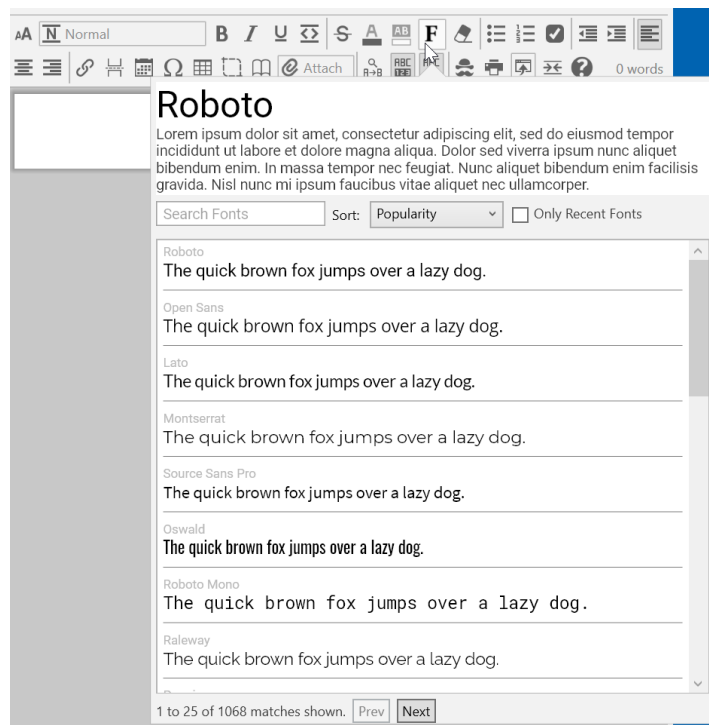
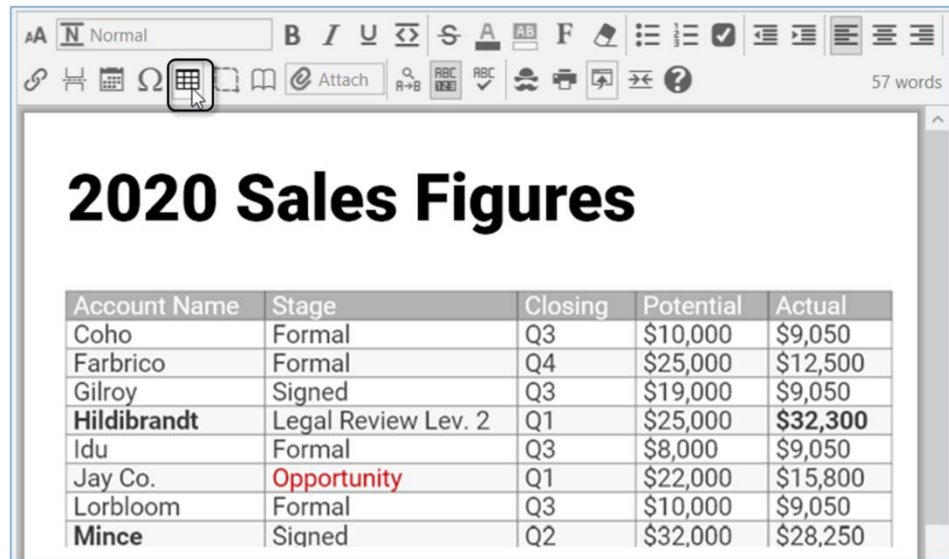


Figure 218. Fonts

Move through large sections of the font list using the **Next** and **Previous** buttons.

Adding Tables

Create tables inside of the Content Area using either the toolbar or the keyboard. To start a new table, type a word or sentence surrounded by pipe symbols, such as: “[this is a new table].” Tables can include formatting and images, and cells can be right, center or left justified, using the Content Area toolbar buttons or with markdown formatting.



| Account Name | Stage | Closing | Potential | Actual |
|--------------------|---------------------|---------|-----------|-----------------|
| Coho | Formal | Q3 | \$10,000 | \$9,050 |
| Farbrico | Formal | Q4 | \$25,000 | \$12,500 |
| Gilroy | Signed | Q3 | \$19,000 | \$9,050 |
| Hildibrandt | Legal Review Lev. 2 | Q1 | \$25,000 | \$32,300 |
| Idu | Formal | Q3 | \$8,000 | \$9,050 |
| Jay Co. | Opportunity | Q1 | \$22,000 | \$15,800 |
| Lorbloom | Formal | Q3 | \$10,000 | \$9,050 |
| Mince | Signed | Q2 | \$32,000 | \$28,250 |

Figure 219. A Table Inserted in the Content Area

Set justification of a table column by adding justification prefix to cell in header row.



To make a table with no header, leave the cells in the header row empty (only pipe characters and optional justification tags). The header will appear with a dotted outline when editing and will completely disappear when printed or in view mode.

Inserting a Table of Contents

You can easily add a Table of Contents into any existing note. The Table of Contents will provide quick links to all Titles, Subtitles, Headings, and Subheadings. You can also see a quick pop-up Table of Contents.

To insert a Table of Contents:

- Click in the note where you want the Table of Contents to begin, then click the **Table of Contents** icon in the Content Area toolbar or type `[/toc/]`.



The Table of Contents that is created will only include the content that appears below it.

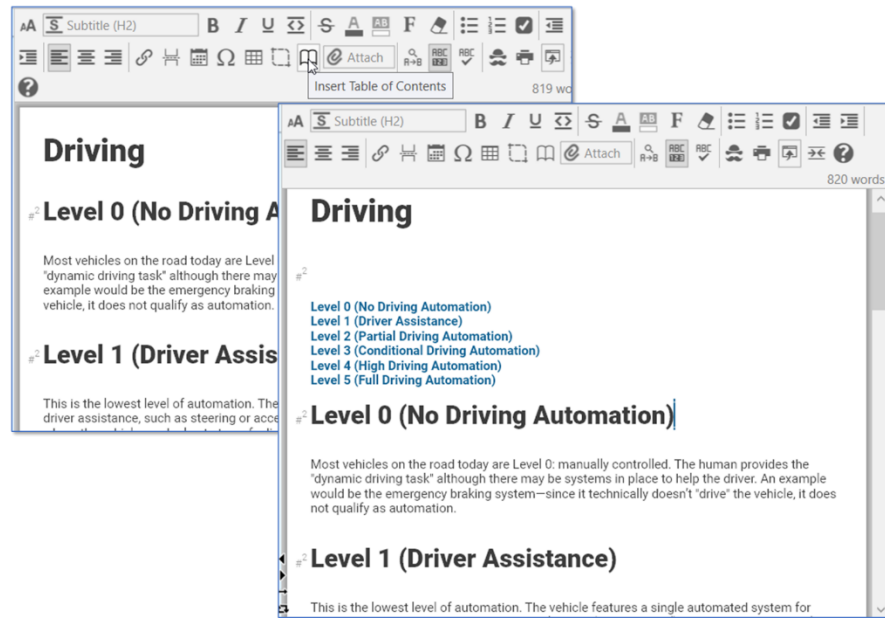


Figure 220. Table of Contents

To delete a Table of Contents:

- Click just above the Table of Contents, then press the **Delete** key, or click just after the Table of Contents, then press the **Backspace** key.

To view a pop-up Table of Contents:

- For a quick pop-up window that contains the note's Table of Contents, right-click in the note or press **Ctrl+T**.

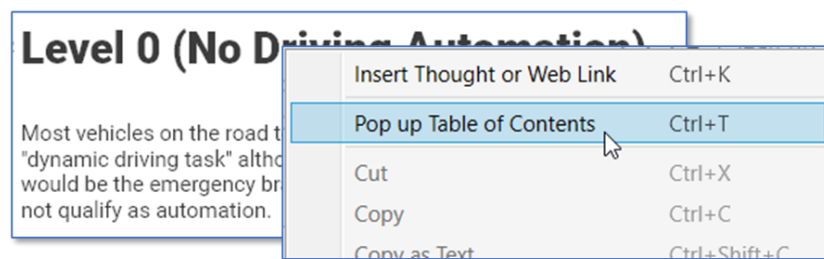


Figure 221. Pop Up Table of Contents

Checking Your Spelling



A spell checker is automatically at work for your notes. Possible misspellings are automatically highlighted and you can right-click to view suggestions. Click the suggestion of your choice to replace the misspelled word. You can customize the dictionary by adding words to it.

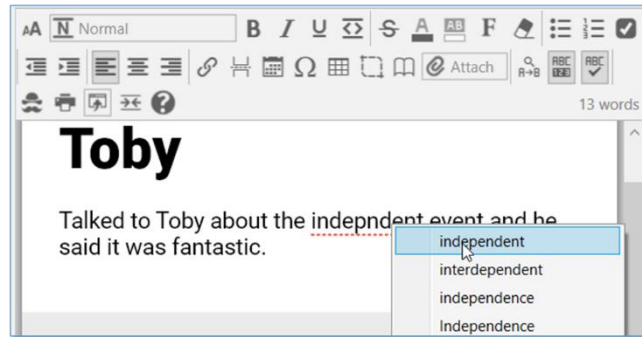


Figure 222. Spell Checker in a Note

If you prefer not to see misspellings flagged as you type:

- Click in the **Notes** tab, click the **More** button, then click the **Check Spelling as You Type** command (or just click the **Check Spelling as You Type** button if the toolbar is expanded).

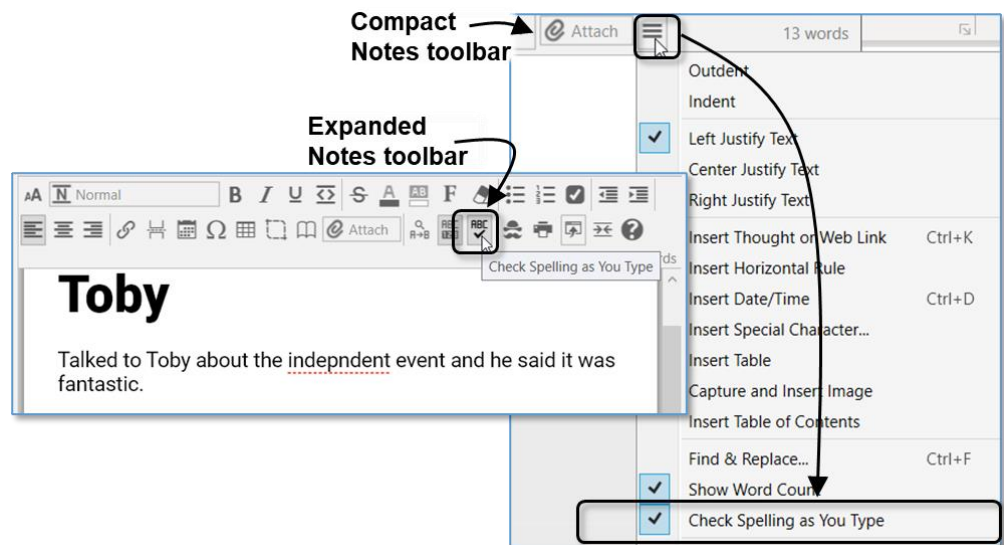


Figure 223. Disabling Spell Checking



This is a toggle command. When you want to turn the feature on again, follow the same procedure.

Real-time spellchecking also applies to creating and editing thought names.

Inserting Horizontal Rules

You can insert horizontal rules (lines) for organizing notes into sections visually.

- Click in the note where you want the horizontal rule to appear, click the **More** button, then click the **Insert Horizontal Rule** command (or just click the **Insert Horizontal Rule** button if the toolbar is expanded).
- Horizontal Rules can also be added manually by typing 3 hyphens. Typing 10 hyphens will create a Page Break.

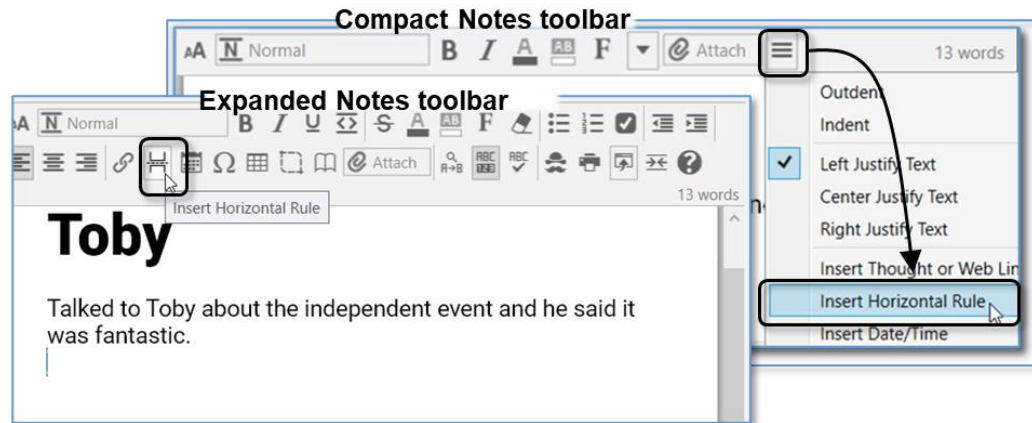


Figure 224. Inserting a Horizontal Rule

To remove a horizontal rule:

- Click within the rule to select it, then press the **Delete** key. If there is a rule between two paragraphs, the rule will also be deleted if you select and delete the paragraphs before and after it.

Creating Check Box Lists

You can create a quick check box list and mark the items as complete or incomplete. You can either create the list as you type or turn any existing text into a check box list after you select it.

1. Click in the note where you want to type the first item to appear, click in any paragraph, or select multiple paragraphs.
2. Click the **Toggle Checkbox List** button in the Content Area toolbar.

3. When a task is complete, click the check box to display a check mark or click it again to remove the check mark if you decide the task isn't complete after all.

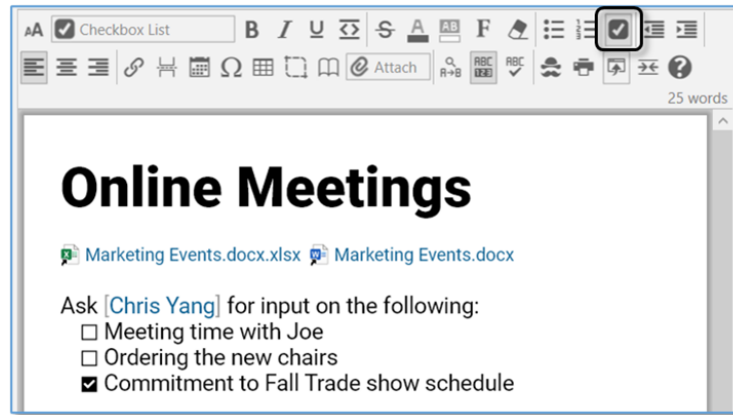


Figure 225. Formatting Text as a Check Box List

To see ALL of your To-Do items in one place:

- Click the **Right Panel** button in the upper-right area next to the Search box or click the **To Do List** command on the **View** menu.

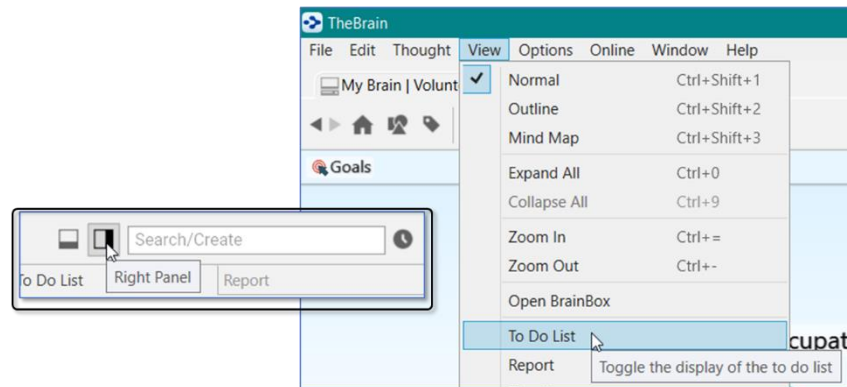


Figure 226. Two Ways to Open the To Do List for All Thoughts

The To Do List panel is displayed:

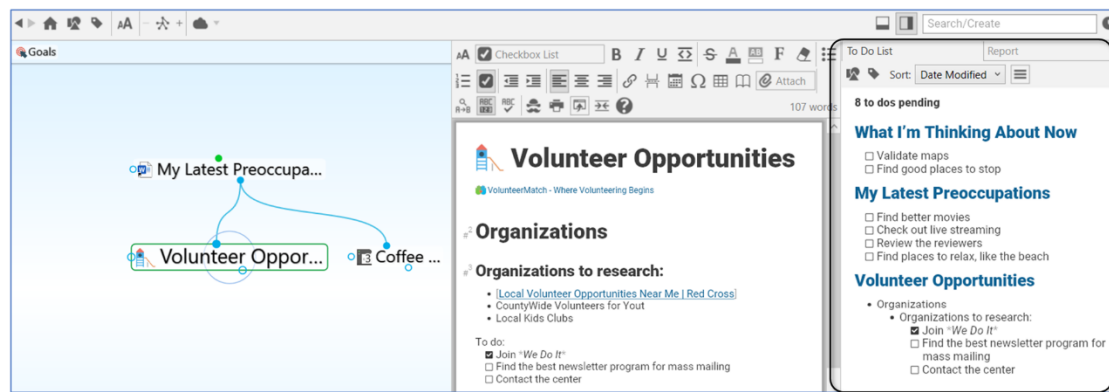


Figure 227. A To Do List for All Thoughts



When you click a check box in one location, such as the To Do List panel, it is automatically checked off in the other location (the thought) and vice versa.

Linking to Thoughts in Notes

TheBrain has a built-in feature that automatically marks note text that matches any thought in your brain with a blue dotted underline. You can then choose to quickly create a link to that thought. This is explained in the Thought Mentions section beginning on page 206.

Creating Web Links

Web links can easily be inserted, edited, and identified within your notes for the active thought. Use any of these three ways:

- Type in the URL, or
- Paste in the URL from the clipboard after you copy it (any selected note text is automatically linked to the URL), or
- Drag the URL in from a browser

The web link will be identified and processed automatically.



Videos from YouTube are embedded into notes in a playable form automatically. Just drag and drop from your browser into your notes.

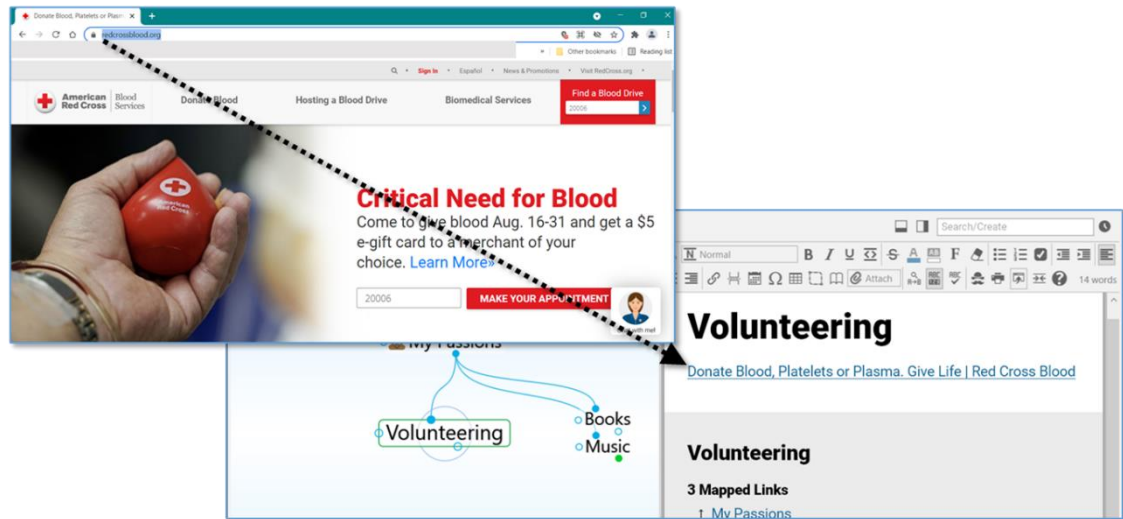


Figure 228. Dragging a Web Link into a Note

- The URL will be replaced with the title of the page it links to—and you can easily edit the title by clicking within it and using standard typing and deleting techniques. If you delete the brackets around the link text, the connection to the URL will be broken—just use the **Undo** command on the **Edit** menu or press **Ctrl-Z** if you delete a bracket by accident.

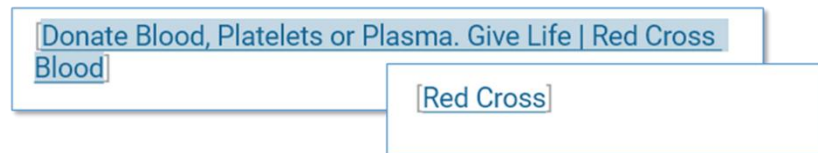


Figure 229. Revising Link Text in a Note

Fast Linking and Creating from Notes

Pressing **Ctrl/Cmd+K** is a shortcut to:

- Insert a link to an existing thought
- Create a new thought
- Link to a URL
- Edit or remove a link

After you press **Ctrl/Cmd+K**:

1. An edit box opens so you can begin typing a URL or the name of the thought you want to perform any of these activities on. Or, if you select text or a URL first, that text will appear in the edit box.

2. Double-click the entry that appears to insert a link to that item in the note. For example, double-clicking “Volunteer Opportunities” in the example below creates a link to that thought in the notes for “Goals.”

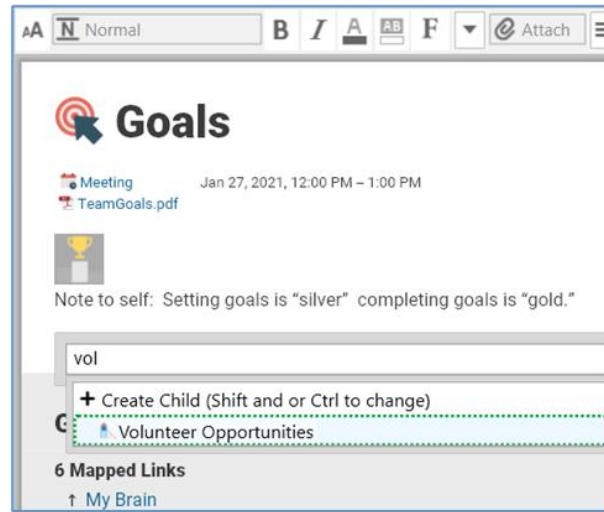


Figure 230. The Ctrl/Cmd+K Shortcut

2. If an existing link is selected, you’re ready to begin editing it. To remove the link, just delete its name in the edit box.
3. If you type a URL, it will be inserted.

The link command includes all the features of **Quick Thought Creation** so you can insert all types of relationships easily.



Alternatively, you can type **[[** to link or create thoughts.

Capturing and Inserting Images in the Content Area

You can take a screen capture of virtually anything you can see on the screen and then insert the image into the Content Area.

- Click the **Capture and Insert Image** button in the Content Area toolbar.
- Your brain will be hidden temporarily and red crosshairs will appear on the screen in place of your cursor.
- Click and drag a rectangle around the area to be captured as an image in your note.

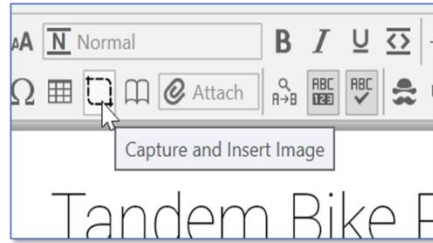


Figure 231. Capture Image from the Content Area Toolbar

Details on Images in Notes

Select an image in a note to see its size as a percentage.

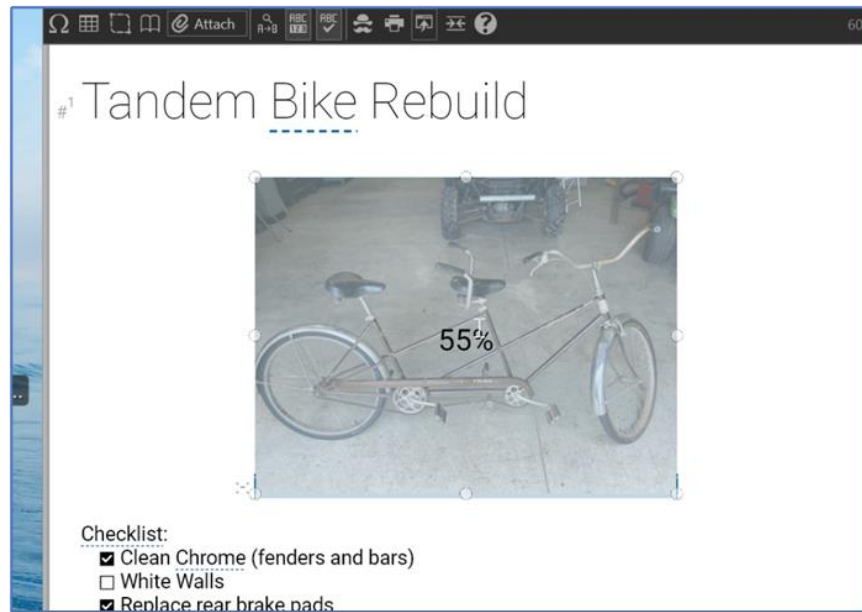


Figure 232. Image Size Displayed as a Percentage When Selected

Find and Replace in Notes

Click the **Find & Replace** button in the Content Area toolbar to open the **Find** and **Replace** fields. Type the text you're searching for in the **Find** field and the replacement text in the **Replace** field. All matches to the **Find** field will be highlighted in the note. Use the arrow keys move back and forth between each occurrence to preview when you'll be replacing. Use the **Replace** button to replace specific instances one at a time, or the **All** button to replace all instances of your search criteria.

Your cursor will remain on the current selected highlight when you close the Find/Replace fields.



The **Find** field can be used independently, without content in the **Replace** field if you are just looking for specific text to be highlighted within a long note.

Printing Notes



To print the active note, press **Ctrl-P** or click the **More** button, then click the **Print** command (or just click the **Print** button if the toolbar is expanded). The **Print** dialog box will open and you can fine-tune your print request.

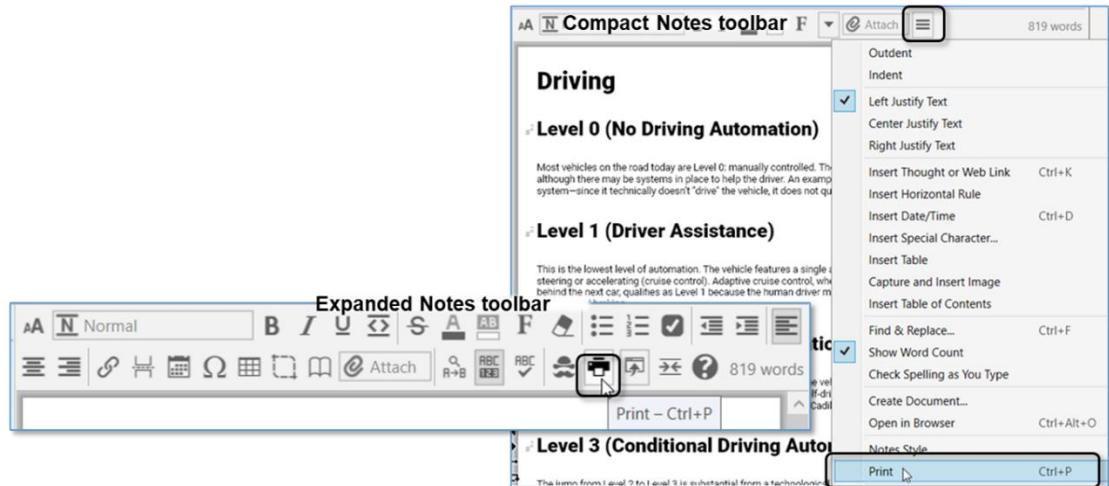


Figure 233. Printing a Note



Additional Note Features

Word and Character Count

The number of words for each note displays in the bottom-right corner of the Content Area toolbar. Hovering over the word count for each individual note will display the character count of that note. You can toggle the display on or off by selecting the **Show Word Count** button on the expanded Content Area menu or the compact toolbar's drop-down menu.

Search Web from Notes

Select any text in your note and press **F4** on your keyboard (or your customized Web Search keyboard shortcut) to open the Web Search dialog box, pre-populated with the selected text.

Delete By Word

The Content Area supports keystrokes to delete by word, rather than one character at a time:

- **Ctrl+Backspace** = Delete to start of current word (equal to **Ctrl+Shift+Left**, **Backspace** on macOS)
- **Ctrl+Delete** = Delete to start of next word (equal to **Ctrl+Shift+Right**, **Delete** on macOS)

Edit Link Context Menu Commands

Once a link has been added to notes, you can right-click on it to edit it. If the link is a URL, you can edit its text. If the link is to a thought, you can search for and select a different thought.

Resizable Images and Videos

Images and videos that have been pasted into a note can easily be resized. Click on the image or video to highlight it. Each image will have eight resizing points. Click and drag on any resizing point to resize the image.

Copying Images from Notes

When a picture in the Content Area is copied (by right-clicking it and selecting the **Copy** command), pasting into Paint or Word will paste the image itself.

Pasting into notepad or some other text-only application will paste the markdown text that references the picture.

Additionally, you can right-click an image in the Content Area and select **Copy as Image**.

Adding and Viewing Thought Attachments

In addition to notes, each thought in your brain can have content associated with it such as web pages and a multitude of file attachments. You can drag and drop attachments, create them from scratch, and use any of the other options provided by the **Attach** button in the Content Area toolbar. To access your attachments, just click their links in the Content Area.

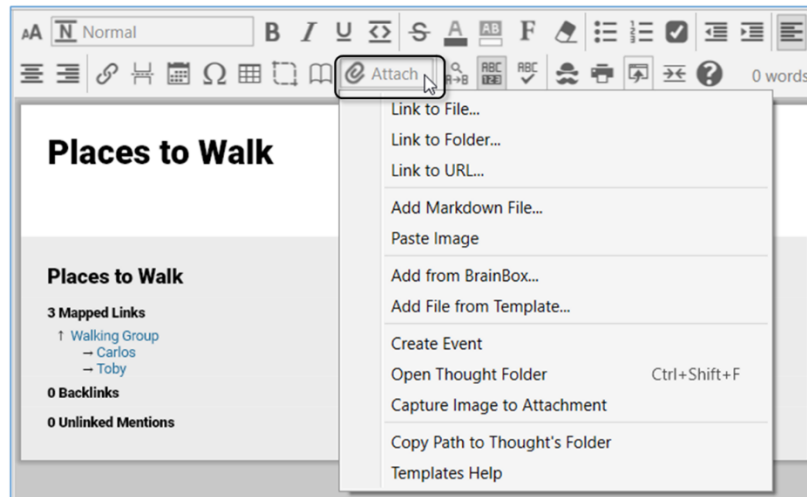


Figure 234. The Attach Button in the Content Area

Attaching Files



You can use standard “drag and drop” techniques to add file attachments into your brain from other programs to a thought or to create new thoughts.

To drag and drop one or more items into the Content Area of a thought:

1. Make sure the thought to which you want to add the attachment is currently the active thought and that the Content Area is visible.
2. Position the window containing the item you want to attach so that it and the Content Area are both visible, then drag the selected item to the blank area under the thought name in the Content Area. A dashed outline around the thought name shows you that you’re about to attach the file to that thought. You can select multiple items and drag them all at the same time.

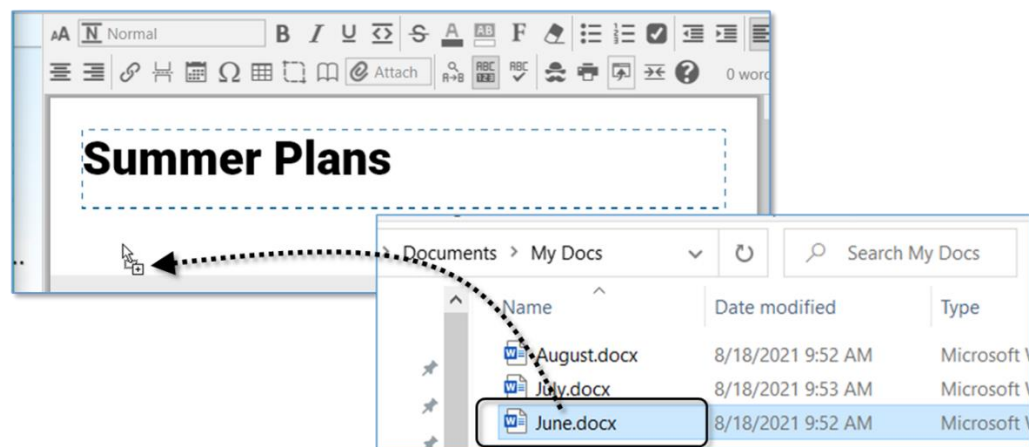


Figure 235. Dragging and Dropping a File into the Content Area

Specifying your Drag and Drop Preference

By default, all files that you drag and drop into your brain will create a copy of the original file. You can easily change the default to suit your environment. Please see the Behavior Preferences section on page 82 for information about viewing and changing the “On drag and drop of files” setting.



Tip: You can also override the current drag and drop setting in the **Preferences** window by holding down the following keys as you drag and drop:



In Windows

- Link to file = **Alt**
- Move file = **Shift**
- Copy file = **Ctrl**



In macOS

- Link to file = **Ctrl**
- Move file = **Cmd**
- Copy file = **Alt**

Attaching Links to Files and Folders without Dragging



You can also add a file attachment to the active thought without dragging and dropping.

To insert a link in the active thought to a file or a folder:

1. Click the **Attach** button in the Content Area toolbar.
2. Click **Link to File** or **Link to Folder**, navigate to the item, then click the **Open** button.

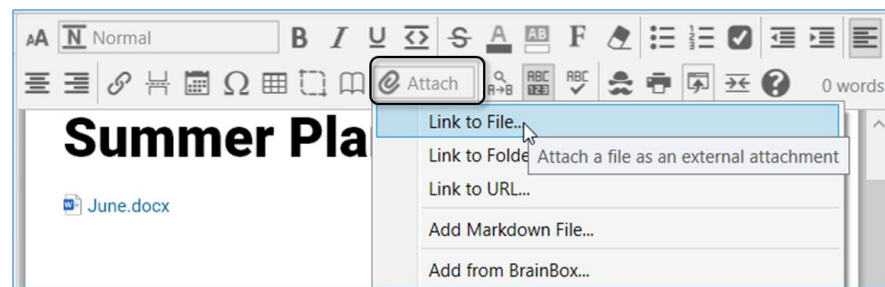


Figure 236. Using Link to File to Add a File Attachment

4. The Content Area will display the details of the new attachment.

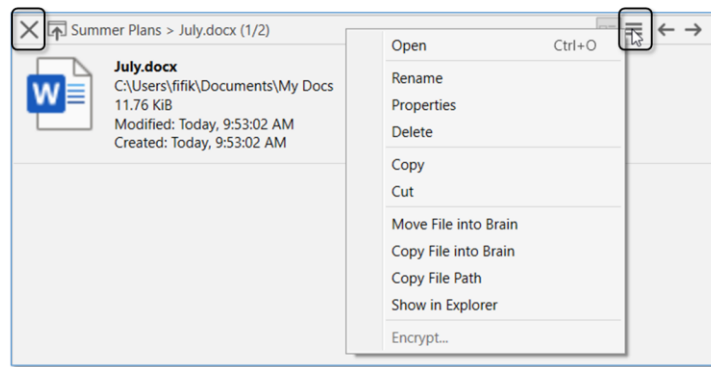


Figure 237. Content Area after a Link to a File is Attached

From here you can click the **X** button to return to the notes, click the up-arrow button to open the attachment, use the left- and right-arrow buttons to move back and forth between other attachments in the same thought or to move back to the notes, or click the **Actions** button to access more choices for handling the attachment.

Actions Menu for Files

- **Open:** Open the selected attachment in its default application.
- **Rename:** Change the name of the selected attachment.
- **Properties:** Display all attributes of the selected file in a separate dialog box; based on the default application, there may be properties you can change.
- **Delete:** Delete the selected attachment (you will be not be prompted to confirm the deletion but you can use the **Edit** menu to **Undo** the deletion).
- **Copy:** Copy the selected attachment to the clipboard; you can then paste the attachment elsewhere in your brain.
- **Cut:** Place the selected attachment into the clipboard; the attachment will be removed from its current location when it is pasted elsewhere in your brain.
- **Move File into/out of Brain:** Switch this attachment between internal and external storage; if you are moving the file out of your brain, you will be prompted to specify the destination folder.
- **Copy File into/out of Brain:** Switch this attachment between internal and external storage; if you are moving the file out of your brain, you will be prompted to specify the destination folder.
- **Copy File Path:** Copies the location so that you can paste it elsewhere, including the Search box; for example, you may want to see if the file is elsewhere in your brain.
- **Show in Explorer:** Shows where the file resides outside of your brain.

- **Encrypt:** Ensures that it is impossible to recover the file contents without a password.

Attaching Web Pages



Adding URL attachments to your brain is a simple process. TheBrain's built-in browser will display each web page in the Content Area.

The easiest method for linking a web page into your brain is to simply drag and drop it into your brain. Click on the URL icon in the address bar of any browser and drag into one of several different locations to add the web page as an attachment:

- Drag and drop to the Plex area to create new thoughts. The thought name will be the URL of the web page or what is contained in the <title> tag of the URL, which you can easily rename as you would any other thought. A link to the page will appear under the thought name in the Content Area and clicking that link will open the page in TheBrain's built-in browser. Online non-HTML content, such as online .PDF files will be renamed with the file name.
- Drag and drop onto existing thoughts in the Content Area. This will simply add the web page as an additional attachment link. The thought name will not be updated.
- Drag and drop into the body of an existing note for a hyperlink.

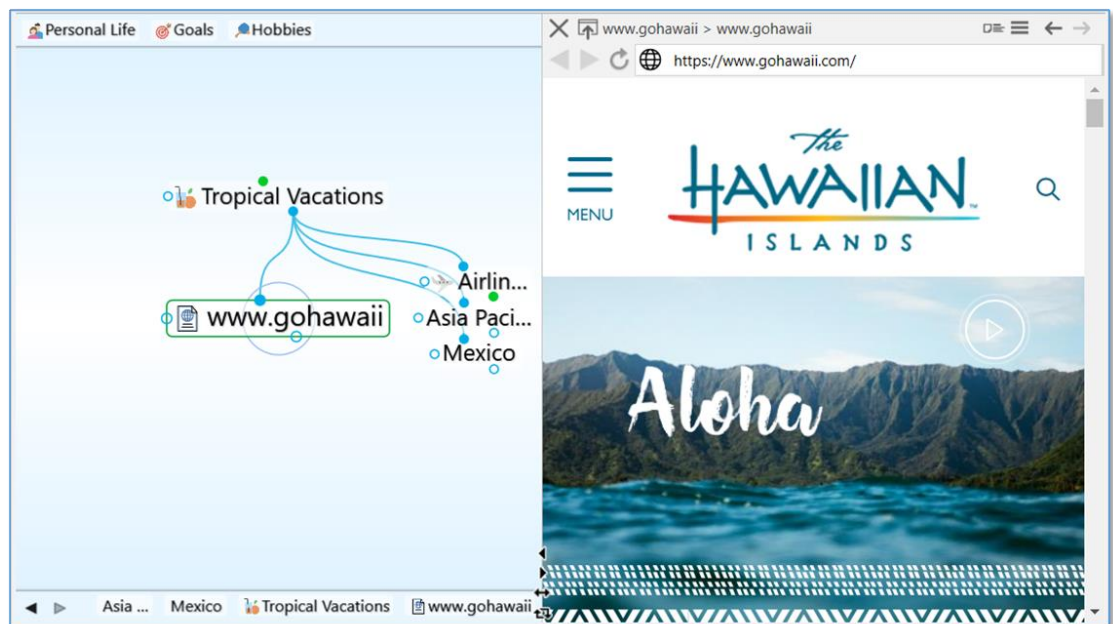


Figure 238. TheBrain's Built-In Web Browser

Adding a Web Page by Typing or Pasting its URL

You can also add a web page attachment to the active thought by clicking the **Attach** button in the Content Area.

- Click **Link to URL**, paste or type the URL address into the empty field, then press the **Enter** key.

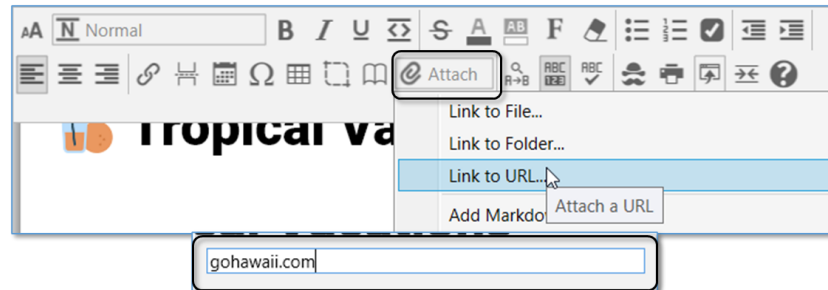


Figure 239. Adding a Web Page Attachment using the Attach Button

If the URL you are attaching to your thought already exists as an attachment on another thought, you'll have the option to cancel, add, navigate to the Attachment or replace the attachment.

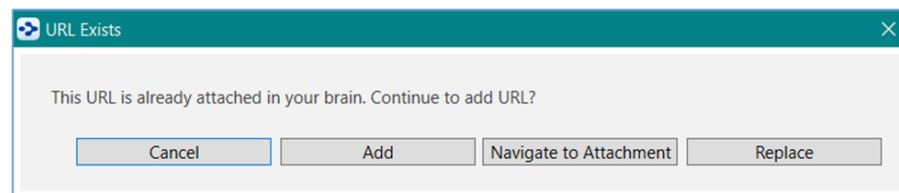


Figure 240. URL Exists



TheBrain's built in browser allows you to open archived web pages for attached URLs. In the context menu for any URL attachment, select **Open Using Wayback Machine**.

Attaching Video and Sound Files



TheBrain 12 includes a built-in media player that can enables playback of several common video and audio files.

To activate the video player, select a video file attachment. The video will be previewed and the player controls will be shown near the bottom of the window. To activate the audio player, use an audio file attachment.

The primary controls are: play/pause, advance by 10 seconds, and rewind by 10 seconds. There is also a timeline that can be dragged to go directly to a specific time in the video and a button to open the file in an external player. The numbers

at the left of the timeline show the amount of time that has elapsed while the numbers at the right of the timeline show the amount of time remaining.

As the window is resized, the video player and its controls scale to fit within the available space with the controls appearing in a translucent overlay on top of the video when insufficient vertical space is available.

A fading animation is utilized to hide and display the controls as necessary when video is playing. For audio files, the controls are displayed in the center of the available space and do not fade out at any time.

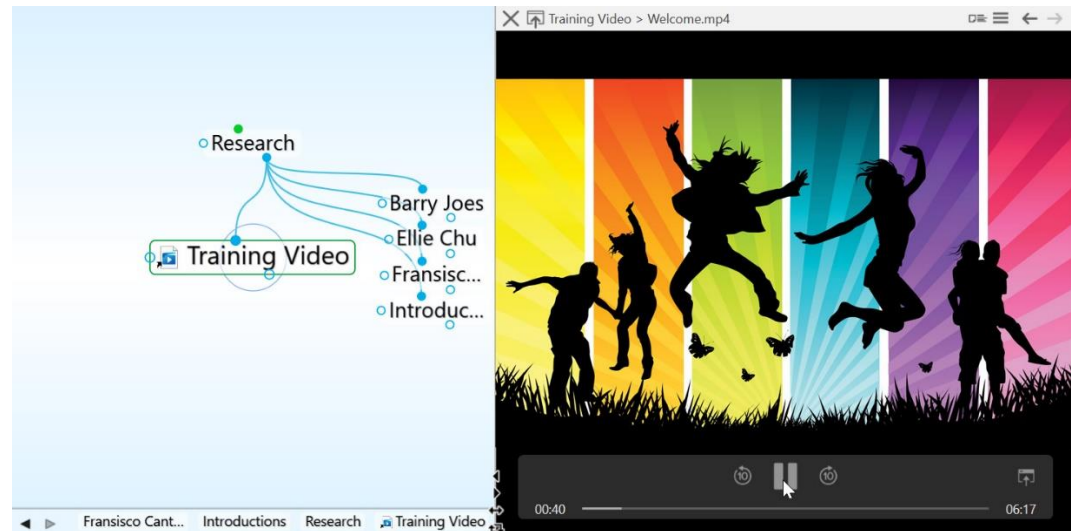


Figure 241. TheBrain's Built-In Media Player

Supported File Types

| Media Type | Windows and macOS | Windows Only | macOS Only |
|------------|--|--------------|------------|
| Video | mov, mp4, h264, h263, mpeg, mpg, avi, mkv, wmv | mkv | 3gp |
| Audio | mp3, wav, aac, ts, flac | pcm, wma | aiff, ac3 |

Action Menu for URLs

An attachment that is a web page has a slightly different menu—and it's also slightly different based on whether its showing in the note or with the attachment "in place," meaning in TheBrain's built-in browser. Access the menu by either right-clicking attachment in the note or by the **Actions** menu button in the Content Area where the web page is displayed.

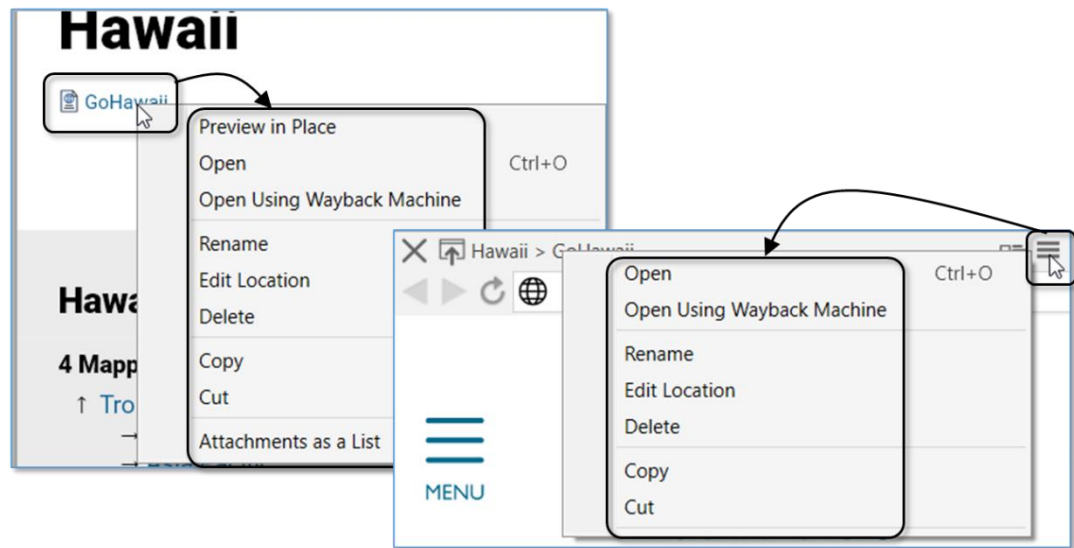


Figure 242. URL Attach Menu in Notes and in Place

- **Preview in Place:** Open the page within the Content Area in TheBrain's built-in browser.
- **Open:** Open the selected web page in its default application.
- **Open Using Wayback Machine:** Open an archived web page for the URL.
- **Rename:** Change the name of the selected attachment (not the URL itself).
- **Edit Location:** Change the URL address for the selected attachment.
- **Attachments as a List:** By default, attachment links appear one after another, wrapping to a new line when there are more than fit in one line. This option shows each link in a separate paragraph.

The rest of the commands work as they do for file attachments.



When a thought's attachments are modified, the modification date of the thoughts is also automatically updated, improving the accuracy of your searches and filters.

Viewing Attachments as a Slideshow

Use the **Next** and **Previous** navigational arrows in the top-right corner of the Content Area toolbar to browse through attachments.

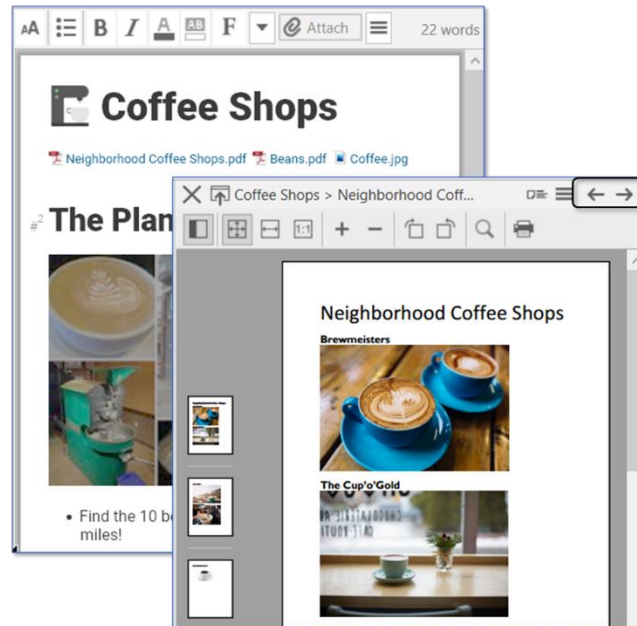


Figure 243. Next and Previous Arrows

To view attachments as a slide show:

- Click the first attachment, then click the **Next** button to display the next attachment.
- For multi-page attachments, click a thumbnail to jump to a specific page.
- To return to the notes, just click the Close button (**X**) at the start of the Notes toolbar (or keep clicking the **Previous** button until the notes appear).

To view pictures in notes as a slide show:

- Double-click the image you want to see first to maximize it, then click the **Next** button to display the next picture.



Figure 244. A Picture from Notes in Slideshow Mode

Working with Multiple Attachments



You can add multiple attachments to thoughts and you can have many types of attachments for a single thought. For example, if you have a thought for a person, you might attach their blog as a web page, and their resume in a file—all in the same thought.

When there is more than one attachment, the number of attachments is displayed on the thought icon. For example, the thought shown below has two attachments:

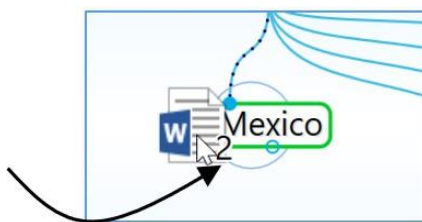


Figure 245. Number of Attachments Indicator

For keyboard navigation, when opening a list of attachments for a single thought, the first attachment will automatically be selected.

Creating an Event as an Attachment



You can use the **Create Event** command on the **Attach** menu in the Content Area toolbar to add events to your thoughts. Please see the Managing Events section on page 229 for details.

Adding a Template File to Your Brain

There may be types of files that you create frequently that share a common look and feel. For example, you may prepare correspondence using a common

letterhead. You can designate template files that will be at your fingertips whenever you create attachments.

To create a template file:

1. Click the **Attach** button in the Content Area, then click the **Add File from Template** command.

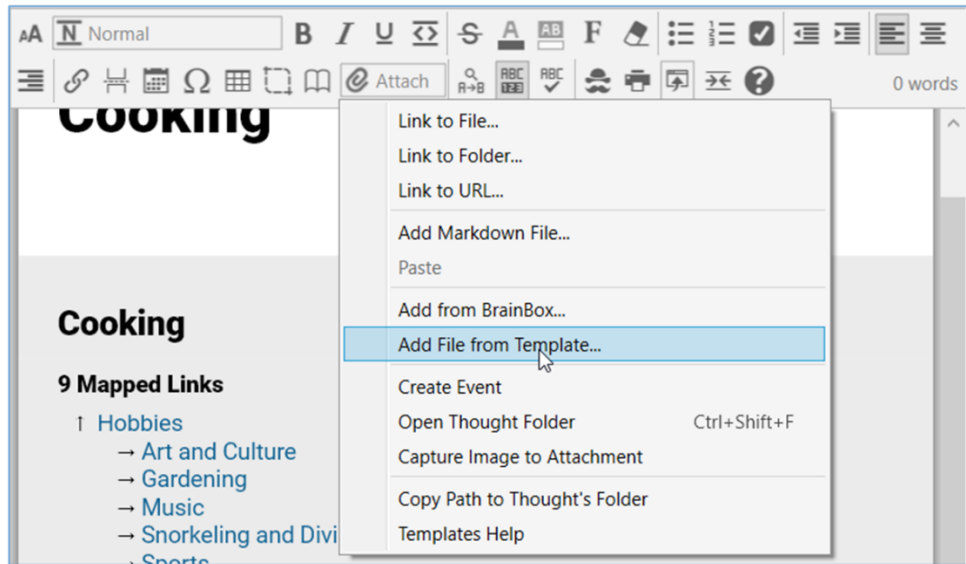


Figure 246. Adding a File from a Template

2. In the **Create File from Template** tab, any previously created templates will appear under the “User Templates” heading and the built-in templates will appear under “System Templates.” Click the file type of your choice.

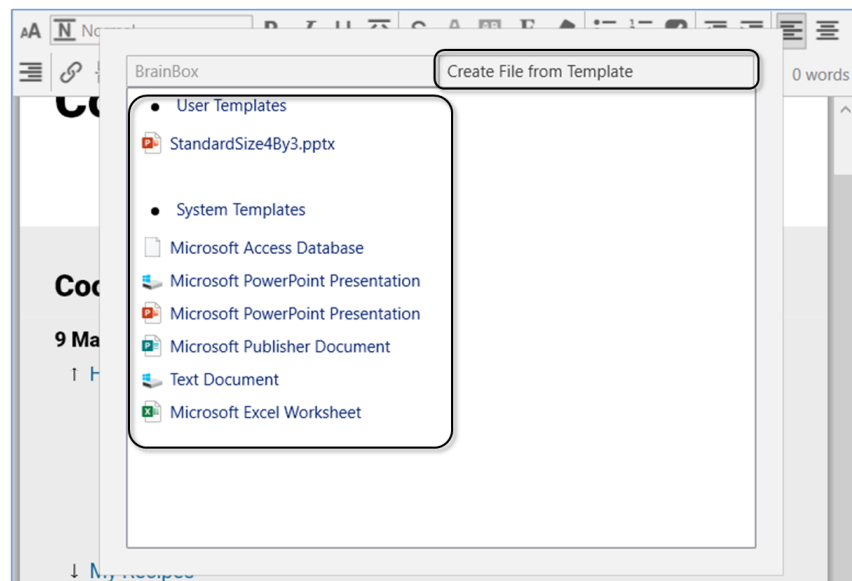


Figure 247. Selecting a Template

3. The associated application will open and you can begin creating your file. Save as usual. After you close the file, TheBrain window will appear. Note that you can switch back and forth between windows—including TheBrain—as usual, as you’re working. By default, the new file will have the same name as the active thought and it will be saved as an internal file.

Remember to click on **Template Help** under the **Attach** button if you want to add new and/or custom file types to your existing template list.



Tip: If you edit one of the files in your templates folder, save it under a new name in order to preserve your original template.

Pasting in an Image as an Attachment

If you have copied an image, you can click the **Attach** button in the Content Area, then click **Paste Image**. The image will become both an attachment for the active thought and its icon. Common file types such as .jpg, .gif, .png and .svg will all preview in TheBrain content area.

Additionally, multiple image files can be copy/pasted or drag/dropped into TheBrain as attachments at a single time.

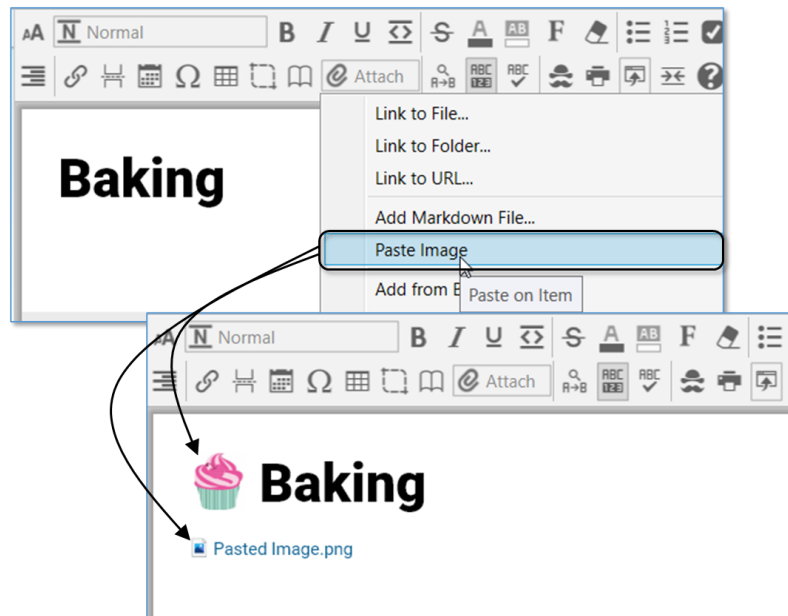


Figure 248. Pasting In an Image

Using the Save As Command



You can use any application's "Save as" command to create a new file inside your brain. For example, if you have opened a Word file that is an internal attachment to a thought, you would click the **File** menu, click the **Save as** command, then enter the name of the new file to create. The new file will automatically appear in a tab of the thought's Content Area.

Viewing Related Thoughts in the Content Area

Have you ever wondered whether content in one thought's note is referencing another thought in the same brain or even if the thought you are on is being referenced in another note—but you figured it might be too complicated to go searching? Without your having to do anything, the Content Area displays all related thoughts.



Related thoughts do not have to be visible in the Plex in order to display in the Content Area.

Thought Mentions

When a thought name appears within notes, your brain recognizes it automatically as a "mention." Both plural and singular forms of the text are recognized, so exact matches are not required.

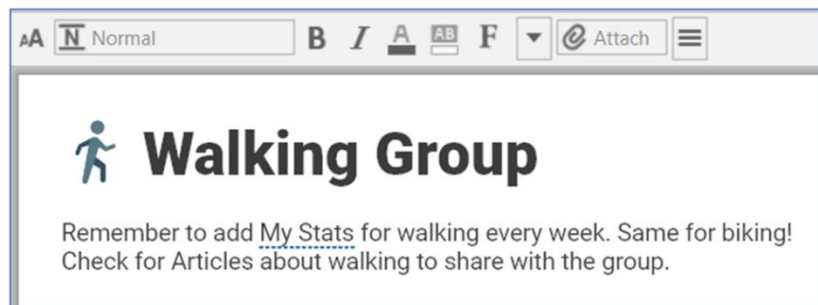


Figure 249. A Thought Mention Underlined in a Note

Right-click on a Mention in a note to either link to or activate this thought.

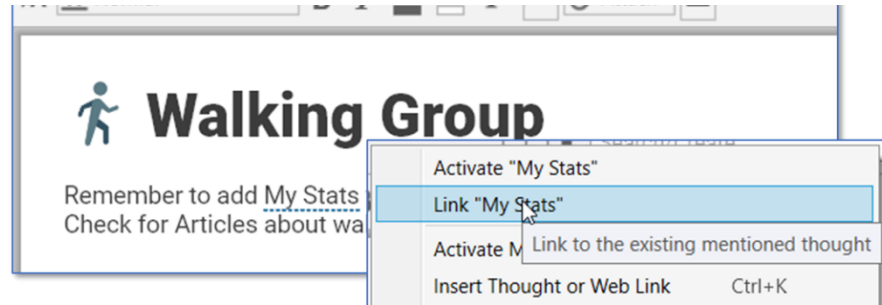


Figure 250. Context Menu When Right-Clicking on a Mention

Below the note are options for displaying more related content within the same brain by opening Mapped Links, Backlinks, or Unlinked Mentions in a footer that can appear below the note:

- Mapped Links:** Thoughts that are connected in the Plex as parents, children, jumps, or siblings (but do not necessarily have text in common)
- Backlinks:** Thoughts whose notes link to the active thought
- Unlinked Mentions:** Thoughts whose notes contain the name of the active thought—even if not explicitly linked

While mapped links refer to thought names, backlinks and mentions display both the names of the related thoughts and the context of the notes in which they appear.

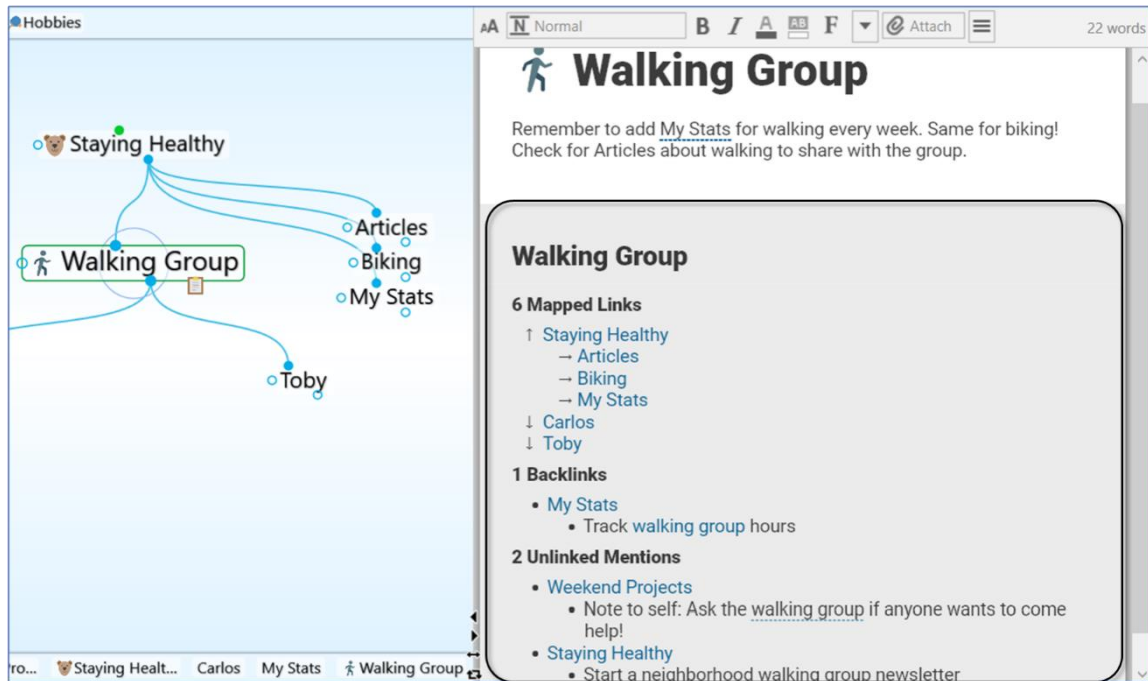


Figure 251. Content Area with Related Thoughts in the Footer

Using Related Thought Links

You can activate any related thought by clicking its link in the Content Area footer. This enables you to add content to one note from another via links or mentions.

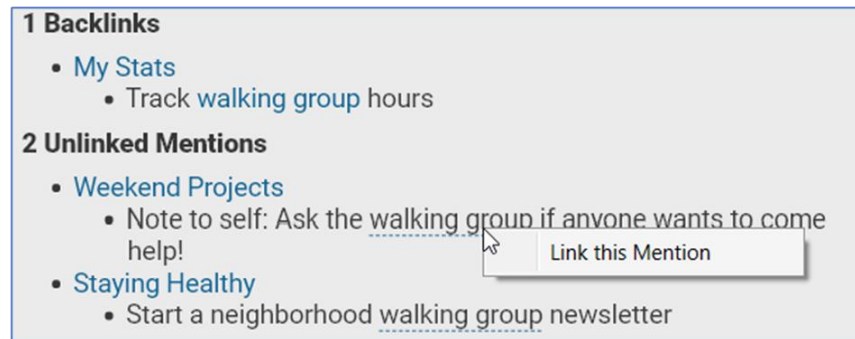


Figure 252. Two Kinds of Links for Related Thoughts

- Click a solid **blue link** to activate that thought.
- In the footer, click a **dashed underline** link to display the **Link this Mention** command. Once it's linked to the existing mentioned thought, it will move from the **Unlinked Mention** section to the **Backlinks** section in the Content Area.

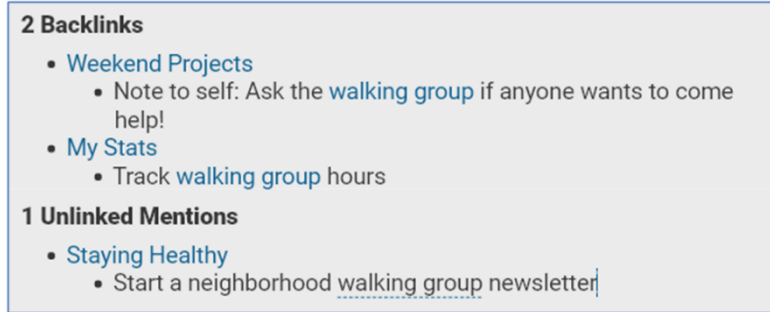


Figure 253. After an Unlinked Mention is Linked



Note that while links appear in **blue** by default, you can easily change their color. To do so, select **Brain Theme** in the **Options** menu, then click the color of your choice on the **Colors** tab for the **Links** entry. Click **Save Theme** to save your change.

Hiding or Showing Related Thoughts

To hide mapped links, backlinks, or unlinked mentions in the Content Area:

- Right-click below the notes, then click **Show Mapped Links**, **Show Backlinks**, and/or **Show Unlinked Mentions** in the context menu.

To restore the thought names and/or links and mentions:

- Right-click within the Notes area and click **Show Mapped Links**, **Show Backlinks**, and/or **Show Unlinked Mentions** in the context menu.

Note that hiding or showing related thoughts is global and applies to your entire brain.

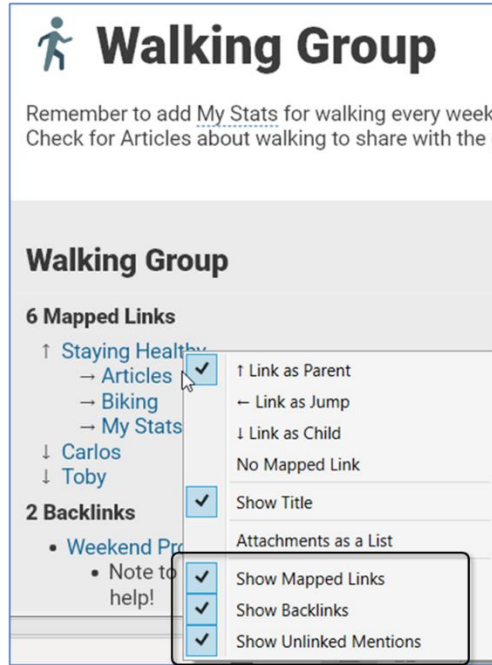


Figure 254. Context Menu Below Notes

You can also use the **Notes Editor** tab in **Preferences** to hide or display links and mentions in the Content Area.

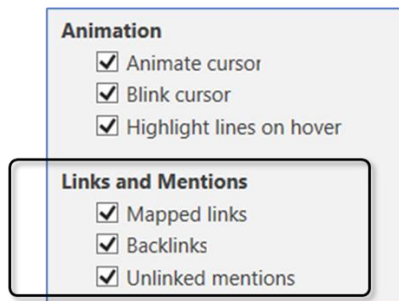


Figure 255. Links and Mentions Section in Notes Editor Preferences

Collapsing and Expanding Related Thoughts Sections

When you hover over the area to the left of the related thoughts, you'll see down- and right-arrows.

- Click the down-arrow to the left of the current thought name to collapse the entire list. This symbol will become a right-arrow which you can click to expand the entire list.
- Click any other down- or right-arrow to expand or collapse that section or item.

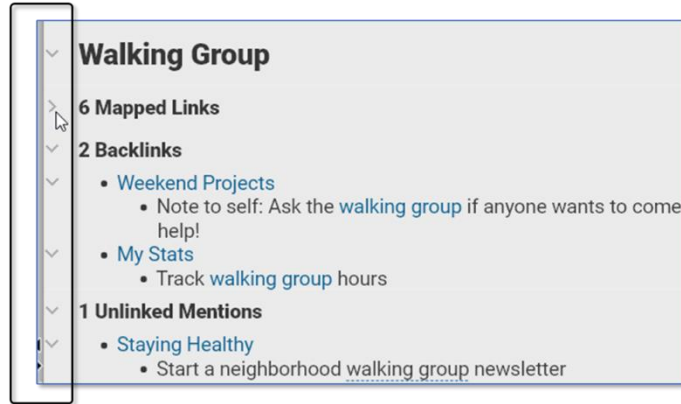


Figure 256. Collapsing or Expanding Sections

You can also collapse and expand sections within note text in a similar way when Heading styles are used.

Aggregating Content

The data in your brain can be aggregated automatically with just a few simple mechanics. When data is aggregated, you can see content from notes about the same subject throughout the thoughts in your brain all at the same time. This ability is powerful and magical!

In the example below, the four backlinks comprise every note that begins with a “George” heading throughout the brain, organized by the name of the thought that contains one or more “George” headings.

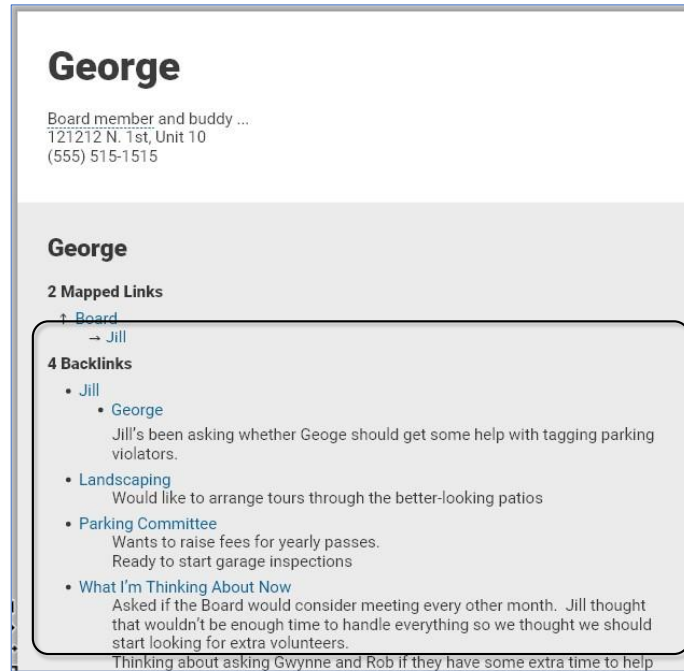


Figure 257. Aggregated Data for “George”

To prepare data to be aggregated:

1. Create a thought whose name represents the information you want to see aggregated. In the Figure 257 example, that thought name is “George.”
2. In any thought that has information about “George” (following this example), precede the information with a standalone paragraph. This paragraph should simply have the text that matches the name of the thought for which you want aggregated data—“George” in our example. The text should be attached to a Heading style.



Figure 258. “George” is Formatted as a Heading 3

3. Link the Heading by right-clicking it, then selecting **Link (thought name)**.

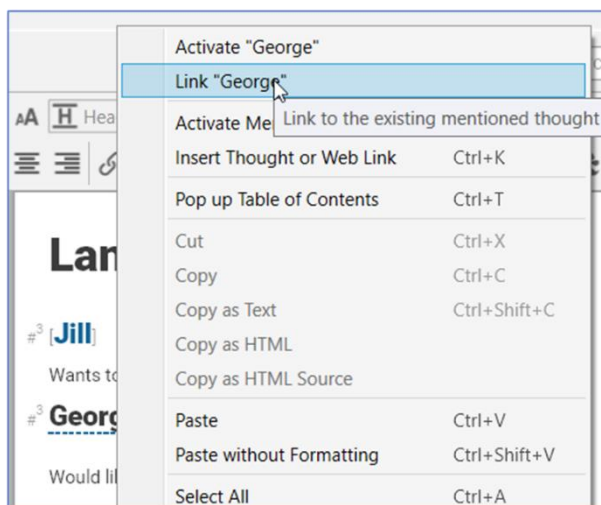


Figure 259. Linking the Heading to the Thought of the Same Name

4. In this scenario, the backlink content on the George thought will display all text until it comes to the next #3 (Heading) formatted text.

Any time you activate the “George” thought, you’ll see the information aggregated, as in Figure 257.

BrainBox

BrainBox lets you send information to your brain quickly and easily. Just click the icon in the top-right corner of TheBrain for Windows or macOS for instant access. Use BrainBox for adding information on the go, from your desktop, from the web, anything that you want to quickly capture into your brain, to be categorized later.



To add content from the web to BrainBox, first install the BrainBox extension in your preferred browser. Go to <https://www.thebrain.com/docs/brainbox> and follow the instructions there.

Accessing BrainBox

The BrainBox Button

At any time, when you have a brain open, use the **BrainBox** button in the upper-right corner of the window to add previously captured content into your brain.

1. Click on a brain to open it.
2. Navigate to the desired thought where you want to add your content.
3. Click on the BrainBox icon to display its content.

4. Hover over or click any item to display the choices for the item.

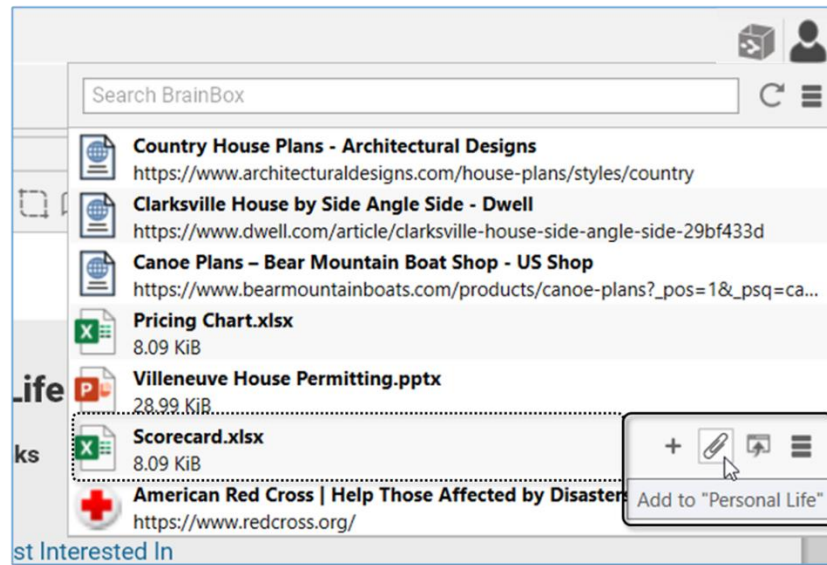


Figure 260. The BrainBox Button

5. From here, the file or web page can be:
 - Added as an internal attachment on a new child thought below the current active thought. The new thought name will be the file or web page name
 - Added as an internal attachment to the active thought
 - Opened in its default application
 - Renamed, deleted and other actions applied from the context menu button
 - The context menu will also allow you to either **Move** from BrainBox to the active thought or **Copy** from BrainBox

The BrainBox Tab

An alternative way to view and manage the content of your BrainBox is available by opening BrainBox in its own tab.

To open BrainBox in its own tab:

- Click the **Open BrainBox** button, click the drop-down **Show Commands** menu, then select **Open BrainBox in New Tab**.

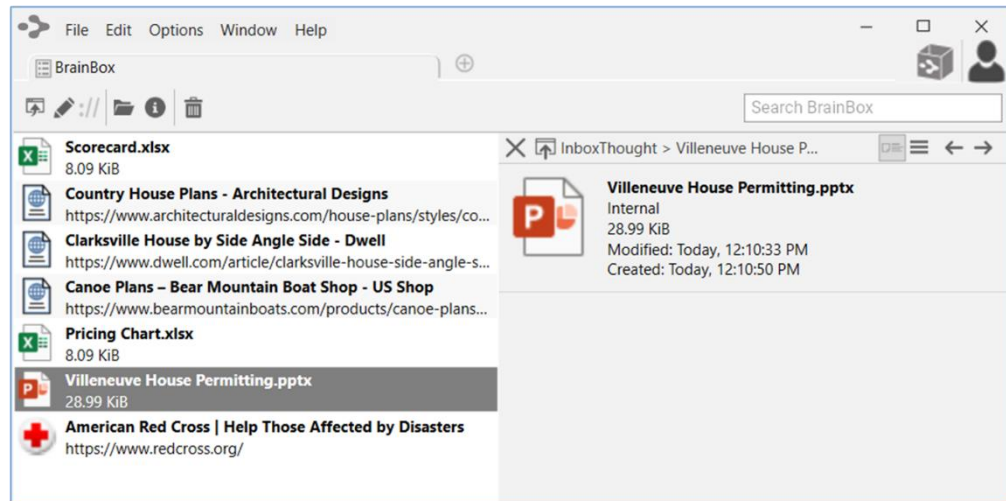


Figure 261. The BrainBox Tab

Use the **BrainBox** tab to review, edit or delete existing content in your BrainBox.

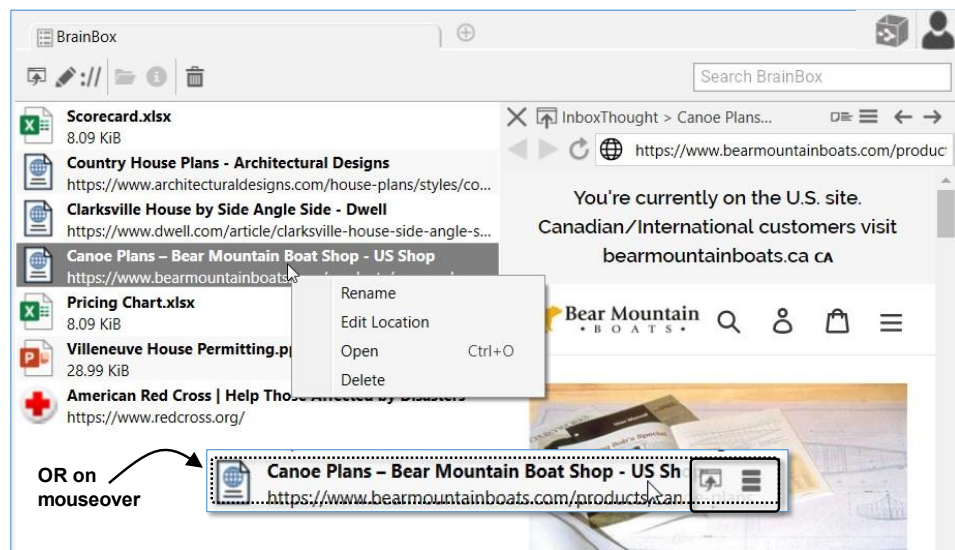


Figure 262. Editing Content of The BrainBox

1. Point to or click an item listed in the BrainBox to select it.
2. Use the context menu or the choices that appear on mouseover to:
 - Open item in its native application for preview
 - Edit the file or link name
 - Edit the URL
 - Open in Explorer or Finder

- Delete the item from your BrainBox

Sending Web Pages to BrainBox

Add information from any web browser with a single click. When you find a page you want to capture to be organized later in TheBrain, just click the BrainBox extension button or bookmarklet (depending on your browser).

You must be logged into your brain account at <https://app.thebrain.com> in the browser you are using in order for the web page to be successfully added into your BrainBox. If you are not logged in, clicking on the BrainBox extension from your browser will prompt you to do so in the status screen. Once you have logged in, return to the desired web page and click the BrainBox button again.

You can use the browser extension or bookmarklet from any computer, even if TheBrain application is not installed on that device.

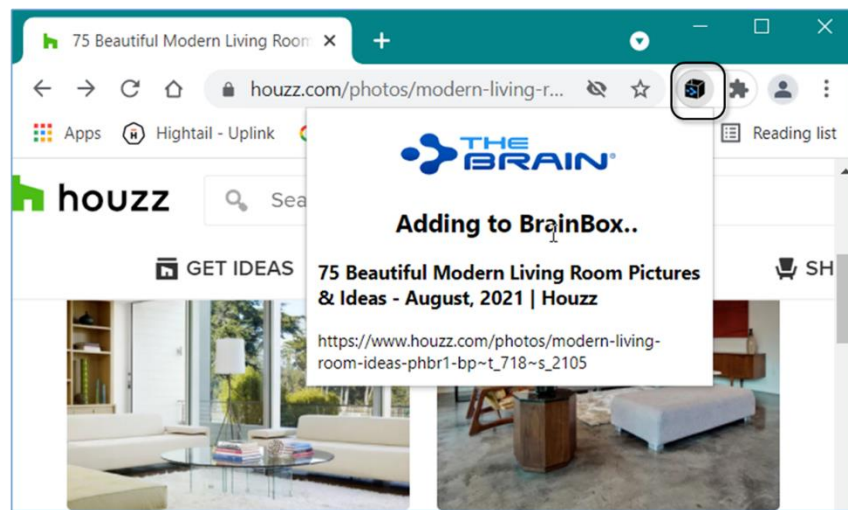


Figure 263. Clicking on the BrainBox Extension

Sending Files to BrainBox

Send copies of individual files into your BrainBox to be organized and associated with thoughts at a later time. No additional setup for this feature is required.

Windows File Explorer *Send to Integration*

From Windows File Explorer, right-click on any file and select **BrainBox** from the **Send to** submenu. TheBrain will be started if it is not already running and the file will be added to BrainBox. To set up the Windows File Explorer integration, install and run TheBrain 12.

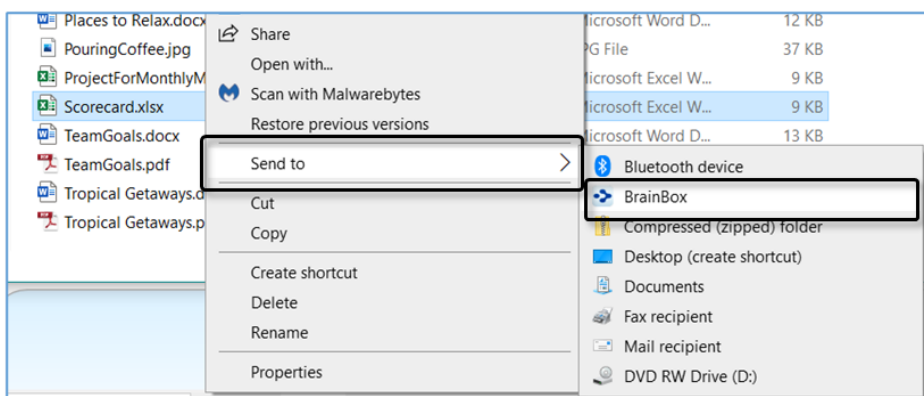


Figure 264. Sending a File to BrainBox

macOS Dock Drag and Drop

Launch TheBrain application if it is not running already. From any Finder window, drag and drop any file to TheBrain icon in the macOS Dock. The file will be added to BrainBox. You can also drag the icon from the title bar of many macOS apps.

Producing Reports



Reports are an excellent way to manage large groups of thoughts in your Brain. To open a brain's Report area, click the **View** menu then click the **Report** command. You may also click on the **Right Panel** button next to the search box. The report pane is resizable.

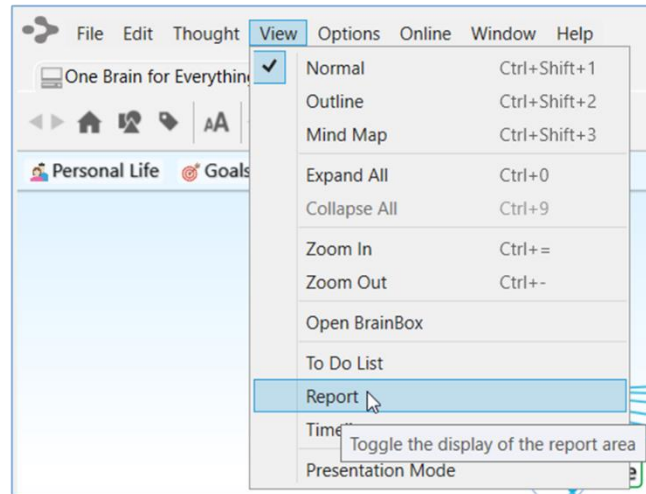


Figure 265. Viewing the Report Area

Selecting Report Criteria

The **Thoughts** drop-down list includes the following options and each selection provides additional criteria choices for fine-tuning your reports.

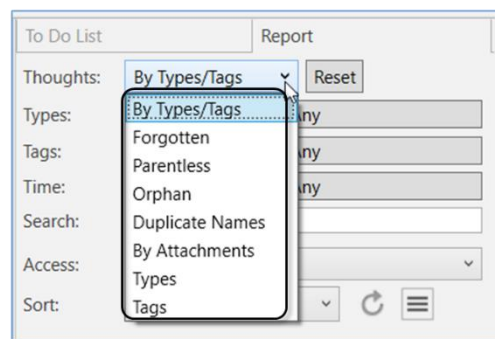


Figure 266. Thought Options for Reports

You can run reports based on the criteria discussed below.

By Types/Tags

The **By Types/Tags** option in the **Thoughts** drop-down helps you filter thoughts in your Report by checking for specific thought Types and Tags for thoughts and/or for links. All thoughts or links that don't meet the criteria will be excluded from the report. By default, thoughts of any Type will be included.

- Click the field to the right of **Types** (which will display “Any” if no Types have been selected yet), then select the check box for each thought Type to be included. Click outside of the list to close it.

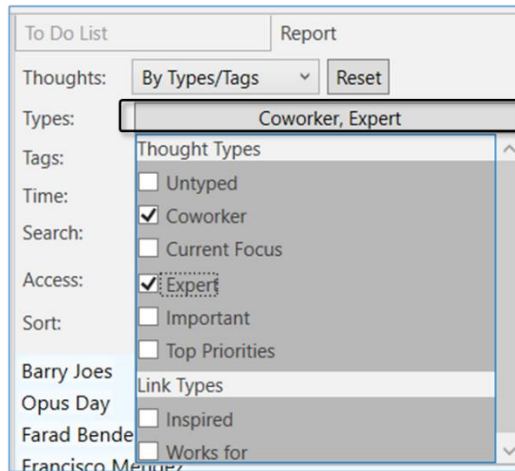


Figure 267. Selecting Thoughts by Types

Use the **Tags** field to filter thoughts based on your assigned Tags.

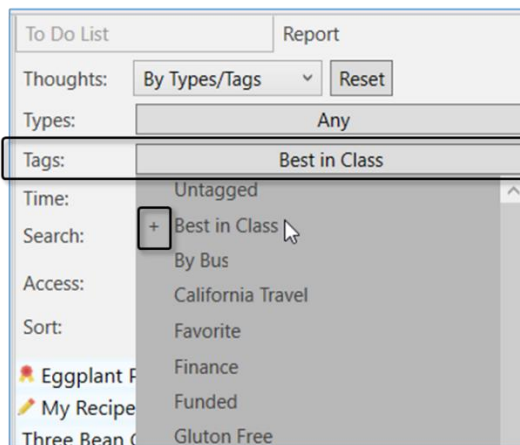


Figure 268. Filtering a Report by Tags

Clicking on a Tag in the list will add a “+” next to it, indicating that you want to list thoughts that have that Tag. Clicking the same Tag again will add a “-” next to it. This indicates that you do not want thoughts with that Tag listed. Clicking the same Tag once more will remove it from your list of filtered Tags.

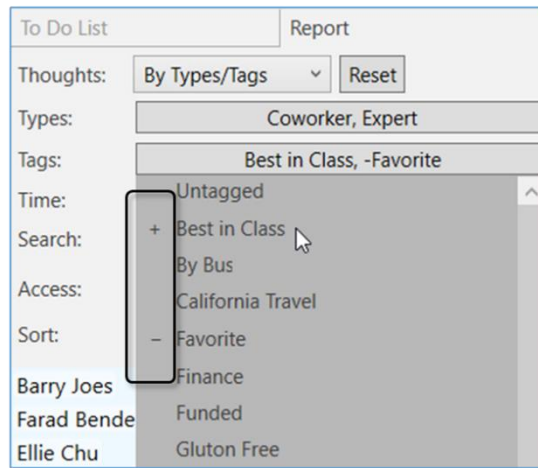


Figure 269. Filtering With and Without Tags

Use Types and Tags together in a report for some incredibly powerful thought filtering. When your report is displayed, you can click on any result to immediately navigate to the thought.

Forgotten Thoughts

The Forgotten thoughts selection allows you to quickly view and access any thoughts you have forgotten in a brain.

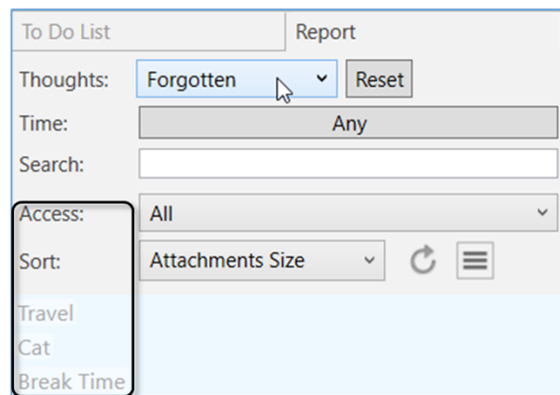


Figure 270. Forgotten Thoughts Report

With **Forgotten** selected in the **Thoughts** drop-down, you can use the menu button to add all forgotten thoughts in your report to your Selection, remove all forgotten thoughts in your report from your Selection, permanently delete all forgotten thoughts in your report, or remember all forgotten thoughts in your report.

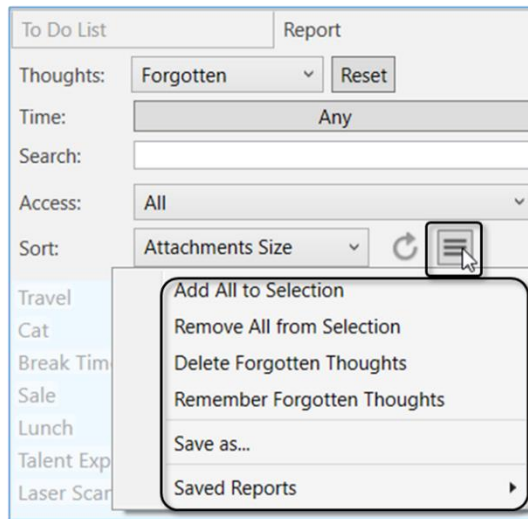


Figure 271. Choices for Forgotten Thoughts

As soon as you click any forgotten thought in the list, a “Showing Forgotten thoughts” message displays above the Plex. Click any forgotten thought in the report to display that thought in the Plex.

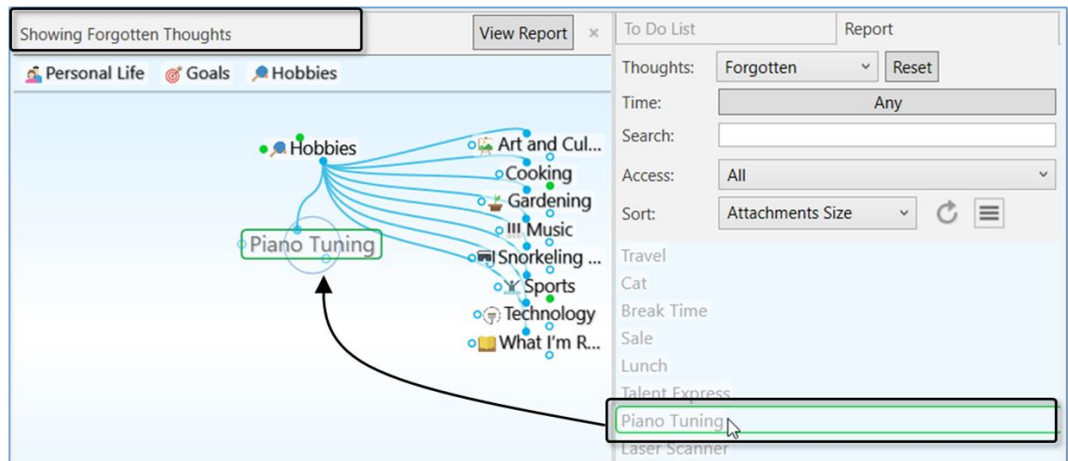


Figure 272. Showing Forgotten Thoughts

Parentless Thoughts

Select **Parentless** in the **Thoughts** drop-down to quickly view and access any thoughts that do not have a parent.

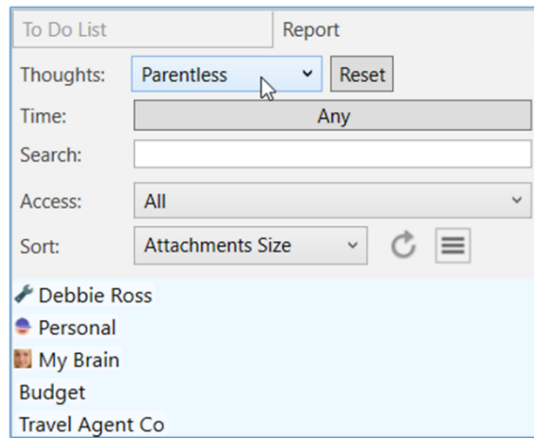


Figure 273. Parentless Thought Report

Viewing a Parentless Thought Report is great for tying up any loose connections or finding groups of disconnected "satellite thought clusters" in your brain for easy reconnection and clean-up.



Orphan thoughts will also appear in a Parentless Thought Report. Jump thoughts (when they have no Parent) will frequently appear in this report as well.

Orphan Thoughts

Select **Orphan** in the **Thoughts** drop-down to quickly view and access any thoughts that do not have any other connections.

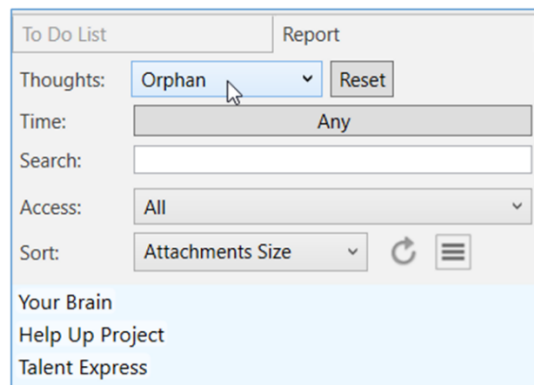


Figure 274. Orphan Thought Report

Viewing an Orphan Thought Report is an excellent way to find lost thoughts or thoughts that may have inadvertently been disconnected at some point. Is there a thought you know you had in your brain? Try running an Orphan Thought Report to see if it was previously unlinked by accident.

Duplicate Names

Select **Duplicate Names** in the **Thoughts** drop-down to quickly view and access multiple thoughts with the same name.

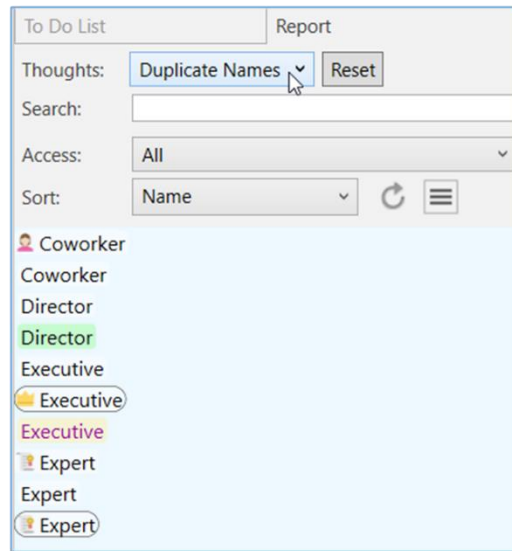


Figure 275. Duplicate Names Report

Viewing the Duplicate Thoughts Report can help you organize and manage your brain to make sure you are getting the most out of your information with quick access to the most important thoughts.

By Attachments

Select **By Attachments** in the **Thoughts** drop-down to quickly view and access all thoughts that have an attachment. By default, only internal attachments will be included and you can use the Type drop-down list to fine-tune as needed.

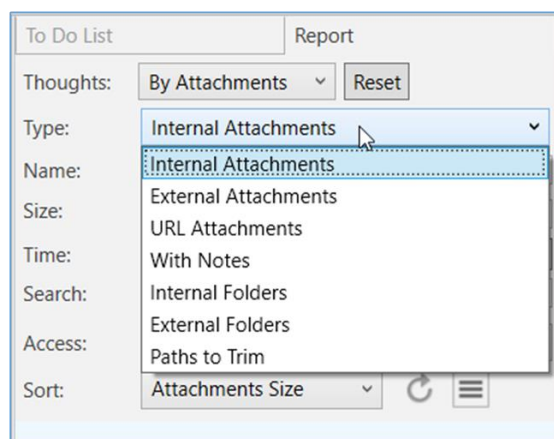


Figure 276. By Attachments Report

Filtering by Modification or Creation Date

All report options except **Duplicate Names** can be further narrowed down using the **Time** drop-down selections. This is incredibly useful for finding information modified within a specific date range and allows for even more in-depth reporting.

Figure 277. Filtering Thoughts in a Report by Modified Date

- Select **Modified**, **Created**, or **Event** to specify what the date range should pertain to. For example, select **Modified** if you want to see thoughts you made changes to within a specific period of time.
- Click in the first date field to display a calendar, then select a date; click in the “to” date to select an end date.
- Additionally, you can click on the context menu button to select from a preset list of date ranges:
 - Last Day
 - Last 2 Days
 - Last 7 Days
 - Last 14 Days
 - Last 30 Days
- Select **Any** if you want to remove the time criteria.

Sorting Report Results

Use the **Sort** drop-down to switch the list order of your report results between **Name**, **Date Modified**, and **Attachment Size**.

- Reports sorted by Name will appear in ascending order, A-Z
- Reports sorted by Date Modified will appear newest first
- Reports sorted by Attachment Size will appear with the largest total attachment sizes highest in the list

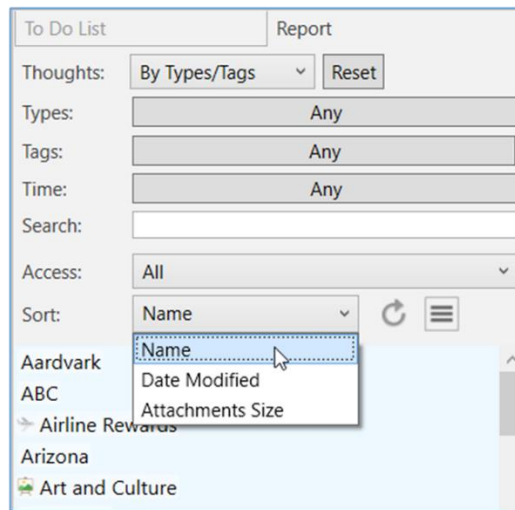


Figure 278. Sorting Thoughts in a Report

Refreshing or Resetting Report Results

- Click the **Refresh** button to update the list of thoughts that match your report criteria.

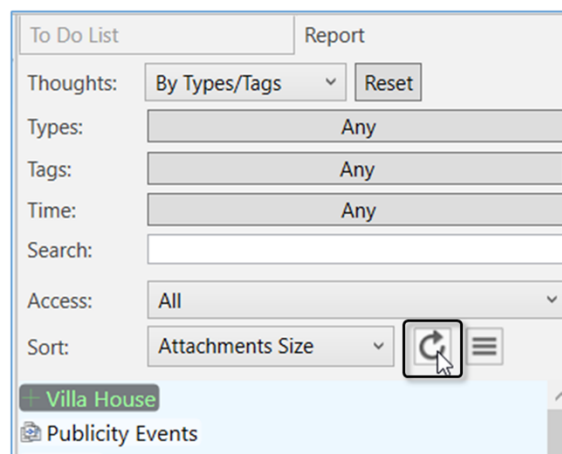


Figure 279. The Refresh Button

- Click the **Reset** button to clear all report criteria except the **Thoughts** field and the **Sort** field selections.

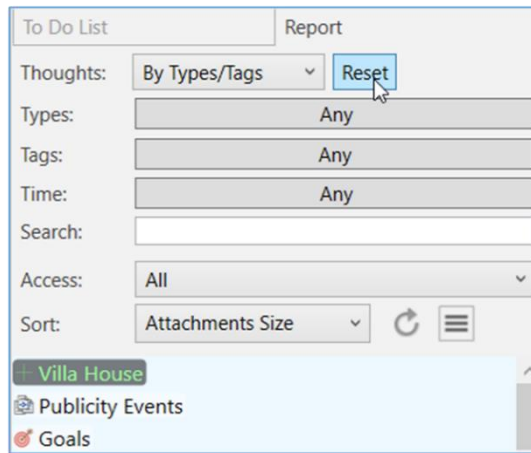


Figure 280. The Reset Button

Adding Report Results to the Selection Panel

- Click the menu button, then click **Add All to Selection**. All report results will be added to the Selection panel where you can apply actions to the thoughts all at one time. Right-click in the Selection area to see your choices.

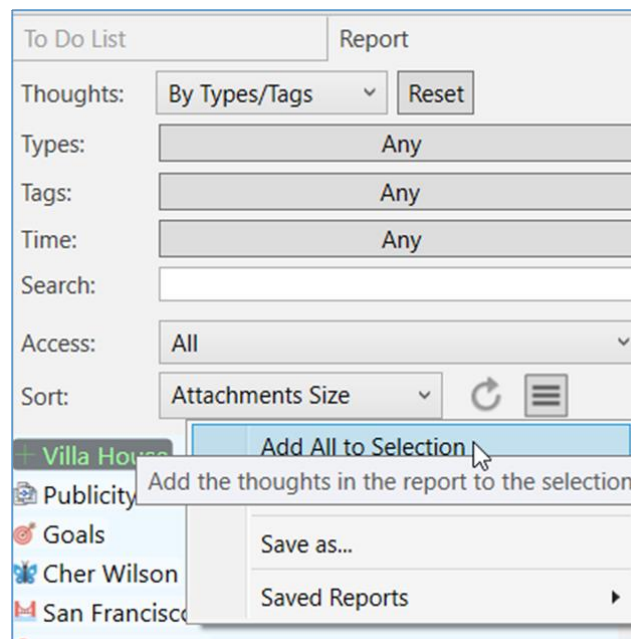


Figure 281. Adding Report Results to the Selection Panel

Saving and Accessing Reports



Reports can be saved and used again at any time.

To save a report:

1. Click the **Save as** command on the menu.
2. Type a name for your report, then click the **OK** button.

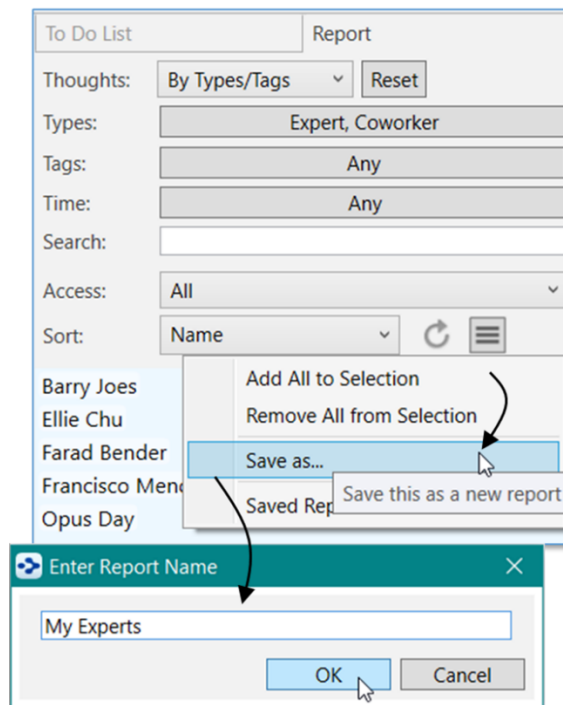


Figure 282. Saving a Report

To open a saved report:

1. Click the **Saved Reports** command on the menu.
2. Click the name of the report you want to open.

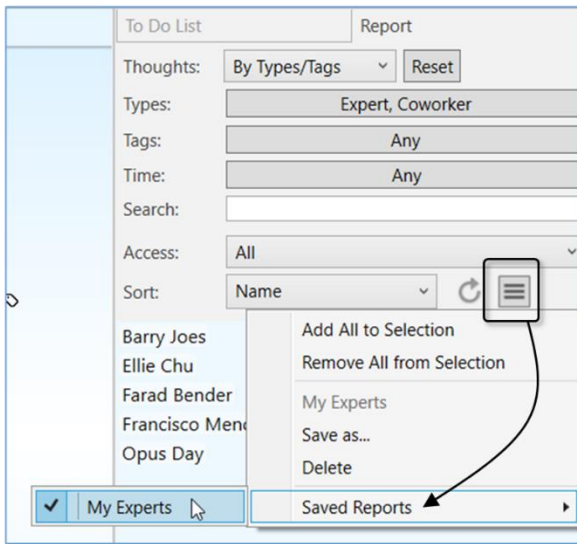


Figure 283. Saving a Report

Viewing a List of Recent Changes

You can view a quick report of all changes you've made recently to thoughts. Your thought modifications are now logged and instantly viewable in a chronological display of the previous 1,000 created and modified thoughts.

Modifications can include:

- Renaming
- Editing, adding or deleting attachments
- Any edit to the thought notes
- Renaming
- Linking or unlinking to another thought

To view your recently modified thoughts, simply click on the clock icon to the right of the Search box. Modified thoughts will be displayed starting with the current date. When you hover over a thought, a comprehensive, time-stamped report of the exact modification(s) appear in a pop-up next to the name.

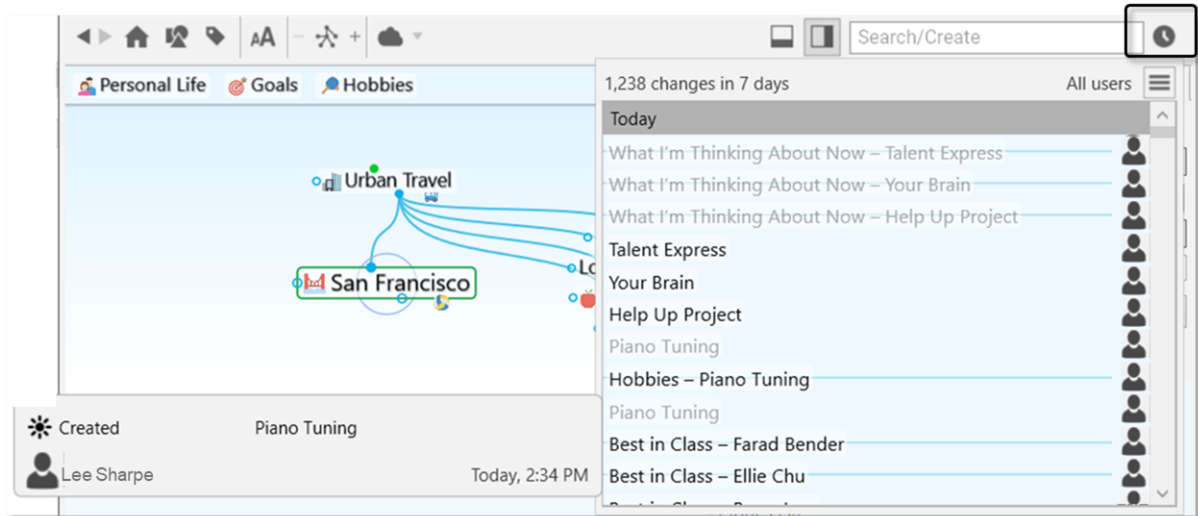


Figure 284. Recently Modified Thoughts and Links

Find and Replace

Find and replace all occurrences of text within thought names and labels, link labels, external attachment paths and URLs

- Includes support for regular expressions
- Changes are undoable however it is still highly recommended that you create a brain Archive (.brz) prior to performing a large Find and Replace operation on an important brain

To begin replacing:

1. Open the **File** menu, select **Utilities**, then select **Find and Replace**.
2. Enter the text to be replaced and the text to replace it with.
3. Specify where the text occurs. The available locations are:
 - Thought Names
 - Thought Labels
 - Link Labels
 - External Attachment Paths
 - Attached URLs

4. Use the check boxes to specify whether letter case is to be ignored and if you want to use regex (regular expressions, which allow sophisticated pattern matching capabilities).
5. Preview your results prior to executing the change and click **Replace** when you're ready.

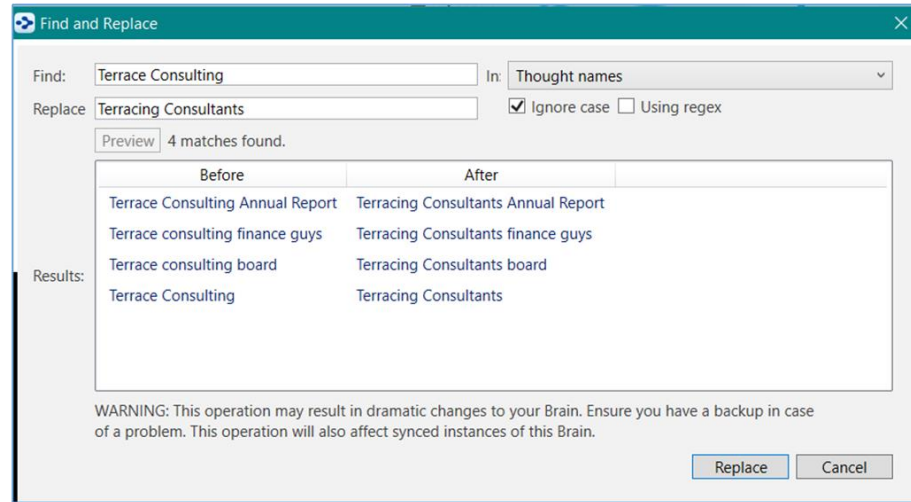


Figure 285. Find and Replace

Additionally, the Content Area toolbar has its own Find and Replace functionality.

Statistics

Curious about the content of your brain? Click the **File** menu and select **Statistics** to view in-depth details such as:

- Date Generated
- Last Sync Date
- Number of Thoughts
- Number of Links
- Average Number of Links per Thought
- Internal File Size and Total Icon Size
- Number of Notes, Attachments, Web Links, Icons and more ...

Managing Events



Your brain has its own built-in Calendar. You can access it from the Content Area or the Timeline View to add and modify events and integrate them with your thoughts. You can view your Calendar a day, week, month, or year at a time.

TheBrain also has several different ways to assist you with managing your time, so you'll know when events are taking place, when content was edited and when projects are due.

Creating a New Event

You can create a new event from the Content Area or from the Timeline. Both methods give you full access to all event settings. Events support spellcheck and markdown formatting in their descriptions.

Creating an Event from the Content Area

1. Select the thought with which the new event will be associated.
2. Click the **Attachment** button in the Content Area toolbar, then click **Create Event**.



Events created from the Content Area are automatically associated with the active thought, but you can easily detach them.

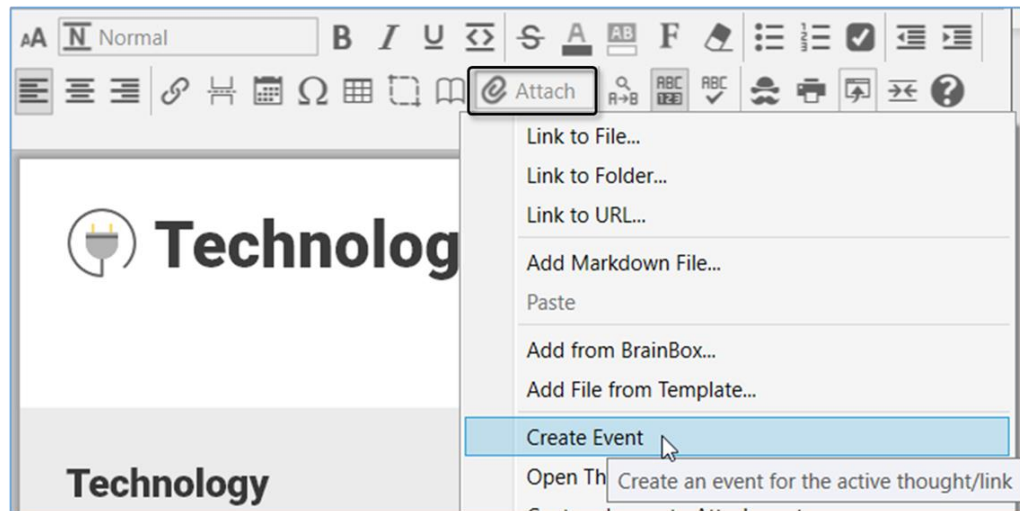


Figure 286. Creating a New Event in the Content Area

Use the event editor pop-up to enter details about the event. By default, the name of the event is the name of the active thought.

As shown below, you can specify start and stop times and dates and add a label, description, and location in the event editor pop-up. You can make the event recurring and set up a reminder. You can also color code an event—so that all events of a specific type (personal, marketing, finance, etc.) will appear in your Timeline view in an identifiable color. Event will inherit from colors form associated thoughts.

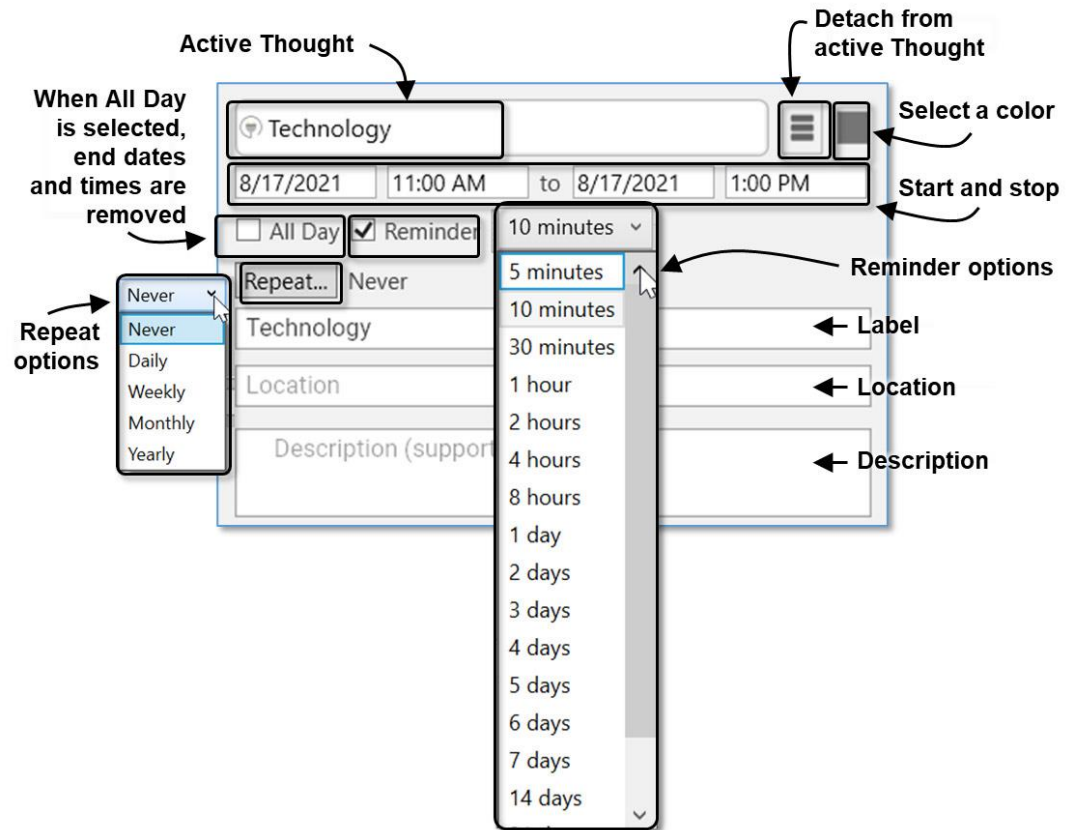


Figure 287. The Event Editor

Creating an Event from the Timeline

1. Unless it is already open, display the Timeline by clicking the **Timeline** command in the **View** menu or the **Timeline** button to the left of the Search box.

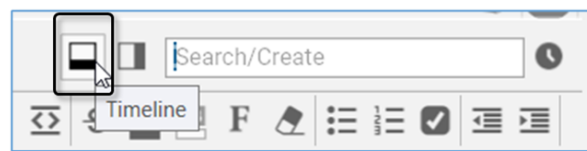


Figure 288. Launching TheBrain Timeline

2. Drag on the time ruler at the bottom to select the start and stop times of the event. After you finish dragging, the event editor will be displayed. By default, this will be a standalone event, not associated with the current active thought. You can easily attach it to the active thought by clicking **Attach to** “*active thought*” in the event editor menu.

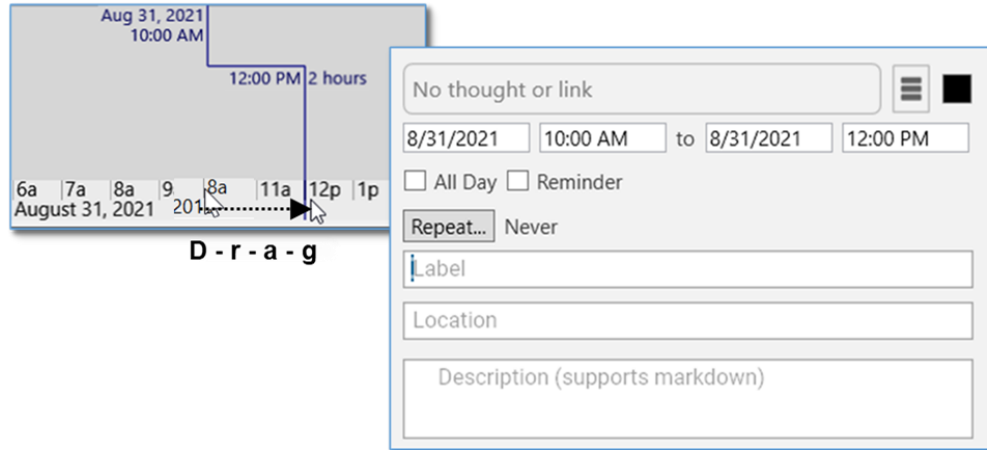


Figure 289. Click and Drag to Create a New Event



Please see the Navigating in Timeline View section on page 235 for information about using the Timeline and 1-click fine-tuning based on your preferences.

Responding to Event Reminders

Reminders appear when the brain containing the event is open.

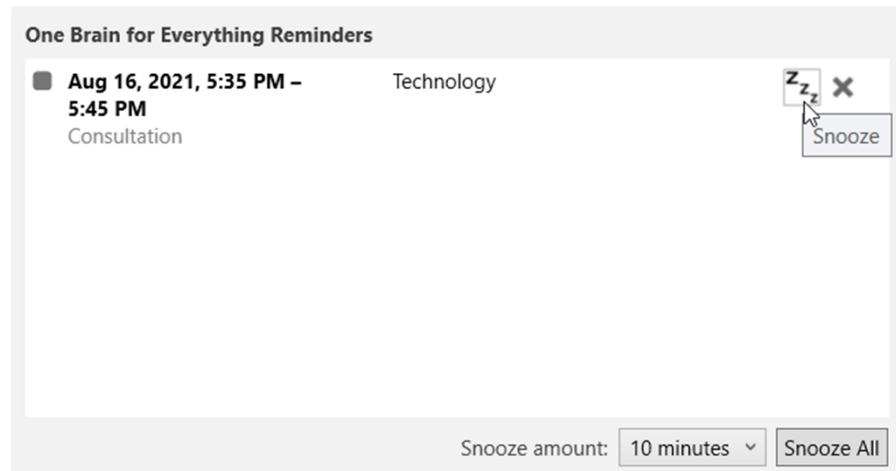


Figure 290. TheBrain's Event Reminder Pop-Up

From the **Reminder** window, you can snooze for a designated amount of time or dismiss the reminder. Dismissing the reminder does not delete the event in your timeline.

Editing and Deleting Events

To edit or delete an event from the **Content Area**:

- In the Content Area for the Thought associated with the event, right-click the event you want to work with, then choose a command from the context menu. Choose **Properties** to edit the details of the event.

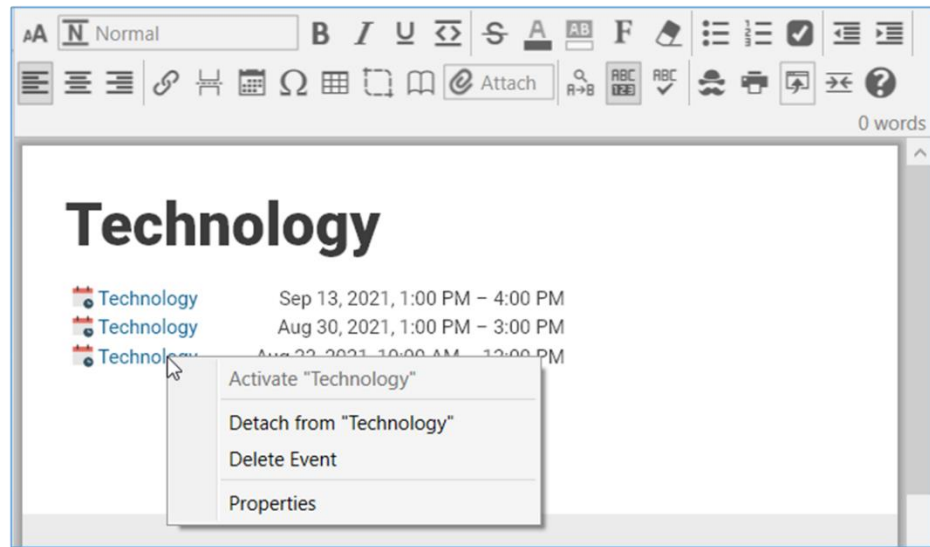


Figure 291. Editing and Deleting Events in the Content Area

To edit or delete an event from the **Timeline**:

- To edit, click the event to open the event editor pop-up.
- To delete, right-click the event on the Timeline, then click **Delete Event**. You can also delete the event by selecting **Delete Event** in the event editor pop-up.

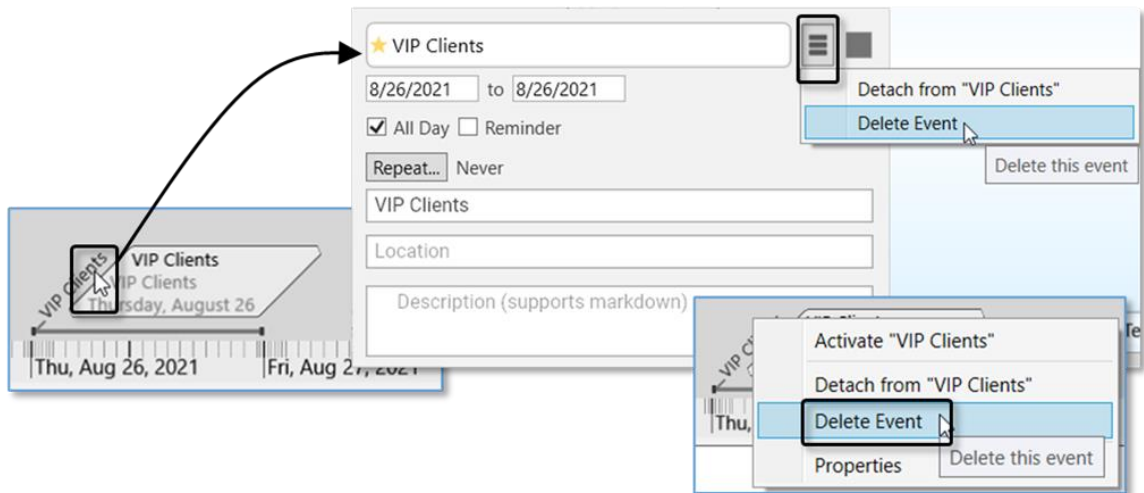


Figure 292. Editing and Deleting an Event in the Timeline

Navigating in Timeline View

- Drag in the background of the timeline up and down to zoom in and out.

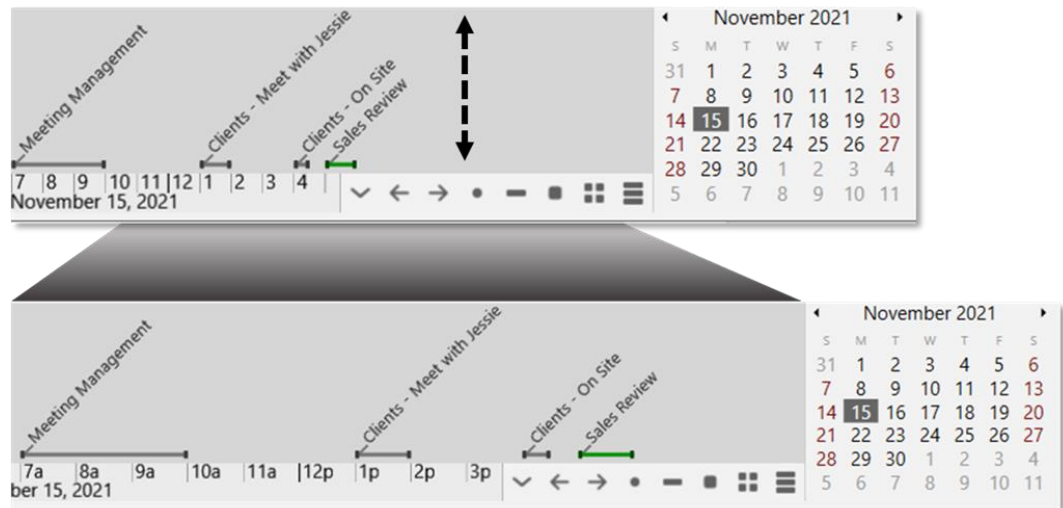


Figure 293. Click and Drag Up and Down to Zoom

- Drag left and right to scroll through time.
- Buttons allow you to switch between day, week, month and year view. Or, navigate to a specific day in the mini calendar.

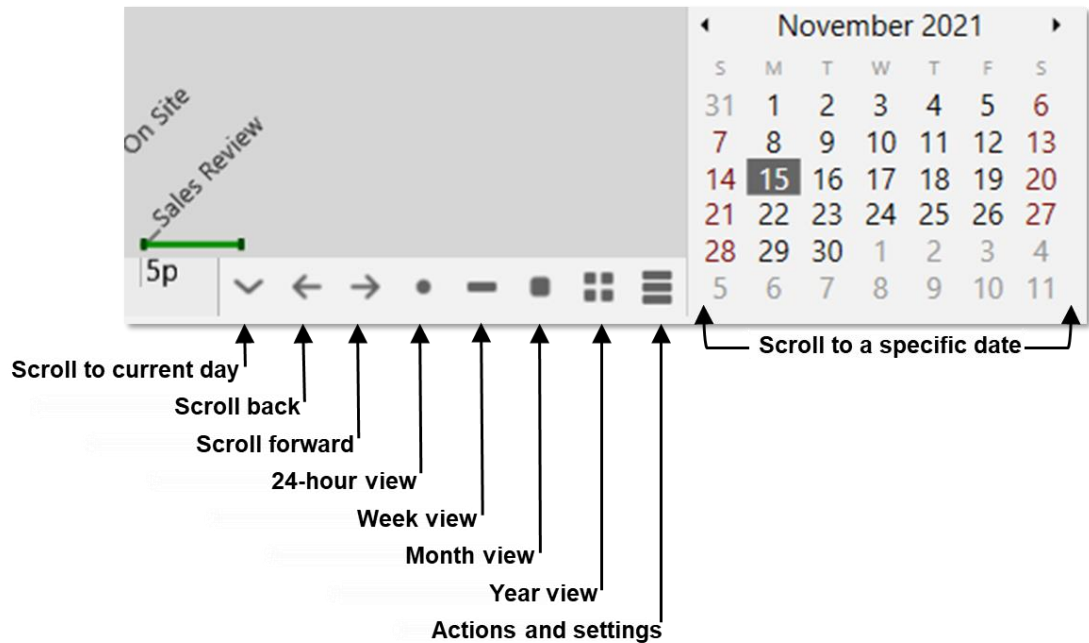


Figure 294. TheBrain Timeline Buttons

Google Calendar Sync

If you're synchronizing your brain to TheBrain Cloud with a Pro Combo or Pro Service account, you can also synchronize your brain's Timeline events with Google Calendar. This will allow you to receive email reminders from Google on events originally created in TheBrain.

To set up Google Calendar Sync in TheBrain:

1. Open TheBrain Timeline and click the **Actions and Settings** button, then click **Google Calendar Settings**.
2. By default, your Google Calendar Settings is set to None. Click on **Manage External Accounts**, then click the **Add Google account** button. This will open <https://accounts.google.com> where you can select your desired Google account that will be associated with this brain.



You can link only one Google account to your brain.

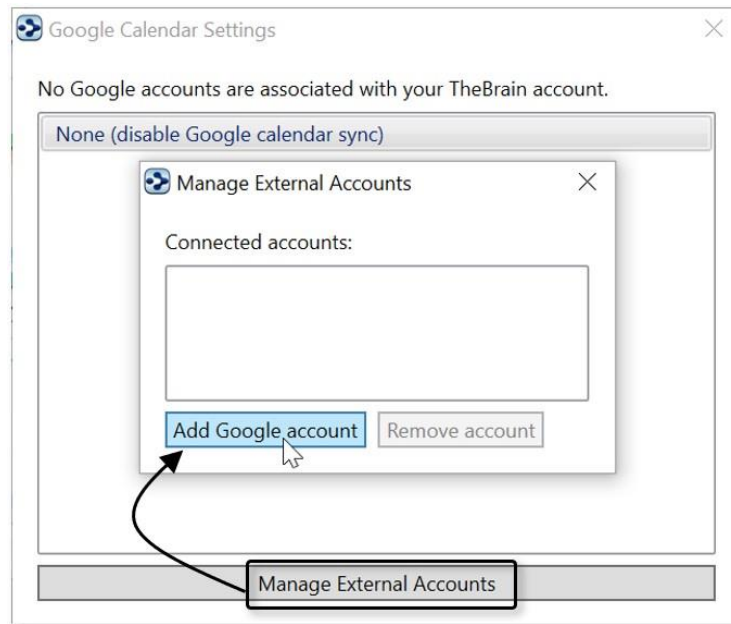


Figure 295. Setting Up the Google Calendar Sync

3. Google will display a confirmation window when you have selected an email address. Click the **Allow** button.

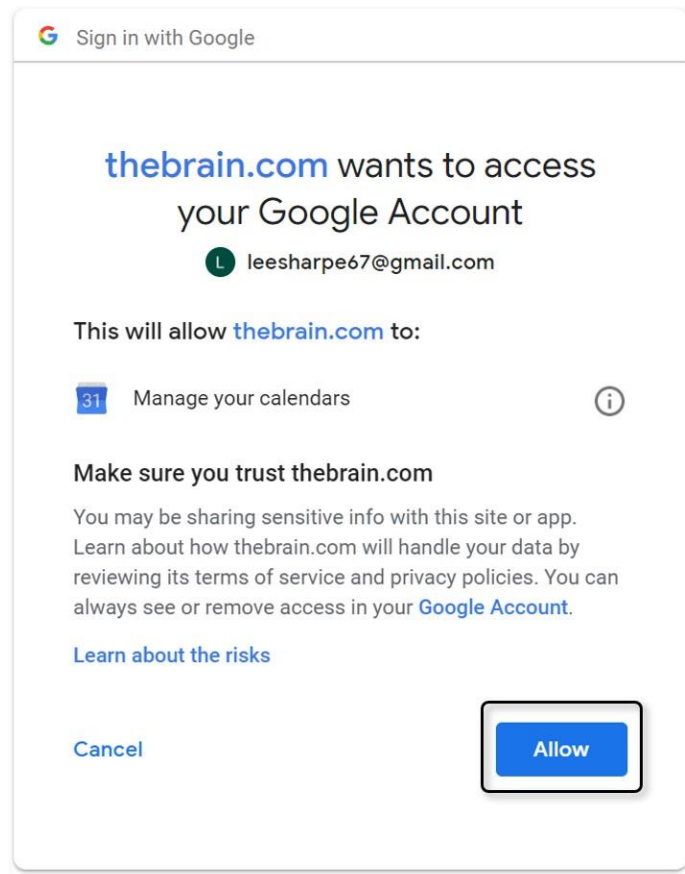


Figure 296. Confirming Access to Google Account

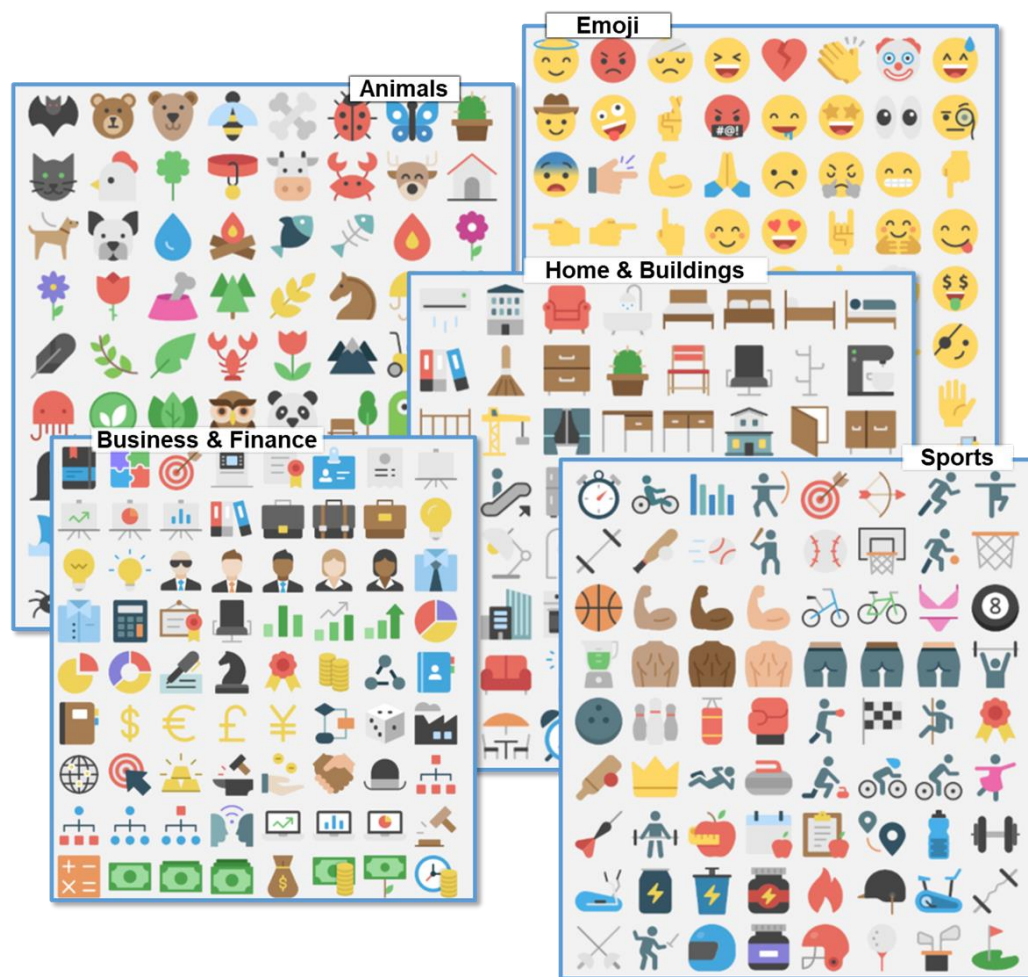


You will be prompted to close the Google Account window and return to TheBrain where the new Gmail address will appear on your **Google Calendar Settings** window.

4. Select your email address, then click the **OK** button to confirm that all events from the Google Calendar will be added to this brain and vice-versa.
 - When changes are made in TheBrain and your brain then syncs to TheBrain Cloud, the sync will also include updates to the Timeline and your Google Calendar.

TheBrain Icons

TheBrain includes nearly 2000 built-in icons for your thoughts, Types, and Tags. Choose from 22 different categories such as Animals, Emojis, Food, Multimedia, and Technology, to name a few. Here are some examples:



To select a Brain icon to be added to a thought:

1. Right-click the thought, then click **Select Stock Icon** or open the **Thought Properties** dialog box, click the thought icon box, then click the **Select Stock Icon** command.

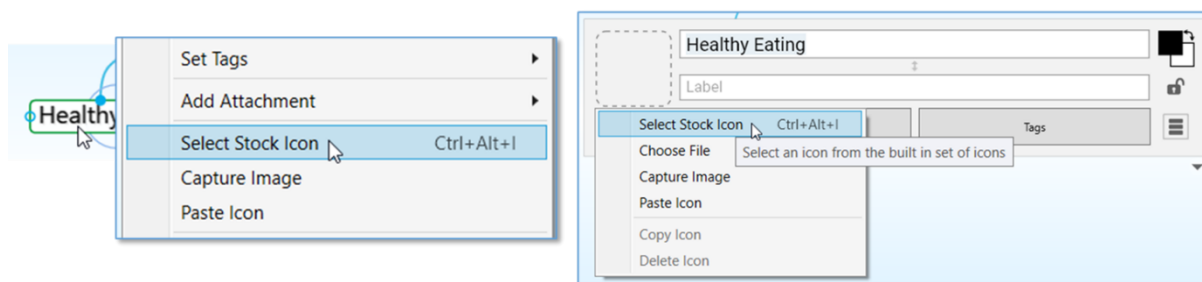


Figure 297. Two Ways to Access Select Stock Icon

2. Select the Browse radio button and choose a category from the list below. The name of the icon will appear when you hover over it. Click on an icon to add it to the active thought.

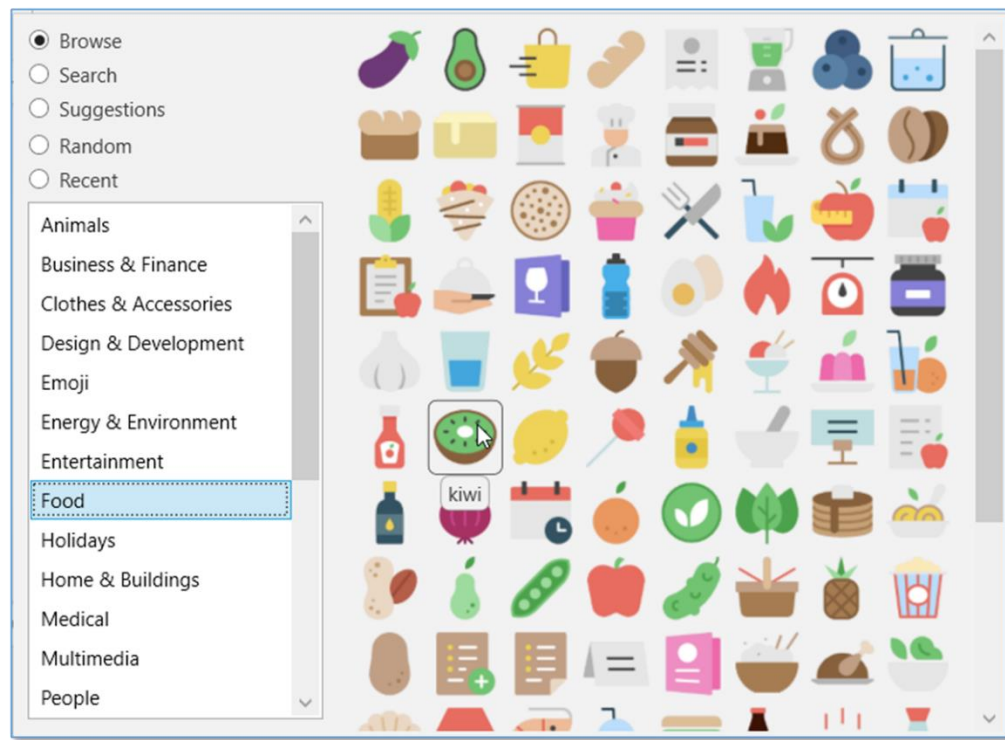


Figure 298. The Food Category

Additionally, you may select one of the other radio buttons:

- **Search**—Type a keyword to filter all icons that match that result
- **Suggestions**—Automatically filters the icon list by using the thought name as the search criteria
- **Random**—72 random icons will appear; click the **Shuffle** button to see a new set of icons
- **Recent**—Displays all recently selected icons

Online Menu Options

The **Online** menu in TheBrain toolbar provides access to your Cloud Services settings from your desktop client and helps you share thoughts and brains quickly.

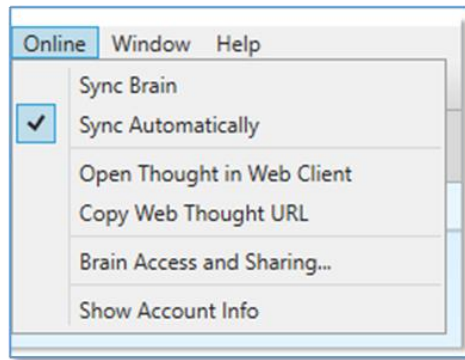


Figure 299. Online Menu Options

Click the **Online** menu in TheBrain's toolbar to access the following features:

Sync Brain—Synchronizes the current opened brain to your Cloud account.

Sync Automatically—Toggle on or off automatic synchronization, once your brain is already synchronized to your Cloud account.

Open Thought in Web Client—Launches a Browser window and automatically loads the current brain/thought from TheBrain Cloud.

Copy Web Thought URL—Copies the current active thought's online URL to your system clipboard. This saves you the hassle of launching a new browser window to log into your Brain Cloud account and navigating to a specific thought in order to acquire its URL.



Copy Web Thought URL and **View in Browser** will only work if you have synchronized your brain to TheBrain Cloud.

Brain Access and Sharing—This is a quick way to switch a brain's Access Control Level (public or private), copy the brain's online URL or grant a new TeamBrain member access. You may also type in an email address to share a read-only copy of your brain with someone else.

Show Account Info—Easy access to managing your external accounts and logging out of TheBrain Cloud.

Using Mobile Versions of TheBrain

Access your ideas and information on all your devices—including iOS and Android. TheBrain for mobile devices combines the best of note-taking, file synchronization, and mind mapping apps to give you the ultimate digital memory everywhere you go.

The iOS and Android apps include the ability to sync your brain so you can access it without an Internet connection. Once you download your brain locally to your mobile device, just click the **Sync** button after making edits or if edits have been made to TheBrain Cloud.

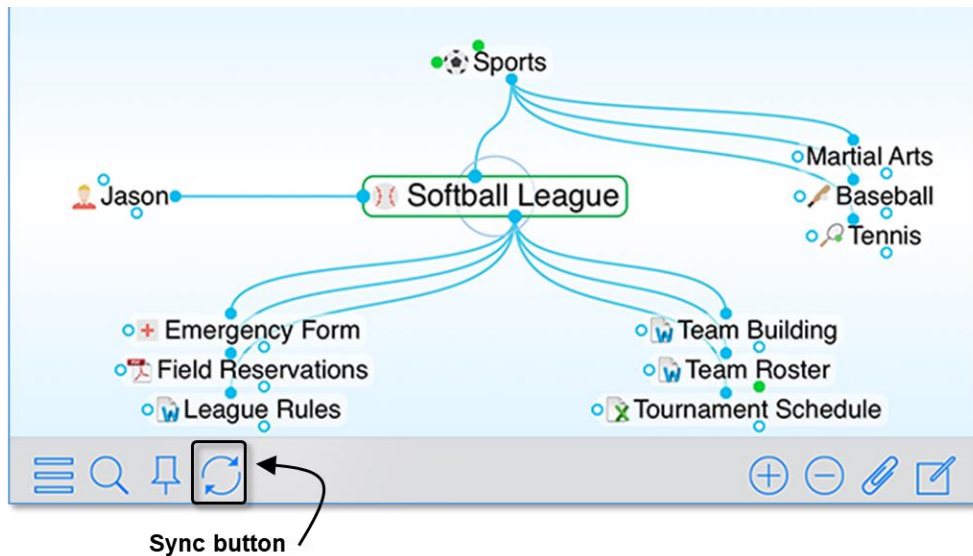


Figure 300. Syncing TheBrain on iPhone

TheBrain for iOS can be downloaded from the App Store at <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/thebrain-tech/id835873357?mt=8>

TheBrain for Android can be downloaded from the Google Play Store at <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.thebrain.android>

Share, Synchronize, and Back Up Your Brains



You can use TheBrain Cloud to publish and share your brain. People can view your published brains whether or not TheBrain is installed on their machines.

To create a Brain account:

1. Go to <http://www.TheBrain.com>, then click the **Log In** button in the top-right area of the page.



Figure 301. Sign Up Button

2. Click the **Sign up** button.

Figure 302. Login Button

3. Complete all fields in the **Sign Up** form, then click the **Sign Up** button. You will see a message explaining that a confirmation notice has been sent to the email address you provided. When you receive the message, follow its instructions to click the link and activate your account.



Allow a few minutes for the email to be delivered. Check your spam folder if the message doesn't arrive within a reasonable amount of time.

- Now you can return to the www.thebrain.com page and click the **Login** button to log in using the information you provided when you signed up.

Synchronizing Your Brain

With TheBrain and TheBrain Cloud Services you can use your brain on multiple computers and synchronize changes. Any changes you make to your brain on one machine will be reflected on every other machine through synchronization!



Cloud synchronization is protected using 128-bit AES Encryption. (This is the same encryption used by the US government to protect classified information.)

Port 443 is used for encrypted syncs. If your IT staff is using a firewall, you can ask them to add WebBrain.com and api.thebrain.com to the white list of your company's firewall. If your IT staff is using a proxy, you will need to try setting up a Proxy connection via TheBrain by using the options found in TheBrain's Preferences > System tab.



Make sure you have created an account on TheBrain.com before you begin synchronizing. Some Cloud services require a subscription fee.

To synchronize your brain:

- Open the brain you wish to sync. Click the cloud icon in the menu bar, or click the **Online** menu, then click the **Sync Brain** command.

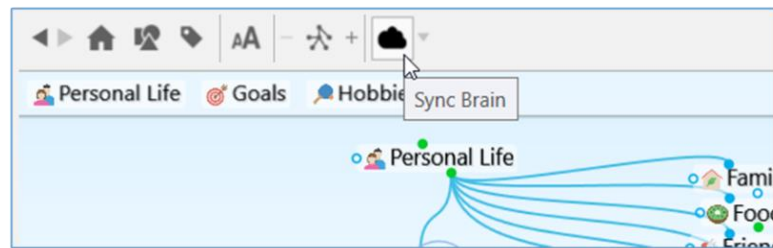


Figure 303. The Cloud Icon in the TheBrain Toolbar

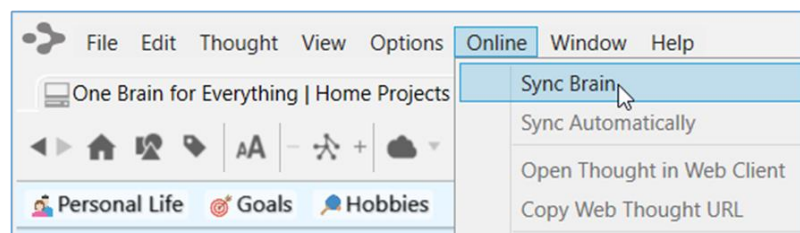


Figure 304. Sync Brain Command

- Click the **Upload** button to upload this local brain.

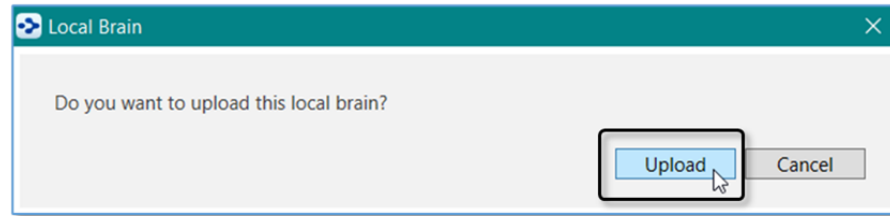


Figure 305. Confirming Upload

3. A progress indicator shows you the upload is taking place, followed by a brief confirmation message.



You can keep working while the synchronization process is continuing in the background. If there is an interruption during an initial upload of your brain, TheBrain will offer to resume from where it was stopped the next time you synchronize.

3. When the process is complete, just go to the other computer on which you want to access your brain. Open TheBrain application and log in. From the list of available brains, click on TheBrain thumbnail, then click the **Download** button when it appears.

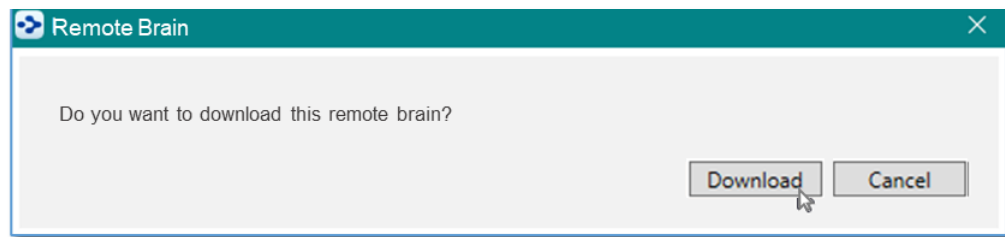


Figure 306. Download for Local Use

4. To synchronize at any time, click the cloud icon in the menu bar or the **Sync Brain** command in the **Online** menu. The active copy of your brain will include the latest changes.

Once your brain has been synced, your brain will be automatically set to auto-sync. To turn this feature off, click the **Sync Status** button next to the Cloud icon in the tool bar.

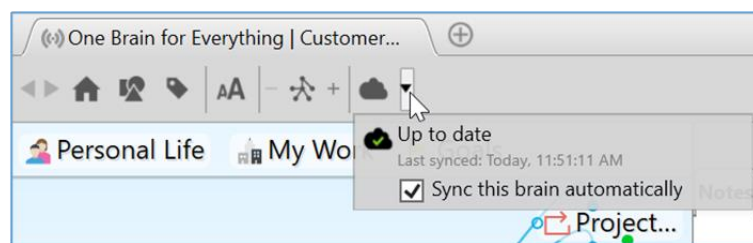


Figure 307. The Sync Status Button

The Sync Status will also display if local changes or online changes are available or if the sync is up to date. The last sync date will also be displayed.

Brain thumbnails in your list of available brains will indicate if a brain is local only, local and online (synced) or online only.



Figure 308. Brain Location Indicators

Editing Your Online Brain

The desktop application has more available features than the web client, but you can still access and edit your online brains by performing any of the following activities:

- Create and Forget Thoughts
- Change thought locations (child to jump)
- Unlink thoughts
- Set Pins
- Edit Notes
- Add Attachments



You can only edit brains that YOU own.

To edit notes in your online brain:

- Click in the Content Area and make any changes you like. The revised note will be saved automatically as soon as you click on another thought.

Sharing Your Online Brain

All brains synced to <https://app.thebrain.com> are private and not accessible to other users without your personal log in credentials. To share a Version 12 brain with other users:

- Open the brain in your local desktop application
- Click the **Online** menu, then click **Brain Access and Sharing...**
- You have two different options for sharing your brain:
 - **Option 1:** Click the **Allow Public Access** check box and **share the Web Link** with others. This is a great option for sharing your brain with a large group of other users or other users that do not use TheBrain software. Anyone with the URL will be able to view your brain in read-only mode in their web browser.
 - **Option 2:** Leave **Allow Public Access** unchecked and type in an email address to **invite individual users** to access your brain. This is a good option if you want other users to be able to download a local, read-only copy of this brain to their desktop app. The other users must have TheBrain installed and be logged in to their Brain account with the email address you specified.

To prepare your brain to be shared:

1. Activate the thought that you want to be the Home thought when your brain is viewed. It will be the first thought your viewers see.
 - Right-click the thought, then click the **Set as Home Thought** command



The current wallpaper and color theme will be included in your published brain.

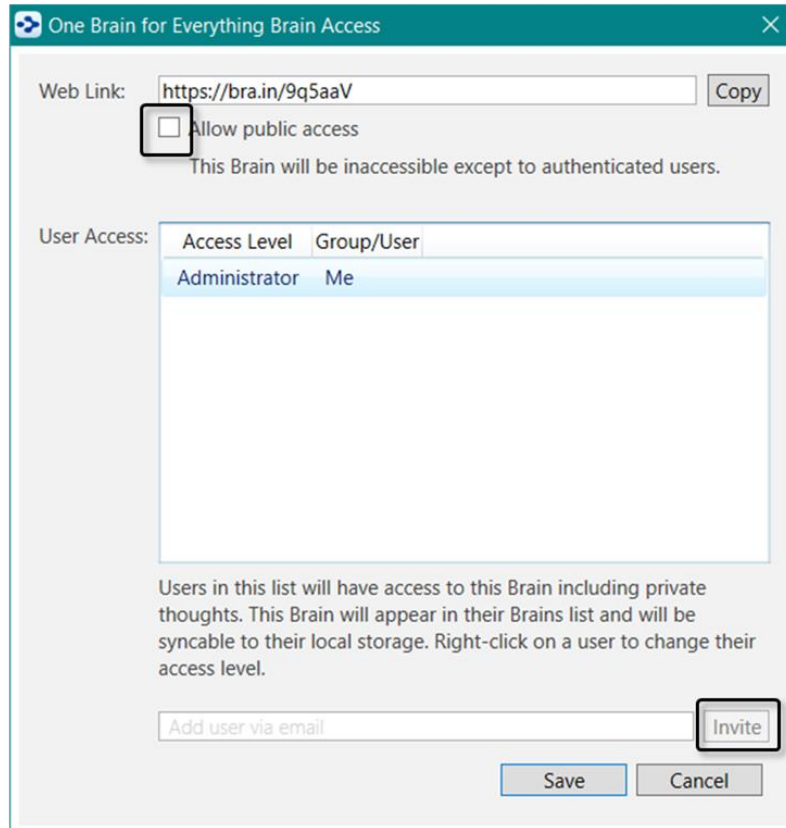


Figure 309. Brain Access and Public URL

Creating a Brain Archive to Send Your Brain to Others

You can send your brain as an email attachment. To make the attachment as small as possible, you can use TheBrain's **Backup to Brain Archive** feature to create a compact file.

To create a Brain Archive:

1. Click the **File** menu, then click the **Backup to Brain Archive** command.
2. In the **Backup to Brain Archive** dialog box, select either of the Access Control options.

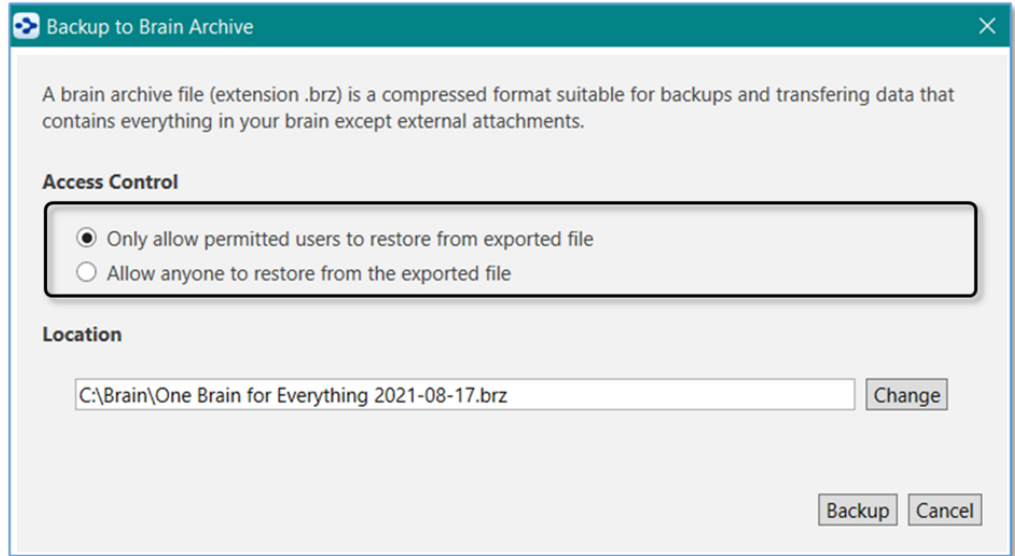


Figure 310. Create Brain Archive Options

3. If necessary, click the **Change** button to change the file name or the folder where the archive file will be saved. Do not change the filename extension, which is .BRZ. Click the **Backup** button to create the archive file.



Make a note of where you are saving your archive file so that you can locate it easily when needed.

A brief message will display in the toolbar area as the archive is created.



Brain Archive files are NOT .zip files. You should not use zip file utilities to modify or access your archive files as doing so may corrupt them.

Copying Thoughts into Other Applications as an Outline

You can copy thoughts from the Selection panel into other programs such as Microsoft Word or Excel and the thoughts will be formatted as an indented hierarchical list.

To copy one or more thoughts into another program as an outline:

1. Select all of the thoughts you want to include in the outline (**Ctrl**-click on a thought to add it to the selection or use the commands on the **Edit** menu to quickly create a selection).
2. Right click in the Selection panel and then click the **Copy as Text Outline** command.

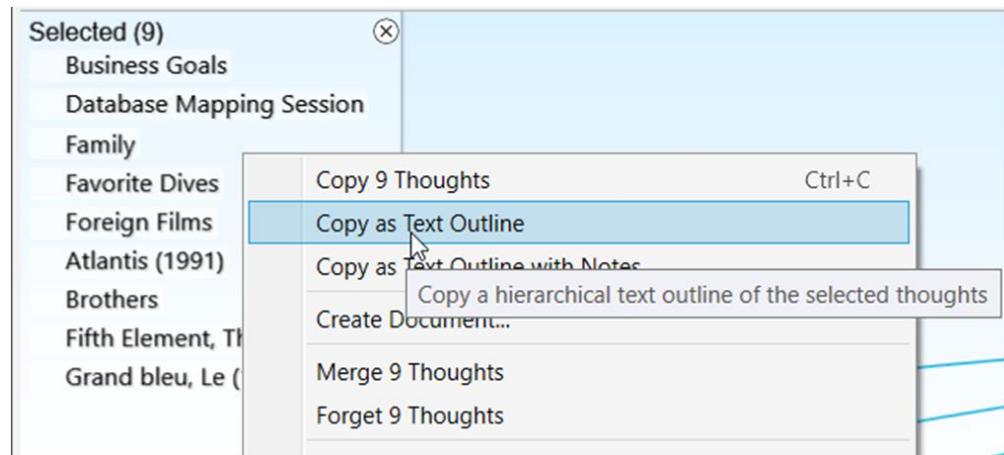


Figure 311. Copying Thoughts as an Outline

3. Open the other application and click where the outline version of the thoughts should be inserted.
4. Right-click and then click the **Paste** command on the context menu (or click the **Edit** menu and then click the **Paste** command).

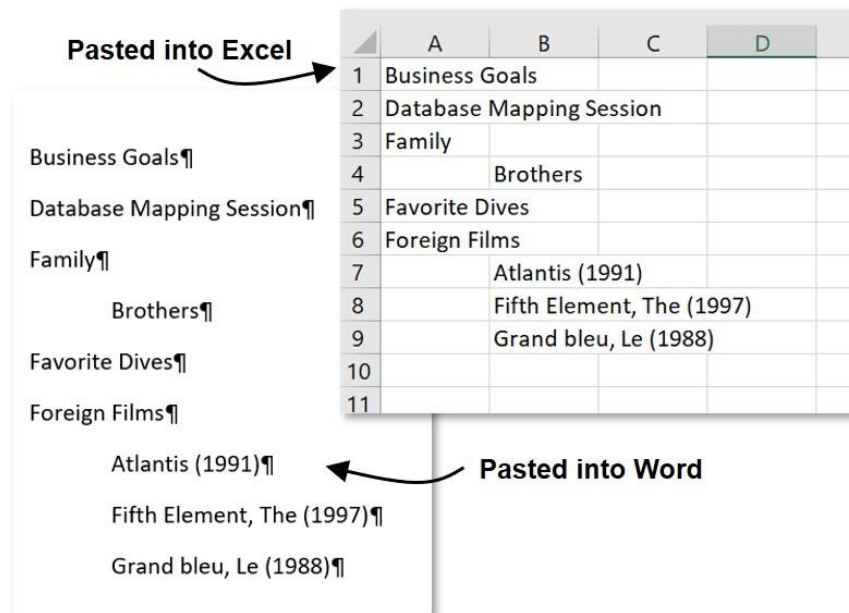


Figure 312. Samples of Outlines Created by Pasting Thoughts from TheBrain

Copying Outlines with Notes

You can copy selected thoughts along with their notes and place them in a tabbed outline.

1. Select the thoughts to be copied, then right-click in the Selection panel to open the context menu.

2. Click the **Copy as Text Outline with Notes** command.
3. Switch to Word or any other text application of your choice and press **Ctrl-V** (or use the program's command for pasting).

Pasting a Text Outline as New Thoughts

You can select tab-delineated text in another application, copy it, then paste it into your brain. Each paragraph of text will become a child thought (and possibly an attachment) of the active thought, based on the formatting of the text.

Pasted outlines may include labels, attachments, and notes. If a URL is included, it is added as an attachment to the thought in the outline entry above the entry containing the URL.

How TheBrain converts content from the source file:

- Each line that ends with an “Enter” or “Shift-Enter” becomes a thought
- A multi-line paragraph with no manual line breaks becomes a thought
- Indentation created using tabs show hierarchical relationships
- Lines starting with a hyphen (-) are added as notes
- Lines starting with a plus sign (+) are added as web link attachments
- If a pipe (|) symbol is inserted, content to the left of the pipe will be the thought name and content to the right of the pipe will become a label (if all content is in the same paragraph)

Example:

The following text adds a thought named “Steve Jobs” with the label “Founder of Apple,” a link to Wikipedia, and a note containing a quotation.

```
Steve Jobs | Founder of Apple  
  
+ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Steve_Jobs  
  
-"I want to put a ding in the universe."
```

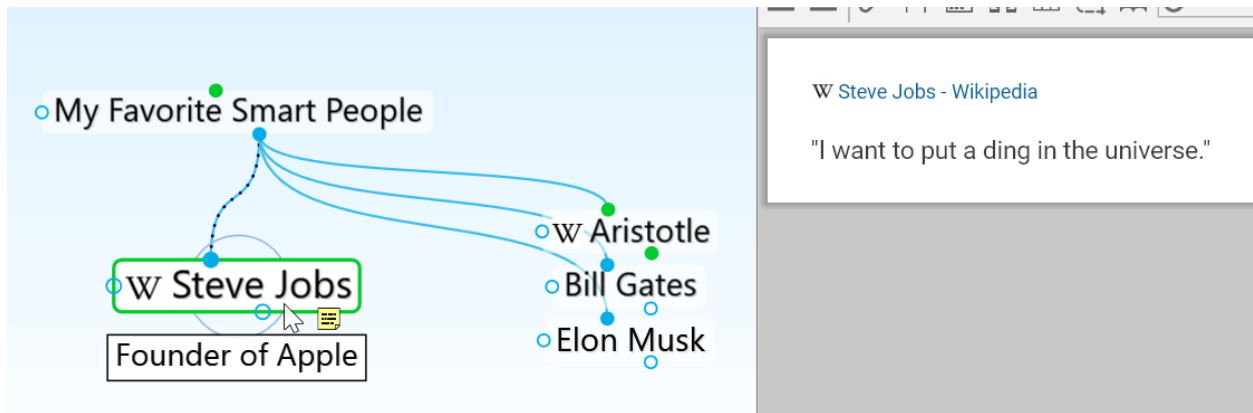


Figure 313. Example Thought from Text with a Pipe, Link, and Note

Importing Information into Your Brain

Importing Folders and Mind Maps

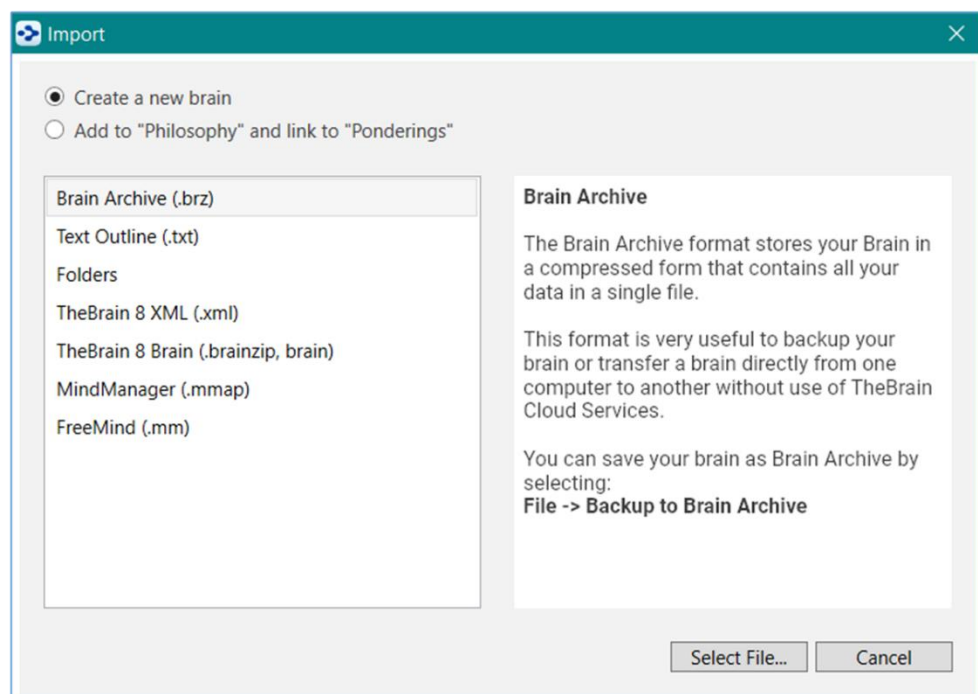


Figure 314. Importing Folders and Mind Maps

You can import folders and Mind Maps into your brain. When you import a folder, it becomes a child thought of the active thought.

To Begin Importing:

1. Activate the thought that will receive the imported information.

2. Click the **File** menu, then click the **Import** command.

For a Folder:

- Click **Folders**, select the **Add to ...** button, click the **Select Folder** button, navigate to the folder of your choice, then click the **OK** button. Click the **Import** button as soon as it becomes available. Click the next **Import** button to confirm that you understand this import can't be undone. Each folder will become a thought, every file inside the folder will become an attachment, and any subfolders will become child thoughts.

For a Mind Map:

- Click **MindManager (.mmap)**, select the **Add to ...** button, click the **Select File** button, navigate to the file of your choice, then click the **Open** button. Each of the topics or ideas will become a separate child thought of the active thought.

Importing TheBrain 8 XMLs

Version 8 brains that have been exported into an XML format (or properly-formatted XML that has been generated outside of TheBrain) can easily be imported back into another brain as a child of the active thought.

1. Activate the thought that will receive the imported XML.
2. Click the **File** menu, click the **Import** command, then select the **Add to ...** button.
3. Click **TheBrain 8 XML**, click the **Select File** button, navigate to the file of your choice, then click the **Open** button.

Merging Brains

You can merge two brains together by importing a Brain Archive file (.BRZ):

1. Open the brain that you want to merge into another brain, click the **File** menu, then click the **Backup to Brain Archive** command.
2. Note the location for the new .BRZ file, then click **Backup**.
3. Open the brain that will receive the merged brain, navigate to the thought where you want the .BRZ file to be added as a child, click the **File** menu, then click the **Import** command.
4. Select the **Add to "open brain name" and link to "active thought name"** option, then click **Brain Archive (brz)** in the list.

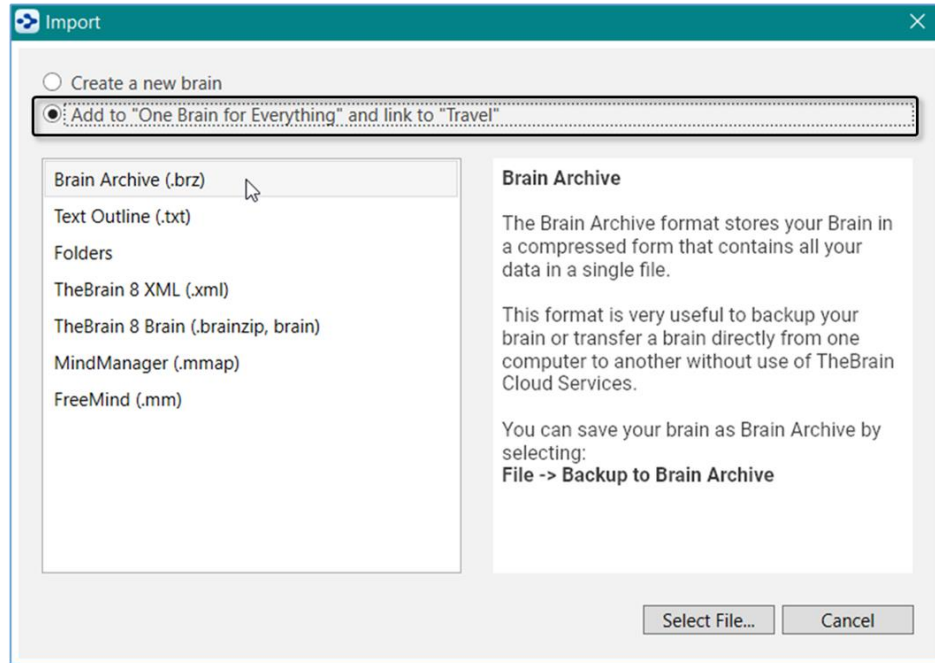


Figure 315. Merging Brains

5. Click the **Select File** button, then navigate to and open the initial .BRZ file you created in the first step. Click the **Import** button. You will be prompted to confirm that you want to continue, since importing a .BRZ file can't be undone.



The only brain that is changed is the one that is open when you begin the merge procedure. The brain you select during step 1 is not changed at all.

Encrypting Individual File Attachments

You can encrypt Individual file attachments within your brain using the **Encrypt** command on an attachment's context menu.

AES 256 bit encryption ensures that without the password, it is impossible to recover the file contents from the encrypted file—even with administrator access to the machine where the file is stored on a local computer or remote cloud server.

Encrypted files cannot be searched and can only be decrypted via Windows and macOS versions of TheBrain. These files are completely inaccessible even to your hosting provider whether that be a private TeamBrain Enterprise Server or TheBrain Technologies Cloud Server.

To encrypt a file:

1. Right-click the attachment, then click **Encrypt** in the context menu.

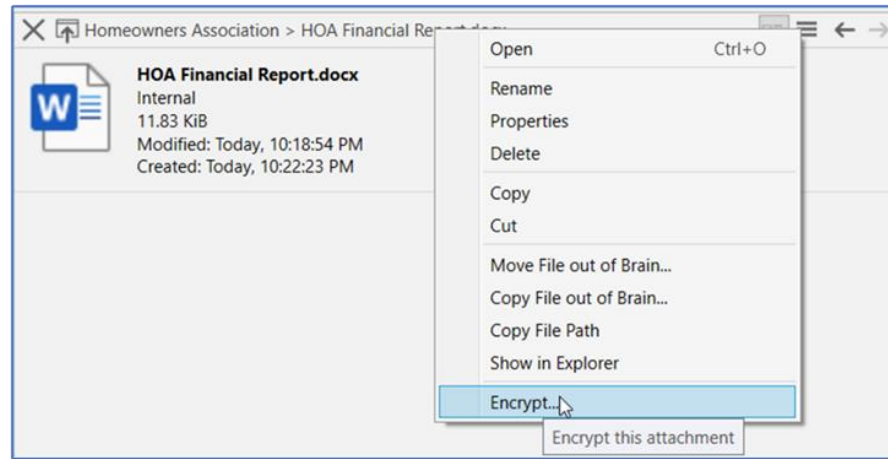


Figure 316. After Clicking on the Attachment's Context Menu

2. Type in the prompt you want the user to see when they attempt to open the file, type a password, click the check box confirming that the file cannot be opened if the password is lost, then click the **Encrypt** button.

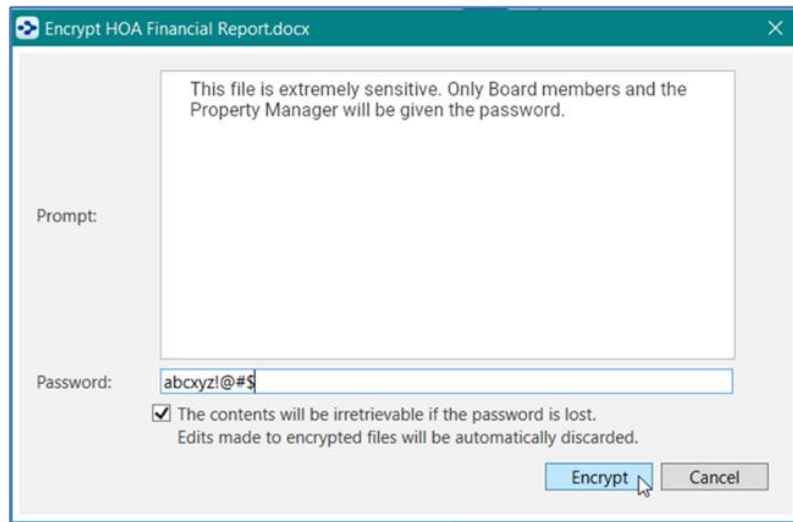


Figure 317. Example Encryption Details

3. Whenever someone attempts to open the file, they'll see the prompt you entered. They will have to enter the correct password, then click the **Decrypt** button. After that the file can be opened by clicking on it.

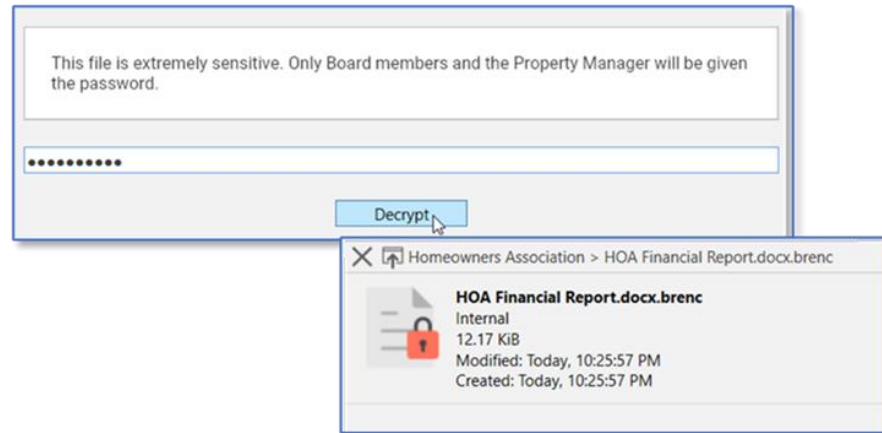


Figure 318. Decrypting and Opening the File

Export

TheBrain 12 features several export options. Export your brain data directly to:

- **Folders**—Exports the thoughts in your brain by converting them to a folder hierarchy.
 - Each thought becomes a folder containing the attachments and notes within it.
 - The folder structure attempts to mimic the parent-child relationships between thoughts with parentless thoughts at the top level.
 - Shortcuts on Windows and symbolic links on macOS are used to represent thoughts that are under multiple parents.
- **Text Outline** (.txt file)—Creates a text outline of thoughts, notes and URLs.
 - Indented hierarchy mimics parent-child relationships between thoughts.
 - Notes are exported as lines starting with a - (dash)
 - URLs are added lines starting with a + (plus)
- **JSON Files**—Exports your brain data in JSON format.
 - Thoughts, links and other types of data are each exported in their own .json file.
 - Attachments and notes are exported into folders based on the ID of the thought or link they are attached to.
 - This gives you access to 100% of your data in an open and easily parsed modern text format.

To export your brain:

- Select **Export** from the **File** menu
- Select the output (Folders, Text or JSON) and click on **Export**
- The output location must be an empty directory
- To export just a portion of your brain, add thoughts first into TheBrain's Selection panel and then check the option to **Only export the selection** in the **Export** window.

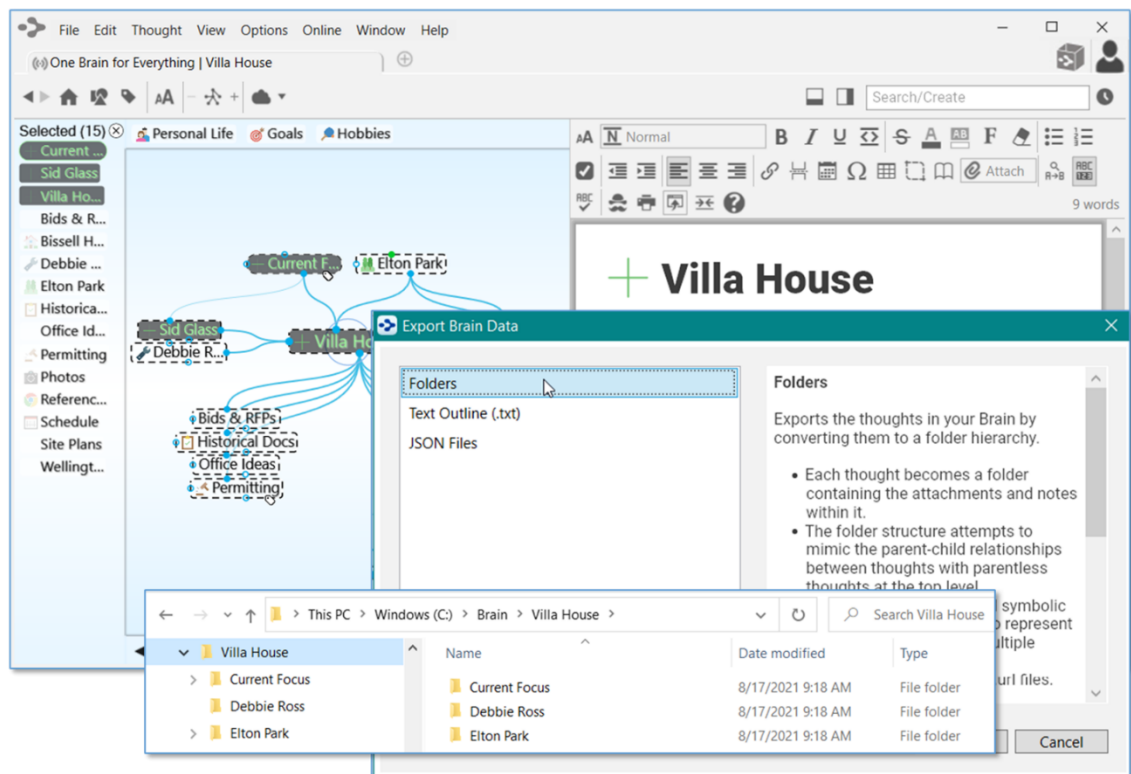


Figure 319. Exporting a Brain to Folders

Glossary

| | |
|-----------------------|---|
| Activate | To bring a thought to the center of the Plex and make it the active thought. |
| Active thought | The thought you are working on right now. The active thought occupies the center of the Plex. The active thought's details are described in the Thought tab. A thought that is not active can be activated by clicking it, its pin, or its name in a list and pressing Enter . |
| Application | A program such as a word processor, web browser, game, or photo editor. |
| Backlinks | Thoughts whose notes link to the active thought. Backlinks appear in the Content Area in a footer under the notes. |
| Brain | A collection of associated thoughts each of which can have content. TheBrain can create multiple brains. |
| Child thought | A thought with at least one parent. Children of the active thought appear in the child zone, below the active thought. In turn, the active thought is a child of any thought that appears above it in the parent zone. |
| Content Area | The Content Area shows content attached to the active thought or a moused-over thought, depending on the current preference settings. Content can include notes, attachments, links, and web pages that display in the Content Area's built-in browser. The Content Area also automatically displays an area showing Mapped Links, Backlinks, and Unlinked Mentions—related content that has commonalities with the active thought. |
| Delete | The complete removal of a thought and/or its content from a brain. Deletion is permanent. |
| Drag and drop | To use this feature, select the item you want to drag, click the mouse button and drag the item to where you want it to appear. |
| Forget | To remove a thought from TheBrain without deleting it, its links, its content, or its note. Forgotten thoughts can be “remembered.” |

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| Forgotten thought | A thought that is removed from TheBrain without deleting it, its links, its content, or its note. Forgotten thoughts can be “remembered.” |
| Gate | The active thought and its close relatives have three circular “gates,” each of which is used to link to a specific relation: The parent gate is above a thought; the child gate is below it; and the jump gate is beside it. A gate is hollow when there are no links through it, and solid when links exist. |
| Home thought | The Home thought is the main or top thought of your brain. It is the thought that is activated when you click the Home button in the Brain toolbar. |
| Jump thought | A jump thought is linked to another thought through its jump gate and appears in the jump zone to the left of the active thought. Activating a jump thought produces a more significant reconfiguration of the Plex than activating a child thought or parent thought. This is because jump thoughts of the active thought are related exclusively to the active thought and not to other thoughts in the Plex. |
| Link | The act of connecting thoughts thereby establishing close relations. Also, the line connecting two thoughts in the Plex. |
| Link Type | A category of links that allows you to distinguish how thoughts are related visually. For example, you could have a Link Type called “writes” set so that links between authors and books display brown with the label “writes.” |
| Mapped Links | Thoughts that are connected in the Plex as parents, children, jumps, or siblings (but do not necessarily have text in common). Mapped links appear in the Content Area in a footer under the notes. |
| Navigate | To move from thought to thought by activating thoughts. |
| Notes | Every thought can have notes, which are displayed in the Content Area. Notes can hold any combination of text, images, sound, or shortcuts. The Notes editor includes a word processor. |

| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| Parent thought | A thought that has at least one child. A parent thought is linked to its child thoughts through its child gate. The active thought is a parent of any thought displayed in its child zone, below it. Parent thoughts of the active thought appear in the parent zone, above the active thought. |
| Parentless thought | A thought without a parent thought. A parentless thought is often a jump thought or a thought representing a subject heading or organizer. Usually, the first thought in a brain (generally named after the user) is a parentless thought. |
| Past Thought list | The scrollable list of thoughts at the bottom of the Plex, arranged in the order activated. The most recently activated thought is the rightmost thought in the list. |
| Pin | An entry point to a brain. Click a pin to activate its thought. A pin is created by dragging a thought to the area immediately below the menu bar. The pin stays there until it is removed by being dragged into the menu bar or title bar. You can also create a pin of the active thought from the thought menu. |
| Plex | The visible portion of your brain; it includes the active thought, its close relations, and the links between them. It also includes the Search box, the Past Thought List, and navigation tools. |
| Remember | A thought that has been removed from the Plex by “forgetting” can be remembered by selecting Showing Forgotten Thoughts on the Options menu, right-clicking the thought, then selecting Remember thought name on the context menu. |
| Search box | The field in the top-right area of the Plex. Type text in this field to perform an Instant Activation search. |
| Siblings | Two or more thoughts with a common parent. When a thought that has siblings is active, its siblings are displayed in the sibling zone, to the right of the active thought. |
| Template | A file used as the basis for creating other files. Template files can be added to the window of the Add Attachment dialog box. |

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| Thought | The basic unit of a brain. A thought can represent anything the user wants it to. A thought can have content in the form of a file, shortcut, or web page, or it can be devoid of content and simply act as a subject heading or organizer. |
| Thought Type | A way to categorize thoughts and give them distinct colors. For example, you can have a “Person” thought type so that all thoughts that are people display as green. |
| Timeline | The Timeline is the visual tool for using TheBrain’s built-in calendar. Use it to create, edit, and view events which can be associated with specific thoughts. |
| Unlinked Mentions | Thoughts whose notes contain the name of the active thought—even if not explicitly linked. Unlinked mentions appear in the Content Area in a footer under the notes. |
| Styles | Notes may be formatted using any of TheBrain’s built-in Styles, which are combinations of font, color, and size. By default, notes appear in a style called “Modern.” |
| Unlink | Unlink thoughts that you no longer want to be related to any other thought in your brain, or when you want to remove a superfluous link. You cannot unlink a thought’s only Link to the active thought. |
| URL | Universal Resource Locator; the address of a web site. |
| Wander | The option to step randomly through TheBrain, to let you see thought associations. |
| Zones | Areas in the Plex devoted to specific relations of the active thought. There are four zones: the parent zone above the active thought, the child zone below it, the jump zone to its left, and the sibling zone to its right. |