

'SciPlore MindMapping' – A Tool for Creating Mind Maps Combined with PDF and Reference Management

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Mind maps are useful tools for researchers. They can use mind maps, for example, to manage their literature or to draft research papers. Dozens of tools exist to create mind maps, for instance, FreeMind, MindManager, and XMind. However, researchers need special features such as the possibility of accessing their bibliographic databases (e.g., BibTeX) directly from within the mind mapping software. Therefore, we developed SciPlore MindMapping, the first mind mapping tool solely focusing on researchers' needs. It offers all the features one would expect from a standard mind mapping software, plus three additional features for researchers.

1. Adding references manually allows users to assign a BibTeX key to a mind map's node. This way, researchers can organize their ideas and references to the originals. To ease the process, the key is automatically completed with data from the user's bibliographic database. In the current version, SciPlore MindMapping supports only bibliographic databases in the BibTeX format (and therefore can only be used directly in combination with reference managers such as JabRef, BibDesk, or Referencer). In upcoming versions, the support of Mendeley, Zotero, and others will be available as well.
2. References can also be added automatically to a node. Most reference managers allow assigning a file (usually a PDF file) to entries in the bibliographic database. If the same file is linked by a node in the mind map, SciPlore MindMapping automatically assigns the corresponding BibTeX key to the node.
3. When researchers read an article in PDF format, some create bookmarks for the most important statements in the article. The same information is likely to be needed in a mind map when structuring ideas or drafting a new paper. SciPlore MindMapping offers the option of importing bookmarks from a PDF. Each bookmark is imported as a node into the mind map that links to the PDF. If the PDF is included in the user's bibliographic database, the corresponding BibTeX key is also added.

SciPlore MindMapping is based on the mind mapping tool FreeMind. It is written in Java and offered as open source under the GNU license on <http://www.sciplore.org> (software section).