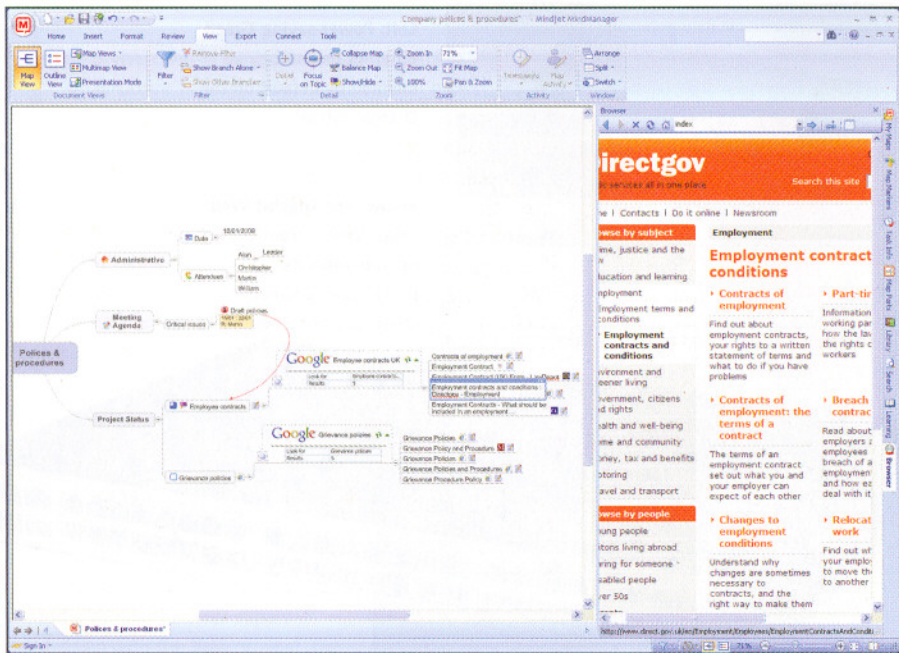


VISUAL PROJECT MAPPING

Mindjet Mindmanager 8

Two minds are better than one with new map sharing feature



Internet searches and other web services can be embedded into Mindmanager 8 maps

Mindmanager lets you visualise complex tasks and projects in the form of tree diagrams with branches leading from a central topic to related documents, notes and other information, a process often referred to as mind mapping. The eighth version of the program makes it a lot easier to share maps with others and adds support for extra data sources, including web services, via an embedded web browser. The program also includes built-in editors for Microsoft Office documents and the database integration has been enhanced, too.

Unlike the previous Pro and Lite editions, Mindmanager 8 is only available as a single product, with optional software-as-a-service implementation called Mindmanager Web. At £8 ex Vat a month this lets you create, edit and share maps in a browser — although this is not included in the full feature set in the Windows version. There's no new version yet for Mac users.

Information sharing is a key feature in Mindmanager 8. In previous releases you could export maps to a variety of fixed formats or distribute dynamic versions using a separate, freely distributable, player. This can now be embedded into PDF documents or Flash .swf files, removing the need to install the application directly and making it much simpler to share maps. Unfortunately Mindjet Player can only display maps as read-only. For a further £8 a month, users can subscribe to Mindjet Connect and work collaboratively on maps with other users equipped with the full Mindmanager product.

A lot of other tools have been added to this release, but we particularly liked the built-in browser that opens inside the Mindmanager Window. This

enables you to conduct research and link to online data sources.

We thought the built-in document editor was a great boon as well. It enables you to directly edit Word, Excel and other Office documents included in your maps.

Another nice feature is the ability to insert web services. By dragging a map part linked to one of several search engines onto a map, Mindmanager will run a search using the selected topic and display the specified number of results as linked sub-topics. Click one of these and it opens in the embedded browser, with a refresh button also on hand to update the results as needed. A number of ecommerce services are similarly supported, including Amazon and Ebay, plus Facebook and Myspace friend searches.

Database integration is enhanced too, with a new linker tool which supports DB2, MySQL and Oracle as well as the Access, Excel and SQL Server formats.

To use Mindmanager you will need Windows XP, Vista or Windows Server (2003 or later), although officially you can only use a 32-bit operating system. .Net Framework V2.0 is also required and will be configured during installation.

We've looked at Mindmanager before and have always found it relatively easy once you've got to grips with the underlying concepts. This release is one of the first applications to adopt the Fluid ribbon menus first introduced in Office 2007, and the interface has been tweaked, with the end result being a lot more consistent and easy to use. However, it's still something of a specialist tool and we'd strongly recommend trialling it before buying. *Alan Stevens*

Verdict

Pros Embedded PDF/Flash Mindjet player; built-in browser, web services and Office document editors; enhanced database linker; hosted Mindjet Web and Connect services

Cons Not a general-purpose tool; no update yet for Mac users

Overall A significant update to this market-leading mind-mapping tool

Features ★★★★★
Ease of use ★★★★★
Value for money ★★★★★
Overall ★★★★★

Price £228.85 (£199 ex Vat)

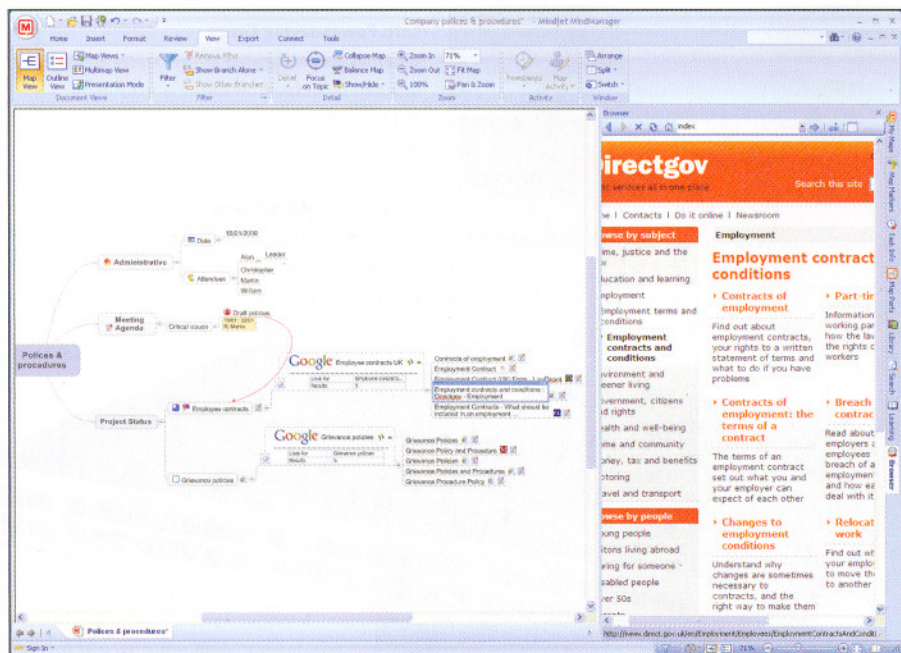
Contact Mindjet 020 8261 8240
 www.mindjet.co.uk

System requirements 700MHz Pentium processor or faster • 256MB Ram (512MB on Vista) • 150MB disk space • Windows XP Pro, Windows Server 2003 or Windows Vista • Office Professional 2002 or above required for Office integration

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