



# biggerplate

## Annual Mind Map Report 2016

**#BPAR16**

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# Welcome to the Biggerplate.com Annual Mind Map Report 2016!

## Another year flown by, and another chance for us to take the temperature of the mind mapping world with our Annual Mind Map Survey and Report!

We started this project three years ago with the intention of creating an authoritative piece of research that spanned the mind mapping world and provided valuable insights for companies and individuals who are interested and/or engaged in this arena. This year we had over 1,100 mind mappers take part, giving us the best sample of the global user community to date.

As the scale and ambition of this project has grown, so has the report itself, and this document may appear a little daunting in length. However, please keep in mind however that this is intended to be a resource that covers a lot of ground, and provide useful reference points for the entire year ahead. As such, we hope you will find it a useful place to come back to on occasion, dip in and out of, and certainly *not* read from front to back...!

The 2016 report should serve as a catalyst for discussion, innovation, and collaboration around mind mapping. Whatever your views on the resulting data, or the report itself, we're really interested to hear your feedback and ideas. We will be discussing the findings with our community at every opportunity, including our Annual Conference, our Brunch Club meetings, and of course, through the numerous social media platforms where you can engage with us. We believe an active dialogue around uses and applications of mind mapping is essential to helping this arena grow and develop. We hope you will be part of this conversation!



I'd like to thank everyone who took the time to participate in the survey. Your individual and collective feedback has played a key role in shaping decision making and strategy at Biggerplate, and is further helping to build an invaluable and ever-clearer picture of where and how mind mapping is being used around the world. Such a picture is vital if we are to better-communicate to others the potential applications and benefits of mind mapping tools and processes. We have been talking at Biggerplate for many years about mind mapping as "the missing link", and the insights contained in your survey feedback (and hopefully conveyed in this report) are essential to identifying where exactly those missing links are, and where mind mapping fits best.

I hope you find this report relevant, insightful, and occasionally even a little enjoyable.

Liam Hughes  
Founder: Biggerplate.com

[Act serious with me on LinkedIn](#)



[Talk nonsense with me on Twitter](#)



# Table of Contents

## Biggerplate: 2015 Review

Key Projects Overview	
- API & Developer Hub	4
- Online Courses	4
- Biggerplate Unplugged	5
- Brunch Club	6

Web Traffic & Trends	
- Top Traffic Sources	7
- High Growth: United States	8-9
- High Growth: France	11
- Visits vs New Member	12

Conclusions	13
-------------	----

## Annual Mind Map Survey 2015

Participant Profile	
- Age	14
- Gender	14
- Job Roles	15
- Industry	16
- Conclusions	17

Mind Maps in Action	
- Frequency	18
- Proficiency	18
- Tasks	19-20
- Benefits	22
- Barriers	23-24
- Conclusions	25

Tools & Technology	
- Software vs Manual	28
- Mobile & Cloud	29
- Mind Mapper's Choice 2016	30-32
- Conclusions	33

Mapping the Future	
- The Innovation Wishlist	34-36

<b>Biggerplate Outlook 2016</b>	37-38
---------------------------------	-------

<b>Report Conclusions</b>	39
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**Please help us by sharing the Annual Mind Map Report!**

**Copy this link:**

<http://www.biggerplate.com/annual-report-2016>

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**#BPUN16**

# Biggerplate.com: 2015 Review

## Key Projects Overview

Last year was extremely busy and productive for Biggerplate, once more building on positive momentum and growth in both our online and offline activities. Here is a brief overview of some of the key projects from 2015...

### API & Developer Hub

We reached a significant landmark in 2015 with the long-awaited launch of our [API & Developer Hub](#), which gives mind mapping software/app developers the opportunity to integrate functionality from the Biggerplate mind map library directly into their software.

Software users will primarily see this in the form of a "Share on Biggerplate" option within their software, enabling a one-click upload of your mind map to our global library. We refer to this as the 'bridge' between your chosen software and our mind map library. In 2015 we completed the first version of this bridge, and it was then up to our software partners to start enabling people to start walking over it...!

We have been delighted with the initial engagement from our software partners, and towards the end of 2015 we saw the first of these 'one-click' integrations go live within the new version of [XMind](#), and the most recent update to [iThoughts](#). The resulting uplift in website visitors, registered members, and mind map sharing from these applications has been extremely positive, as mind mappers around the world discover our bridge and start to walk/run/skip over merrily!

With further integration projects in progress at present, this remains the biggest project and opportunity for Biggerplate as we look to move further towards becoming the global home of mind mapping. This functionality not only enables more people to share how they are using mind maps, but also raises awareness of the mind map library, community, and resources at Biggerplate on an entirely new scale. The first half of 2016 should see some further developments in this area... so keep an eye out!

### Online Mind Mapping Courses

The final quarter of 2015 saw the launch of our first e-learning courses, which aim to help more people to get the most out of their chosen mind mapping software!

Delivered by members of the Biggerplate team, these courses provide a series of walk-through video tutorials that show how your chosen mind mapping software can help you take control of your productivity at work!

Our [Mind Mapping for Business Productivity](#) online courses are currently available for the following software applications:

[> iMindMap Course](#)

[> MindManager Course](#)

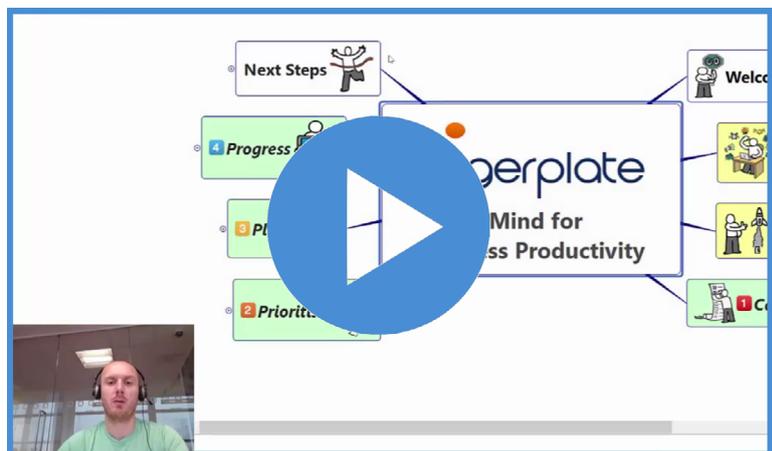
[> XMind Course](#)

[> iThoughts Course](#)

[> MindMeister Course](#)

Use the code **ANNUALREPORT50** to receive a 50% discount on the price of any e-learning course when you purchase before 31 March!

We've got more online courses coming soon, so stay tuned for updates!



# Biggerplate.com: 2015 Review

## Key Projects Overview

### Biggerplate Unplugged London

2015 saw the return of Biggerplate Unplugged to London, after two years on the road. It was a pleasure to bring the mind map conference back to our home town, and more than 60 mind mappers joined us in March for a fantastic day of discussion, learning, and collaboration about mind mapping!

With a number of fantastic speaker presentations and interactive sessions, the London conference was a great development of the conference project, as we moved into an annual cycle after an initial 5 events in 2 years!

With the next conference coming up in [New York City on 10 March](#), the foundations of a successful mind map event series are now firmly in place. As we look to contribute to the further development of the mind mapping sector, these events will come to play an ever-greater role in helping to define and shape the present, and future of the mind mapping world.

[Join Biggerplate Unplugged in New York](#)

[View photos and video from Biggerplate Unplugged London](#)



# Biggerplate.com: 2015 Review

## Key Projects Overview

### Biggerplate Brunch Club

2015 also saw the launch of the Biggerplate Brunch Club; a regular series of small meetings for members of our community to get together and discuss ideas and opportunities related to mind mapping in their local region, whilst sharing learning and experiences about the use of mind mapping tools and processes in a range of different contexts.

With two events in Paris, two in Amsterdam, and a first event in Brussels, Brunch Club got off to a flying start, and has already become a regular fixture in certain mind mapper calendars as we moved into 2016!

As ever, there is a challenge in achieving balance in hosting meetings such as these. Ensuring they are regular enough to create momentum, but not so regular as to create weariness, is essential, and groups in each Brunch Club region have independently arrived at the conclusion that quarterly meetings are probably the best approach. With this in mind, we are in the process of setting up meetings in London, Paris, Brussels, and Amsterdam for the year ahead, with other city opportunities also under consideration!

[View details of upcoming events near you!](#)



Members of the Paris Brunch Club at the first meeting of 2016 after a successful launch in 2015!

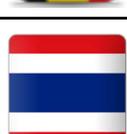
# Biggerplate.com: 2015 Review

## Web Traffic & Trends

Total visits to Biggerplate.com increased by **7.67%** in 2015 compared to 2014, and visitors to our site came from 227 different countries around the world!

## Top Traffic Sources

The following table shows the top 10 traffic sources over the last three years, and what percentage (%) of our total site visits came from each region:

	2013		2014		2015	
1		<b>United States</b> 21.67%		<b>United States</b> 19.03%		<b>United States</b> 19.72%
2		<b>United Kingdom</b> 13.11%		<b>United Kingdom</b> 12.28%		<b>France</b> 10.61%
3		<b>France</b> 6.66%		<b>France</b> 9.74%		<b>United Kingdom</b> 10.48%
4		<b>Australia</b> 3.94%		<b>Germany</b> 4.98%		<b>Germany</b> 5.30%
5		<b>Germany</b> 3.92%		<b>Australia</b> 3.82%		<b>India</b> 4.72%
6		<b>Netherlands</b> 3.72%		<b>India</b> 3.77%		<b>Australia</b> 3.48%
7		<b>Canada</b> 3.58%		<b>Canada</b> 3.40%		<b>Canada</b> 3.25%
8		<b>India</b> 3.35%		<b>Netherlands</b> 2.88%		<b>Netherlands</b> 2.62%
9		<b>Belgium</b> 2.12%		<b>Belgium</b> 2.43%		<b>Belgium</b> 2.43%
10		<b>Malaysia</b> 1.89%		<b>Malaysia</b> 1.88%		<b>Thailand</b> 2.02%

# Biggerplate.com: 2015 Review

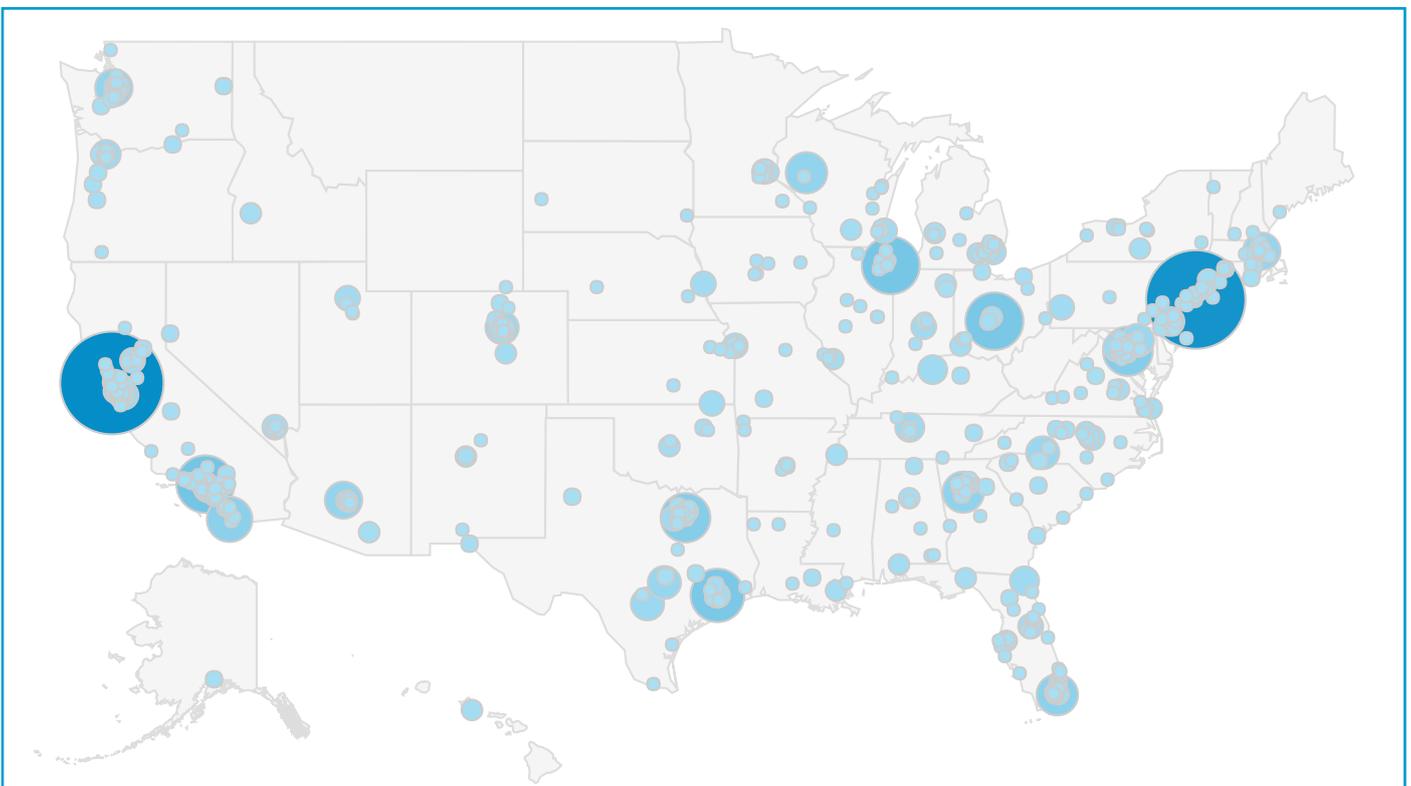
## Web Traffic & Trends

### High Growth Regions: United States

The United States once again retains top spot in the traffic statistics, and continues to provide close to 20% of visitors to Biggerplate, as well as the most new member registrations per year.

Importantly, retaining the top spot is not just about holding the current visitor levels. In fact, visits from the USA increased by 11.53% in 2015 compared to 2014, meaning the region is not only our biggest traffic contributor, but also one of our most significant for growth!

The picture below shows how our US visitors are spread across US cities, with the two hot spots being San Francisco on the West Coast, and New York on the East Coast:



The continued strength and growth of Biggerplate in the USA means we will be aiming to further develop our activities in the region over the course of 2016 through 3 key projects:

#### E-learning Courses

The recent launch of our online e-learning courses has already enabled us to engage with more of our users in the USA, and as we look to expand the e-learning offers, our hope is that we can continue to engage with more mind map users in the US through these courses!

#### Active Service Delivery

With an increasing number of enquiries for our mind map training and facilitation services over the past year, we will be more actively seeking opportunities to work with US-based organisations, with a particular focus on the East Coast over the course of 2016.

For more information on Biggerplate training and facilitation services in your region, please visit [Biggerplate.com/Services](http://Biggerplate.com/Services)

# Biggerplate.com: 2015 Review

## Web Traffic & Trends

### High Growth Regions: United States (continued...)

#### Biggerplate Unplugged New York 10 March 2016

This year sees Biggerplate Unplugged return to the USA for the first time since 2014, as our annual mind map conference arrives in New York on 10 March 2016.

The conference series has played a key part in helping us improve engagement with our regional member communities over the years, and we hope the New York event will act as a catalyst for even more engagement and activity on the East Coast over the course of 2016.

Biggerplate Unplugged is a fantastic opportunity for our members in North America to connect, collaborate, and innovate around the current and future state of the mind mapping world. These events aim to explore the various uses of mind mapping in a wide range of practical contexts across business, education, public sector, and the world in general. Our focus is on stimulating dialogue, and enabling lively discussion throughout the day, and we hope to see many of you in New York this March!

Overall, it's fair to say that the USA demands greater attention from Biggerplate over the coming year, and as such, we will certainly be focusing more time and resources on developing a greater presence in both online and offline terms. As always, our members on the ground will play a key part in this happening successfully. We hope that those of you reading this report (wherever you are in the world) will take it as an open invitation to connect with us more pro-actively in 2016 and help us improve the connectedness and visibility of the global mind mapping user community even further!

#### Planning to attend Biggerplate Unplugged?

Use discount code **ANNUALREPORT25** to save 25% on your ticket!

[> View event details](#)

A photograph of the Statue of Liberty in New York City, with the city skyline visible in the background under a blue sky with light clouds.

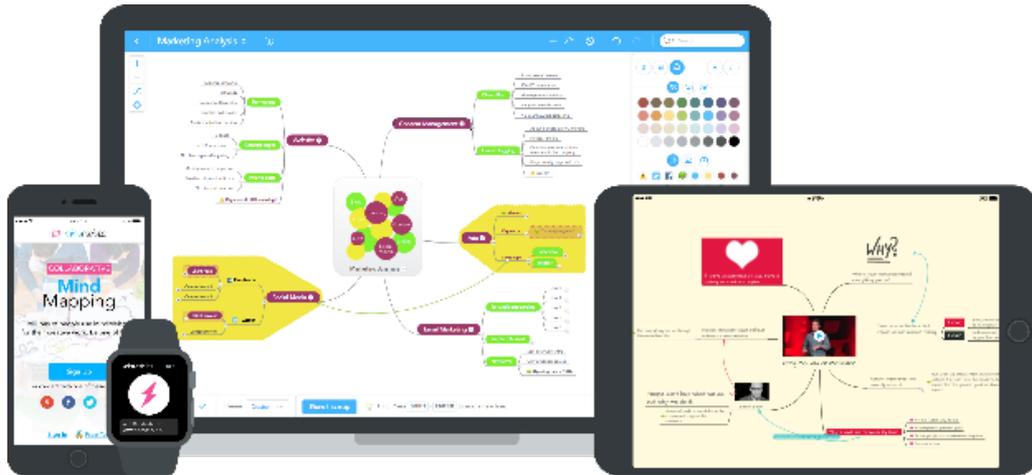
# Biggerplate Unplugged New York City 10 March 2016

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[www.meistertask.com](http://www.meistertask.com)



# Biggerplate.com: 2015 Review

## Web Traffic & Trends

### High Growth Regions: France

While the USA continues to hold its position at the top of the regional traffic stats, there is a significant switch in 2nd and 3rd place, with the UK being overtaken by France for the first time ever in terms of visitors to Biggerplate!

For a UK-based company, and a website that is largely in English, this is a significant shift, and yet comes as no surprise...

We wrote in our 2015 report about the continued growth in French activity on the website, and the move into second place this year simply reflects the continuation of a trend that can be clearly seen in the French visitor statistics over the last three years.

Visits from France in 2015 were up by 17.26% compared to 2014, and the early signs in 2016 suggest that France will in fact extend its lead over the UK further...

With France making up just over 6% of website visitors in 2013, to over 10% in 2015, it is now vital that Biggerplate works to further engage with our French members.

A number of key projects launched in 2015 had this specific goal in mind, and both our Paris Brunch Club meetings and our new French Blog have certainly helped contribute to the increasing momentum in France, along with the on-going work of our excellent Community Management team of course!

However, the biggest item on the French "to do list" is full translation of the website... More on this later in the year we hope!

Are you a French mind mapper?

- View our [French Blog](#) articles
- Follow [@Biggerplate\\_Fr](#) on Twitter
- Join our [Français Facebook Group](#)

*Visits to Biggerplate.com from France increased by **17.26%** in 2015 compared to 2014!*



Follow [@Biggerplate\\_Fr](#)



Join Biggerplate Français group!



# Biggerplate.com: 2015 Review

## Web Traffic & Trends

### Website Visits vs New Member Registrations

It's important that visitors to Biggerplate.com become registered members, in order that we can continue to grow the overall mind mapping community. The tables on this page show the Top 40 countries for website visits (left), and the Top 40 countries for member registrations (right) in 2015, to give you an idea of how the two compare:

#### 2015 Web Visitors (Top 40)

1. United States of America
2. France
3. United Kingdom
4. Germany
5. India
6. Australia
7. Canada
8. Netherlands
9. Belgium
10. Thailand
11. Malaysia
12. Italy
13. South Africa
14. Russia
15. Indonesia
16. Singapore
17. Spain
18. Vietnam
19. Brazil
20. Mexico
21. Switzerland
22. Ireland
23. China
24. Saudi Arabia
25. Morocco
26. United Arab Emirates
27. Turkey
28. Philippines
29. New Zealand
30. Ukraine
31. Egypt
32. Poland
33. Sweden
34. Colombia
35. Iran
36. Hong Kong
37. Pakistan
38. Austria
39. Taiwan
40. Kenya

#### 2015 New Member Registrations (Top 40)

1. United States of America
2. United Kingdom
3. France
4. Australia
5. India
6. Canada
7. Belgium
8. South Africa
9. Germany
10. Netherlands
11. Vietnam
12. Malaysia
13. Brazil
14. Italy
15. China
16. Russia
17. Indonesia
18. Thailand
19. Saudi Arabia
20. Ireland
21. Spain
22. Switzerland
23. United Arab Emirates
24. Singapore
25. New Zealand
26. Mexico
27. Egypt
28. Iran
29. Turkey
30. Ukraine
31. Taiwan
32. Czech Republic
33. Sweden
34. Austria
35. Poland
36. Philippines
37. Algeria
38. Morocco
39. Denmark
40. Romania

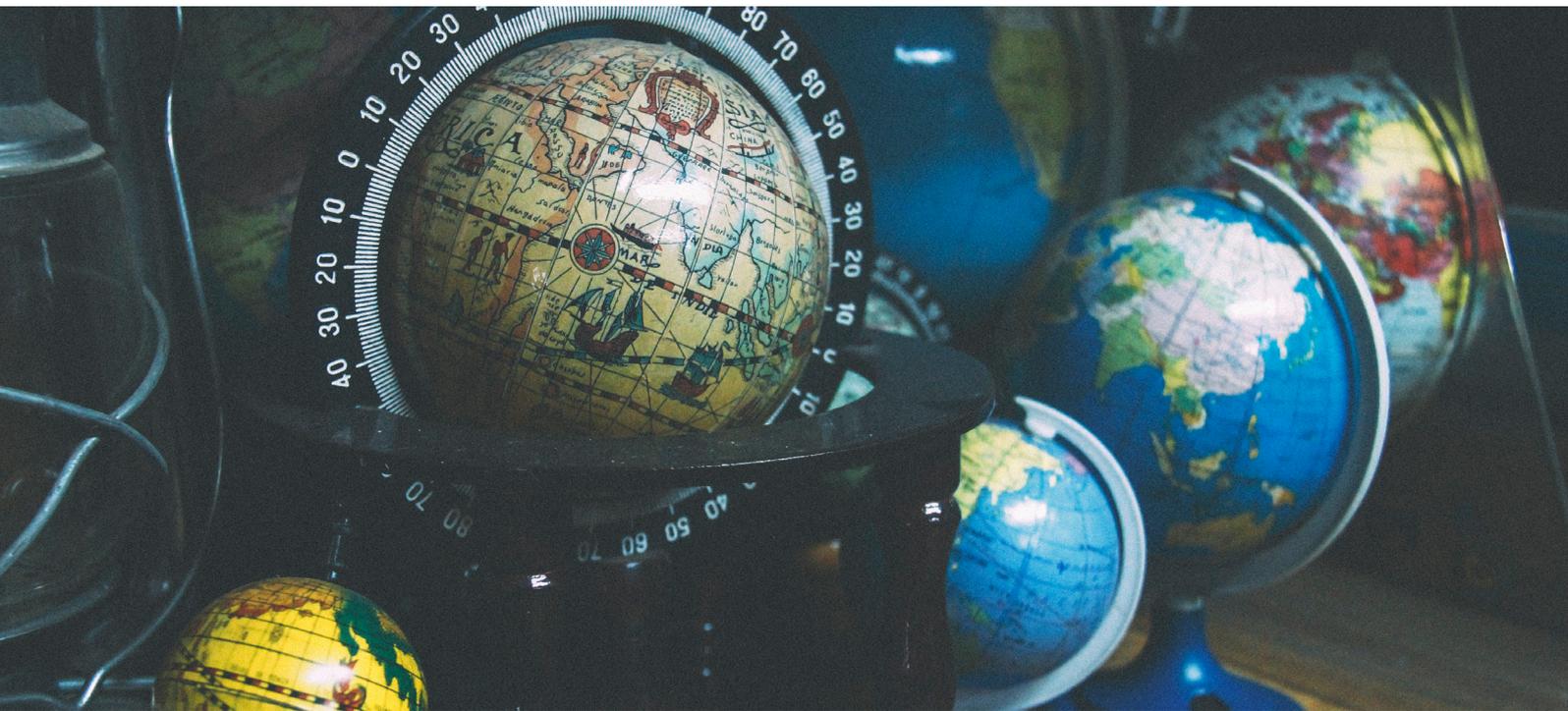
# Biggerplate.com: 2015 Review

## Conclusions

Out of all the stats, facts, and comparisons above, one key fact is clear: Biggerplate.com now represents an extraordinary gathering of mind mappers from all around the world, and this community is growing all the time!

The challenge this brings for us is ensuring mind mappers from all regions are catered for properly, and primarily this means the current translation efforts on the website need to be addressed, as does our ability to engage with our community members worldwide through our Community Manager team.

Note the higher positions of English speaking countries in the top 10 for new member registrations, in comparison to the top 10 for website visits. Clearly we have a greater chance of converting visitors to members if they can understand the website they have arrived at! If a website visitor from Germany is to become a registered member, we need to welcome them in German. If members from Thailand can't understand how to upload a mind map due to English-only guidance, how can we hope to provide the best source of Thai language mind maps? If Brazilian mind mappers can only follow Biggerplate on Twitter in English and French, how will they know how hilarious and insightful we are? These are important questions...

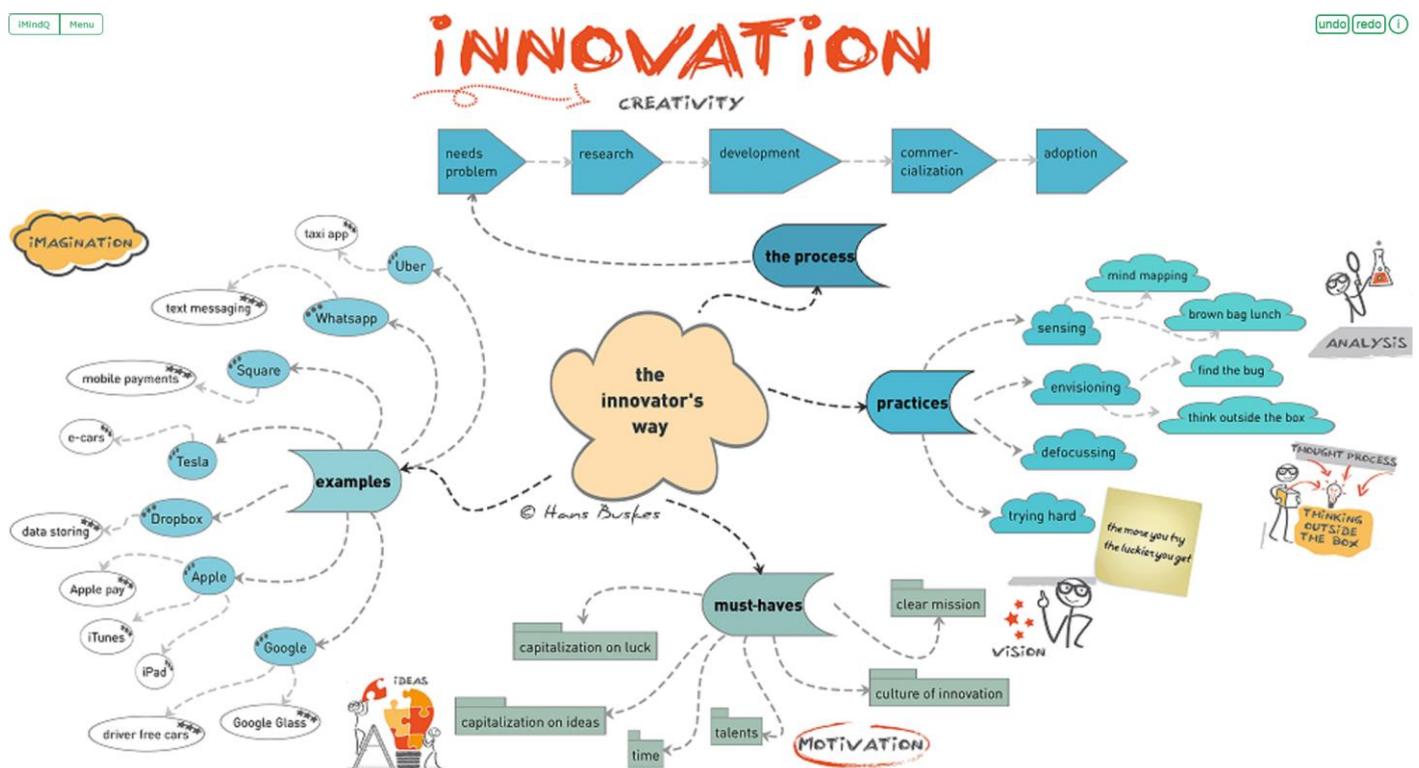


Our view of the situation is simple: If we're going to be the global home of mind mapping, we have to think global and act local. We have to maintain a genuinely global outlook, and at the same time work hard to establish and extend our local networks of known mind mapping users in every country, through both online channels, and our offline activities and events.

For other organisations in the mind mapping sector (large, medium or small), the challenge for you is most likely the same as ours: figuring out which regions you can (and cannot) effectively engage with at this point, allocating resources accordingly based on the current picture, and continuing to monitor and nudge forward research and foundation-building efforts in the regions that may not merit priority attention... yet!

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# Annual Mind Map Survey 2016

## Participant Profile

### Introduction

This year more than 1,100 mind mappers completed the Annual Mind Map Survey, making this our biggest sample ever of the mind mapping community worldwide!

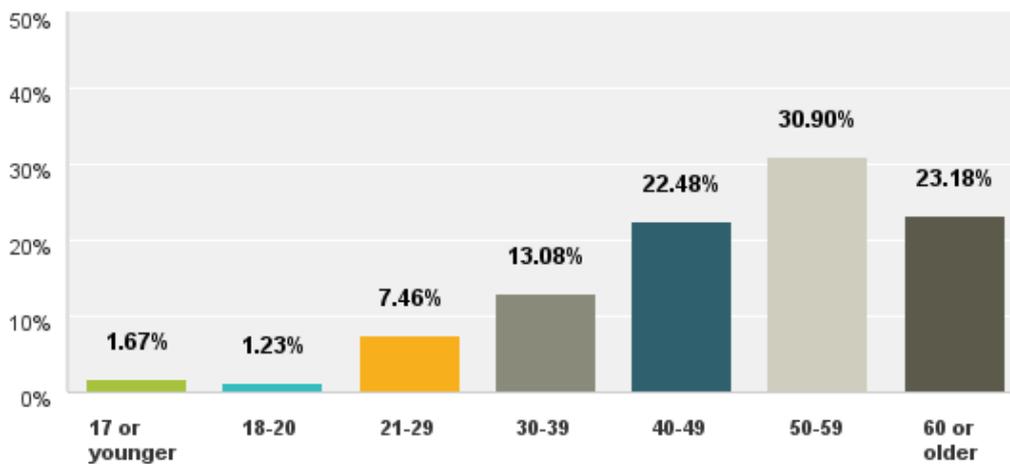
The following section looks at the composition of the participant population, and what we might learn about the wider mind mapping community based on the profile of those who took part.

### Age

As in the previous two years, more than 75% of our survey participants are in the 40+ age brackets, and the 50-59 group is dominant once again.

This year however we do see greater representation from the under 30s, with an increase of 1.78% participants below the age of 30 compared to the 2015 survey.

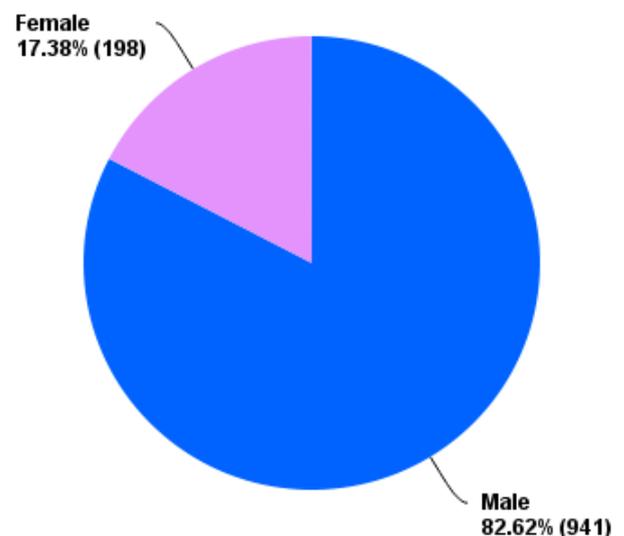
2016 Survey: Age



### Gender

Once again, the male to female ratio in our participant population is heavily weighted towards the males. In fact, the percentage of female participants this year is the lowest we've had in the three years of running the annual survey. While we reached more people than ever with the survey this year overall, fewer women participated than in 2015.

2016 Survey: Male vs Female



### Female Participation in Annual Surveys

Year:	2014	2015	2016
Number:	145	210	198
% of Total:	20.11%	21.97%	17.38%

# Annual Mind Map Survey 2016

## Participant Profile

### Job Roles

A key objective for our Annual Survey and Report is to help understand where mind mapping is being used, in what sort of roles, and for what sort of tasks. To help us understand what type of people are using mind mapping, we asked participants to write their job titles, which we then used to generate the following word cloud, which shows the top 100 words used...



The prominence of words like **Manager** and **Director** gives an interesting insight into the type of person who uses mind mapping tools, and when combined with the age profile identified in the previous pages, perhaps suggests that mind mapping tools become more useful and relevant as you take on more management responsibility through your natural career progression.

As knowledge workers (that's most of us) move into management or director-level roles, the complexity of work and volume of information we need to handle increases greatly, as does the number of projects that we are expected to manage at any one time. In such circumstances, tools like mind mapping can help hugely with the management of information and projects. As such, perhaps it is unsurprising to see so many people at this more senior level using mind maps in some form.

In many ways this should be a clear and encouraging signal to all those working in the world of mind mapping, and (perhaps) in particular our friends working hard to create

powerful mind mapping software and applications. The explicit message is this: **you have created (and continue to develop) an essential management tool for the modern world.**

The evidence of three years of surveying the mind mapping population is that mind mapping tools are heavily employed and relied upon by those in management roles. (See our 2014, and 2015 reports for further validation of this).

The resulting challenge for all of us involved in trying to spread the adoption and uptake of mind mapping worldwide is to try and communicate to the managers of today, and the managers of tomorrow that mind mapping tools appear to be invaluable and effective in the management of every day complexity and information management.

For Biggerplate this leads us towards one particular area of focus: business schools.

We must engage and inform the managers of tomorrow, and that's an exciting prospect!

# Annual Mind Map Survey 2016

## Participant Profile

### Industry

The chart to the right shows the industry profile of participants, and shows a heavy bias towards professional services (25%) and technology (24.52%). Education is well-represented in the 2016 survey, with nearly 15% of participants identifying themselves within this sector.

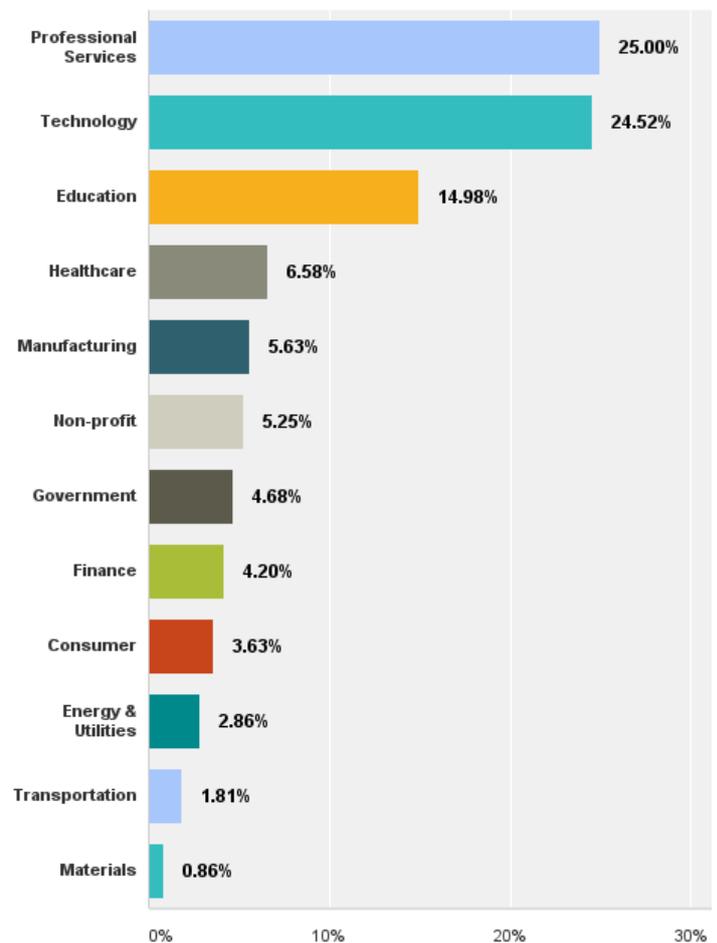
The weight of professional services reflects what we have seen in many different contexts, which is a strong use of mind mapping among business and management consultants. The prominence of technology is an interesting revelation, and while we are aware of a heavy mind mapping use among the Software Testing community, this result suggests there is a much wider use of mind maps in the Technology industry, and this is certainly something we'll be looking into further in the next few months.

Healthcare ranking in 4th reflects a trend we have seen over many years, with a high number of Biggerplate members registering from healthcare backgrounds such as the NHS in the UK, and/or Pharmaceutical organisations worldwide. While we are still unsure of the drivers behind this, it appears that project and programme managers within the Healthcare sector represent a significant proportion of those who are joining our mind mapping community. Another area that requires further investigation and analysis over the coming year.

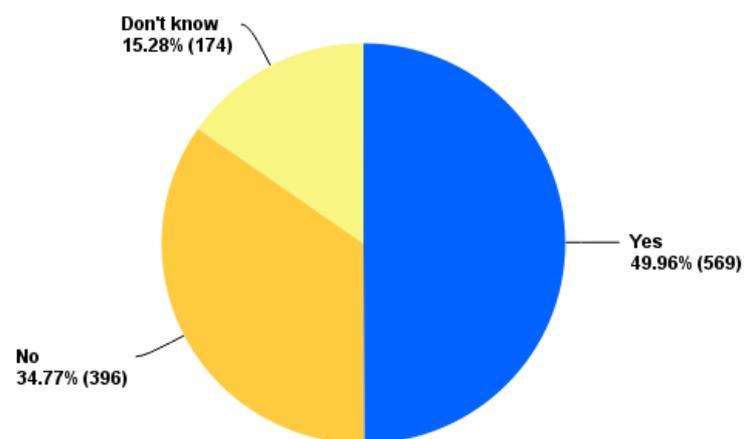
### Biggerplate.com Members

One pleasing part of the survey is the fact that we are clearly reaching mind mappers from outside the mind mapping community, which helps to broaden the range of perspectives shared! In fact, more than 30% of participants were not (yet) members of the global mind mapping community, so we must thank all those who shared and promoted the survey and helped us to reach a wider section of the mind mapping community!

Participant Industry



### Are you a member of Biggerplate.com?

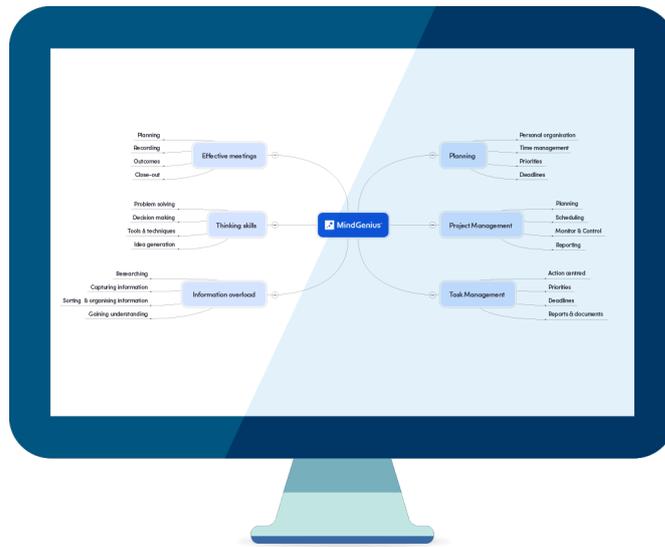


### Conclusions

To put it simply, there's a lot more analysis to be done in terms of the composition of our mind mapping community, and you can expect to see much more data and analysis on this emerging over the next few months at Biggerplate.com!



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# Annual Mind Map Survey 2016

## Mind Maps in Action

### Introduction

In this section of the report we look at how participants are using mind mapping, and in what areas. It is vital that we understand the contexts in which mind mapping is being used with the greatest benefit, and what those benefits are. If we can collectively become clearer on “where mind mapping fits” then we are going to be more able to help newcomers understand how they might start to experiment with mind mapping tools and techniques. This section aims to uncover some of this information.

### Frequency

Previous years have shown that once adopted, mind mapping is used extremely regularly. The results of the 2016 survey support this further with more than 60% saying they use mind mapping every day or almost every day.

Again, the message is essential and explicit: **once understood, mind mapping becomes an essential go-to tool on a regular basis.**

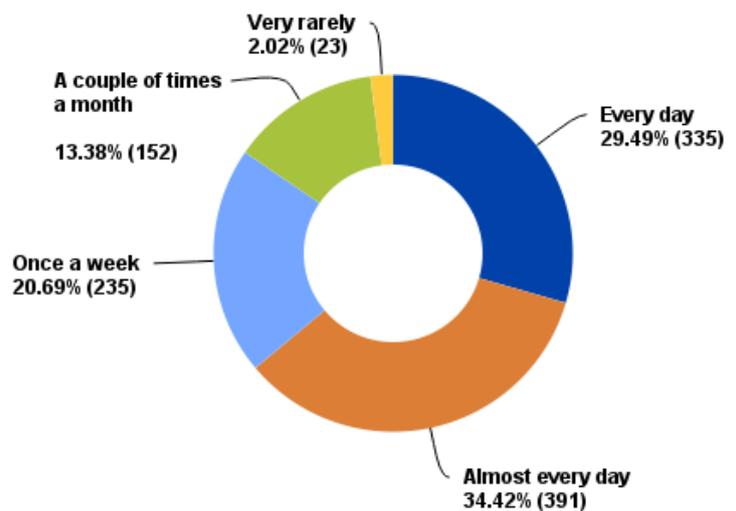
When combined with the job role data, this paints an intriguing picture of where mind mapping fits...

### Mind Mapping Proficiency

This year we asked our survey participants to rate their own mind mapping proficiency on a scale from beginner up to expert, and the results are shown below.

We see a higher proportion in the rankings from intermediate up to expert, probably reflecting the fact (shown above) that a high proportion of participants use mind maps

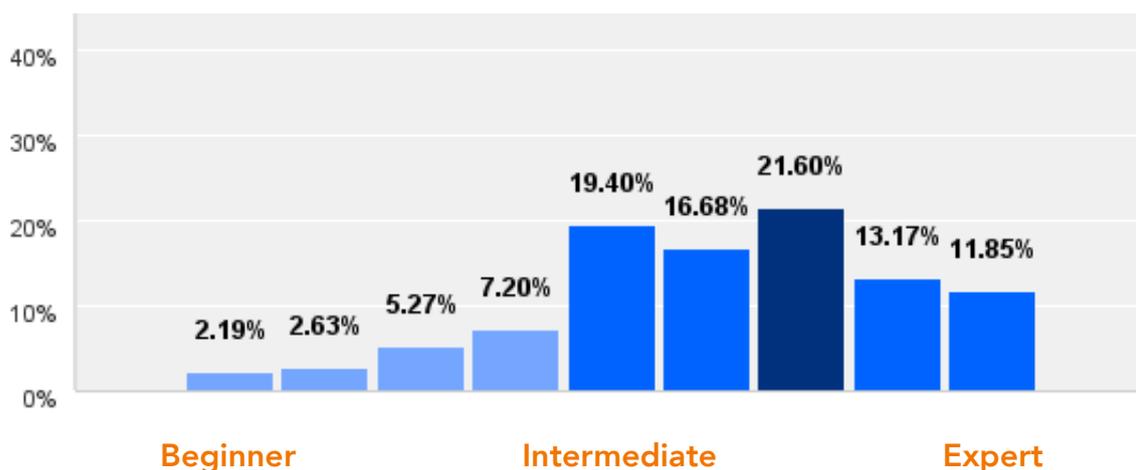
### How often do you use mind mapping?



every day, or almost every day, which will obviously help to improve their proficiency with the tools.

That being said, there are a significant number of people at the lower end of the scale, who we need/want to support in improving their proficiency, so that they can become more effective in their working and learning!

### How would you rate your mind mapping proficiency?



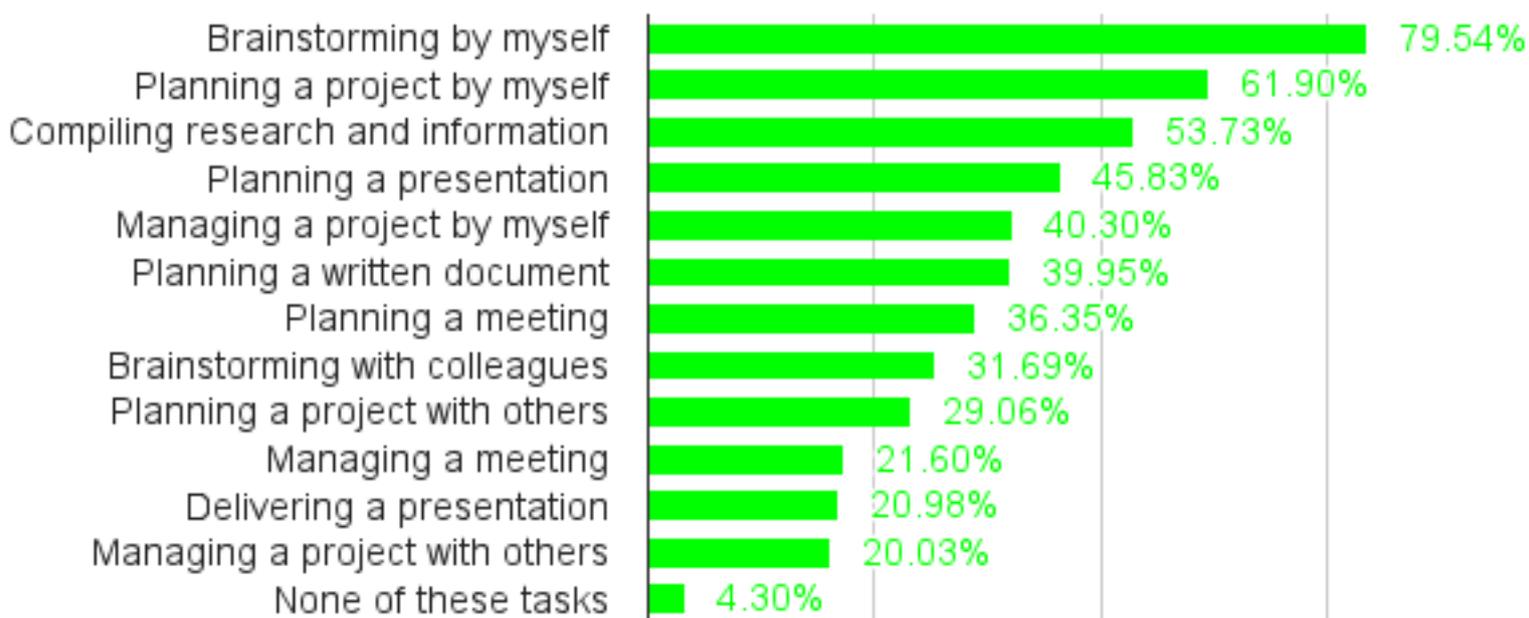
# Annual Mind Map Survey 2016

## Mind Maps in Action

### Tasks

Here we start to look at the functional tasks and activities where mind mapping is being used, by asking people to select from a list of common activities, to show where they use mind mapping. The results are shown in the chart below.

**In the last week, have you used mind mapping for any of the following tasks?**



As has been observed in each of the previous years, while there is a great deal of marketing around the use of mind maps as a collaborative tool, the evidence above suggests that much of the main usage occurs on an individual basis, with the top 2 tasks explicitly labelled as being 'by myself'. This is not to say that mind mapping cannot be put to great use in collaborative settings, but simply that for many people, it appears to first and foremost be called into context in solo situations.

Interestingly, while many people would probably associate 'BRAINSTORMING' with group/collaborative working, it emerges as the top task in the list above, but (again) on a solo basis. What we have observed through our own working, and our training workshops and facilitation services over the years is that many people find the mind mapping tools help them hugely in putting structure into what may (at first) be unstructured ideas and information. A key question we often ask is what tools people would otherwise use for this sort of process if we took mind mapping away, and what quickly becomes clear is that the mind mapping tool is by far and away the best means of capturing lots of disconnected ideas and information, then starting to put them together into a coherent and structured whole. Many brainstorming processes are great at getting ideas out, but less good at converting them into a connected picture that can then be used to drive forward further development, planning, and action. This is where (in our opinion) mind mapping tools appear to be without equal at present, and the survey participants seem to be providing a lot of evidence to support this assertion, as can be seen above, and in the following pages.

# Annual Mind Map Survey 2016

## Mind Maps in Action

### Tasks (Continued...)

In an open question we asked our survey participants to write the three tasks that they use mind mapping for the most. The graphic on this page shows which words were used the most in the answers.

PLANNING leaps out as the dominant item from the graphic, and this echoes what we see on the previous page when people were asked to choose from a prescriptive and pre-defined selection of tasks.

If you look back at the [2015 Annual Report](#), you'll see remarkable consistency between the word cloud below, and the 2015 version. We wrote in 2015 that this could be seen as validation of the role that mind mapping can play as the up-front thinking and planning tool in a number of processes (note the prominence of BRAINSTORMING as evidence of the up-front 'thinking' part). Once again this seems a fair assertion to make based on what we are learning from over 1,000 mind map users.

In our collective attempts to share, promote, and spread mind mapping tools and processes further into the world, we should perhaps pay ever-closer attention to the role it can play in planning processes, and attempt (wherever possible) to show practical real-world examples and end-to-end planning processes that can illustrate the role of mind mapping clearly and explicitly.

Importantly, we must clearly explain the powerful features of mind mapping tools that help with capturing and organising essential information in the early stages of a planning process. The visibility of words like INFORMATION, RESEARCH, COMPILING, and MANAGEMENT in the graphic below hints at the important role that mind mapping can play in helping to gather together and make sense of the various information and idea inputs at the start of a planning process.

Which 3 tasks do you use mind mapping for the most?



How does mind mapping help your planning? Share your thoughts on Twitter using the tag #BPAR16



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# Annual Mind Map Survey 2016

## Mind Maps in Action

### Barriers (continued...)

improved upon, as many users of our mind map library contact us with degrees of confusion/annoyance about why certain maps on the site won't open with their chosen software. A universal file format, and improved conversion between file types is certainly something that we're looking to explore further in 2016.

### Software cost

Some participants suggested that cost of software is a barrier to adoption, but we find this a difficult one to agree with, given that there is now a very healthy variation in software options available at different price points in the market, including excellent free software options. While those looking for top-end power and functionality will certainly be looking at significant investments, there are many lower cost, and also free software options that should be helping to remove 'cost' as a barrier, especially for those who are perhaps new to mind mapping.

It's possible that a perception of 'cost' as a barrier actually reflects a lack of awareness of the range of options available, and this is something that perhaps needs to be improved upon. Organisations like Biggerplate can play a part in providing better independent consumer guidance, so that people can feel fully informed about the range of free to premium-priced products available, and choose their options according to their needs from the full range available.

### Education

As in previous years, education crops up in many different guises in the 'barriers to adoption' question, and certainly this remains an area that we're keen to explore and engage with more. At both school and university level education, we believe mind mapping is a tool and process that students must be made aware of, so that they may call upon it as and when it is helpful for them to do so.

Biggerplate.com of course began life as an education resource, and while it is fair to say that the library and community is now more slanted in the direction of business, we remain convinced of the need and value of making more students aware of mind mapping.

For us, the long-term view is simple enough: if we can get the knowledge workers of tomorrow (school pupils and college students) to understand and utilise mind mapping like any other common studying/working tool, then business adoption of mind mapping in 5-10 years time will be universal.

Such a long-term view is however difficult to line up with short-term, here and now actions that can start this process. As we are challenged to balance an increasingly wide range of activities and projects at Biggerplate, finding time and resources to put into the education objective is certainly difficult... but not impossible.

An expansion of our e-learning courses to provide options for both student and teachers is one way that we hope to make significant in-roads in this area very soon, while we are also looking to support and work more closely with mind mapping advocates and ambassadors who are already actively engaged in the different education systems around the world. Perhaps most importantly at this stage; we must compare and learn more about the different degrees of educational adoption of mind mapping in different countries, to see if we can identify the approaches that are likely to prove most successful, and also hold up 'best practice' and positive examples that may encourage other education systems to take more notice of mind mapping as both a teaching and learning tool for teachers and students.

# Annual Mind Map Survey 2016

## Mind Maps in Action

### Conclusions

Over the last three years it is fair to say that we have learned a great deal more about where mind mapping fits into people's lives through the successive Annual Surveys, and as this picture has become richer and clearer, we have certainly been able to make some informed decisions within our business to better align our activities with what we are learning from our community members.

It now seems clearer than ever to us that once adopted, mind mapping tools become an integral part of the modern software tool set, used extensively and broadly alongside other tools to tackle a range of tasks, but with a particular focus on the initial capture and organisation of ideas and information. This should, in itself, be a powerful draw for others to want to investigate and understand mind mapping, in order to achieve the same benefits of clarity in their thinking and planning as mind map users feel.

However, the evidence clearly shows that there are still barriers to overcome, and whether it is a need to shorten and simplify the learning curve, make interchanging of mind map information easier, informing consumers about the full range of software options available, or fully embedding mind mapping into everyday education, there is clearly a role for the entire mind mapping community to play in tackling some key obstacle to wider adoption. For our part, we view all these challenges as not only extremely winnable, but also extremely enticing. If we (or any others out there) can crack even one of these barriers, then there is likely to be a step-change in the adoption of mind mapping worldwide on an as-yet unprecedented level.

In essence; it's only a matter of time...

### **Want to help us solve any of these issues?**

Get in touch and let us know what you can do, and what we can do to help!



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# Annual Mind Map Survey 2016

## Tools & Technology

### Introduction

In this section of the report we look at the mind mapping tools that people are using around the world.

### Software vs Pen & Paper

We're interested to see once again a slight fall in the number of people who use pen and paper for mind mapping, as illustrated in the graph below which shows the figures from the last 3 years.

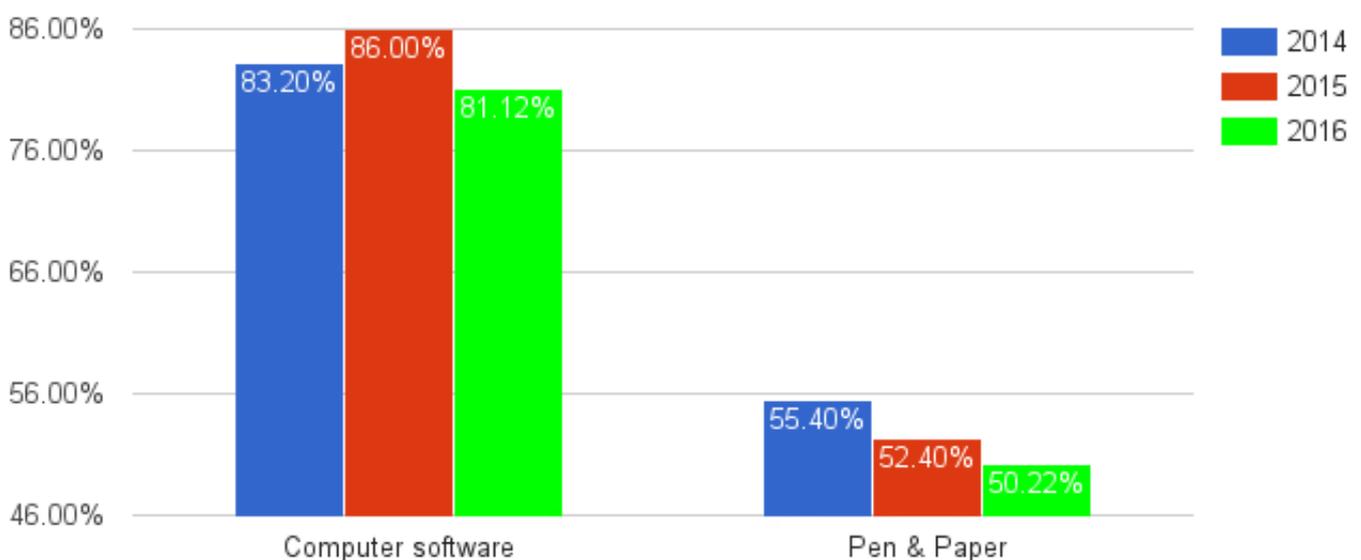
Is this indicative of a genuine decline in this sort of manual mind mapping? It's certainly possible when you compare with the uptake and growth in mobile and tablet app use on the following page. However, it's important to recognise that though the numbers are declining, they are still significant, with more than 50% of participants continuing to mind map using pen and paper in some form.

So we can be confident that pen and paper mind mapping is not going anywhere fast, though it may continue on a downward trend as people in general move ever more electronic in their activities, and software/apps become the norm for everything.

Interestingly we see a decline in the number of people who say they are using 'Computer Software' for mind mapping, but there is no discernible pattern over the three year period that would suggest this is significant on the basis of one year. However, when compared with the growth in web-based and mobile tools illustrated on the following page, it's possible that we may see a longer-term decline in what might be considered more traditional 'computer software', as people move away from 'ownership' of both hardware and software, and move to a world of multi-device, access anywhere applications.

Again, it is important to note however the difference in total numbers here, with more than 80% saying they use computer software for mind mapping, compared to less than 40% using 'Tablet' applications (see next page). So while the wider technology trends may point in the direction of a highly mobile future for mind mapping, there is still a long way to go before this will catch up or overtake the volume of users with installed computer software as their preferred means of mind mapping.

Which of the following did you use for mind mapping in the last week?



# Annual Mind Map Survey 2016

## Tools & Technology

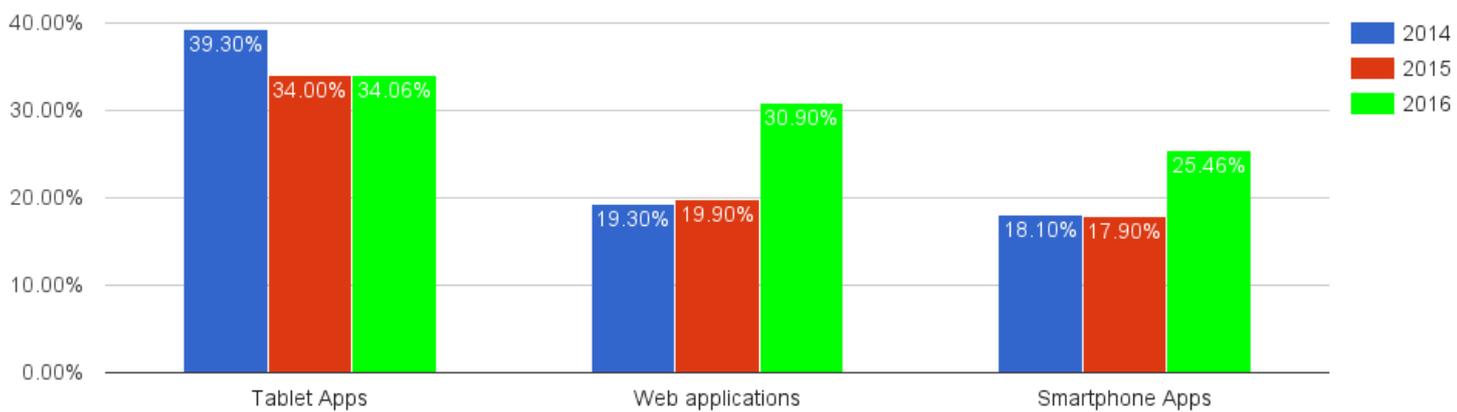
### Mobile & Cloud

When compared with the chart on the previous page, it's clear that web and mobile apps still have some way to go before they will challenge the established base of installed software users. However, the sizeable increase in the use of web applications (up from 19.90% to 30.90%) is something to pay attention to, as web applications are likely to play a key role in acting as a bridge between installed software and mobile applications, with people increasingly expecting multi-device, access anywhere tools for mind mapping, in the same way that they do for everything else.

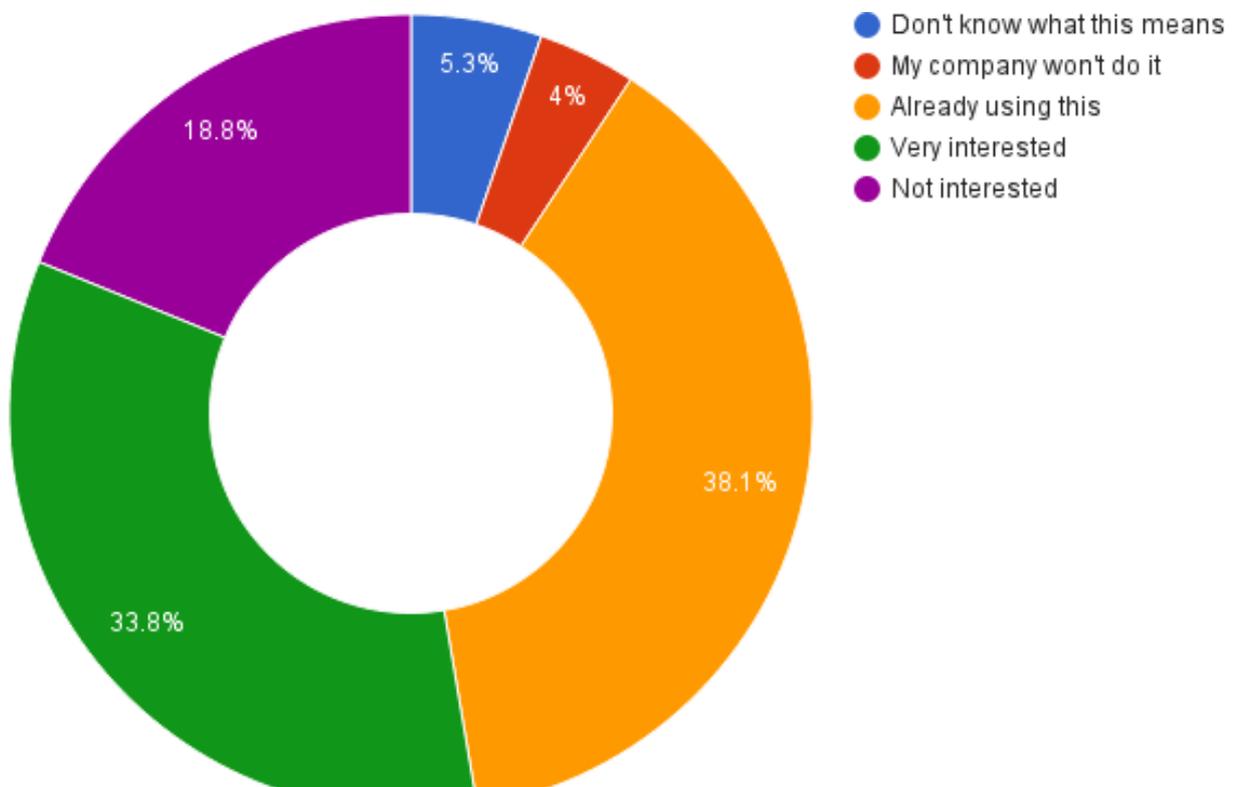
The 7% growth in use of smartphone apps is perhaps reflecting on the wider technology trend for ever-larger smartphones, with the emergence of the so-called 'phablet' possibly making mind mapping on a phone less fiddly, and more feasible than ever before.

When combined with a high proportion of 'already using this' and 'very interested' responses in answer to the Cloud question below, it seems clear that the access anywhere, and multi-device trend looks set to develop further.

Which of the following did you use for mind mapping in the last week?



How interested are you in the use of cloud-based mind mapping applications?



# Annual Mind Map Survey 2016

## Tools & Technology

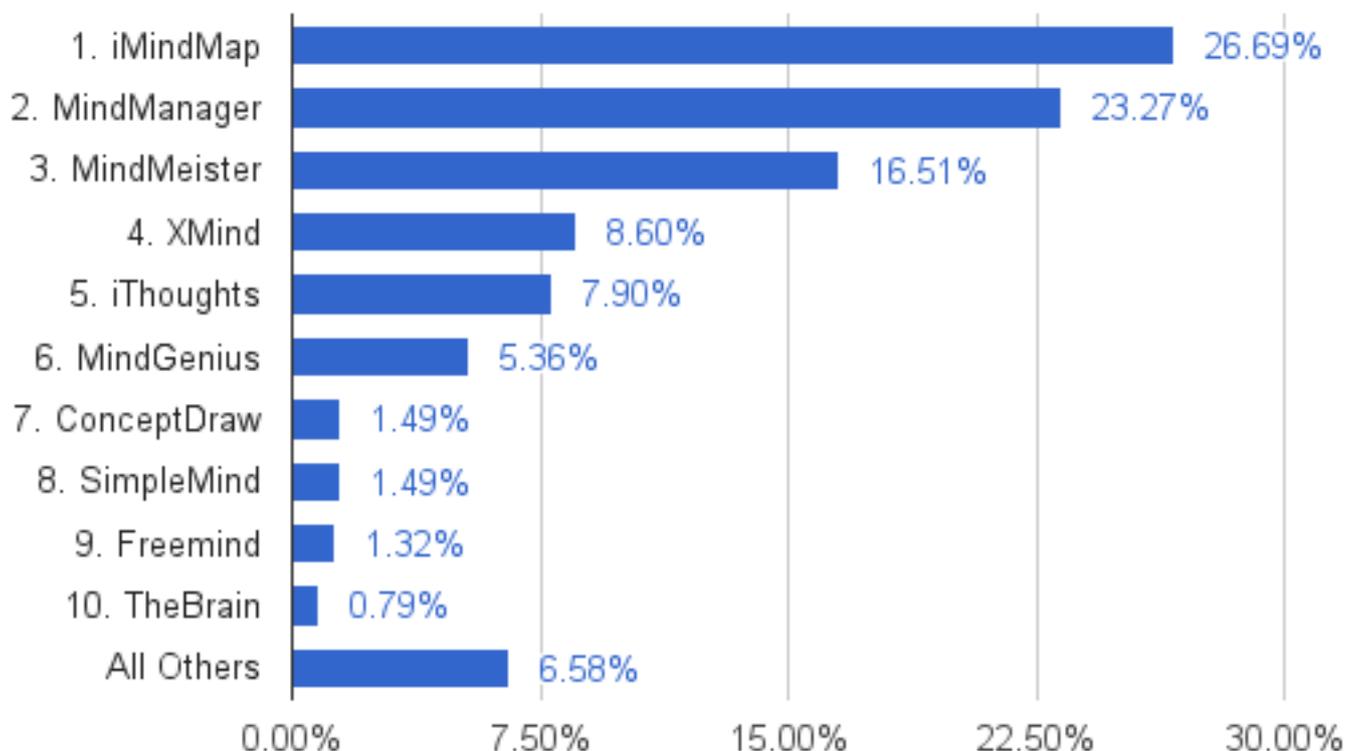
### Mind Mapper's Choice 2016

Every year we ask our survey participants to vote for their favourite mind mapping software to determine the 'Mind Mapper's Choice' award.

The Mind Mapper's Choice should be seen as a strong endorsement of all the performing software/apps listed, not only those who come out towards the top. With a huge number of mind mapping applications out there, to be recognised in this list by over 1,000 people who actually use these tools should be seen a strong validation of their quality.

With more people than ever before taking part in the Annual Survey in 2016, it is reasonable to say that this list is the best possible reflection of the mind mapping community view than has ever been collected before, and this is why we are delighted to share this list as the 'Mind Mapper's Choice' - it is after all, user validation of the highest level for those included.

#### Biggerplate Mind Mapper's Choice 2016: Top 10



# Annual Mind Map Survey 2016

## Tools & Technology

### Mind Mapper's Choice 2016: iMindMap

The votes are in and we are delighted to announce that iMindMap is officially the Mind Mapper's Choice of 2016!

Huge congratulations go to the team over at iMindMap for achieving first place in the 2016 rankings, with 26.69% of the votes cast by more than 1,000 mind map users!

A wonderful testament to the continuous evolution and innovation of the iMindMap product over successive years, the 1st place finish this year follows top 3 rankings for the previous two years, and now sets iMindMap at the top of the pile for 2016!

Chris Griffiths and the team over in Cardiff have done a wonderful job in bringing to life their vision of a software application that can replicate as accurately as possible the feel of hand-drawn mind mapping, and as the product has evolved over the last few years, the levels of activity among the iMindMap user community on Biggerplate has grown exponentially!



Currently the most shared mind map format on Biggerplate.com, it's fair to say that iMindMap achieving top spot this year did not take us by surprise, as this is a company, software, and user community that seems to have real momentum at present!

We look forward to seeing what Chris and the team have in store for us in 2016, and we thank and congratulate them for the innovation, energy, and enthusiasm that they bring to the mind mapping arena!

Learn more about iMindMap here:  
[www.iMindMap.com](http://www.iMindMap.com)

Say congratulations to the team on Twitter:  
[Twitter.com/iMindMap](https://twitter.com/iMindMap)



CEO Chris Griffiths (with bottle...) and some of his iMindMap team receive the good news from Biggerplate Founder Liam Hughes (disappointed to no longer have bottle...) at the fabulous new iMindMap HQ in Cardiff Bay... complete with boat!

# Annual Mind Map Survey 2016

## Tools & Technology

### Mind Mapper's Choice 2016: Top 10

Top 10 status in the Mind Mapper's Choice rankings should be seen as fantastic validation for all these mind map applications, and we send our congratulations to all those included!

Here's a run down of the Top 10 for 2016:

#### 1. iMindMap

Following a Top 3 finish in each of the previous years, iMindMap moves into top spot this year with more than a quarter of the total vote!

#### 2. MindManager

After finishing top of the pile for the previous two years, MindManager moves down into second place this year, but still with a fantastic portion of the user voting with more than 23% of the votes!

#### 3. MindMeister

Leaping up from a 7th place last year to finish 3rd this year is MindMeister, perhaps reflecting the trend towards web-based tools observed above? A great move up for the team in Vienna, who took 16.51% of the community vote this year!

#### 4. XMind

Retaining the 4th place position achieved in 2015, XMind once again performs strongly in the mind mapper vote, gaining 8.6% of the votes, and ensuring another excellent placement for the team from Hong Kong.

#### 5. iThoughts

Flying the flag for independent app developers everywhere, iThoughts completes the Top 5 with 7.9% of the vote, and retains the position achieved last year.

#### 6. MindGenius

Slipping a few places from their best ever 2nd place finish last year, MindGenius comes in this year in 6th place, with 5.36% of the total votes.

#### 7. ConceptDraw

Returning to the Top 10 after missing out in 2015, ConceptDraw comes back in at number 7 with 1.49% of the votes.

#### 8. SimpleMind

A new entrant to the Top 10 this year is SimpleMind, which gathered a highly respectable 1.49% of the community vote to land at the number 8 position this year!

#### 9. Freemind

Improving on a 10th place finish in 2015, Freemind moves up one place this year to 9th position, with just over 1% of the votes. A great validation of the lasting popularity of this open-source mind mapping application.

#### 10. TheBrain

After arriving in the Top 10 last year in 8th position, TheBrain slips down to complete our Top 10 this year, propping up the table in 10th place.

#### All Others

There were of course other applications available in the voting, and even more added to the 'Other' box by users, but sadly none of these gathered enough votes to merit a top 10 place this year. This is not to say that there is not excellent and exciting work being done elsewhere, and we're certainly keeping a close eye on a number of developers who came just short of that top 10 place this year!

#### Who got your vote this year?

Show your support and let them know on Twitter using the tag **#BPAR16**

# Annual Mind Map Survey 2016

## Tools & Technology

### Conclusions

There can be no doubt that the mind mapping sector is experiencing increasing influence from the wider technology trends that we see in the world, whether that is further adoption of cloud-based technologies, or the continuing rise of smartphones as the device of choice for all manner of activities. It is not the trends themselves that drive change, but rather the developing expectations of consumers that go with them.

The organisations that adapt best for those developing expectations are likely to be topping the Mind Mapper's Choice table in the years to come, and many of those featured in the Top 10 this year were praised (and chosen) by users based on a perception of continuing innovation, and a sense that they were providing for the core requirements of modern working with mind maps. This is a great testament to those developing mind mapping applications who have a challenging time balancing the need to push forward, with the need to bring along users who may still (not always of their own choosing) be relying on older systems and technology.

What should excite mind map users above all is the sheer speed and diversity of innovation efforts that are taking place in the mind mapping software/app world. We have a privileged position at Biggerplate in working with all of the leading mind mapping software developers, and it is safe to say that none are content with standing still! While there will always be some who are disappointed that their particular wishlist is not being catered for, developers are doing a tremendous job in bringing new features and functionality to their users, and this is true of those who made the Top 10, and a number of those who did not quite make it.

As always, the role of the end user when it comes to tools and technology is to let your views, ideas, and questions be heard. Be vocal, and be constructive. We can assure you that developers are listening closely!

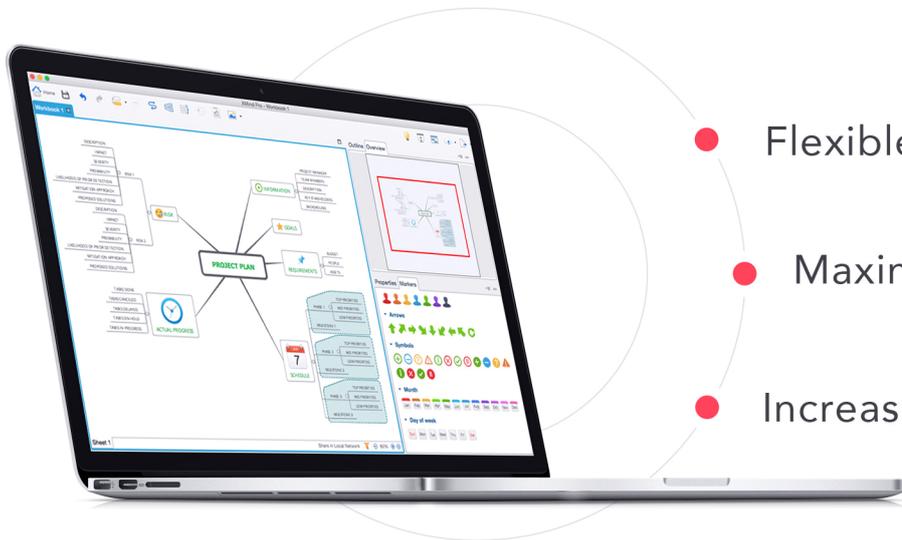




# Welcome To XMind

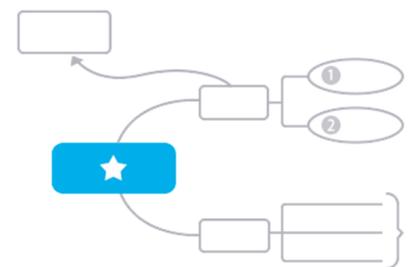
The most popular mind mapping software

Download XMind here



- Flexible, Effective and Easy to use
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- Increase your effectiveness

XMind works well on any desktop OS that makes it easy to organize ideas and thoughts with a variety of templates and themes. Also, it is completely Free.



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# Annual Mind Map Survey 2016

## Mapping the Future

### The Innovation Wishlist

As we look ahead to another exciting year for Mind Mapping, we look at what innovations and improvements mind mappers are hoping to see this year from their chosen software, and the industry as a whole.

We asked participants the following question:

#### **What mind mapping innovation would you most like to see in 2016?**

On the following pages we have tried to extract some of the most common requests, in an attempt to summarise the mind mapper's wishlist for the year ahead!



#### **Standard file format**

A desire for better and easier compatibility between different mind mapping applications was raised multiple times, not only in the innovation question, but also previously in the 'barriers to adoption' question, and clearly mind map users are now looking for more. Even where people did not explicitly use the words 'standard' or 'universal' format, there were mentions of improving import and export functions.

Our own experience over many years at Biggerplate is that people pay little attention to the file format when they download from our library ; they simply see a mind map, and they expect it to open and work on whatever soft-

ware they have installed. When this does not happen, they get confused and annoyed. Once again, it is not the developing technology that challenges developers, but the evolving expectations that go with it. Mind mappers increasingly expect to be able to send/receive/open/import/export in whatever software format they like, and we as an industry will need to pay attention.

This is not an issue that is going to go away anytime soon, and though some developers have done fantastic work in adding import/export functions to make life easier for their users, the hit and miss nature of this feature set across the board remains a source of frustration for many, and (most likely) a barrier to more widespread use of mapping.

This is definitely something that's on the Biggerplate wishlist too, and we'll be doing our bit to try and move things forward where possible, as we view better interoperability between applications as a key component to the long-term success of mind mapping.

Besides... look how happy these kids are when they successfully imported a mind map from one software into another. They're over the moon... and wouldn't we all like to feel like this...?

#### **Cross platform and access anywhere**

Building on the signals coming from the earlier sections of the report, there appears to be a growing demand/expectation from users that they be able to use their mind mapping applications on any device (with a consistent user experience), and be able to access their mind maps from anywhere. Again, the growing significance of the cloud and mobile devices looks set to shape some of the demand in mind mapping in the year ahead. Developers who cannot offer a consistent, multi-platform solution may find their users harder to hold onto in years to come.

# Annual Mind Map Survey 2016

## Mapping the Future

### The Innovation Wishlist (continued...)



#### Handwriting recognition

A number of survey participants identified handwriting recognition as the innovation they'd like to see most in the year ahead, so that they could 'hand-draw' their mind maps (remember the 50% on page 28) and have their software convert it into a nice digital mind map.

Interestingly, there are already some steps being taken in this direction, and we will attempt to compile a blog post about these efforts, and look at some potentially relevant apps in the near future.

This idea may be emerging as result of increased touchscreen use, and additional innovations like the new Apple Stylus for the iPad. Regardless; whether hand-drawing on a Tablet, or an electronic whiteboard, the ability to convert our scribbles into something digital, useable, and shareable would be pretty awesome and (by the look of things) very popular! It may also be a powerful means of providing those who prefer to create attractive and artistic hand-drawn mind maps with a modern means of working with, and sharing their creations.



#### Voice recognition

Ok, we were not so clear about this one, but lots of survey participants mentioned voice activation, recognition, navigation etc when asked what innovation they wanted most.

Probably/possibly a reflection of the growing use and sophistication of digital assistants like Siri/Cortana on our phones, it seems we would like to be able to do more and more talking, and less and less, well, doing...

Quite how people imagine this working is unclear, and our discussions here in the office centred on the difficulties that may emerge with voice-activated mind mapping once the mind map is actually built and you want to start moving things around and re-organising, which is of course, one of the most powerful functions of mind mapping software. While "add subtopic" may be simple enough as a voice command, what about "grab 3rd topic under second main topic and move over to 4th subtopic under 5th main branch... no sorry... 6th main branch... no not that one... no undo, go back... where did that hyperlink come from? No I do not want to call mum... or order pizza". We have only questions at this stage...!

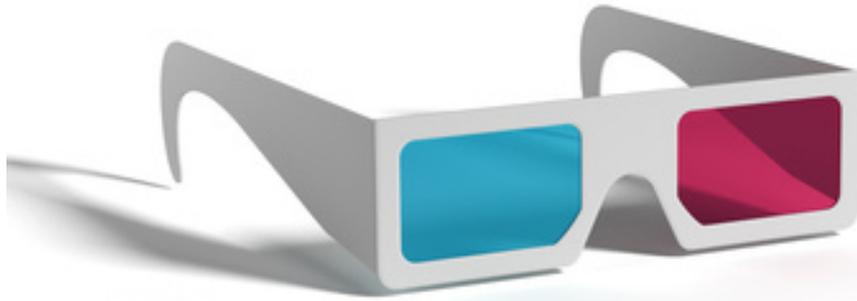


**What's on your mind mapping innovation wishlist?  
Share your ideas on Twitter using the tag #BPAR16**

# Annual Mind Map Survey 2016

## Mapping the Future

### The Innovation Wishlist (continued...)



### 3D, Holographic, Virtual Reality Mind Maps

A significant number of our survey participants were certainly looking to the future as they outlined their vision for 'true' 3D, immersive, holographic, virtual, augmented reality mind mapping...

Science fiction? Maybe not...

A number of mind mapping developers have been experimenting with 3D effects for a number of years, and there have also been some interesting experiments with products like Google Glass, and, more recently, Google Cardboard!

So, where will it end up? No idea... but if we get to wear cool glasses while we mind map, how can this possibly be a bad thing?

We'll do our best to scour the mind mapping landscape to find the most interesting experiments and developments in this particular area, and bring an update to our blog later this year!

## Conclusions

Clearly there is no lack of innovation potential in the mind mapping sector, and while ideas range from the extremely functional (improve import/export between mind map formats) to the extremely forward-thinking (I want to get in my mind map and walk around...) the exciting thing for us is that users are fully engaged with discussions and dialogue around the future of mind mapping products and the sector in general.

We can all benefit from such active participation, and even if not everyone will be satisfied with the innovations that emerge, by asking the community and listening to what they say, we can clearly collaborate to develop ever-better solutions.

Innovation does not always have to be hugely creative or disruptive, but can instead be simple incremental iterations to products that are already in themselves, inherently innovative.

Importantly, there is a role for all of us to play in trying to tackle some of the less glamorous innovation challenges that may in fact be holding us back collectively. While creating 3D mind maps in virtual reality environments using voice recognition might be an exciting prospect for the future, if in 5 years time people are still not easily able to exchange those mind maps between applications, then we will have surely sacrificed functional innovation for fanciful innovation. If mind mapping is to become a mainstream tool, we must address both.

# Biggerplate Outlook 2016

## Projects & Priorities

With more happening in the Biggerplate world than ever before, we thought it would be useful to outline a few key components of our 2016 plan, so that members can engage with us wherever they feel interested and able to do so!

### More Member Events

Following on from the successes of Biggerplate Unplugged and Brunch Club in 2015, our plan is to further develop our member events, so that we are more able to meet and collaborate with our community face to face.

Brunch Club has already resumed in 2016 with fully booked meetings taking place in Paris and Brussels this February, and of course, [Biggerplate Unplugged](#) arrives in New York on 10th March for the latest instalment of the Annual Mind Map Conference.

You can view details of any/all upcoming events from Biggerplate on our [Events Page](#)

### Expanded Training & E-learning

Biggerplate aims to be the best source of mind mapping content, learning, and community in the world. This second 'learning' element is something we will be attacking in a big way in 2016, as we look to expand our service delivery further into North America and Europe, both through our training workshops, and our mind mapping facilitation services.

Interested to bring Biggerplate thinking to your organisation? Visit our [Services Page](#) to learn more.



We will also be working to expand our range of online courses to provide easy access, on-demand learning options for people around the world who want to get the most out of their mind mapping software!

Don't forget, you can get 50% off all our e-learning courses before the end of March when you use the code **ANNUALREPORT50**

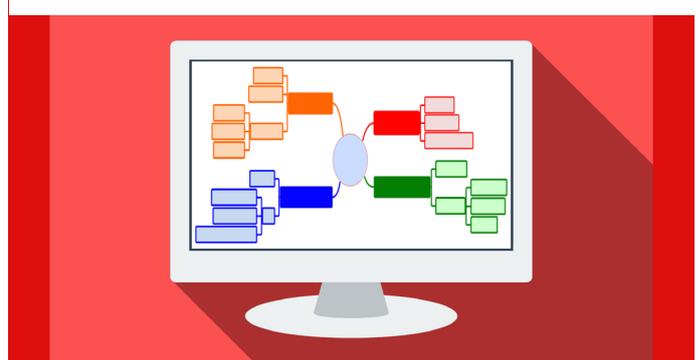
[View all Online Courses](#)



### Phase 2 Software Integrations

Expect to see more "Share on Biggerplate" buttons appearing in popular mind mapping software over the coming months as we work with our software partners to connect up the mind mapping ecosystem like never before!

Are you a software/app developer? Check out the [Biggerplate Developer Hub](#) to see what might be possible!



# Biggerplate Outlook 2016

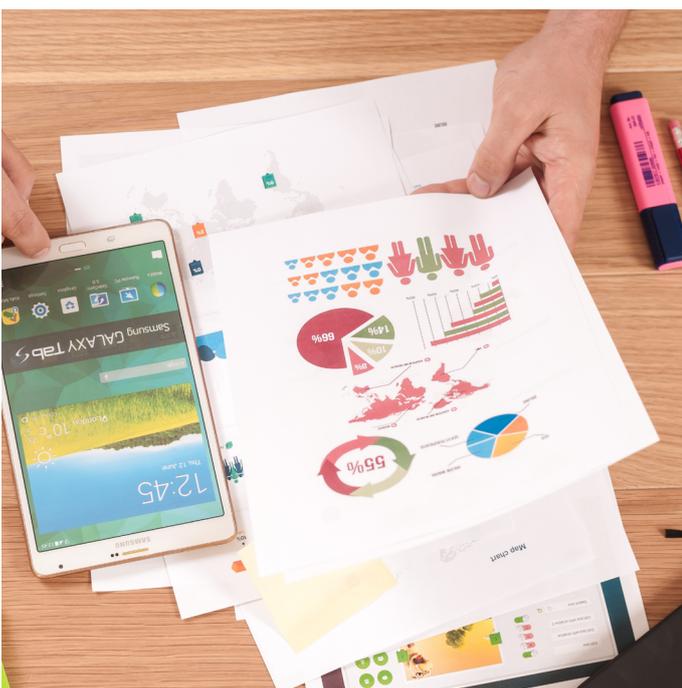
## Projects & Priorities (continued...)

### Research & Reports

We believe better data and research from the mind mapping world is essential if we are to collectively expand and develop our industry and rise to meet the needs of modern business and education.

As such, Biggerplate aims to play a central role in conducting ongoing research into the use of mind mapping worldwide, and build on our Annual Report with a series of smaller reports to follow. The data gathered in the Annual Survey provides a wealth of information that cannot all be included in this one report, so we plan to follow with additional blog posts and sub-reports that will expand further on some of the topics here, with specific focus on segments of the mind mapping community, such as country, software preference, and/or industry/job role.

We hope that our members will help us by continuing to engage and share their perspectives. A richer research picture will play a key role in shaping decision-making and innovation both at Biggerplate, and within the wider mind mapping sector.



### Biggerplate Version 3

Did you know that the current Biggerplate website came online in 2011, and is actually the second version of the mind map library?

Well, the site is starting to show a few signs of age, and while it still has plenty of life left in it, we will be starting the process of planning for Version 3 in 2016... which is exciting... and scary.

Exciting because a fresh start will enable us to more easily tackle some of our long-standing challenges, for example around on-going translation of the site, and ensuring a mobile-friendly experience for visitors. But more than this, it will enable us to strip out some of the weight that Biggerplate has gained over the years, and provide members with a leaner, faster, and easier to use resource that focuses on the three key elements of content (the map library), learning, and community. With a leaner and cleaner foundation comes opportunities for new and improved functionality for users who want to share mind maps (how about 'Map Albums' and Account Analytics perhaps...). Just as developers must continue to innovate and develop their offers, so must we. While it's fair to say we have achieved a strong position in the mind mapping world, we by no means consider ourselves the best in the world yet... and that remains the target.

So, we'll be spending a lot of time this year, preparing for a brand new site to come next year. You'll continue to see changes and improvements to the current site, as we use the existing platform to test ideas and functionality that may (or may not) make it into Version 3.

As always, we will be providing plenty of opportunities for our members to have their say on what should come in Version 3, and we look forward to collaborating with many of you over the course of 2016 as we plan for a BIG leap forward in 2017!!!

# Annual Mind Map Report 2016

## Conclusions

Compiling and writing this report each of the last 3 years has certainly been hard work, but is without a doubt among the most useful, enjoyable, and ultimately rewarding projects we work on in the year. And that's saying something!

The overall conclusion that we reach in reviewing the survey data and compiling the report is that the mind mapping sector is in a fantastic state of health, and has a number of exciting potential roads ahead, and almost limitless potential for growth. The fact that mind mapping software is still considered to be a relatively niche arena simply speaks to the scale of the opportunity that exists.

More exciting to us than any particular software, website, or technical innovation, is the fact the mind mapping community worldwide is lively, engaged, and playing a very active role in shaping the future of the arena. We sit in a privileged position at Biggerplate with fantastic opportunities to meet and engage with mind mappers from a range of backgrounds all around the world. There is a tangible energy, enthusiasm, and belief in what can be achieved, and an almost universal desire and willingness to participate and collaborate in defining the road ahead. There are industries (both niche, and mainstream) that would kill for this level of user engagement, and we must be collectively relentless in helping to nurture it, maintain it, and utilise it effectively to ensure the opportunity in front of us is not missed.

We would like to thank all those who participated in the Annual Survey this year, all those who engage with us on a daily basis at Biggerplate.com, and of course, the great partners and companies we have the pleasure of working with in this space. It is the combination of engaged users, and creative companies that gives the mind mapping world the momentum we see now. Long may it continue!

Bring on 2016.



**#BPAR16**