



Case Study

Ankush Chopra, Ph.D. Candidate, Fuqua School of Business, Duke University



“By giving me a holistic view of information, enabling me to both plan and execute on a single platform—and doing it all unobtrusively—MindManager has increased my personal productivity manifold.”

ROI

Significantly faster brainstorming (estimated time savings: 67 percent); information capture, organization, and retrieval (50 percent); writing process (67 percent); and planning (35 percent).

Customer Profile

Chopra became very interested in the impact of technological change on business while he worked in various project, product, and finance manager roles with Citibank, Procter & Gamble, and Reliance Industries in India, Singapore, the Philippines, and Japan. He chose to understand the phenomenon in greater detail through a doctoral education in management at Duke University. Says Chopra: “I wish I had mind-mapping software when I led a large-scale organizational transformation project in Asia. It would have been invaluable bringing together dozens of projects, different levels of customers, more than 50 managers, and a hectic travel schedule.”

Information management/Project management

Ph.D. candidate relies on MindManager to increase academic productivity.

Like most graduate students, Ankush Chopra focuses his life around information: locating it, retrieving it, collating it, analyzing it and generating it. As Chopra pursues a Ph.D. in Management at Duke University's Fuqua School of Business, he counts on Mindjet MindManager to tie together all the elements of his academic life.

By his own estimate, Chopra has read more than one thousand papers and books—any number of which might inform his dissertation or be pressed into service as he tackles his upcoming three-day comprehensive field exams. Of course, Chopra also fulfills that most quotidian student responsibility—attending classes and seminars, where he must capture lecture and discussion content, decide what is important, and assimilate this information alongside the many assigned texts and other content sources.

Studying, researching, writing, identifying market trends, evaluating competing theories, exploring career options, and more—it's a challenging mix. It's not surprising that, with so much going on and so much information to grasp as well as to produce, Chopra felt that moving his various projects forward was simply taking too much time.

Putting the pieces together

To try to streamline his workload, Chopra tried using an electronic calendar application, reference software, text documents, spreadsheet files, notes jotted on paper, and bookmarked websites.

“It was a less than optimal solution with several drawbacks resulting in inefficiency and ineffectiveness, which I really couldn't afford,” says Chopra. “Information took too long to find and even then I couldn't be sure I'd retrieved everything I needed. Perhaps most damaging, the links between different pieces of information were not always clear in my mind. In short, I lacked a holistic view. And fragmented information meant I was leaking productivity.”

Fragmentation also plagued Chopra's writing. He would begin from a short outline, adding details as they came to mind. “This led to incomplete and disorganized first drafts, which required significant time and effort to improve. What I needed, but didn't know at the time, was a single platform from which I could plan, control, and execute all my activities.”

Ease of use, speed, Microsoft Office support make all the difference

Chopra became interested in “mind mapping” in April 2005 when he bought a tablet PC and read several tablet blogs that championed the software category. “I immediately fell in love with the mind-mapping concept,” he says, then began testing several free and commercial products to see if they could help him prepare for his comprehensive exam. In the end, he chose Mindjet MindManager.

“First I was taken by MindManager's tablet-friendly inkability feature and intuitive operation. I could get started without first reading the manual and, because it's gestures-based, I could work without buttons and toolbars—the software is basically invisible to me. Later I learned how fast it lets you work and how well it integrated with Microsoft Office.”

Chopra bought the package expressly to help with his comprehensive exams but has extended its use into virtually every area of his academic life. That includes taking notes during seminars and presentations. “Creating these visual maps enables me to better comprehend incoming information and, obviously, to go back and retrieve it quickly.”

The upshot, he says, is significantly enhanced productivity, particularly in four regards: quickly generating usable ideas; quickly capturing, organizing, and retrieving

Challenge

Efficiently capture information from a broad range of sources and repurpose that information for a variety of academic projects and goals.

Solution

Implement Mindjet MindManager as the central repository and authoring application .

Product

Mindjet MindManager

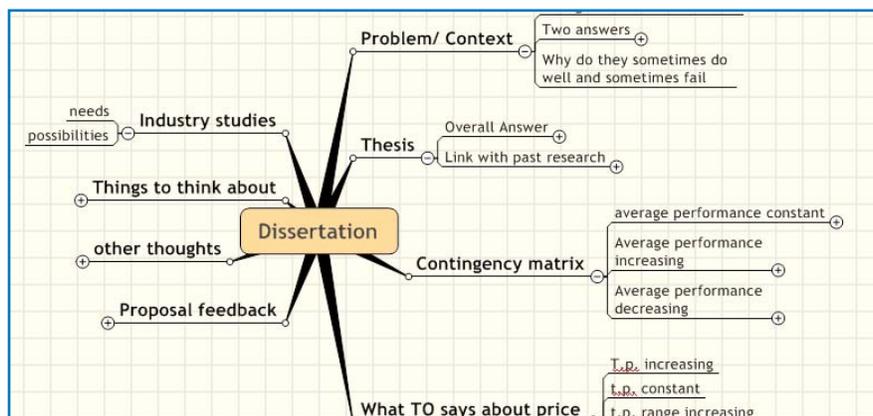
Result

Better organized, easily accessed information contributing to overall academic success.

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information; improving the writing process and the writing itself; and making planning a breeze. "My use of mapping software showed tangible results very quickly. It paid for itself during my comprehensive exams, and has paid me back many times since. I do most of my work in it."



Information management with Mindjet MindManager

Organize and retrieve information fast

Comprehensive field exams, with their broad scope of inquiry, require doctoral students to draw on all manner of information relevant to their area of study. From this wealth of information, the student must quickly identify and assimilate precisely that subset of information needed to address each question.

"MindManager enabled me to quickly extract key concepts from literally thousands of papers and books, and then connect them to others with similar concepts—and I can do it all in a single map," says Chopra. "During the comprehensives, instead of slogging through Excel files in 20 or more categories, I was able to search the domain quickly—probably four times as fast as before. As a result, instead of looking for information I was able to spend much more time thinking through issues and providing logical answers."

Brainstorm and write more effectively

Mapping enables Chopra to generate more ideas in less time than ever before. And the process of mapping the information simultaneously creates the paper's structure. As a result, he says he arrives at a final version in one-third as many drafts as was formerly required.

"Mapping information and ideas makes me a better and faster writer. I can produce more ideas in 15 or 20 minutes than I would sometimes come up with after working for days—an amazing head start that just adds momentum to my work. And the visual presentation of information enables me to see the links among all my ideas. Instead of starting from an outline and then rewriting the piece 20 times, I add ideas as they come and arrange the narrative later, usually hitting a polished outcome in fewer than six drafts. It's a huge improvement."

Plan and execute simply

MindManager is the first application Chopra fires up whether he's working on his desktop or tablet PC. His "Goals" map, for instance, shows him the current week's key tasks, how they roll up to his larger goals, and the progress he's made to date.

"Creating a map helps me jumpstart every project. Instead of taking hours, now, within minutes, I have a clear set of goals, next steps, potential issues. Moreover, I can see all aspects of a project in front of me so I don't miss anything important."

All this information could become overwhelming. So Chopra tags various parts of his maps with icons that represent different things—say, more information is needed, or a concept needs to be more fully developed. At a later stage, he simply filters the map to reveal only those icons.

"Mapping turned out to be the perfect fix for productivity leaks in my life. By giving me a holistic view of information, enabling me to both plan and execute on a single platform—and doing it all unobtrusively—MindManager has increased my personal productivity manifold." 

To find out how other leading organizations have benefited from Mindjet MindManager, visit www.mindjet.com/casestudies.