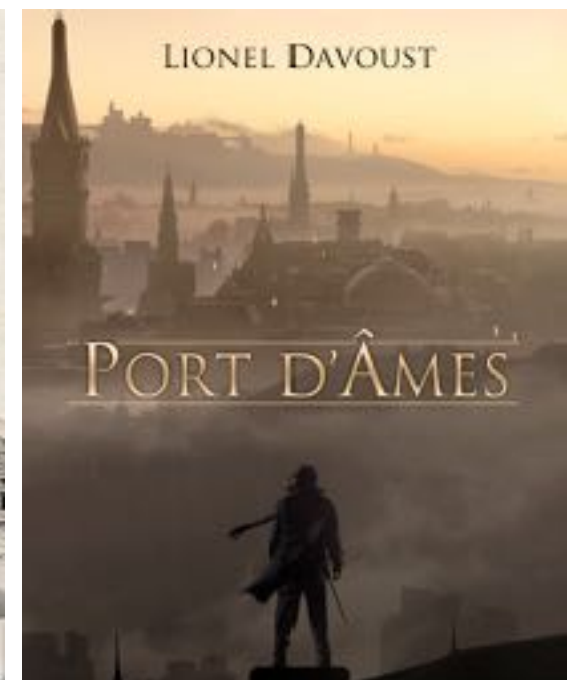


Computer tools for the writer

Worldcon 75, 2017, Helsinki

Hello world 😊

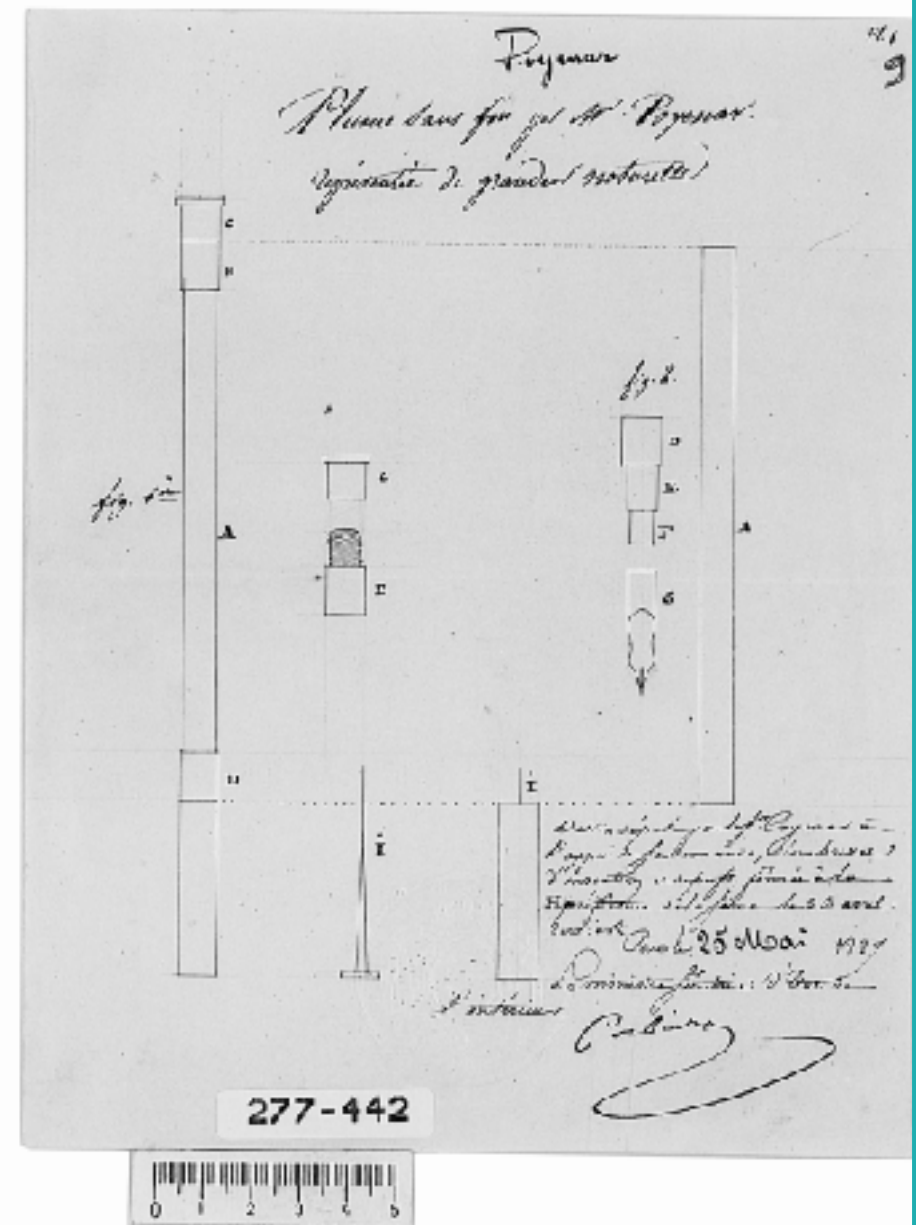




A geeky story

Can we hack creativity with tools?

Things to look for... backed by some science and a **lot** of use.



"Isn't all this enough?"

Absolutely. And yet...



... it's the 21st century, dude

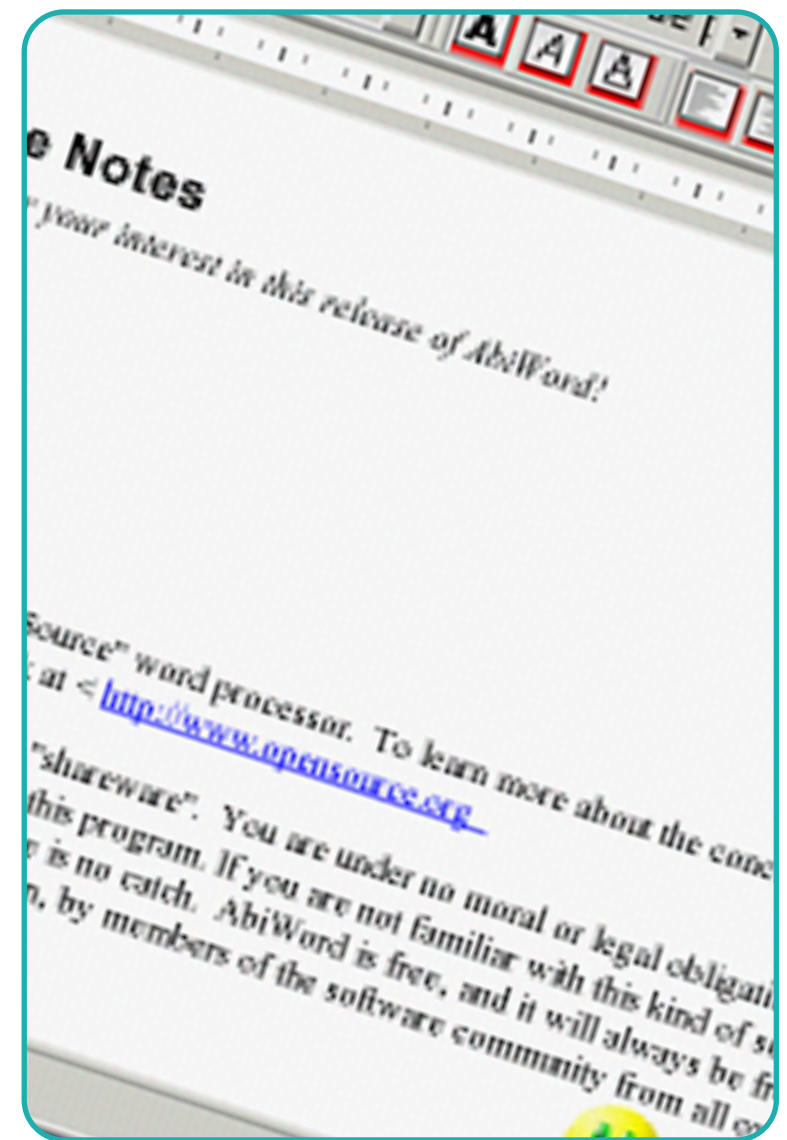
Can we work "better"?

To support the writing?

Huge offer! Let's consider...

- Why writing software?
- Supporting the thinking
- Supporting the writing

➤ **The best tool is the one
you use**





Why writing software?

Creativity and “flow”

(Mihály Csíkszentmihályi)

- **Maximum focus**
- **Over a long time**
- Challenge Vs. feedback
- Difficulty Vs. novelty
- “Play channeled by work”
(Kourosch Dini)



To write “better”?

- Make it easier, faster
- More depth & complexity?
- More fun!



In order to...

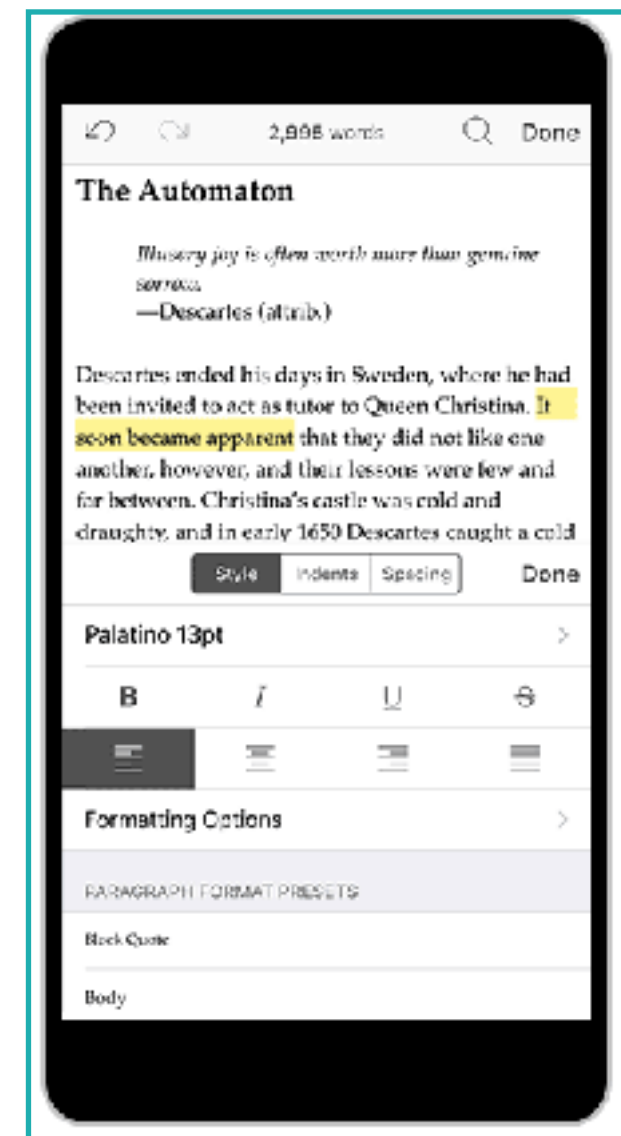
- Enter the “flow” state
- Help the mind along



Make it easier, faster?

Qualities to look for

- Lower the barrier of entry (immediate, ubiquitous?)
- Aesthetics (interface tastes, simplicity?)
- To free the mind (focus, flow)
- Divide a project in smaller "tasks"



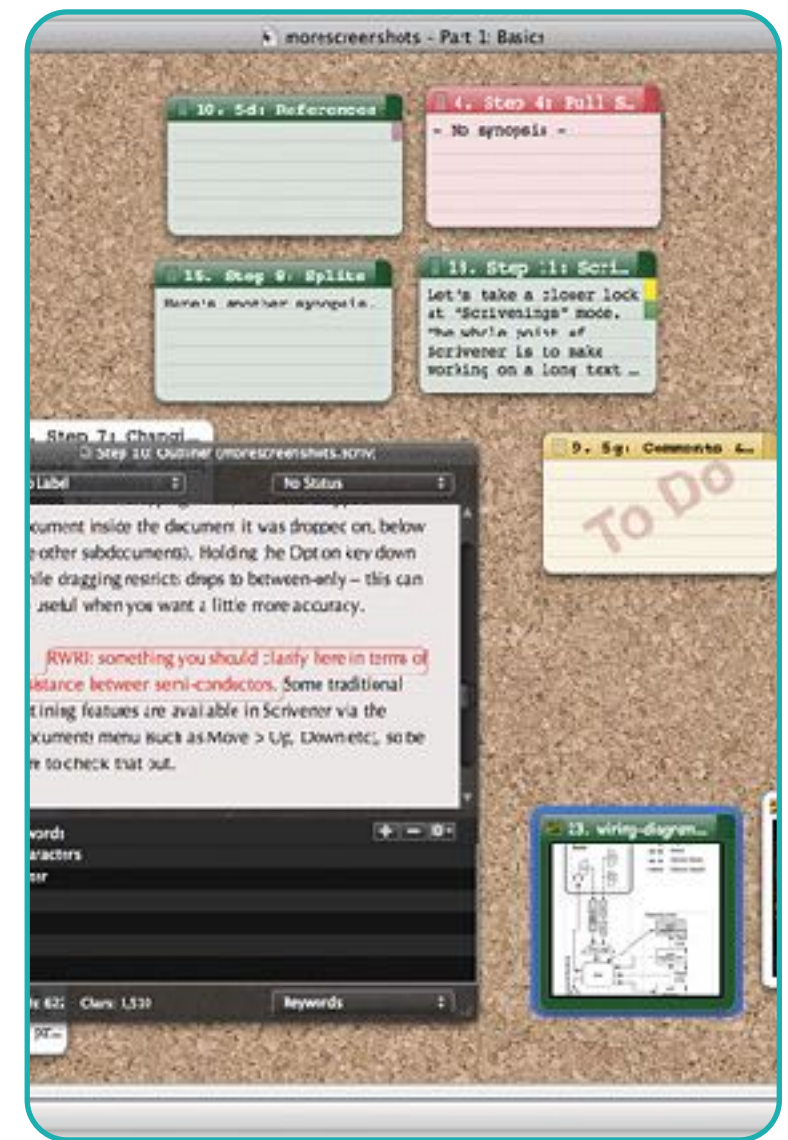
More depth & complexity?

Channel the inspiration

- Incubate (ideas)
- Structure (outlining)

Organize your information (micro & macro levels)

- Around the story (reference)
- Inside the story (coherence, balance...)



Pros & cons



- Ubiquitous
- Easy to organize
- Global view
- Reuse of material
- Backup



- Constraining?
- Indirect, virtual?
- Learning curve
- "Cold"

➤ **Some references**

What to look for

- Suited to your lifestyle (mobile?)
 - To your workflow (architects Vs. gardeners)
 - Doesn't impinge the creative process (! useless questions you don't want to answer)
- **Flexible** (customizable)
 - **Powerful** (depends on your needs)



Museo Sumaya, CC-BY-SA

To support the thinking

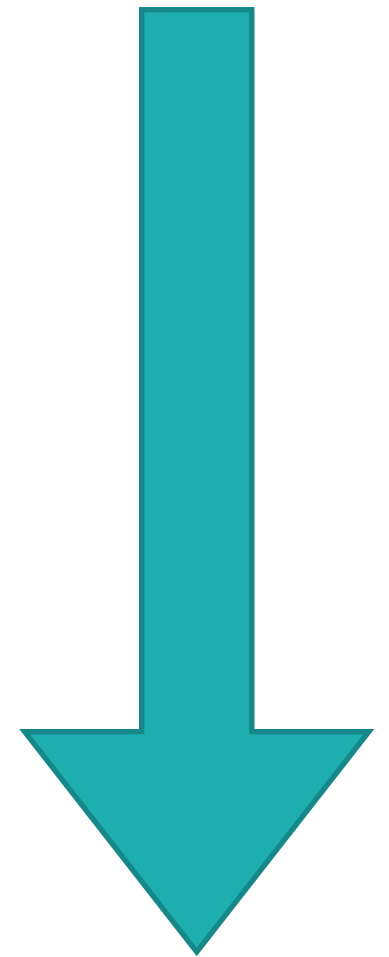
From incubation to reference

Incubation techniques (ideas)

- Mind-mapping
- Outlining (linear or "snowflake")

Reference management (choices)

- Extrinsic (research)
- Intrinsic (created)



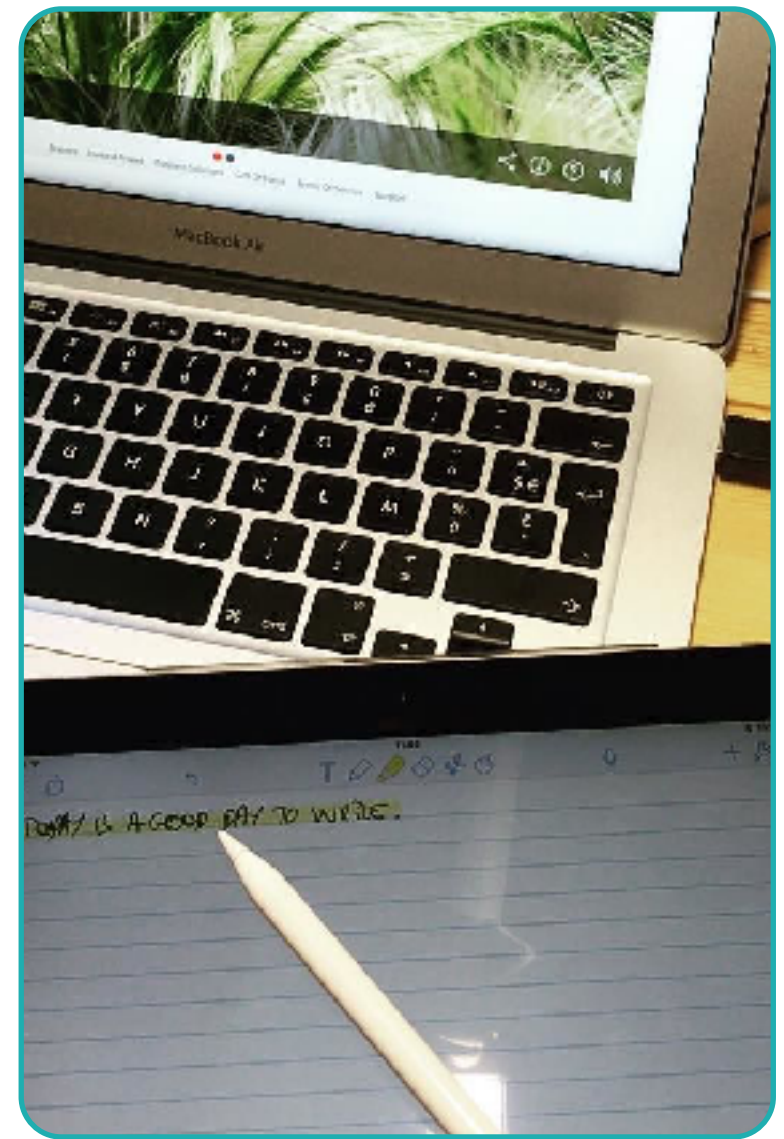
The benefits of scribbling

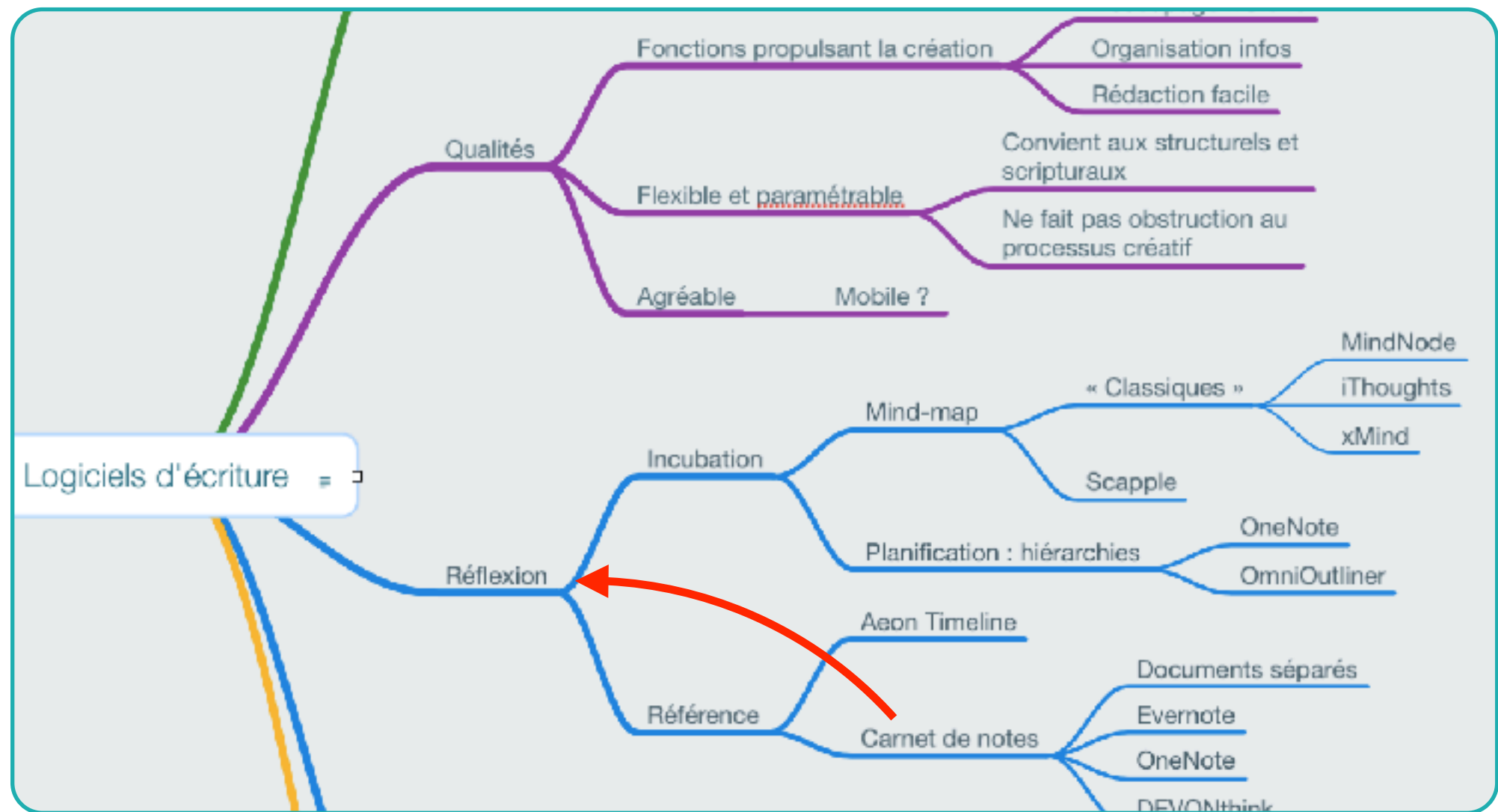
- Kinesthesia of writing
- Doodling, drawing...

So what?

- iPad Pro + Pencil
- Surface + Pen (W10 hybrids)

**Tastes in gear and software
trump all...**





Mind-mapping

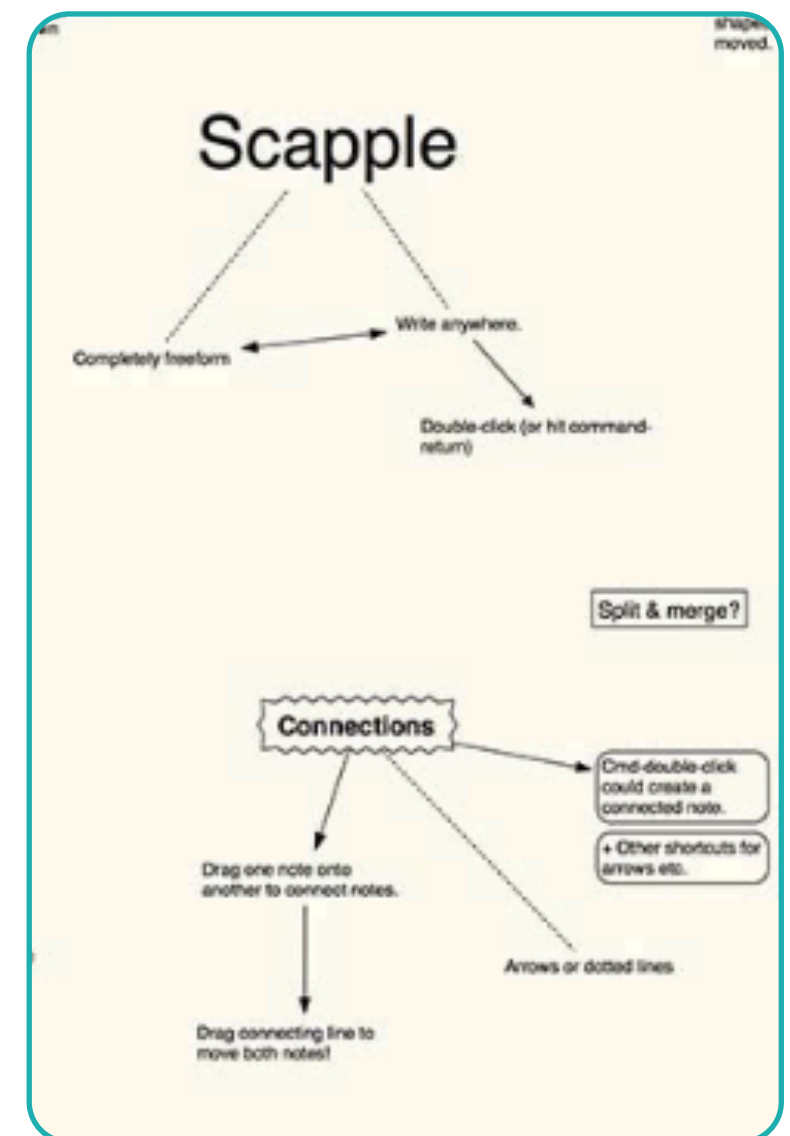
Mind-mapping software...

Far too many

- Mindnode (Mac / iOS)
- XMind (Windows / Mac)

A special case...

- Scapple



Outline & reference

“Personal Information Managers”. Consider:

- Easiness of organisation
- To broaden and deepen subjects
- Content capture (web, notes) (mobility?)

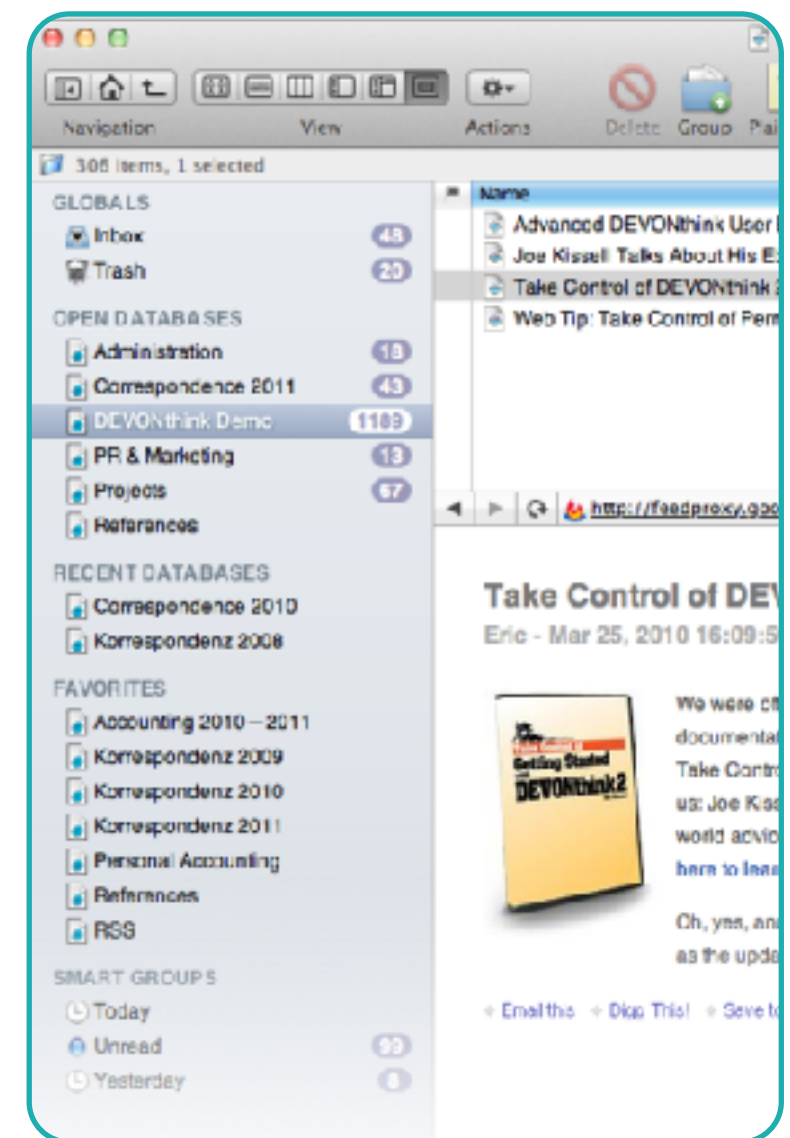
Also in pro writing software...

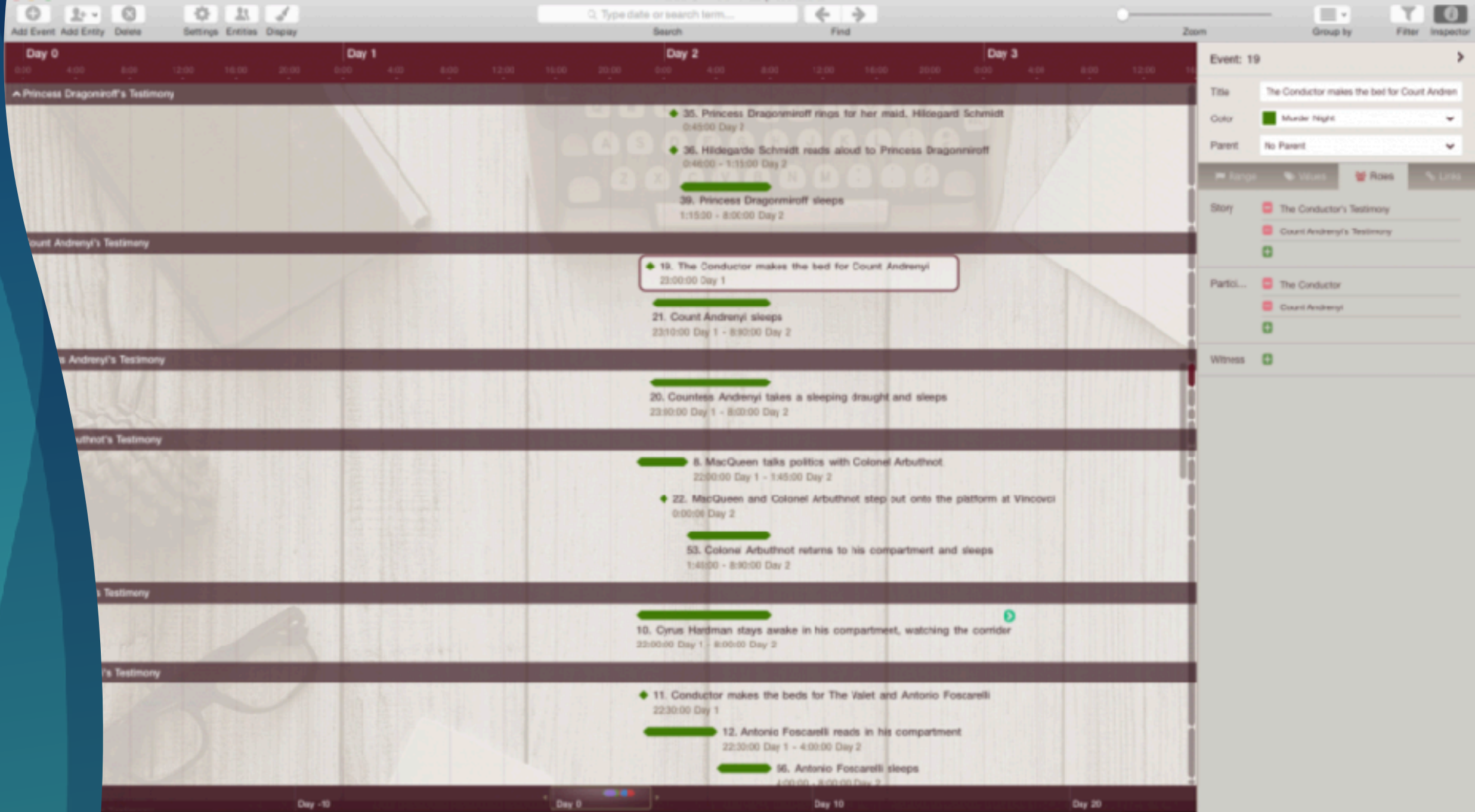


Personal information managers

! « If it's free, you're the product. »

- OneNote (privacy?)
- Evernote (price, privacy, sorting?)
- DEVONthink (Mac)
- Your favorite word processor
- ...





Aeon Timeline

Compiling the Draft

The main purpose of Scribener is to gather together material that will help you write a long piece of text (whether novel, thesis or factual book), which may be structured as individual files in the binder but which can easily be output as one large file. Thus, you write, gather and organise the material for your manuscript in the Draft folder, and when you are ready to export or print the manuscript as a whole, you use Compile Draft (⌘-C) in the File menu, which takes the contents of that folder, formats it as you specify, and outputs (or prints) it as a single document. Using the various settings available in these panes, you can export or print your manuscript however you like – and regardless of how the files are formatted in Scribener itself.

Compile settings are an intrinsic part of your project. They will be saved with the project and travel with it if you move it to another machine. The available presets are global, however, and can be applied to any of your projects. You can also save custom setups as your own presets to be used in this same fashion.

Select from a number of handy presets using the Format As* drop-down menu, and then supply a target format using the Compile For* drop-down menu. If you require more detailed control of the exported file, you can click the expansion arrow to the right of the preset selection menu to reveal the expanded Compile interface.

20.1 Expanded Co

The expanded Compile interface of the Format As* drop-down is a process. With some formats, like

The Compile panel is arranged pertaining to the currently selected on the options in this list will reveal

and you export your settings into your own saved templates via the Format As* drop-down.

At any point, you can hold down the Option key. This will convert the Cancel and Compile buttons to Reset and Save, respectively. Reset will revert all changes you have made back to the last saved version (or preset default if you have never used compile for your project before). The Save button will dismiss the Compile sheet, but save your settings before doing so. This is useful when you want to make a change to your export settings, but do not want to actually compile the document yet.

20.2 Option Panes

Each export format has a variety of features available for customisation. Some of the tabs will be available to all formats, but some are only available to certain types, and others only appear for single specialised formats. Since there is a good deal of duplication, this section will go over each of the available tabs. It will be noted in each section which formats the tab is relevant to.

20.2.1 Contents Pane

This option pane is a core feature available to all export formats.

The Contents pane is where you define which parts of the Draft Scribener will use to

in several tools of varying scope. expand-down menu at the very top of all have the Draft selected (which or started with a template).

if the book, or are working in a path, you can use this drop-down contains you select will include subfolders, its descendants. You 7. All of the some files included chapters folder itself, but nothing

Collection to be used the content certain things to consider

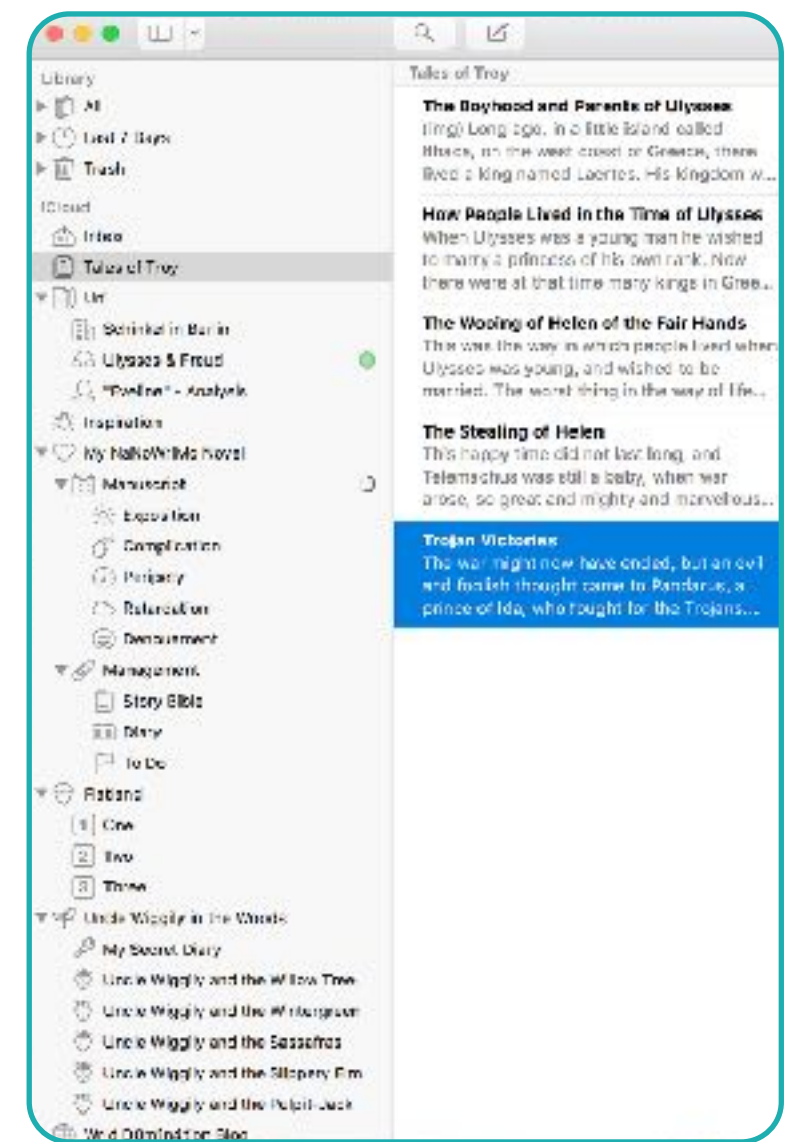


To support the writing

"Pro" writing software

Support creativity without obstruction

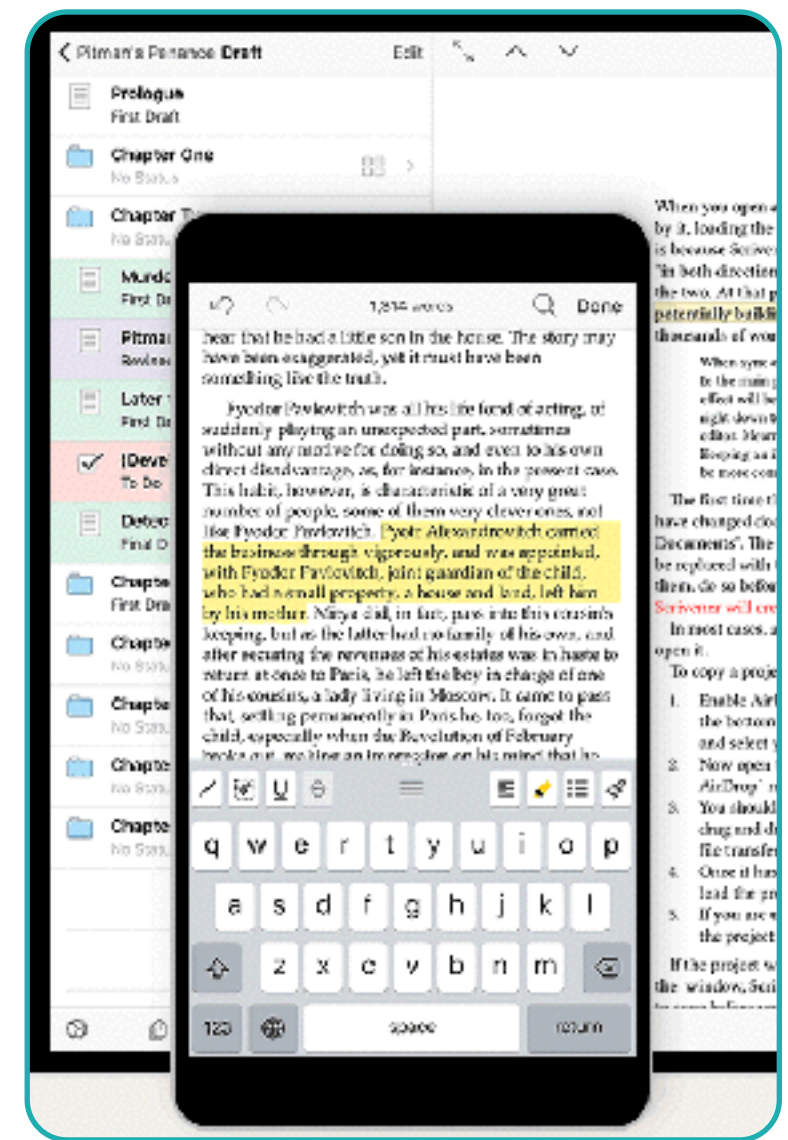
- Total flexibility ("writing canvas")
- Allows you to outline in detail (or not)
- Keep track of the writing AND the reference



The best (IMO): Scrivener

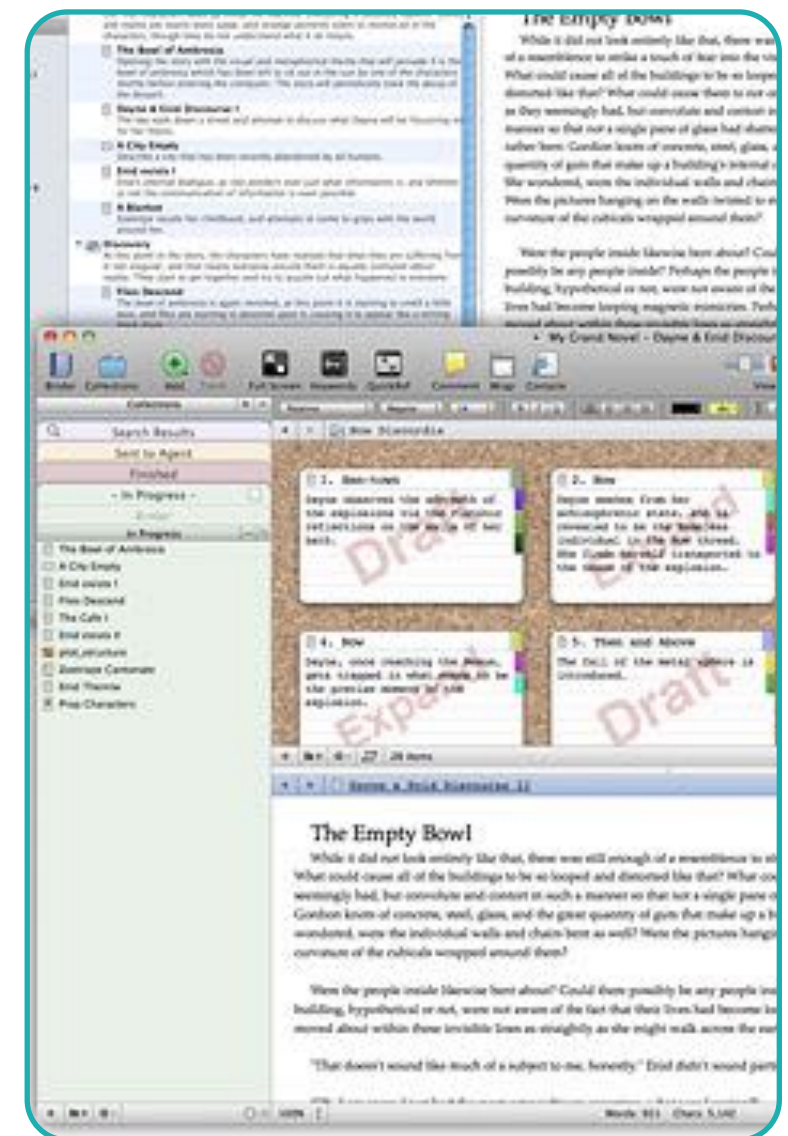
- Hierarchical word processor (∞)
- Reference + production ➤ export ("compiling")
- Outline view, card view (move around freely)
- Keywords & status
- Workflow tools (statistics...)

Mac, Windows, iOS (articles and links)



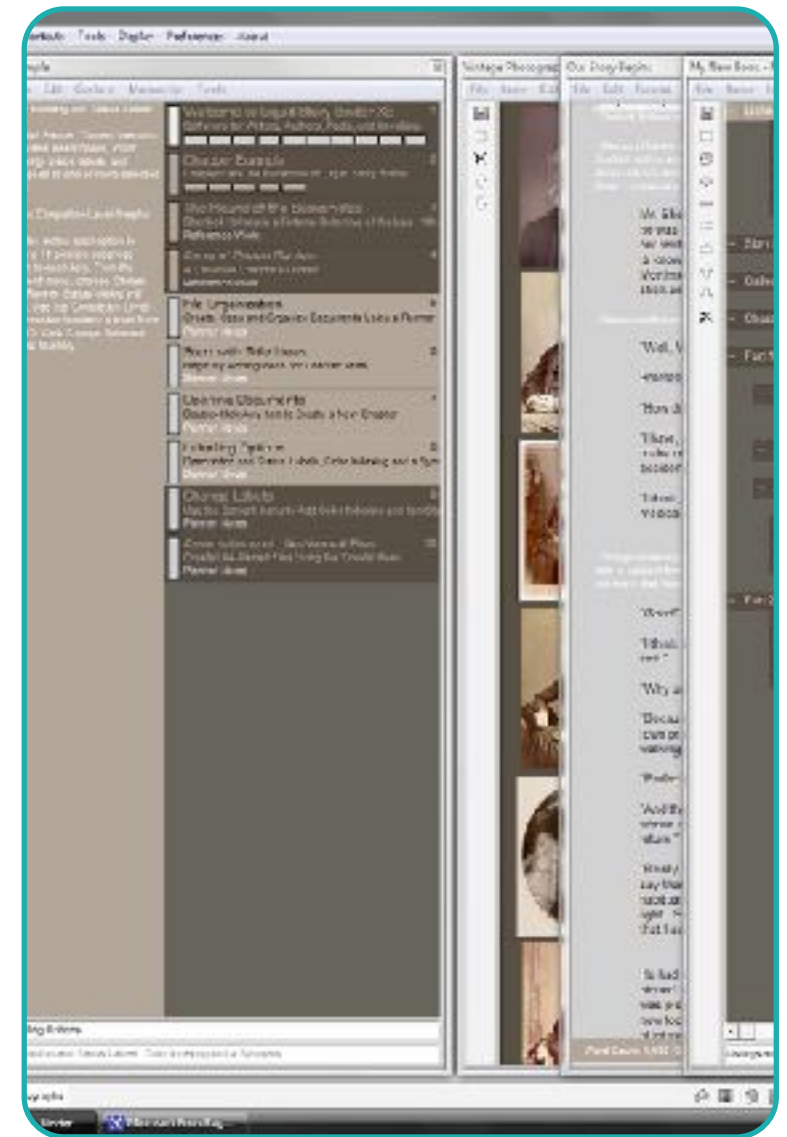
Caveats...

- **Do the tutorial!**
- LOTS of features (use'em or leave'em)
- **!** Compiling
- **For production and not (really) rewriting / correcting**



Scrivener alternatives

- **Ulysses** (Mac / iOS)
- Outline mode of your word processor!
- (Liquid Story Binder, Writer's Café, yWriter...)
- Scriptwriting: Final Draft

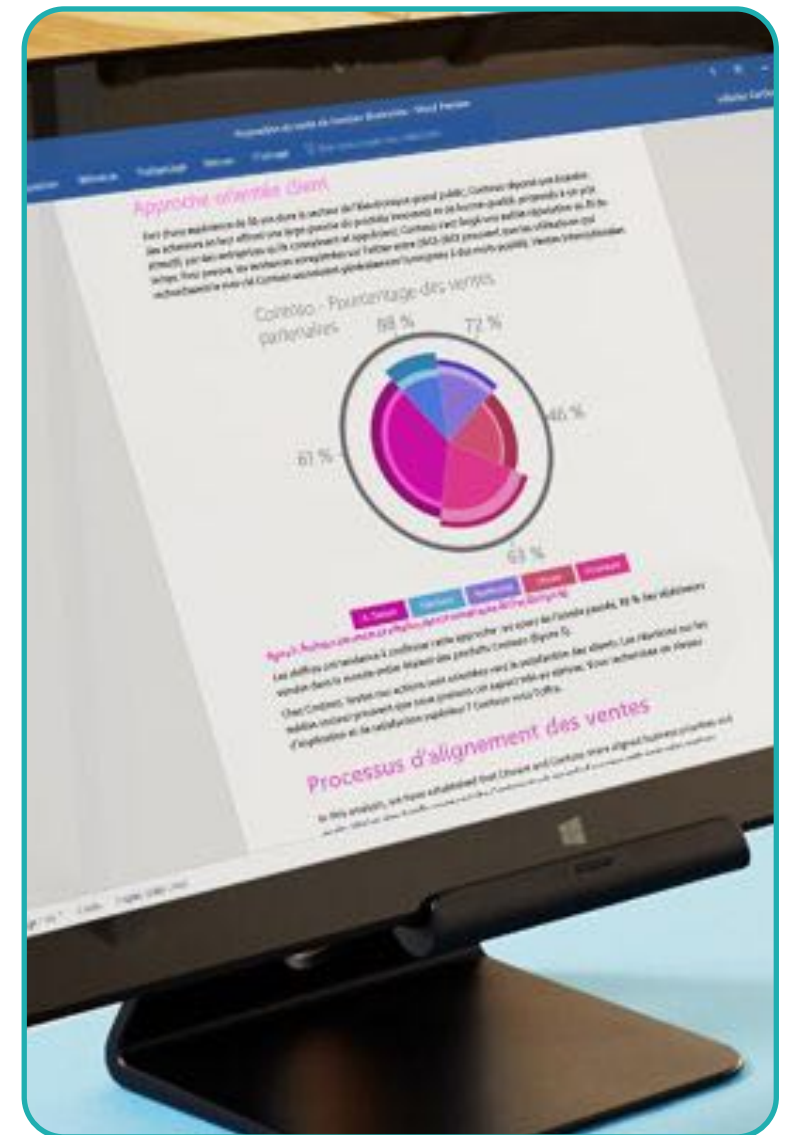


Classical word processors?

Can't escape good ol' .doc(x)...

- Finish and polish
- Formatting?
- File exchange and editorial rewrites (publishing standard)
- 3rd-party correction packages

➤ **Microsoft Word or LibreOffice**
(not StarOffice...)

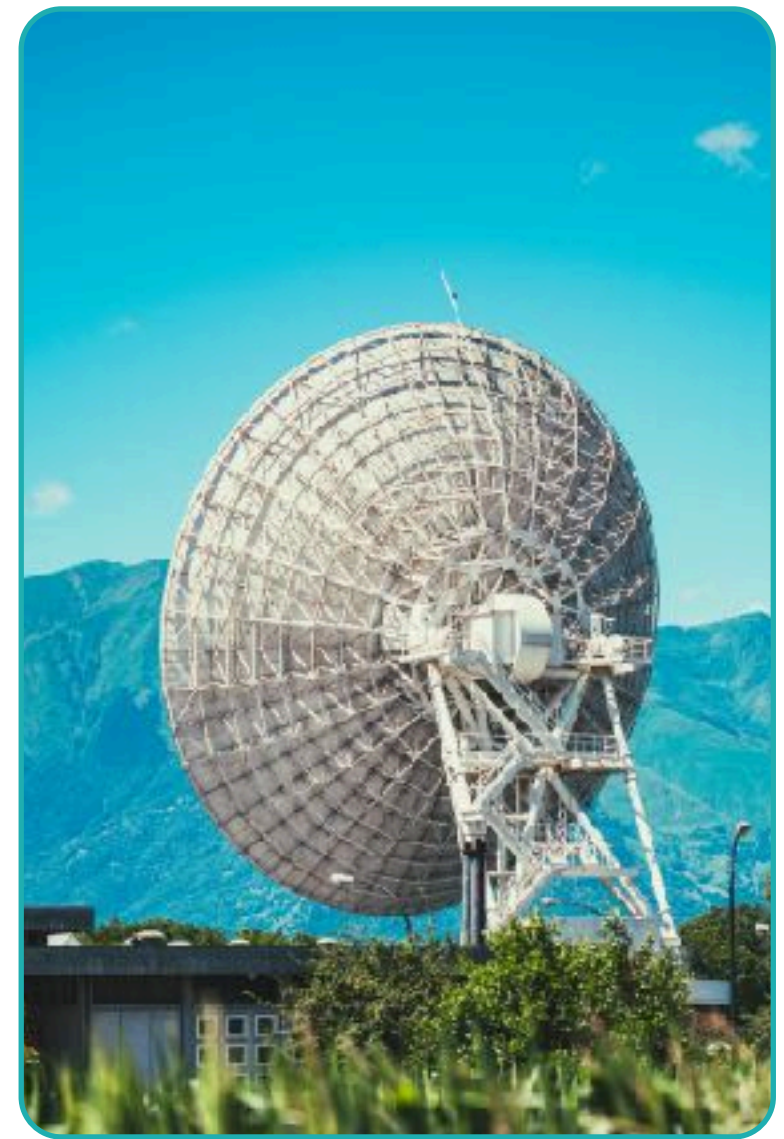




Conclusion: design *your*
workflow

The role of tools

- Not magical. They **support / propel you further**
- An **investment** (learning curve / time / personal approach...)
- With a return (**pleasure, efficiency...**)
- As many as you need, as few as you can



They fit into habits and workflows ► **define yours!**



Thank you for your attention



Reviews and references (in French!)

<http://lioneldavoust.com>

Questions ?

... bonus ?

Productivity tools

- TextExpander
- Focus@Will
- OmniFocus (Getting Things Done, David Allen)
- Dropbox (or similar)
- ... a Mac

