

THEBRAIN[®] 7

The Ultimate Digital Memory

A Guided Tour

Companion for using Version 7 of TheBrain.
Posted April, 2012

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Introduction

The best way to build your comfort level with your Brain is to build one yourself—with your very own hands. This guided tour will walk you through the basics, pointing out items of interest along the way. There's no need to take notes and you'll never get left behind, because you'll be going at the most strategic pace—your own.



During this tour, you'll be asked to enter specific information to make it easier to refer to items and areas as the tour proceeds. Naturally, when you're on your own, you'll use your own ideas to create Brains that reflect your thinking.

Here are the sign posts you'll see along the way:



Enter here—the startup action for this phase of your guided tour



Point of interest—take out your virtual camera



Tip—where you can find more details about this step your guided tour



Take five—this is a good place to take a break if you want one



Exit here—this marks the end of your guided tour

Let's go!

A Guided Tour of TheBrain

Part 1: Explore the Brain Window

Itinerary: You'll start up TheBrain, create a new Brain, and tour through the components of the Brain window.



Start up TheBrain, unless it's already running. You can select TheBrain from the Start menu.

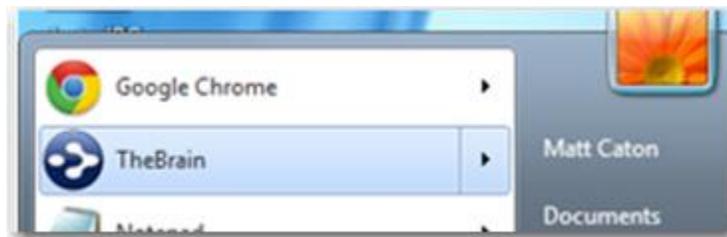


Figure 1. Starting TheBrain

Start Up

When you start, you must log in to your Brain account. This enables integration with any subscriptions you may have. The **Welcome** dialog box provides the ability to sign up for an account and also provides a link for choosing to not connect to any server.



Figure 2. TheBrain 7 Welcome Screen

If you do not have a Brain account, click the **Sign Up** button to create one. If you do not wish to run a registered version of TheBrain, click the **Do Not Connect to the Server** link to run the free version of TheBrain.

1. Click the **New Brain** button on the welcome screen (or click the **File** menu, then click the **New Brain** command).
2. In the empty field, type: **Tour**

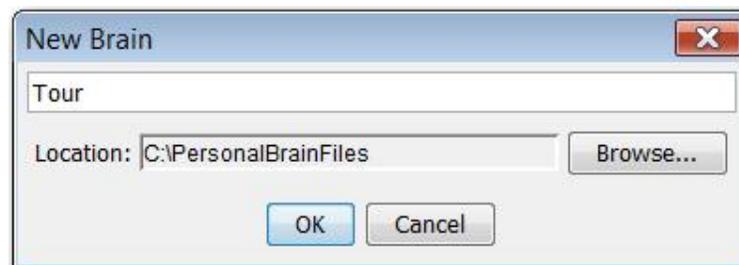


Figure 3. New Brain Dialog Box

Notice that the Location field displays the path of the folder in which your Brain will be created. You can use the **Browse** button to change the location, if necessary.

3. Press the **Enter** key or click the **OK** button to finish creating a new Brain named "Tour."

Your screen should look similar to this:

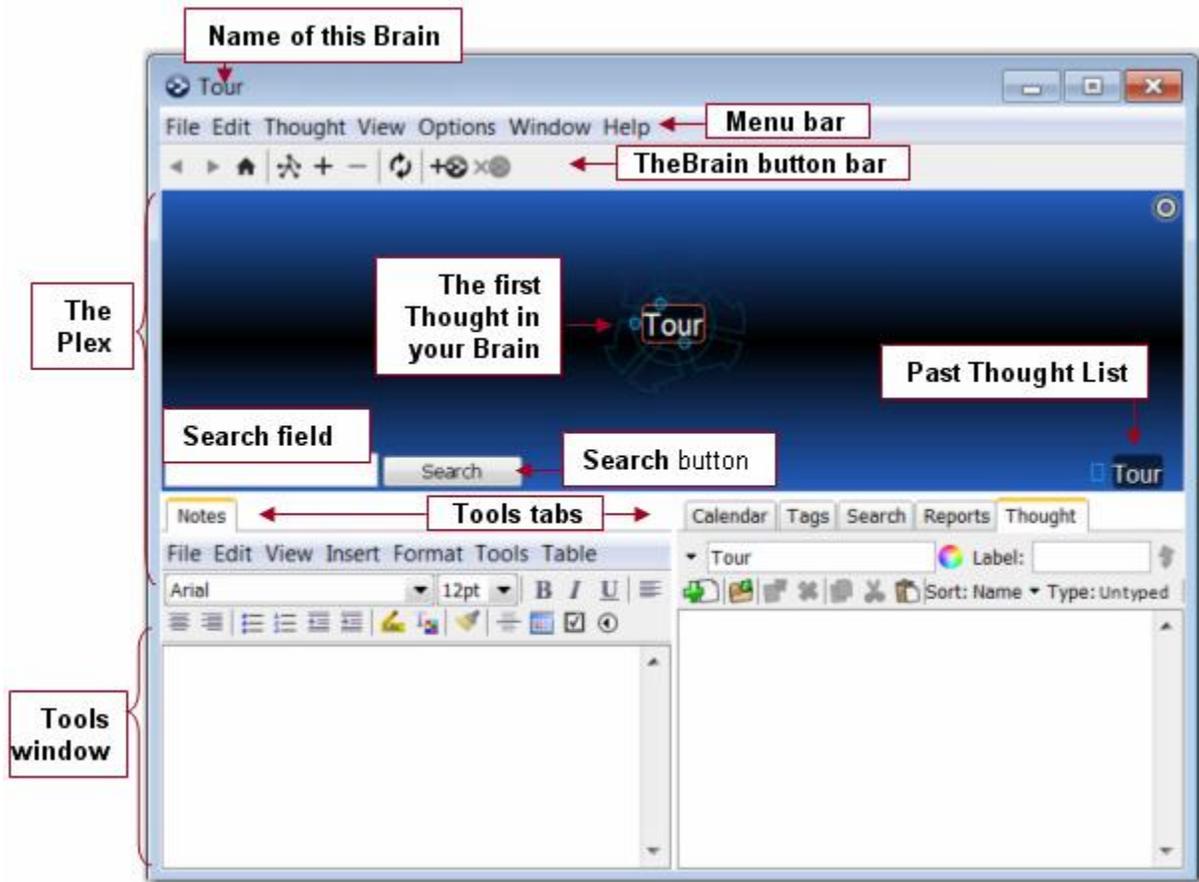


Figure 4. The Parts of the Brain Window

TheBrain creates your first Thought for you. It has the same name as your Brain (which you can change later if you want to). Since it's the only Thought, it's also the "active Thought"—the Thought that's currently selected.



The Brain Toolbar

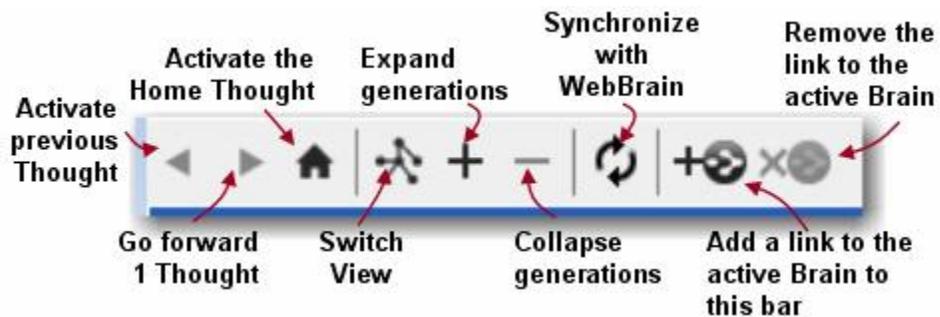


Figure 5. TheBrain Toolbar

1. Point at each one of the buttons in the Brain toolbar so that you see a brief explanation in the pop-up tool tip.
2. Click the **Add Brain** button to add “Tour” to the toolbar. Now you’ll be able to return to this Brain when any other Brain is open.



The Brain Tools

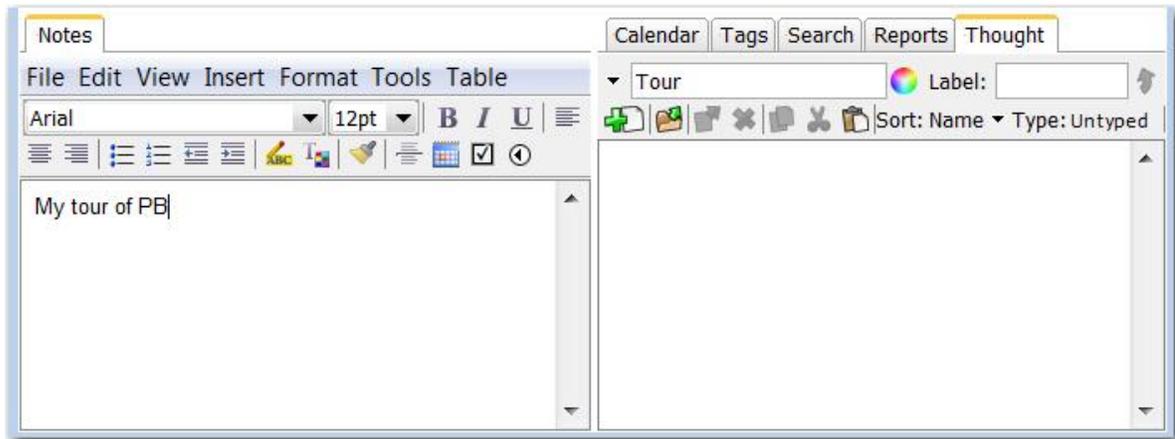


Figure 6. A Note in the Notes Tab

1. Click in the empty white space of the **Notes** tab in the Tools window, then type: **My tour of PB**. You’ve just created your first Note, which is associated with the “Active Thought”—Tour.



There’s no need to save Notes, even if you activate other Thoughts or close your Brain. Although your Notes are saved automatically, you can click the **Save** command on the **File** menu or press **Ctrl-S** to save if you want to.

2. Click any of the other Tools tabs if you want a quick peek.



Tip: See the section beginning on page **Error! Bookmark not defined.** for details about working with the Notes tool.



Window Behavior Options

1. Click the **Window** menu and note what the current selections are so you can return to them later if you want.
2. Select one of the auto-hide options, then click outside of the Brain window. Notice that the Brain window is now hidden from view.
3. Click the **Brain** button to reactivate your Brain. The button will be located on whatever side of the screen you selected via the auto-hide option.



Figure 7. Display TheBrain

- Click the **Window** menu, then click the **Float** command. Notice that now you can minimize, maximize, or restore the Brain window using standard Windows' techniques.



Tip: See “**Error! Reference source not found.**” beginning on page **Error! Bookmark not defined.** for details about controlling the behavior of the Brain window.

Part 2: Create New Thoughts

Itinerary: You'll create a single Thought, multiple Thoughts, a Thought from an existing file, and a Thought “pin,” and modify the relationship between two Thoughts.



Your Tour Brain should be on the screen, as you left it in Part 1.

- The three circles surrounding the Tour Thought are called “gates.” The bottom circle is called the child gate because it provides a gateway towards creating a child Thought. Drag the mouse from the child gate down a short distance, then release the mouse button. The **Create Child** dialog will open.



Tip: If you prefer not to drag the mouse to create a Thought, right-click the Tour Thought and then click the **Create Child** command on the context menu.



Figure 8. Dragging from the Child Gate

- In the empty field, type: **PB Buddies**

This Thought will organize Thoughts about people you're going to talk to about how they use TheBrain, so you can share experiences.



Since “PB” isn’t a standard word, you’ll see a red squiggly line under it. Spell checking is active by default. You can ignore the word or add it to your Brain’s dictionary by right-clicking it and selecting the option of your choice. Spell check preferences are explained in the “**Error! Reference source not found.**” section on page **Error! Bookmark not defined.**

3. Press the **Enter** key (or click the green button showing the check mark). A “pulsing” circle appears around a new Thought for a few seconds, highlighting it for easy visibility. Your Tour Thought now has a child Thought named “PB Buddies.”



Creating Multiple Thoughts at Once

You can create more than one Thought at a time by typing a semicolon to separate each Thought.

1. Create four new child Thoughts for Tour, all at the same time. To begin, drag Tour’s child gate down a bit, then release the mouse button.
2. In the empty field, type: **Tips; Reminders; To-Do; New Brain Ideas**



Figure 9. Multiple Thoughts at Once



Tip: The semicolon (;) between each Thought name tells TheBrain that these are separate Thoughts.

3. Press the **Enter** key (or click the green button with the check mark).



Create a Thought by Dragging and Dropping an Existing File

You can create a Thought by dragging a file from the desktop or from your file manager (such as File Explorer on Windows or Finder on a Mac). The new Thought will have the same name as the file (minus its extension) and it will automatically have the file as an attachment. You’ll learn more about attachments in the next part of this tour.

1. Choose any file, from your desktop or from any other location. Your original file will not be affected by being moved into your Tour Brain—you're just creating a shortcut.
2. Size the TheBrain window so that you can also see either the portion of the desktop containing the file you're going to use or the window in which the file is listed.
3. Drag the file into the Plex.

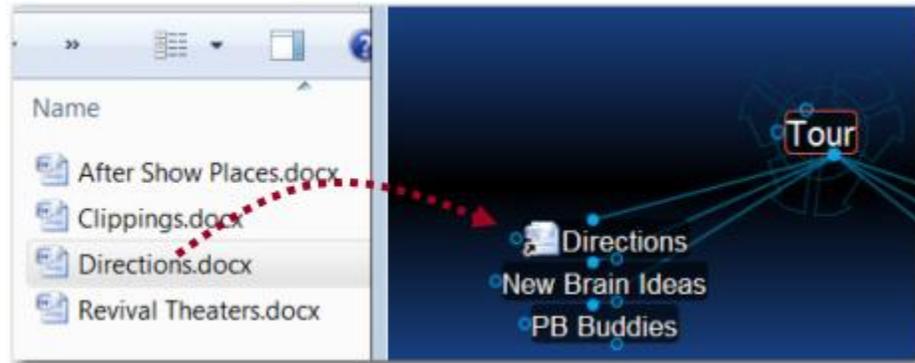


Figure 10. File Dragged into Plex Becomes a Thought

The new Thought will appear in the Plex and it will include an icon that represents the type of file. Any time you click this icon in the Plex, the related file will open.



If TheBrain is in auto-hide mode, dragging the file to the Brain icon opens the window automatically. See "**Error! Reference source not found.**" on page **Error! Bookmark not defined.** for information about the different way the Brain window can operate.



Thought Pins

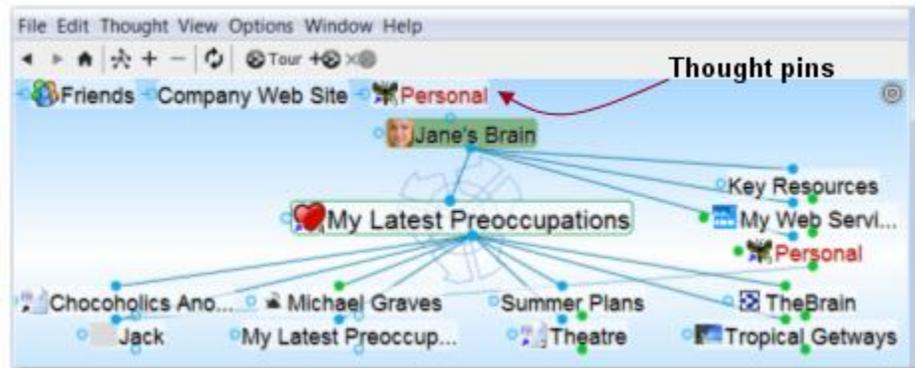


Figure 11. Thought Pins in an Existing Brain

The area at the top of the Plex, just below the Brain toolbar functions like a bulletin board on which you can “thumbtack” Thoughts you want to keep at your fingertips. These quick-access shortcuts to Thoughts are called “pins.” No matter where you are in the Plex, the pins remain visible.

1. Right-click the Thought named Reminders, then click **Create Pin** on the context menu.
2. Click any other Thought in the Plex. When you want to return to the Reminders Thought, click the Reminders pin to get there instantly.



Relationship Changes

1. Create a new child of Tour named “Experiments.” (Drag from Tour’s child gate down a bit, type: **Experiments** and then press the **Enter** key.)
2. Now you’ve decided that the Experiments Thought should really have an equal relationship with Tour, and not be one of its children—because you’ll use experimenting as much as touring to develop your Brain skills.

Drag Experiments up to the left side of the Plex so that it is level with Tour, then release the mouse button.

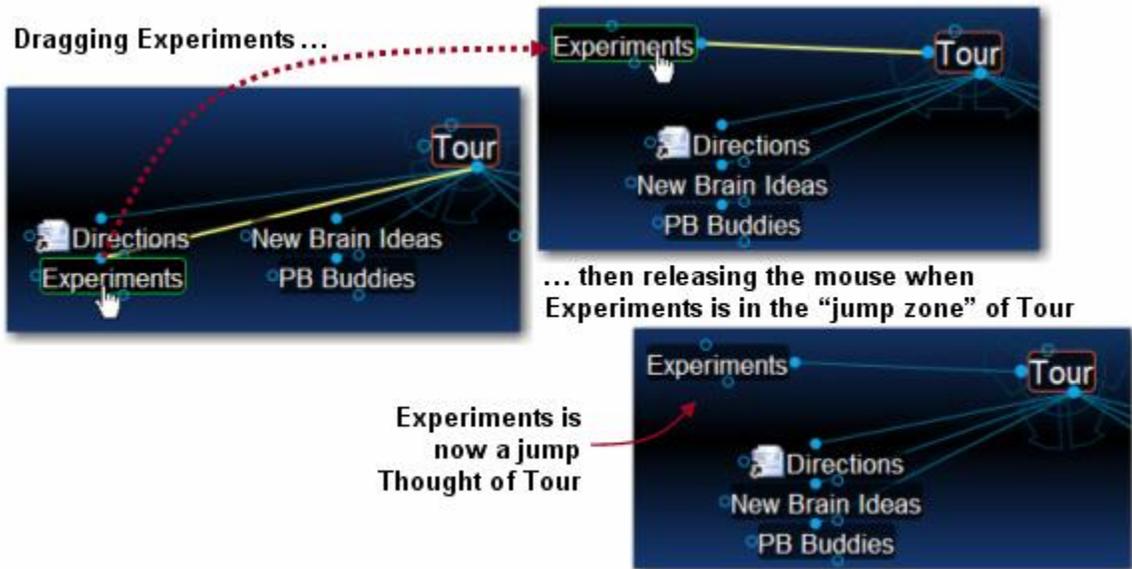


Figure 12. Dragging a Thought to Change its Relationship



Tip: See the section beginning on page **Error! Bookmark not defined.** for details about changing Thought relationships.



This is a good place for a break if you'd like to take one. You can leave your Brain open or close the Brain window. Just start up TheBrain again when you're ready to continue.

Part 3: Find, Add Attachments, Link, and Delete Thoughts

Itinerary: You'll find Thoughts, add an attachment to a Thought, add a Web page to a Thought, use a Thought to open an application, link some Thoughts, and delete a Thought.



Your Tour Brain should be on the screen, as you left it in Part 2. You'll begin by creating a few more Thoughts for a little more scenery along the way.

1. Create four new child Thoughts under PB Buddies: **John; Jill; Fred; Ann** (Drag from PB Buddies' child gate, then type each name, separated by a semicolon, then press the **Enter** key.)

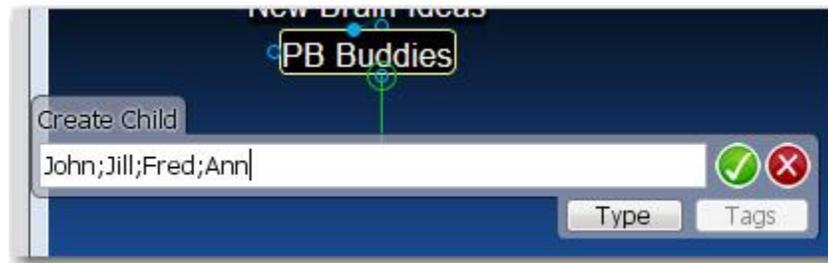


Figure 13. Four New Thoughts

PB Buddies should be the active Thought—you should see the rotating active Thought indicator behind the Thought and it should be in the middle of the Plex.

2. Enter a Note for PB Buddies: **We should compare Brains sometime**
3. Point the mouse at the Tour Thought and notice how the Note changes. Then point back to the active Thought and see how the Note reflects the Thought being pointed to.
4. Click the Reminders pin up at the top of the Plex to go quickly to your Reminders Thought.



Instant Activation

“Instant Activation” is a Brain feature that lets you quickly find a Thought by typing a few letters, and choosing from a list of “hits.” After you click the Thought of your choice, that Thought is automatically activated.

Say you’re ready to work with Fred’s Thought—you want to add an attachment to it. With such a small Brain, you could click around and find it pretty quickly, or you could speed things up:

1. Click in the Search field and type: f



Figure 14. Instant Activation

Because you only have one Thought that begins with the letter “f,” it is found instantly. If other Thoughts begin with the same letter you will see them in the box. The more characters you type, the more finely-tuned your search will become.

2. Click on “Fred” in the one-item list above the Search field where you typed the “f.” Fred will be activated.
3. Type the letter “j” in the Search field to activating Jill. Notice that the two Thoughts beginning with the letter “j” appear in the list. Activate Jill.



Tip: See the “**Error! Reference source not found.**” section beginning on page **Error! Bookmark not defined.** for details about more complex searching and the “**Error! Reference source not found.**” section on page **Error! Bookmark not defined.** for more on cruising around your Brain.



Attachments

1. Back to Fred. Activate Fred by clicking his Thought.
2. Click the **Add Attachment** button in the **Thought** tab of the Tools window.

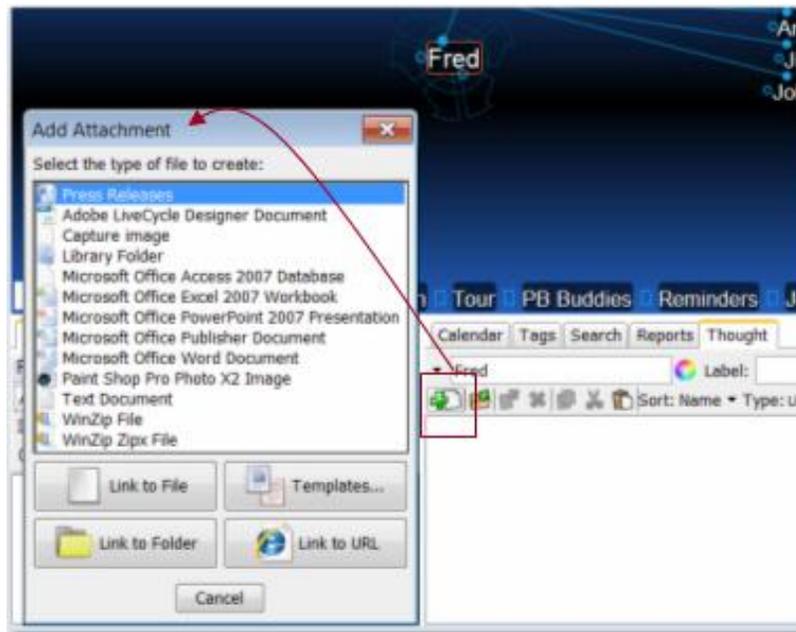


Figure 15. Add an Attachment

3. You can add an existing file or you can create a new one. For now, select an existing file on your computer. To do so, click the **Link to File** button.
4. Navigate to any file on your computer, then click the **Open** button to attach it to the active Thought.

Notice that the filename appears in the **Thought** tab’s list section. Now you can click on it at any time to open the file. You might use this function to add a photo of Fred, or a file you’re collaborating on, or notes about a project you’re completing together.



Web Page Thoughts

1. Activate the John Thought.
2. Open your Internet browser and navigate to a Web page of your choice.
3. Arrange the browser window and the Brain window so that you can see at least part of both of them.
4. Drag from the address bar icon in your browser to the active Thought (John), then release the mouse button.



Figure 16. Inserting a Web Page as an Attachment

A link to the Web page will be added to the attachment list in the Thought tool and you can launch the page by double-clicking on it whenever John is the active Thought. Or, you can single-click the icon in the Thought whenever it is visible in the Plex, whether John is the active Thought or not.



Tip: If you want to create a new Thought for the Web page instead of adding it to existing Thought, just drag and drop the page icon to a blank area of the Plex and a child Thought will be created. See the “**Error! Reference source not**

found.” section beginning on page **Error! Bookmark not defined.** for details about attachments.



Creating Attachments from a Thought

1. Activate the New Brain Ideas Thought by typing an “n” in the Search field and then clicking on “New Brain Ideas” in the list.
2. Click the **Add Attachment** button in the Thought tool.
3. Click **Microsoft Office Word Document** (assuming this application is installed on your computer—if not, select any other application in the list). The new document will be named “New Brain Ideas,” matching the active Thought.



If you are not using Windows, there will not be any automatically created file types to select from. To create files from within TheBrain, you’ll need to add some file templates first:

- Click the **Templates...** button to open the folder where templates are stored, then copy empty files of the types you want to be able to create from within TheBrain into the folder.
- When you are done, click the **Add Attachment** button again and chose one of the templates you added.

Once you select a file type, two things will happen:

- First, a new file will be created and added to the Thought (in this example, a Microsoft Word document named “New Brain Ideas”).
- Second, the file will be automatically opened so that you can work on it (in this case, starting Microsoft Word).

After you add content to the document and save it, it will be saved internally within your Brain. When you click on the Thought, the document will open again.

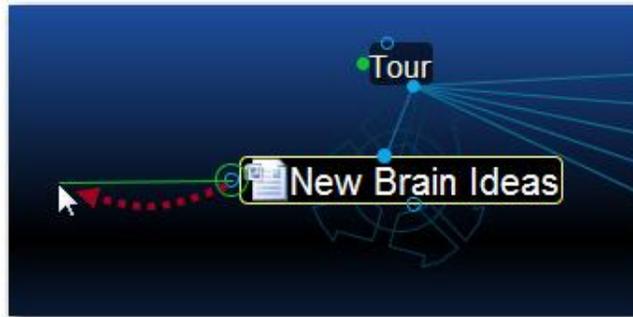
4. Close the new document before moving on to the next section.



Linking Thoughts

One of the most powerful features of TheBrain is the ability to connect Thoughts to each other. Remember, you can connect any Thought to any other Thought. For example, say one of your PB Buddies, Ann, is full of ideas on how to use your Brain. You might want to link her to the New Brain Ideas Thought.

1. Activate the New Brain Ideas Thought.
2. Drag from the jump gate on the left side of New Brain Ideas as if you are going to create a new jump Thought and release the mouse button.



3. Type the first few letters of the Thought you want to connect (Ann) in the Create Jump dialog box. Notice that the existing Thought is displayed in the list below.



4. Select the existing Thought from the list and then click the check mark.

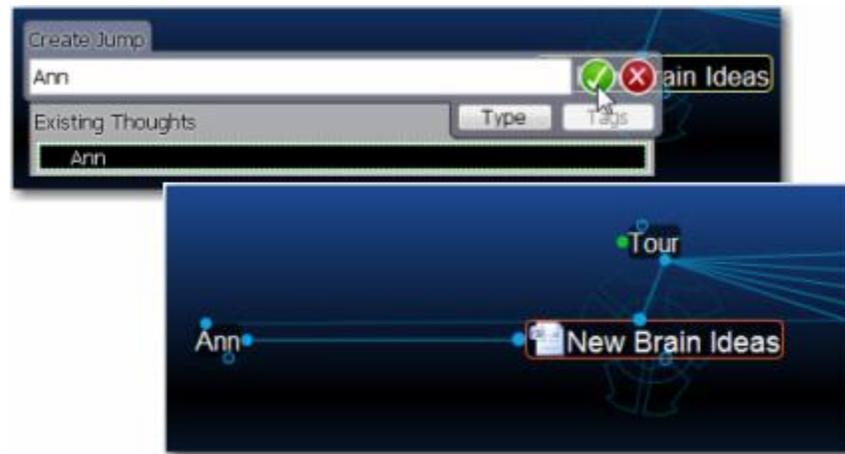


Figure 17. Jump Thought Linked to an Existing Thought

Now that Ann is connected to New Brain Ideas, whenever you look at this Thought, her Thought will be just a click away. Also, when you are at Ann's Thought, the New Brain Ideas Thought will be conveniently available.

There are many ways to link existing Thoughts. The method above is convenient when the Thoughts you want to connect are not both visible, however if the Thoughts are both visible, you can simply draw the link between the two, starting from either one of the Thoughts' gates. Both the Past Thought List below the Plex and the pins can be used for linking Thoughts visually. When you connect two Thoughts visually, the resulting relationship will be determined by which gate you selected to start the linking—it does not matter where you release the mouse button over the destination Thought.



Forgetting and Deleting Thoughts

If you've entered a Thought in error or you simply don't need to keep it around anymore, you can easily remove it from your Brain. TheBrain offers two ways to remove Thoughts—forgetting and deleting. When a Thought is forgotten, it can be remembered later if need be, however, deleting is permanent.

Let's forget the Thought Jill.

1. Make PB Buddies the active Thought.
2. Right-click the Jill Thought.
3. Click the **Forget** command on the context menu.

Jill disappears from the display. Now, if you want to show Jill again, turn on Forgotten Thoughts:

- Click the **Options** menu, then click **Show Forgotten Thoughts**.

The **Forgotten Thoughts** dialog box can be used to permanently delete Thoughts or remember them. Just click the Thought, then click the **Delete** or **Remember** button. To turn off the display of forgotten Thoughts again, simply close the dialog box.



Tip: If you want to permanently delete a Thought without first forgetting it, hold down the **Shift** key as you right-click on it and then select the **Delete** command.

Concluding Your Tour

If you click the **Home** button in the Brain toolbar, your Brain should look something like this:

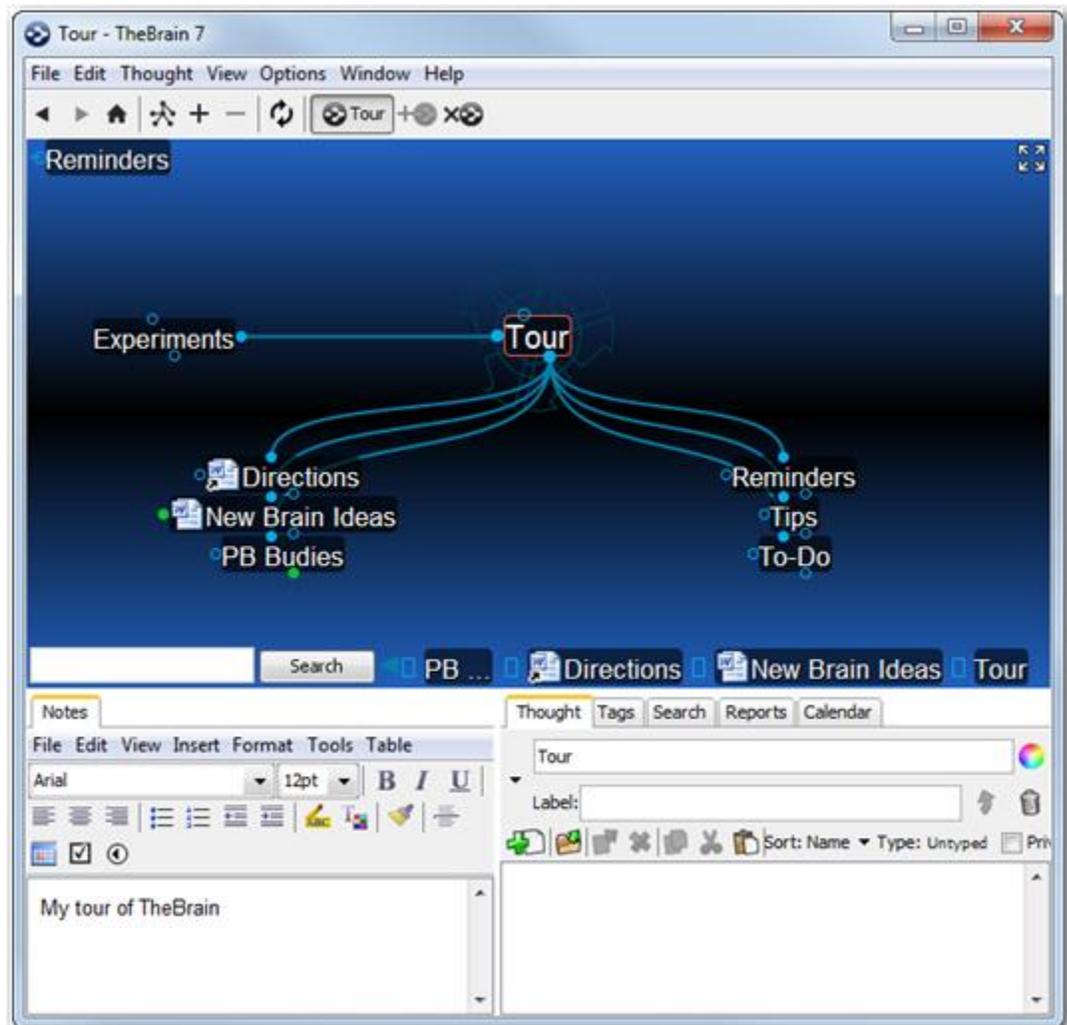


Figure 18. Completed Tour

Where to go from here? You can stay and experiment more with your Tour Brain, begin reviewing sections of interest throughout this guide, or dive into creating your own Brain. You may want to glance at some of the examples in

“Error! Reference source not found.” beginning on page **Error! Bookmark not defined.**, for more ideas—but you probably already have plenty of your own!



Tip: If you are ready to dive into beginning your own Brain, start by creating a few Thoughts for broad categories before you go to the detail level. For example, if your name is Ed, “Ed’s Brain” might be the name of your Brain (and your first Thought) and its first children might be Work, Family, Hobbies, and Friends.



This concludes your guided tour—thanks for coming along!

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