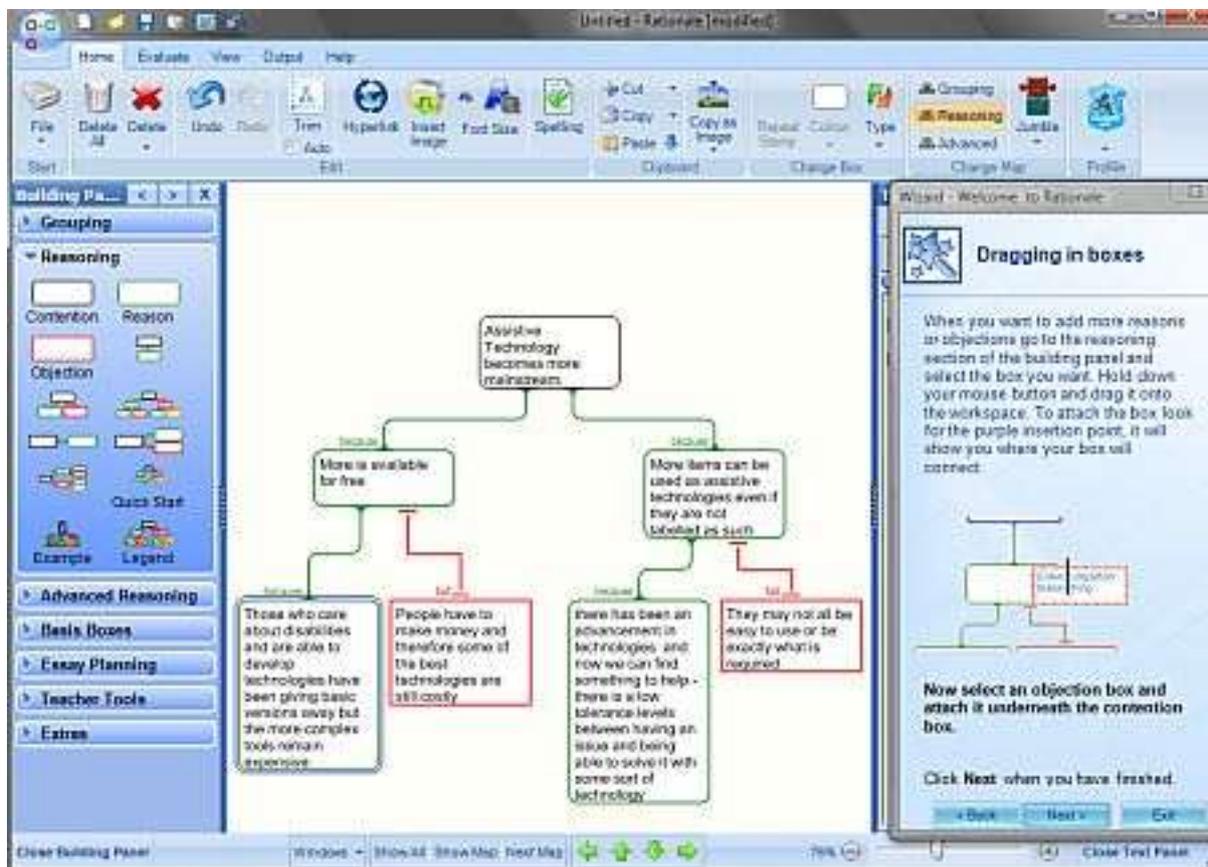


B.D.A. Contact September 2009.

## Rationale - concept mapping with a plus.

By E.A. Draffan.

Rationale is an Australian product sold by Sight and Sound in the UK. It is easy to load and offers the user the chance to set to work immediately with a built in wizard. The wizard walks you through a series of questions based on an argumentative type essay with a hypothesis that requires reasoning with reminders to say why you believe something and to also show the other side of the coin. It is probably suitable for older children, students and researchers.

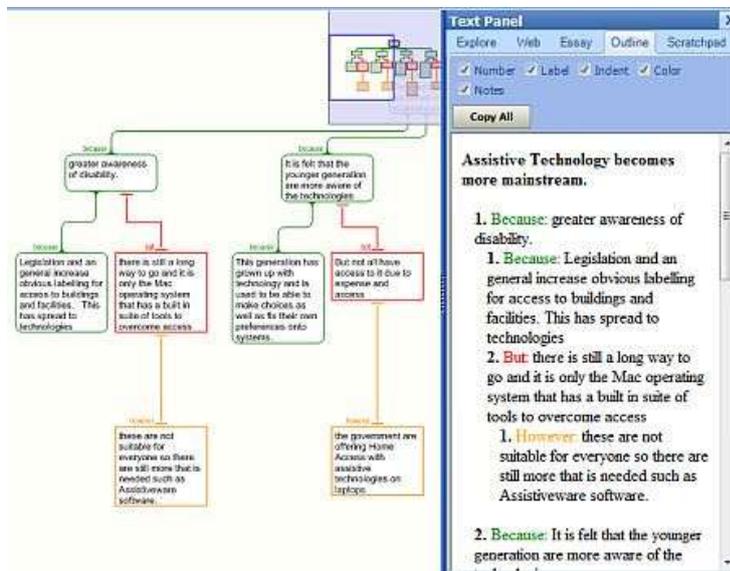


There are easy methods for collecting quotes, web pages, images, and providing visual clues as to where you have taken an expert's view or used an idea from others and shared it with a group. The symbol boxes can all have a reason for being in place or just be a simple text box as in other mind mapping software.

It is much more of a structural approach to essay writing or developing ideas compared to Inspiration or Mind Manager. There is a spell checker but no text to speech and keyboard shortcuts are provided for many actions but not over all. Colour changes are limited as is choosing

different font types and colours but the zooming is good and it is possible to move your position in the map with the mouse or keyboard. There are templates but they do not contain data and are not set up for different topics but rather different map views. The symbol boxes have different colour outlines but are not fluid and there are no options for different shapes although automatic linking helps when initiating ideas quickly and symbol boxes can be moved and links remade.

This really is a very different program from most freely available or online mind mapping experiences such as Freemind or MindMeister. Although one can use it as a basic tool, this would be rather a shame as there is so much support for both students and teachers. The product can be used for group projects and allows teachers to add comments and icons to represent praise etc.



It is possible to see an overview of the map as well as an outline in the same window which can be very helpful. Maps can be exported as images and outlines as text – there are no links with PowerPoint as there are with MindManager and MindGenius.

This program allows those teaching essay skills to work through the process and students to be constantly reminded of structure as well as content. Overall this is a very useful addition to the array of concept mapping programs available and should be tried with older students. Download a trial from Sight and Sound website.

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