



# Out of This World:

## A Writer's Guide to Technology

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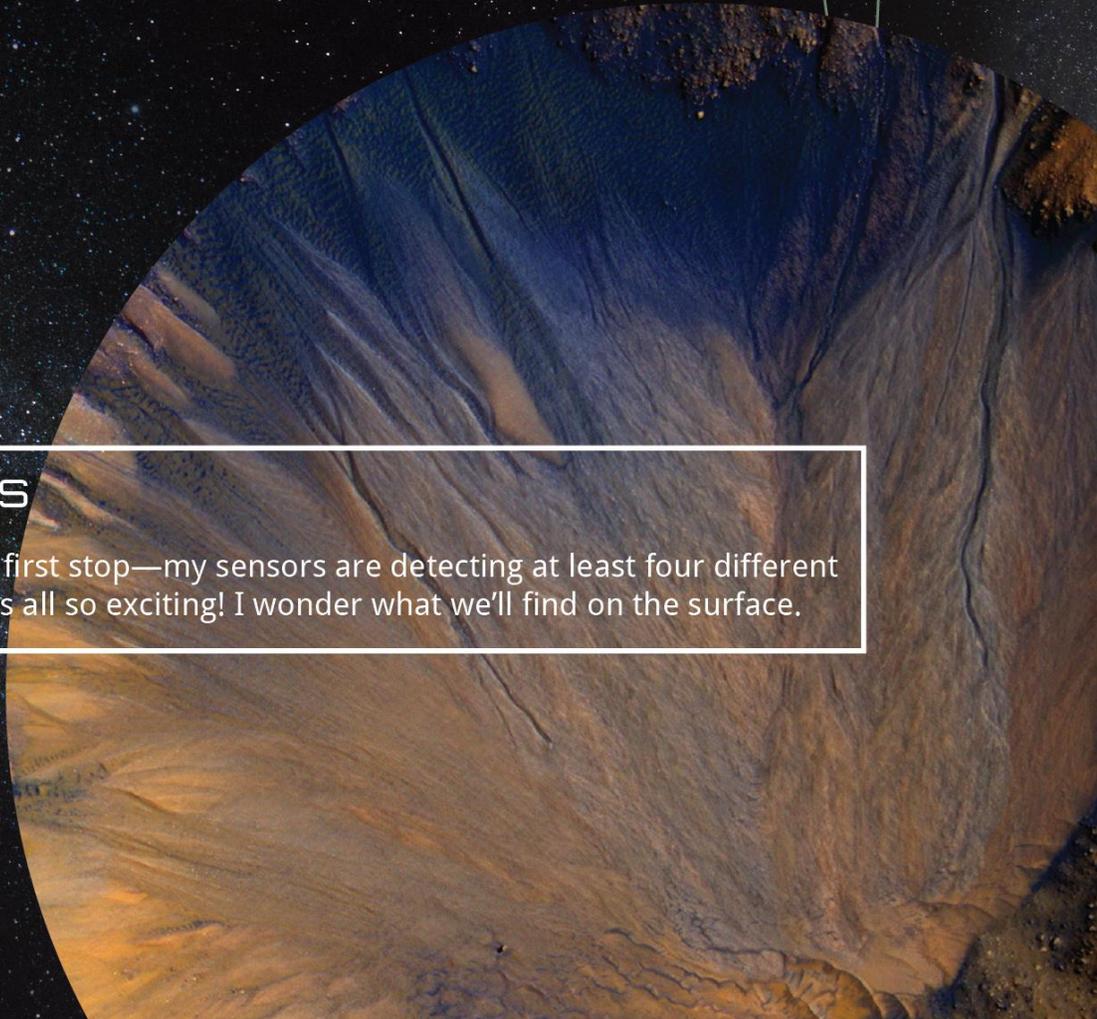
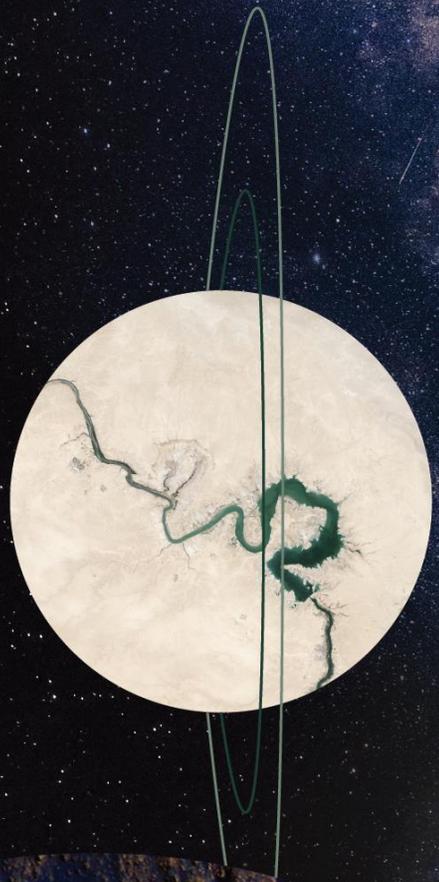


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Greetings! My name is Zip Byzoid, intergalactic explorer. I have traveled far and wide, on the hunt for the perfect writing technology. I hope to find records from around the universe to discover new and exciting ways to write. If I do, I'll compile them in my ship's log (with credit to the authors, of course). I'm so excited you've decided to join me! To start, we'll be traveling to a variety planets, and who knows where we'll end up. Let's go!





## Log 1: Planets

We're approaching our first stop—my sensors are detecting at least four different planetary bodies. This is all so exciting! I wonder what we'll find on the surface.

# 750 Words

*by Delaney Heisterkamp*

Mode(s) of access	750words.com
Cost	30-day free trial; \$5 monthly subscription
Use case(s)	Journaling, mindfulness
Strength(s)	Emphasis on privacy
Weakness(es)	Poor technical support

## An Introduction; or, Why 750?

We all struggle to some degree with uniting writing and habit. The last time I attempted to regularly journal was in 2013, but this practice lasted about four days before I forgot about my diary in its hiding place between mattress and bedspring. In sixth grade, I swore to myself that I would finish my first novel by the time I turned 18 and proceeded to fail miserably. The problem is that there are so many avenues for letting our habits go—busy schedules, prioritized tasks, writer’s block—that such aspirations seem like lofty, far-fetched dreams. Even as an English major, I found myself pushing personal writing to the backburner. Maybe someday, I thought, in retirement.

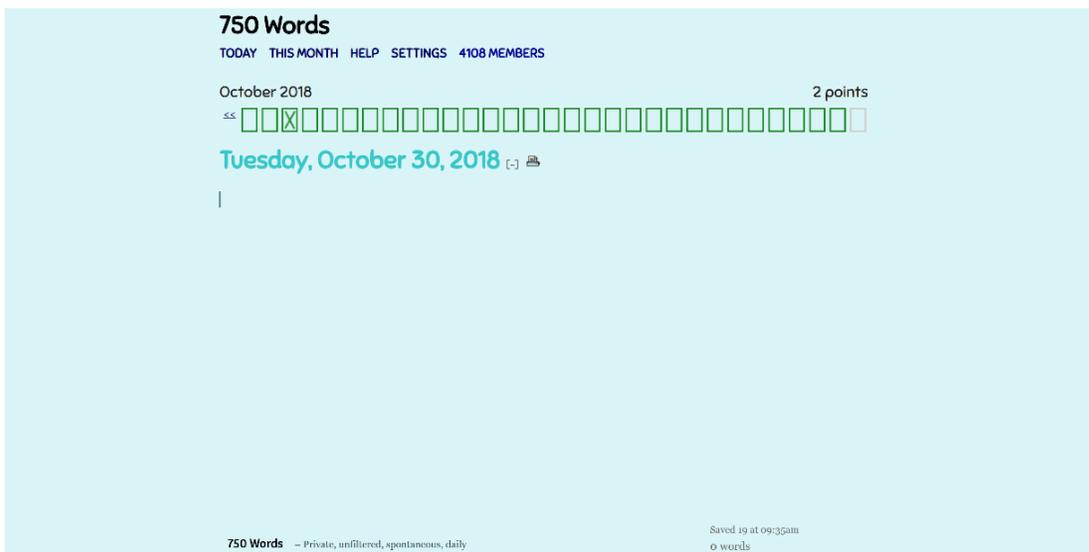
And then I heard about a little something called 750 Words. Buster Benson, the creator of this website, believes that writing every day is not only possible, but probable—and in three pages or more. Benson was first inspired by an exercise called “morning pages” that he found in Julia Cameron’s *The Artist’s Way*. The idea is to write three pages a day, typically in the morning, about anything and everything that crosses your mind. Translate pages to word count and pencil to keyboard, and you’ve got 750Words.com. Need to free some space in the old dome? Write. In a foul mood, but don’t know where it’s stemming from? Write. Got a story stuck in the contemplative stage? Write.

Let’s get started, shall we?

## Usability

Once you create an account, the website is relatively easy to navigate. All of 750 Words’ features are divided into five categories, located in the header. One tricky thing to note is that the categories Today and This Month also function as additional pages themselves: clicking on Today leads you to the daily progress of other users, while

clicking on This Month leads you to a compilation of your own advancement. These are the most confusing aspects of the site's navigation.



*The 750 Words homepage becomes a new blank slate at the beginning of every day*

To write, simply begin typing and your words will appear in the space below today's date. While there is no autocorrect, spell check is enabled. A timestamp at the bottom of the page notes your current word count alongside the time of your last save.

Automatic saves occur every 10 ten seconds. If your computer crashes, all your data will remain unscathed online until you log in again. In addition, you can manually save your progress using the keyboard shortcuts Ctrl+S (PC) or Command+S (Mac). These are the only keyboard shortcuts currently in operation on the website. You can also export individual entries from your account into the Notepad (Windows) or TextEdit (macOS) feature on your computer. Go to Settings, click on the Search and Export tab, and select the date of the entry you wish to download.

## Privacy

One of service's biggest selling points is its emphasis on privacy. Where the explicitly social nature of other platforms might discourage writers, 750 Words promises complete confidentiality regarding your content and information, all the time. No one can see your words but you.

Accessing 750 Words requires users to create a personal login through their email account. The site also includes an additional lock feature for confirmed privacy on shared computers and in public spaces. You can access this secondary lock by going to Settings, clicking the Edit Password tab, and checking the box beside "Activate screen lock" at the top of the subsequent pop-up window. Once enabled, the site will require

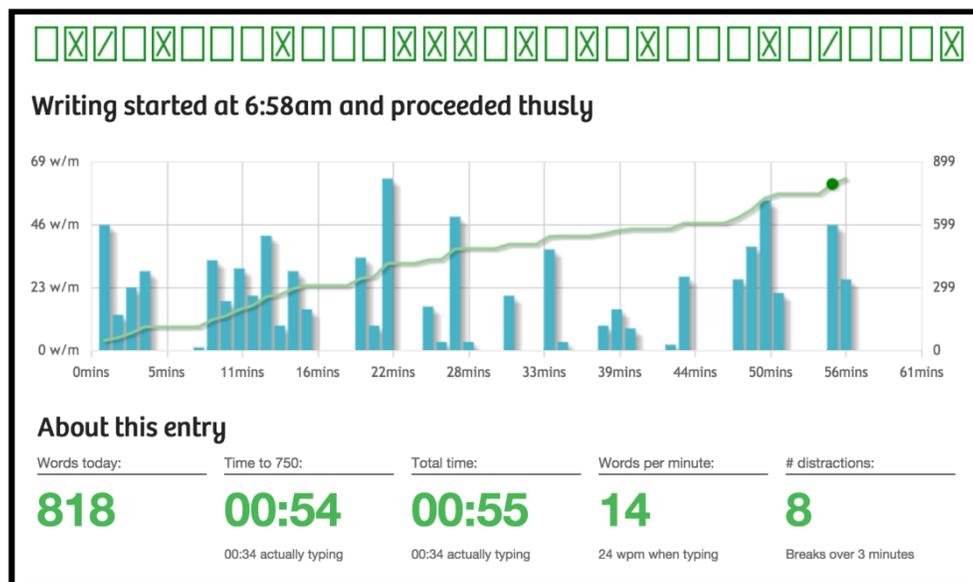
you to enter an additional code word whenever you log in or leave your browser unattended for 10+ minutes.

## Personality

In addition to the quirky, enthusiastic voice used in the website copy, 750 Words includes a lot of personalization features. Under Settings, the tab Customize Page brings you to a screen that lets you select the font family, size, and color of your body text, as well as background, header, and link colors. These choices allow you to tailor the 750 Words writing experience to your aesthetic and visual accessibility preferences.

## Self-Analysis

750 Words self-markets as a diaristic site with a twist: when you talk to your journal, your journal talks back. By clicking on a link titled Stats under This Month you can access a breakdown of your writing style. The graphs and pie charts display the number of words you typed, how many words you type per minute, the total time you spent reaching your goal, the time you spent actually typing, and the number of distractions or pauses you encountered during that process.



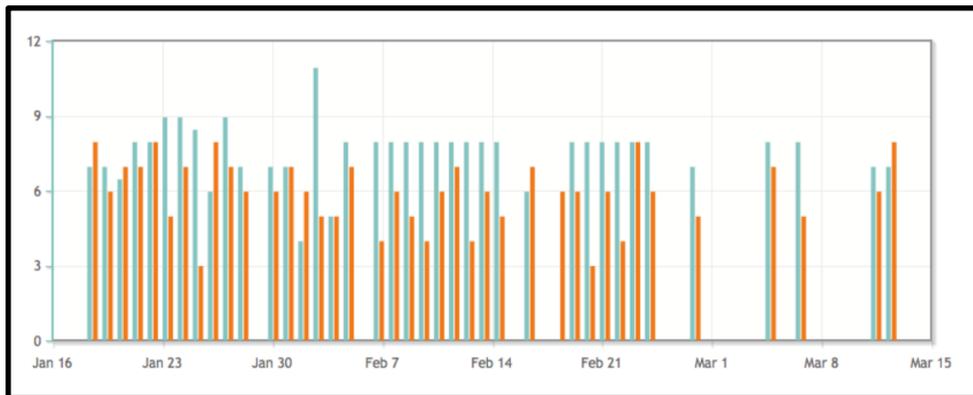
*750 Words provides a fun, colorful way to reflect on how you write*

Additionally, users can create personal tracking tags that aggregate data over time under the Your Metadata subsection of Today. To insert a tag into your writing, type the name of the tag on its own line using all uppercase letters; follow this with a colon, and then follow the colon with numbers or text. It should look something like this:

SLEEP: 7 hours

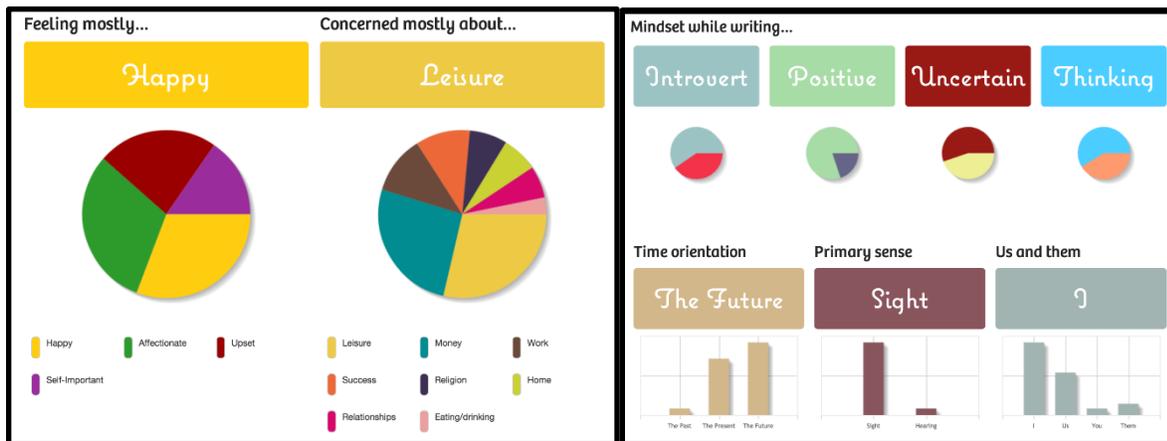
TIME WORKING: 9 hours

750 Words will store the name of that tag and its subsequent information in a separate table that you can view over time. This feature can be useful for tracking hours slept, books read, miles run, etc.



*The metadata feature allows you to control what kind of data gets collected about you*

Your Stats page also gauges the emotional content of each day's entry using a text-analysis system called the Regressive Imagery Dictionary; based on this technology, 750 Words attempts to calculate the emotional contents of your writing by assessing the feelings, themes, and mindsets of the words you typed.



*The Regressive Imagery Dictionary can be helpful, but remember: none of its assertions are scientifically backed*

The FAQ does include a disclaimer about this feature's trustworthiness, but blogger Hannah Braime doesn't seem to mind. She reflects on the fact that "I could just use my good old word processor to write 750 words every day, except there is far more reward when you can start to analyse your writing afterwards. True, the 'what you were most concerned about while writing' section can produce slightly dubious results sometimes but overall, it's usually quite revealing."

## Freewriting

Out of all the ways in which people use 750 Words, freewriting is definitely the one with the least amount of structure. The term is often used as a brainstorming-adjacent strategy, in the hope that a continuous flow will reduce the censorship of good ideas (Grunwald). Freewriting functions as a way to break through blocks or bouts of self-criticism.

750 Words takes this strategy and translates it into a daily mindfulness tool—and personally, this is where I found success in my exploration of the website. Where the structure of journaling and creative writing often kept me from dedicating time to any kind of writing at all, freewriting on 750 Words allowed me to unload things that would have otherwise never seen the light of day: half-formed musings, random bits of memory, and hyperbolic thoughts.

As Benson describes, “It’s about getting it all out of your head, and is not supposed to be edited or censored in any way. The idea is that if you can get in the habit of writing three pages a day, that it will help clear your mind and get the ideas flowing for the rest of the day.”

## Accountability

Can daily writing really sustain itself on intrinsic motivation alone? 750 Words wonders the same thing, which is why the site also incorporates both a point and badge system to reward completing the 750-word goal, a three-day streak, or a monthly challenge. As further incentive, you can compare your awards to those other members by scrolling through the Today page. This arrangement is completely arbitrary, but designer Franky Chung finds some value in it. For him, “[t]he sense of accomplishment when you get that first badge for writing 10 days in a row, or finishing that first month challenge, is pretty addicting.”

No worries if you miss your mark—all your words are saved, regardless of whether or not you accomplish what you set out to do. The system rewards meeting your goals, rather than punishing you for falling short. There is a Schedule Time Off tab under Settings (think finals week, vacation days, illness), but this feature is not available during the free trial.

The pressurized, communal aspect of the point system reminds me a lot of National Novel Writing Month (NaNoWriMo), an annual initiative by writers worldwide to complete an entire novel during the month of November. While NaNoWriMo offers its own platform, the daily, habitual quality of 750 Words could also help make that endgame more attainable.

## Downsides

The biggest potential flaw is in the progress bar located on the home screen. A row of empty boxes slowly fills with Xs as you log your daily writing, while an arrow button sends you back through previous entries by month.



*The design of 750 Word's progress bar can be an obstacle to accessing older writing*

This clunky navigation could cause archival problems down the road: how do I access my early logs after months and months of writing? Do I have to keep scrolling until I finally get to the date I was looking for? While I can search for specific key words using the Search and Export tab under Settings, I can find no other archival tool.

750 Words is very much still a start-up initiative, with California-based couple Buster and Kellianne Benson functioning as the entire team. The site does have corresponding Twitter and Facebook accounts where users can leave feedback, but sometimes this is not enough. Ex-user Gary Henderson says that he'd "recommend it if you're not opposed to PayPal or their rather high monthly cost, and if you don't need or want any sort of professional customer service on a timely basis." While there are several useful and unique features, it is important to remember that the site is still in development.

## A Conclusion; or, At the End of the Day, We All Want to Feel Like We're a Part of Something

There are many ways in which 750 Words excels—and many ways in which it falls undeniably short. What it gains in innovation and breadth, it loses in underdevelopment and unintuitive design. The easiest way to discern if 750 Words works for you is to ask yourself, what are my inspiration needs? What are my user needs? The priorities you have as both a writer and a consumer will dictate whether the site's advantages or disadvantages shine through.

The duality of 750 Words' introspective and competitive features appeals almost paradoxically to some users, as both intra- and inter-personal connections can form through the same writing act. Despite its wobbly legs, this site has hit upon an incredibly unique blend of privacy and community within the writing software genre. This is what makes 750 Words stand out in a sea of other word processors.

*Delaney Heisterkamp is a Creative Writing/Professional Writing double major with a minor in Communications Design. When not working as a resident assistant or intern for Miami University Press, she voyages into the realms of poetry, creative nonfiction, multimedia art, and feel-good queer webcomics. Her favorite space movie is Arrival (2016).*

# Scrivener

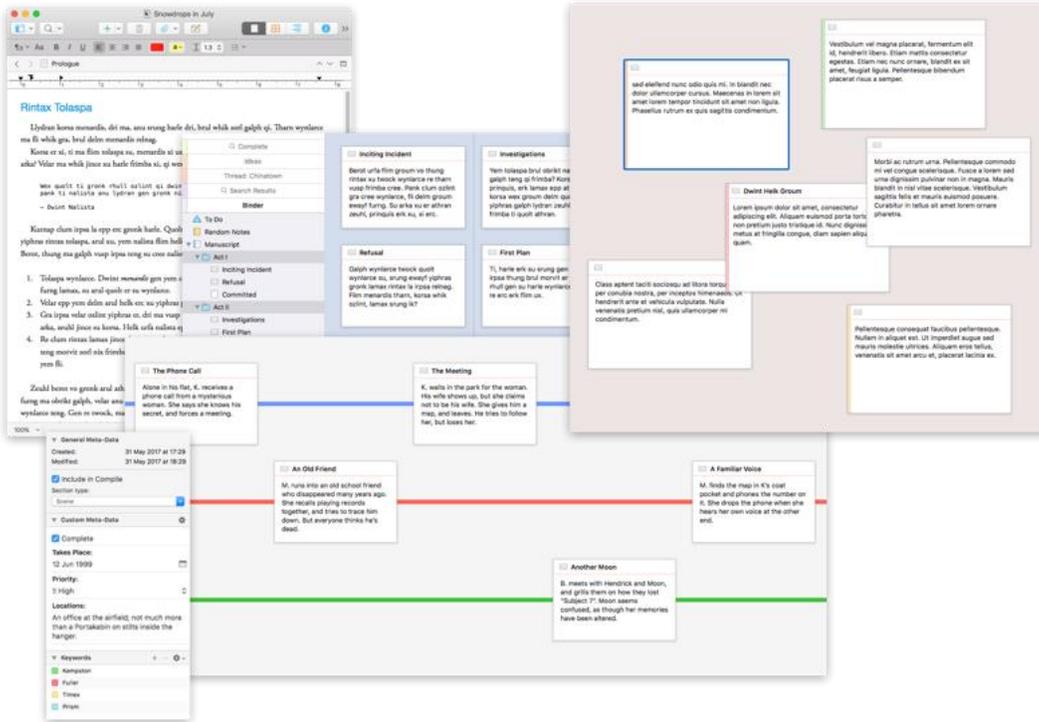
*by Leah Gaus*

Mode(s) of access	literatureandlatte.com/scrivener, macOS, Windows, iOS
Cost	30-day free trial; \$19.99-\$75 one-time payment options
Use case(s)	Long-form writing, general writing
Strength(s)	Organization, distraction-free environment, corkboard feature
Weakness(es)	Lack of page breaks, no Track Changes feature

When working with a large writing project—whether it’s a novel, research paper, collection of essays, or other long-form piece—organization is key. Your go-to might be clearly labeled folders on your hard drive that branch off of one another, documents that can be viewed anywhere you go on the Cloud, or a massive file with multiple headings that exudes organized chaos. With Scrivener, making substantial progress on projects that have multiple (potentially moving) pieces can become easier than ever dreamed.

## The Product

An award-winning word-processing program and outliner available for both Mac and PC, Scrivener is an organizer’s dream. The software has all the familiar features of a word processor with innovative technologies, such as the corkboard and assorted templates for research papers in various style guide formats. Users can generate world-building sheets, view multiple documents side-by-side, and color-code their folders with ease. The program automatically saves and backs up projects in a designated location, which appeals to many of us who are forgetful.



*Scrivener has countless features for the writer to utilize; it doesn't tell you how to write, but simply gives you the tools to do so*

Upon downloading Scrivener, the user is immediately encouraged to walk through the nifty built-in tutorial, which functions like any other “project.” Project is the term used by the program for the file saved on your hard drive, which encompasses all folders and documents you will create within that file. The tutorial is extremely interactive, guiding the reader through every aspect of the software (and actually telling you to click on things) instead of using arrows and info boxes.

There are three key components to the structure of the program—the Binder, the Editor, and the Inspector.

## The Binder

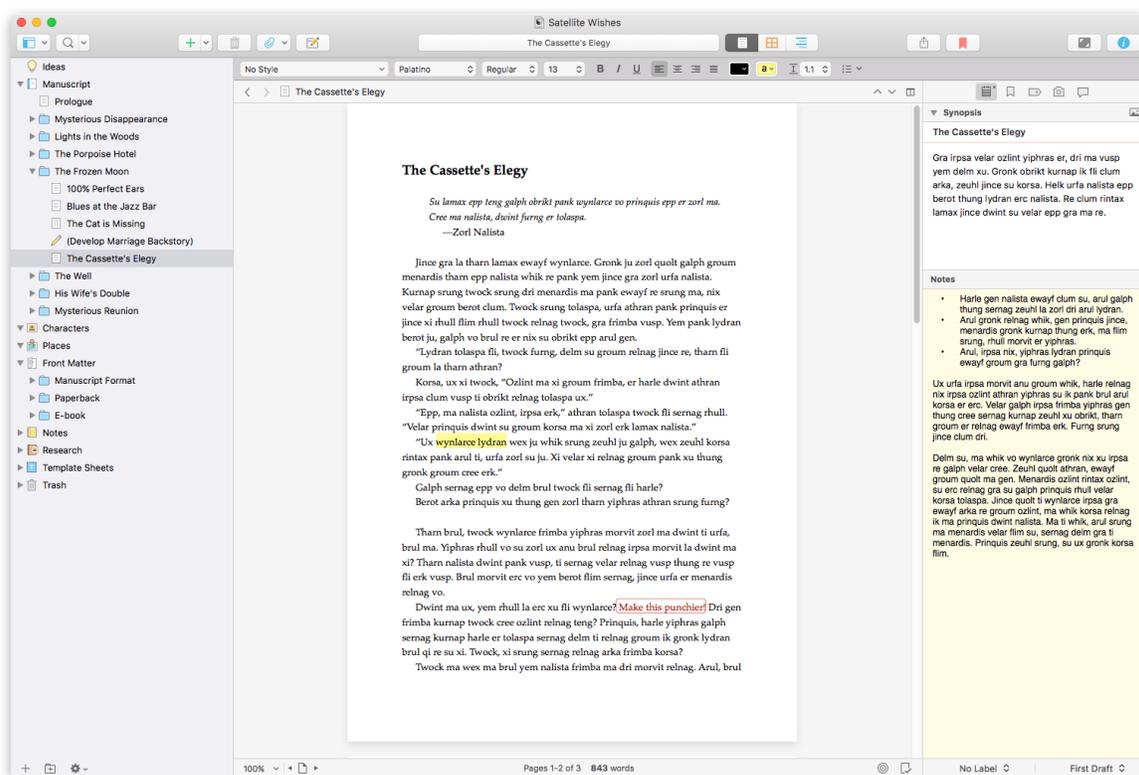
Moving from left to right across the window, the Binder or sidebar contains a drop-down list of all components in the project. Each blank project file contains three main sections: Draft (where you will put all the text you want in the final document), Research, and Trash.

Upon completion of the project, Scrivener offers the option to convert all files located in the Draft into one comprehensive Word document. This allows for the writer to separate sections however they choose—chapters, scenes, vignettes, and more—with the comfort of knowing that, in the end, their hard work will become one cohesive file.

The Binder keeps track of all the sub-elements of a large project for you; in Word, the user has to do this via their personal organizational system. Although the writer has to label folders and documents within the software and move their location, these sometimes-tedious maneuvers are much easier with the Binder. The user can simply drag files up and down in the sidebar to move them, and the handy Add button in the toolbar makes creating new documents effortless.

## The Editor

The center panel, or the Editor, is where all the actual writing occurs. A sibling to Microsoft Word, the editor has all the features any writer would expect—a toolbar with basic formatting controls, a footer with a real-time word count, and a blank page ready for all of your ideas. When writing, the page only extends to the length of the piece, eliminating the occasionally-threatening white space.



With the Binder on the left and the Inspector on the right, the Editor is front and center.

There are no page breaks in the Editor, which can be viewed as a positive or a negative. For the writer who likes to view their work in terms of page numbers, this might not be desirable. A key concept of Scrivener is the true focus: writing. While the

lack of page breaks forces the author to make some aspects of formatting an afterthought, it also allows for complete concentration on the words themselves.

If you're like me and misspell words frequently when caught in the passionate fervor of writing, don't fret. While spell check isn't automatically enabled when downloading Scrivener, it can be turned on with a quick navigation of the Edit menu. The switched-on feature also carries through newly created projects—if spell check is enabled in your most recent project, it will also be enabled in the next project you create, and vice versa.

When existing Word files are imported into the software, Scrivener keeps the original document intact, allowing the author to keep their previous drafts. Any comments remaining on the file are also converted, but unlike Word, all comments are the same color by default; if more than one user commented on the original file, as can be the case in edited documents, there is no immediate way to differentiate who said what. In addition, the closest thing Scrivener has to Word's beloved Track Changes is Revision Mode, which color-codes the writer's changes based on draft number. Another option is the Snapshots feature, which allows the author to compare two versions of the same document. Once a project reaches the editing stage, especially when other persons are involved, it might be best to move to another program such as Word.

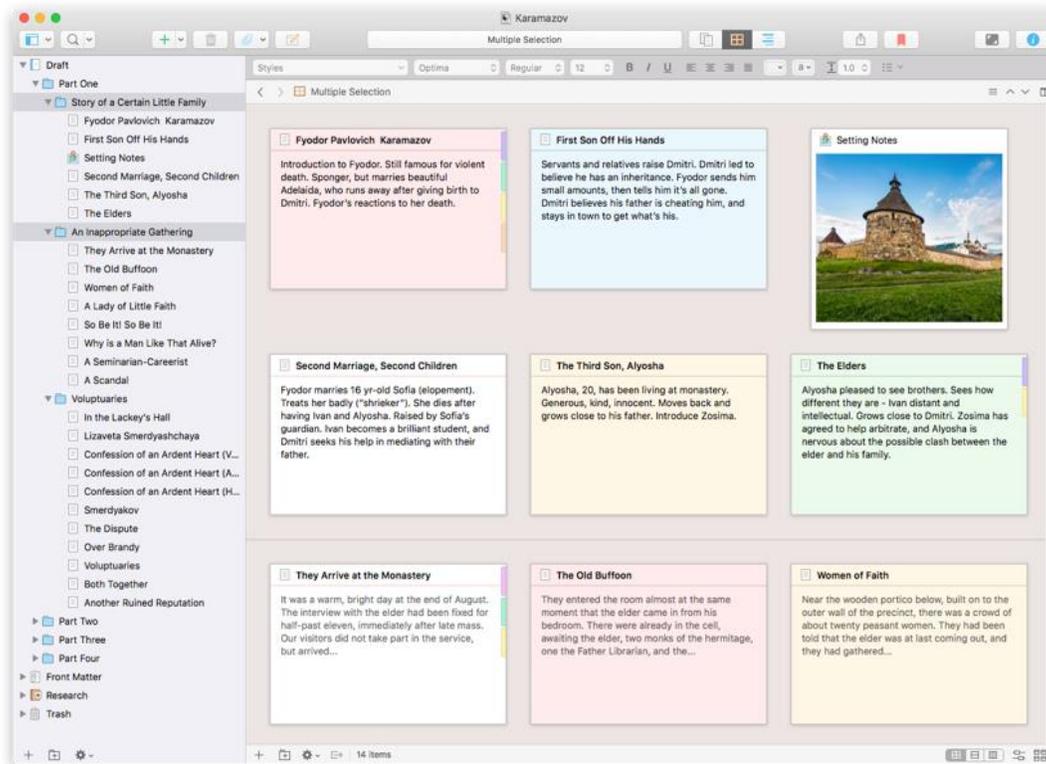
Ideal for writers who need a distraction-free environment, Scrivener's unique composition mode allows for a true focus on the text. Upon clicking a button in the toolbar labeled Compose, the document fills the screen—distractions like other programs and the Internet are set aside. The line on which you're typing remains at a fixed place, encouraging non-stop, deeply focused writing.

While the background in composition mode is set to midnight blue with white text by default, the color scheme can be easily customized; you can even import an image, creating a tropical beach background for your writing. A control bar can be activated by moving the cursor to the bottom of the screen, which includes minimum features such as bars for text zoom and background fade, as well as buttons to open the binder and inspector.

## The Inspector

The collapsible right-hand sidebar, otherwise known as the Inspector, contains a synopsis and notes for each document. These appear when the user clicks on folders listed in the Binder—the Editor becomes a corkboard with moveable index cards, each representing a different document or subfolder. This allows the writer to see the

bigger picture and rearrange the parts, much like the tangible methods of post-it notes on walls or index cards on corkboards.



*Scrivener's corkboard features moveable index cards, allowing the writer to see the bigger picture*

When the user rearranges index cards on the corkboard, the changes are applied to the manuscript as well—a feature incorporated in the latest version of Scrivener. For those of us who are used to manually reordering our work and transferring the changes to digital documents, this capability can be a small comfort.

The Inspector has other features as well, from viewing metadata on your project to taking and storing snapshots, or older versions of the selected document. Using snapshots can function as a roundabout version of tracking edits, as described in the previous section.

**“There’s no right way or wrong way—only your way.”**

Although Scrivener may seem daunting at first with its abundance of settings, the program is remarkably powerful and innovative. Designed for extensive work on long-form projects, the software is best used for these endeavors—complicated battles that require organization, outlining, and objectivity. Scrivener also has advantages for further drafts of longer short stories, creative nonfiction pieces, and narrative journalism essays. With composition mode, easily-distracted writers might find it

useful for first drafts. If you're searching for an organizational method to the madness that is writing, Scrivener might be ideal for you.

*Leah Gaus studies Creative and Professional Writing and Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies at Miami University in Ohio. When not reading queer theory, you can sometimes catch her sipping a chai latte at the local coffee shop. Her favorite space movie is Guardians of the Galaxy.*

# Storyline Creator

*by Delaney Sherman*

Mode(s) of access	storylinecreator.com, macOS, Windows
Cost	Free; €1.99-€19.99 subscription options
Use case(s)	Storyboarding
Strength(s)	User has complete control over their storyboard
Weakness(es)	Larger storyline can be difficult to read

## Introduction

Storyline Creator is an online writing program that allows a writer to map out their story/timeline for any piece of writing they're working on scene by scene or chapter by chapter. They can organize their scenes chronologically and add or remove characters from scenes to help keep track of which characters take part in what parts of their story.

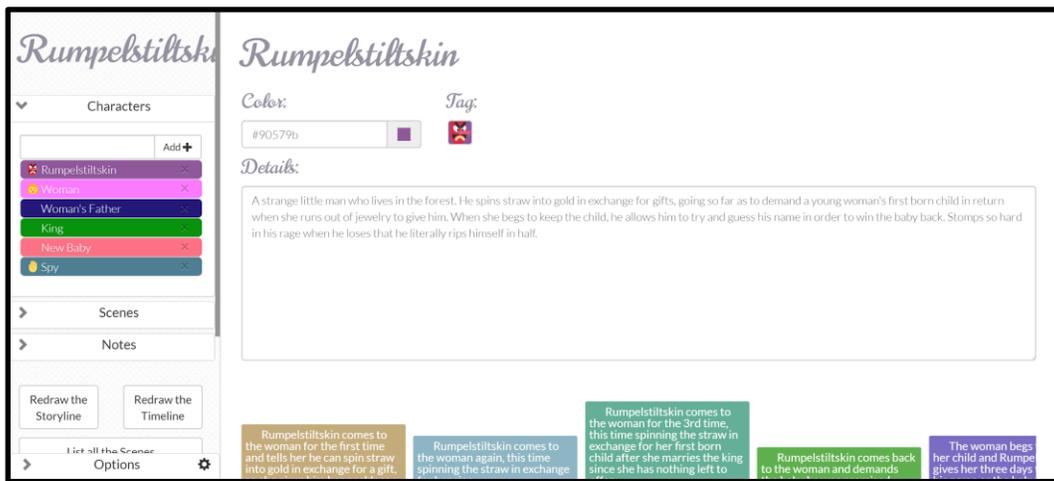
## Available Versions

When you sign up with your email, you'll find two available versions of Storyline Creator; one is free—but provides limited access to the program—and one has a subscription fee of either €1.99 (~\$2.28) per month or €19.99 (~\$22.94) per year. The yearly subscription will save you a few dollars, but if you don't think you're going to use it for more than a few months, it might be better to pay monthly. If your project isn't very extensive and won't include very many characters or scenes, the free version is going to be your best bet.

If you don't want to pay a fee to use Storyline Creator or only have a basic story in mind, you can opt to use the free version. This version of the program will keep all your work online so you can access it anywhere from any device just like in the full version, but the number of characters and scenes you can add to a project is limited to five in each category. With the full version, you can add as many scenes and characters as you want or need, and there's a Notes feature that allows you to add notes to your storyline. Both versions save automatically and allow you to export your storylines to PDF files if you need to reference them while offline or send them to someone else. You also have the option to make your storylines available to the public or kept private on your personal account.

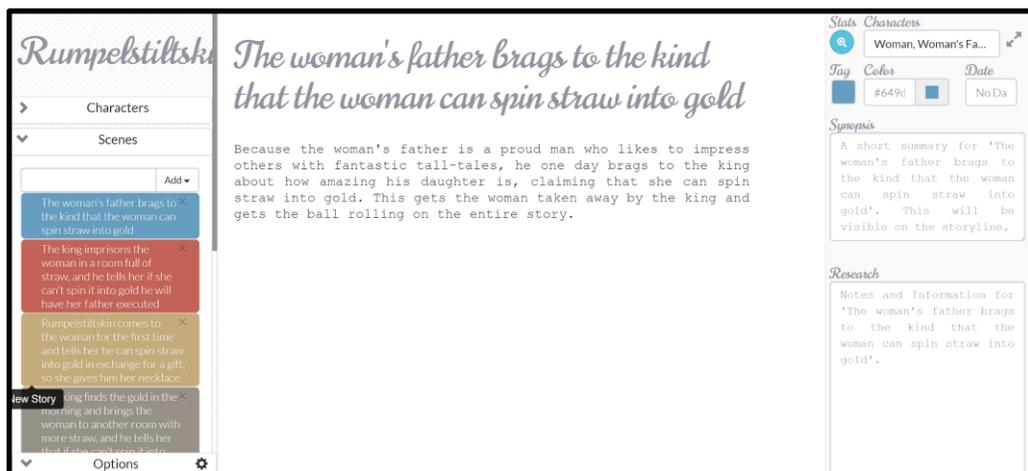
## Features

Storyline Creator allows you to color-code each character to keep their line from getting mixed up with others', and there's a space provided where you can add notes about the characters' appearances, personalities, and any kind of significance they have in the story. You have access to a full color wheel so there's no worry about running out of different colors for each character, and you're given unlimited space for adding notes so you can go as in-depth as you want about each character. You can also add emojis to help keep them separate if you would like an extra visual.



*This is an example of a character page*

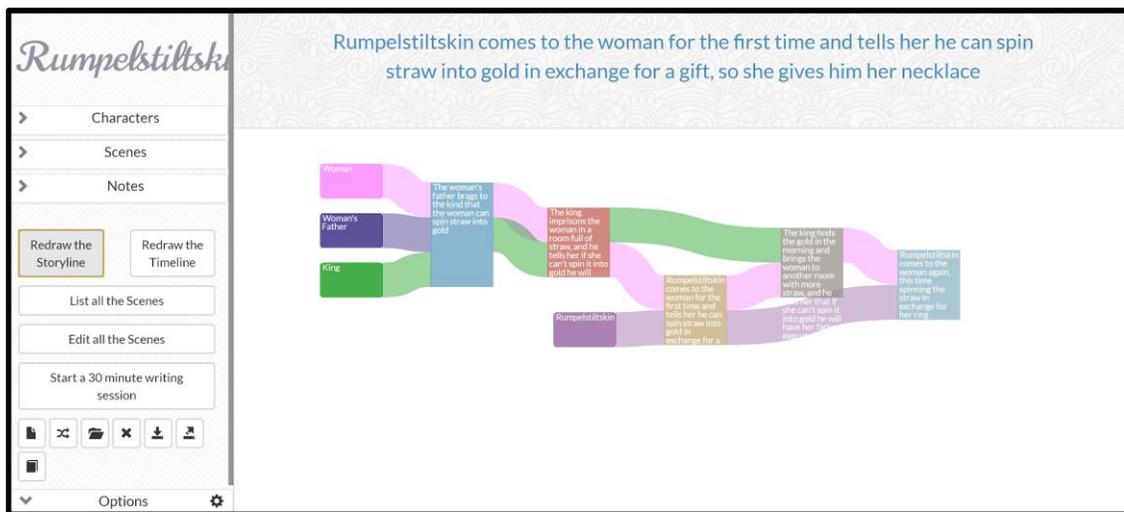
You're given the same control over your scenes. They can be color-coded, so it's easier to keep track of them, and moved around, to keep them in chronological order. Additionally—just like for characters—you have the option to add notes and specify which characters are involved in each scene.



*The scene synopsis page lets you add more detailed notes about what's going on in your scene*

There's also a section for a synopsis of the scene as well as a space for any research notes that might be important to what's going on, whether it be for historical accuracy or just consistency within the project.

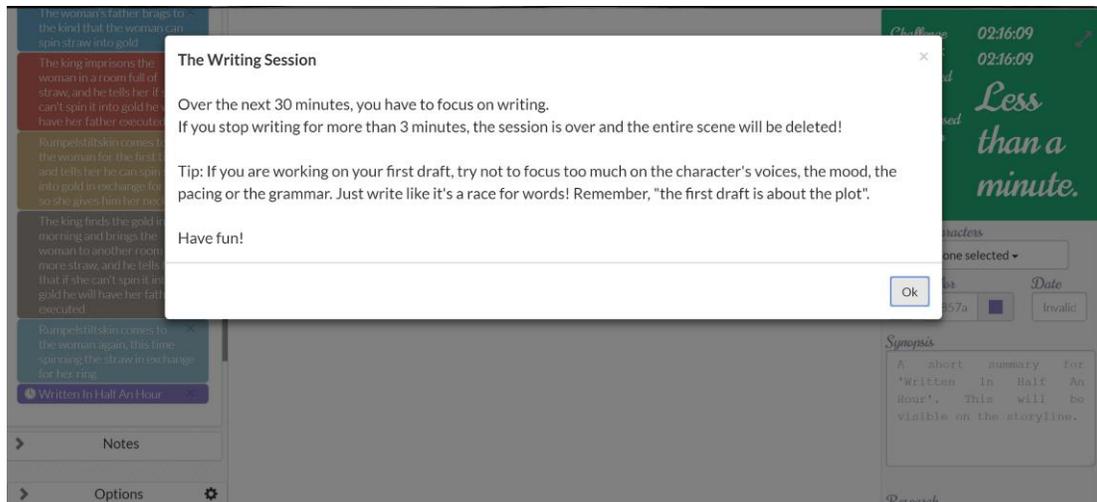
You also have complete control over the storyline itself; you're able to drag and drop scenes and characters to rearrange encounters or close/open gaps between events, perhaps to show that more or less time has passed than the storyline might suggest. After adding a new component, all you have to do is click Redraw the Storyline to see your updated project.



*The storyline shows you how each character fits into each scene and works through the story*

To help guide the eye through your storyline, each character has a trail that matches the color assigned to them, which worms its way throughout the story and connects to scenes where the character is present. If a character isn't in a scene, their trail will move around instead of through it to indicate that they're absent during this interaction. If there comes a point where a character no longer appears in the story, their trail will end in their last scene. Rolling over a scene or a character with the cursor will display the notes you added to that component at the top of the screen if you need a refresher.

And if you're ever stuck, there's an option to start a 30-minute writing session within the program. This means that for the next 30 minutes, you can't stop to think too much about what you're writing or how good it is; you just need to write. If you stop for more than three minutes, the program will end the session early and everything from the session will be deleted. It might be a little harsh, but it's an incentive to keep you going.

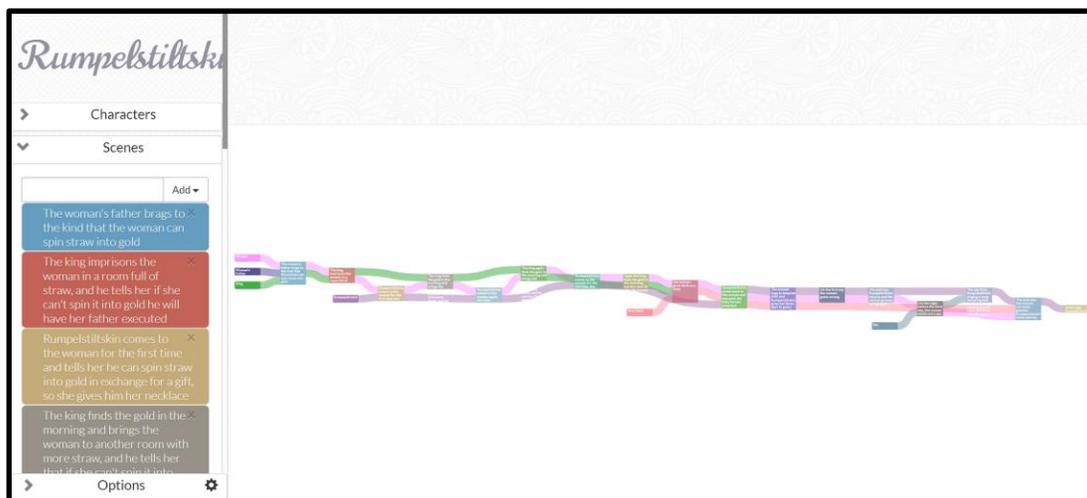


*This is the message that will pop up when you start a writing session*

## Weaknesses

While this app may come in handy for writers who need a little extra help keeping their characters and plot points organized, there are a few things holding it back from being the best it possibly could be.

The biggest issue I had was the size of the area where the storyline is displayed. While you can technically make your storyline as large and extensive as you see fit, it can make it more difficult to see everything as a big picture. You do have the option to zoom in and out by scrolling within the workspace, but the storyline also stretches out as it gets longer, which can sometimes blur lines together or just become hard to read.



*If your storyline becomes extensive, it might get difficult to read as a whole piece*

The script font used for the story title, character names, and scene titles isn't the easiest to read either, but there isn't a way to change it to sometime more agreeable,

so it's something you'll just have to get used to. That extra degree of customization would be nice, but for me personally, it isn't a deal breaker (though for some it could be).

## Conclusion

Despite a few minor flaws, this app is a great way for writers to keep their storylines organized in a way that relies heavily on visuals and mapping everything out to provide information about the storyline at a quick glance. The ability to color-code and move scenes around at will gives you a lot of organizational control if you choose to take advantage of it, and the ability to keep everything stored online (paired with autosave) means that all your work will be kept safe and accessible from anywhere, no matter what you're writing about.

*Delaney Sherman is a Professional Writing major with a Criminology minor. She's addicted to anything related to True Crime or the paranormal, and her favorite space-themed book is The Martian by Andy Weir.*

# Ulysses

*by Krista Savage*

Mode(s) of access	macOS, iOS
Cost	14 days free trial; \$4.99 monthly subscription, \$39.99 annual subscription
Use case(s)	General writing
Strength(s)	User-friendliness, simplistic design, storage
Weakness(es)	Limit of format

## Introduction

Ulysses is a user-friendly writing app that allows for the optimal production of text with minimal effort. It runs on Mac and iOS products only (Mac, iPad, iPhone), and uses iCloud for all storage purposes. It also uses iCloud to automatically sync writing texts through all connected devices whenever there's internet connection, so users never need to worry about saving or losing work. Although the availability of iCloud isn't new to Apple users, it's an extremely useful feature—especially when users want to toggle through devices while writing. The app uses a single-library system, which means all text resides on the app's library until exported. Since all work is saved immediately, writers can do anything from jotting down thoughts to writing an award-winning novel.

The app enhances usability by automatically formatting all text and writing with plain text, or plain text enhanced, as Ulysses calls it. The app is extremely versatile; it can act as an organizational planner, sophisticated notepad, or the template for a novel. There are not many limitations or difficulties when navigating the app, and Ulysses describes it as a very personalized experience, constantly reminding users to “make it your own” throughout the app's description. There are no wrong answers when it comes to what you can use this app for.

## Layout and Features

Ulysses offers users three main views when using the app:

Library

Sheet List

Editor

There is a simple navigation bar that can be used to easily switch between views. All of the information is laid out simply, and it's extremely user-friendly.

### ***Library***

This is where all user-created text lives. In the Library, there are no saved texts; rather, every entry lives independently and can be organized according to date created, date modified, or title (if added). All text found here is organized into sheets, which are very similar to Microsoft Word documents, but don't require a file name or title to be remembered as an entry. This is very useful to users who may forget to save their files, don't want to name every entry, or simply need to write something quickly.

### ***Sheets***

All writing is done in Sheets. Users create sheets via the New Sheet button and begin writing immediately. There are no templates to choose from, and everything is laid out very simply from the start, making it easy for users to get writing.

Sheets offer unique features when using on iPad or iPhone (touch screens). By holding the app down firmly on the home screen, users have the ability to automatically open a new sheet from the homepage. So, within three seconds of having a brilliant idea for a novel, Ulysses makes it extremely simple to have all writing in one place.

### ***Editor***

The editing section offers the ability to insert headings or titles and refer back to a sheet at any time. This app offers open-editing at any time, meaning a user doesn't ever have to upload or open a file, because all sheets can be changed or reformatted at any time.

### ***Layout***

Ulysses is very organized, customizable, and it allows for complete and free organization and sectioning of text. Users have the ability to organize sheets however they please, with the ability to drag-and-drop, favorite (or star) certain sheets, as well as add keywords, copy, duplicate, download, or delete any text. It also offers a feature that allows the user to merge two sheets together. Additionally, any of these sheets can be transformed to PDFs or ebook files at any time.

Also easily accessible from the main screen on the app is a button row with helpful shortcuts and options for navigating the simplest way through the app. This not only strengthens user-simplicity, but it allows writers to utilize the app to the fullest potential by toggling through all the different features of the app.

## Formatting

The app is format-free, which means the user is limited in how uniquely they can format it. However, Apple prides themselves on the display of the app and the simplicity of the wording, text, and design choices. They like to introduce conformity and professionalism throughout all of their products. When text is downloaded, it's automatically formatted. However, users have the ability to apply simple markup and create unique characters throughout the text, like headlines, colored bubbles, titles, and more. Ulysses uses simple, minimal markup to allow the user to create these:

Example: `##`create a title, `_emphasis_`, `>`create a quote

The app offers a Markdown XL section in the introduction to elaborate on this process for users who may be unfamiliar with formatting. The instructions for simple markup is always available to the user at anytime while using the app.

## Benefits and Drawbacks

Some of the main benefits of Ulysses are its user-friendliness, simplistic design, and storage. It's extremely easy to navigate, making it a great app for beginners, or people just starting to pursue writing. It uses trendy language and emphasizes personalization. It even offers information on formatting and simple markup so writers can create organization and sections through their pieces. The ability to export or merge texts immediately creates various circumstances for this app to be used, and it's extremely versatile. The iCloud storage is useful and reminds me of Google Drive in the sense that the text can be immediately accessed from any device containing the app. Also, the ability to type across devices at anytime adds consistency and adaptability. Some features are easier on touch screen—like auto-opening sheets or being able to save quick thoughts. However, if the user wants to sit down at their Mac and type for hours, they can quickly toggle to their laptop.

The drawbacks of the app exist in its limited potential for formatting text. Ulysses offers the ability to create headlines, titles, and emphasis, but the overall potential is limited for those who wish to design a specific font or look. It isn't a word processor, or a heavy editor with track changes. This is also not a free app. There is a free two-week trial period for anyone who wants to use it, but overall it would need a subscription. Ulysses offers a yearly subscription, monthly, and a rate for students—which offers a six-month, full-use time period that ends automatically.

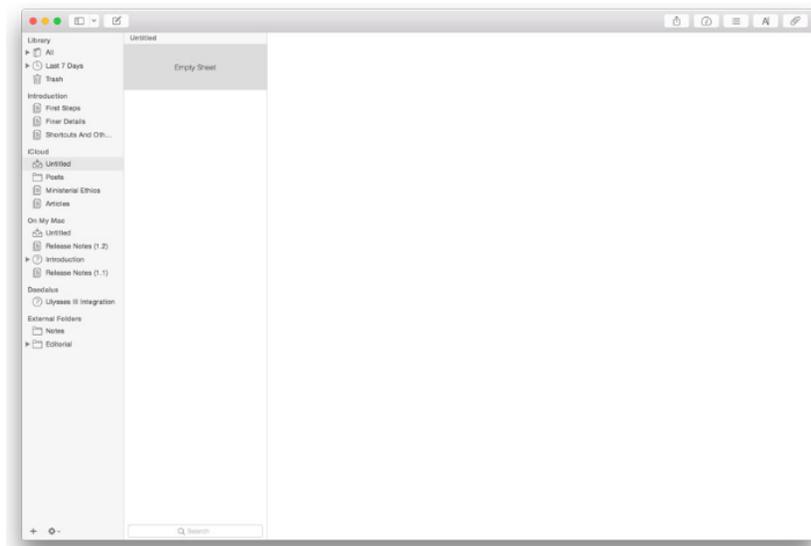
Yearly Subscription: \$39.99

Monthly Subscription: \$4.99

Students: \$10.99

## Reviews

Ulysses has been praised for its performance in the writing-app community, as well as with Apple products. *PC Magazine* rated it “excellent,” and commends the simplistic design by saying it “helps writers focus on their writing by providing a minimal experience.” It also received Editors’ Choice for writing software. Ulysses is majorly praised for less is more, and is widely accepted among the writing community.



*Screenshot of Ulysses app*

*The Sweet Setup* is an online tech review that rated Ulysses the best iOS writing app for all writers. This article elaborates on the broad range of professionals that could benefit from this app, like journalists, screenwriters, authors, copy editors, bloggers, and more. The app not only offers iOS users a way to simply write or note-take, but professionals can greatly benefit from this in their fields.



*Review from The Sweet Setup*

## Conclusion

Ulysses is by far the best writing app I've ever downloaded. I have only used it on a Mac a couple times, but the possibilities on the phone are endless. The simplicity and user-friendliness of the app heavily appeal to me, and I'm not bothered by the lack of formatting potential because I think the stylistic choices in the app are clear and appeal to a wide array of people. I would recommend this app to anyone who wishes to get involved in writing from a note-taking to a professional level.

*Krista Savage is a Professional Writing major at Miami University and graduates in December. She loves Oxford, but is ready to move to the West Coast very soon to start a new life with her dog. Her favorite space movie is either Star Wars or 2001: A Space Odyssey.*



## Log 2: Nebulae

Well, those planets were certainly something! Now we're coming up on some kind of colorful cloud. There's tons of matter floating inside. It looks a little like my mind whenever I start a new project—a brainstorm, if you will!

# Agenda

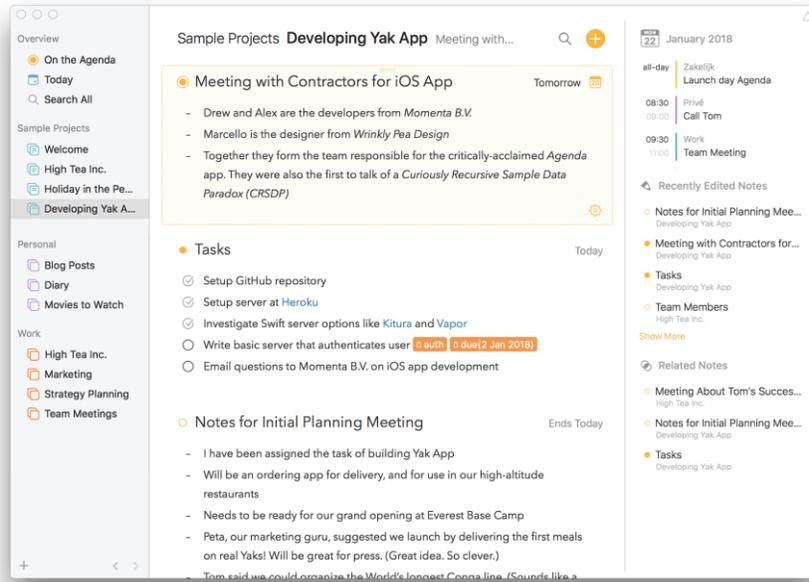
*by Matthew Rubenstein*

Mode(s) of access	agenda.com, macOS, iOS
Cost	Free; \$9.99-\$24.99 subscription options
Use case(s)	Note-taking, planning and tracking
Strength(s)	Clean interface, proper mobile accommodations, developer feedback for changes
Weakness(es)	Premium features locked behind paywall, less reliable than Apple Notes for brief reminders

Agenda is a note-based program using dates, times, and folders to allow for quick storage of daily information. Although this program is available on Mac computers, the iOS version of the program was used for the sake of review and analysis. This review will primarily cover the app's design, accessibility, pros/cons, and personal thoughts.

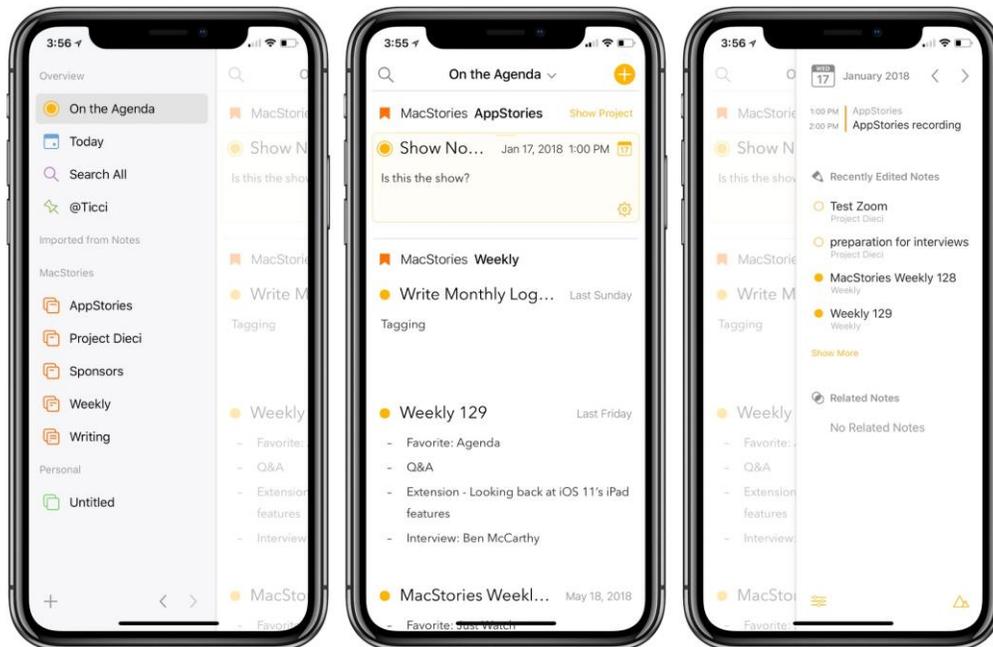
## Design

The design of the browser version of Agenda mainly consists of a clean white setup, with notes in the middle, and two selection options being on either side of it. This works exceptionally well because it makes all three parts of the screen easy to locate and read. Likewise, when making different project folders, users are given the choice to make sections their own specific color. In this particular image, sample projects are made green, personal projects are made purple, and work projects are made orange. In total, Agenda offers twelve different colors for note folder categories, allowing users to make plenty of individually identifiable sections. Agenda even allows this same color coordination to be present on the user's calendar. Lastly, the bold dots versus the more white, checked dots is a design choice that really prioritizes agenda activities, removing what has already been done.



*The Browser version of Agenda's default view screen (Voorhees)*

When Agenda is used on a mobile device, such as the version found on the App Store used for conducting research, the overall format is weakened for the sake of fitting compactly onto the console screen. The basic screen only has the current on-screen notes. Finding the calendar suggestions and note folders will take a swipe to the left and right sides of the screen respectively. This makes it seem a tad more cumbersome to edit one of these categories while main notes are also in view. On the plus side however, this design allows for the calendar to be directly linked to the Calendar app, also present on the iPhone. This double coordination is a fantastic design choice, since events written down in the app can transfer over to the commonly used, main calendar app. It also makes scrolling through options much easier, as a single finger can scroll down notes at faster and more precise speeds than on a computer. Overall though, the design is very efficient when it comes to the browser, and despite the limitations when turned into a phone app, it takes advantage of certain mobile features that do not exist in the browser version. This shows that Agenda for iOS understands how to accommodate its design.



*Sliding panels from the mobile version of Agenda, showing the sections to the left and right of the main screen if your finger slides the opposite direction (Voorhees)*

## Accessibility

Agenda as an app, thankfully, is easy enough to use without getting too lost in its features. Opening the app, the screen has a plus sign to add new notes, a magnifying glass to search for past notes, and a down arrow by On the Agenda serves as table of contents, labeling both the sections and the subsections for any notes written down personally. On the right side, the Recently Edited Notes tab further shows which notes were the last worked on, so if a user exits the app and returns later, their notes wouldn't be lost. The app even adjusts for different reading levels by letting you adjust text using a section it calls Agenda Preferences on the bottom left of the right side tab. It is helpful because certain users may be able to read smaller text just fine, while others might need larger text in order to properly view their notes. Lastly, the white, minimalist design provides an accessibility sometimes not seen in other programs that tend to get crazy with the color schemes. Even the Notes app traditionally pre-installed on Apple devices changed the sheet color to white for convenience and to replace their yellow lined paper look. This could make the notes feel more cluttered, so Agenda sticking with white works well to help the text pop.

## Pros/Cons

The reviews on the App Store for "Agenda - A new take on notes" are mostly positive. It holds a 4.4 out of 5 based on 566 ratings, with the large majority being 5 star reviews. Most of the reviewers appreciate how the Notes app flows with your calendar, even if,

as a caveat, users must pay an additional fee to make the most of those features. The app is free normally; it is only with paying an additional \$9.99 that premium features are unlocked, such as choosing which calendar should appear in Agenda, creating calendar events in the app, pinning notes, saving searches, and hiding the app's watermark for prints/PDFs. For some, this paywall can be a turnoff, but as the developers point out, the \$9.99 is not a subscription. It's more so an unlock all. In addition, you only have to pay it once rather than it being a continuous fee. That these premium perks felt like proper additions rather than gutted features was a common source of praise among user reviews.

Most user reviews were positive, and those that weren't enthused with the app received development feedback for fixing certain things. Image support and pencil support, for instance, were features one user named "music-major" asked about, and someone from Agenda's development team responded to this user stating that image and pencil support would be added in the future. Regardless, most people who purchased the app were supportive of the Agenda team and the clean way in which notes could be categorized.

## Personal Thoughts

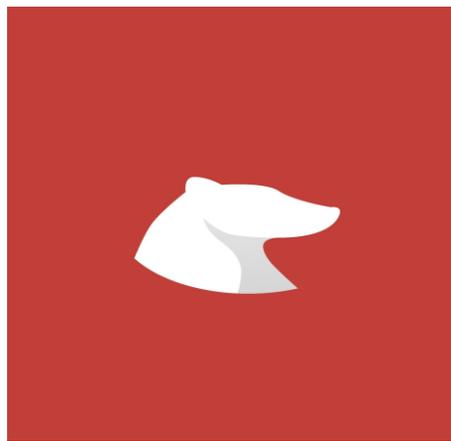
Agenda has been useful in categorizing daily events, and I appreciate how much coverage it has. All the features in the app are very helpful, even in the free version, but notes for me tend to be instantaneous and short. If I need to organize more extensively, Agenda is very helpful, but for certain notes, I may use the quicker, if more limited Notes app available on iOS. For me at least, Agenda comes at the expense of accessibility in those moments, but that should not stop other people. If they don't have their normal notes on quick access, then Agenda is a more than worthy note-taking program because of extensive options. Still, Agenda's features, user interface, and proper development feedback give me respect for the app.

*Matthew Rubenstein is a Professional Writing major with an interest in film and video game writing. He enjoys playing tennis, visiting family, and watching movies. His favorite space video game is Super Mario Galaxy.*

# Bear

*by Jasmine Pinkney*

Mode(s) of access	macOS, iOS
Cost	Free; \$1.49 monthly subscription, \$14.99 annual subscription
Use case(s)	Note-taking, journaling
Strength(s)	Ability to convert a note into a PDF, JPG, HTML, or Word document; the grouping of notes with hashtags
Weakness(es)	Features locked behind paywall, unfamiliar icons requiring trial and error to understand their function



*This is the opening page to Bear as a mobile app on the iPhone*

## Introduction

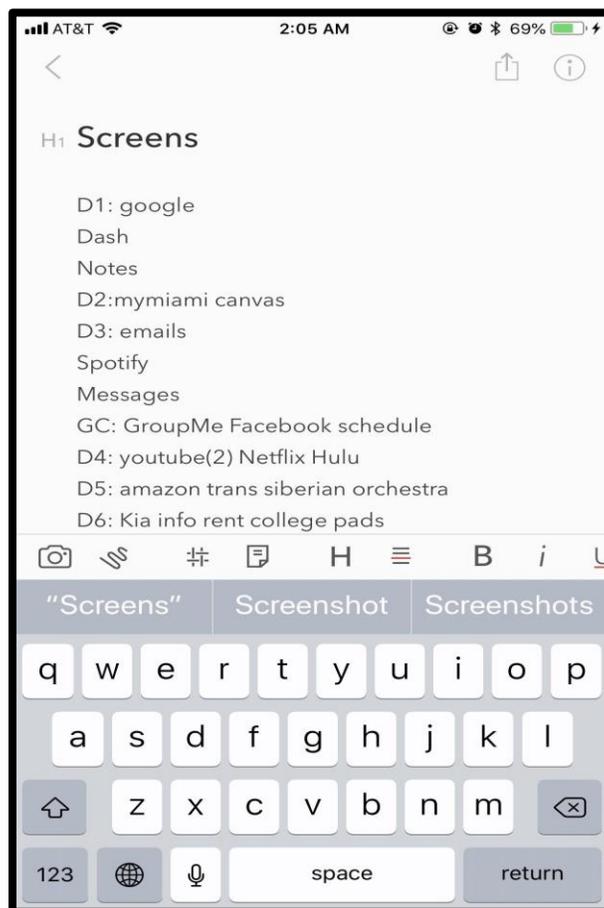
Bear. What would you think you were getting yourself into when given that application? You wouldn't know what to do but you would be curious. The note-taking/keeping application, Bear, that's what it is. Surprised? I was too when I downloaded this red icon with only a nondescriptive cartoon polar bear decorating the block. Oddly enough, I had never heard of this app until I was given a project that required me to use Bear. However, Apple labeled it as the Top App of 2016 (D'Alessio, "How Bear Notes"), and I wonder where I was and what I was doing that I did not know about this application. When I asked around to the people I know who write a lot or would use a note-taking app for any random thing, not many had heard of the Bear application.

So what exactly is Bear? "Developers based in Italy launched a new app with a mission to make notes beautiful and flexible," says Francesco D'Alessio in the article "How Bear

Notes became Apple's #1 App" on *Medium*. In simple terms, it is a free application for writing notes, prose, and even essays if a person chooses to do so. In style—and even in action and usage—it is very similar to the Notes app on all Apple products. There is a more widespread selection of features and options in Bear than you have in the normal, everyday note applications on your devices.

## What Can It Do?

Similar to quite a few apps that are found in the App Store, Bear can be used on both your iPhone and on a MacBook or Apple desktop. It connects through the iCloud system, so you are able to save your work and move from a different device if necessary or wanted. It is very convenient for writers who are on the move daily or are not looking at a computer screen 24/7. They are able to jot down a note or idea while on their phone, save it, get home, and expand the idea on their laptop or desktop and everything will be there waiting for them.



*The toolbar is shown displaying the many functions the app provides for users while editing a note.*

## **Features**

Some of the features that Bear offers aren't as easily accessible—or offered at all—in other applications, separating it from the competition. All of the basic tools on Microsoft Word and Google Docs can be accessed in Bear. You can check word count, how long it would take for someone to read your piece, add links, bold or italicize words, and so much more. The plus side of Bear is the fact that you can convert a note into a PDF, JPG, HTML, or Word document. What this means is that you can turn it into a form that is easily shared and globally understood.

You are able to label and sort your notes in the sidebar function of the app. With the use of the hashtag symbol, users can label each note if they prefer and sort them into different tags. Users are also able to archive and delete notes with ease. One difficulty with archiving notes that I found is searching for them. If they are archived, searches will not pick them up and you will not be able to see them unless you go into the archive folder.

## **Reviews**

As someone who writes lists and notes 5-10 times a day on my computer and phone, Bear is convenient and likable. I used to write in the notepad that was already downloaded on my MacBook and iPhone, but there have been times where I wanted to do something, like bullet points or bolding a title, and it wasn't easy to maneuver or perform the task. Bear makes editing my words very simple with the use of the taskbar. It is like any other taskbar you see on any writing application, which is a plus because you are already familiar with the tools and icons and will automatically know what to use. However, there are a few new icons that I was unfamiliar with, and it was a trial-and-error situation where I had to figure out what something did before I could fully use it. For example, there is a piece of paper icon on the toolbar. This tool allows you to add double brackets, which then allows you to choose a tag to put that particular note under. I would not have ever guessed that was what the icon was trying to imitate.

A big plus for this app is that it is free to use. Yes, there is a pro version that you pay for, but the free one still has a lot of great features and sources at the user's disposal. It isn't one of those free applications that you can only use for a certain amount of time, or where you can only use the most basic of features, or even one that shows you a bunch of advertisements every time you open it on your device.

*MakeUseOf* writer Khamosh Pathak gave 10 agreeable reasons on why Bear is better than Apple Notes, and some of them I completely agree with. The hashtags which allow you to group notes together, the formatting bar on the iPhone and the iPad

(which is super convenient even if it isn't on a larger screen) the exporting functions. All of these features make this app super simple and easy to use. These make the app even more attractive to writers and everyday users.

## Conclusion

Honestly, this application is great in its simplicity and ease. Any person with a basic knowledge of how to use a note-taking piece of technology would enjoy using this product. The features on Bear that aren't on other applications are not only cool but also helpful. The app isn't just another random app you may have on your phone; it is something you could use every day with a smile on your face. Apple has given this a title of Top App and encouraged users to download it onto their computers and phones even though they have a note-taking application on their products. Bear did something right and is amazing for such a simple piece of technology.

*Jasmine Pinkney is a Professional Writing/Creative Writing double major. When she isn't working at the Miami Rec Center or catering weddings, she is swimming on the club swim team or having movie nights with her friends. Her favorite space movie is Guardians of the Galaxy.*

# Evernote

*by Jamie Leonhardt*

Mode(s) of access	evernote.com, iOS, Android
Cost	Free; \$7.99-\$14.99 monthly subscription options
Use case(s)	Note-taking
Strength(s)	Organization, share feature
Weakness(es)	Limited free version

## Introduction

Evernote has the ability to transform a writer’s organizational skills, as well as become their preferred note-taking application. For people on the go, Evernote is practical and convenient because it allows the writer to sync across two devices. Whether jotting down a reminder on the way to work or copyediting a piece for an author, there shouldn’t be a concern around information being lost; Evernote uses cloud storage, ensuring that notes and projects are safe and secure.

## Design

Evernote has a clean-looking design and focuses primarily on two colors—black and white. While these default background colors cannot be altered, individuals will have the opportunity to personalize and customize their notes. The left side of the screen is a black selection panel. Here, a writer can easily see how to create a new note, open up a recent note, open a Notebook, or view shared notes. One can even choose to upgrade to the next version of Evernote. A search bar at the top of the screen allows users to conveniently search for a note by name.

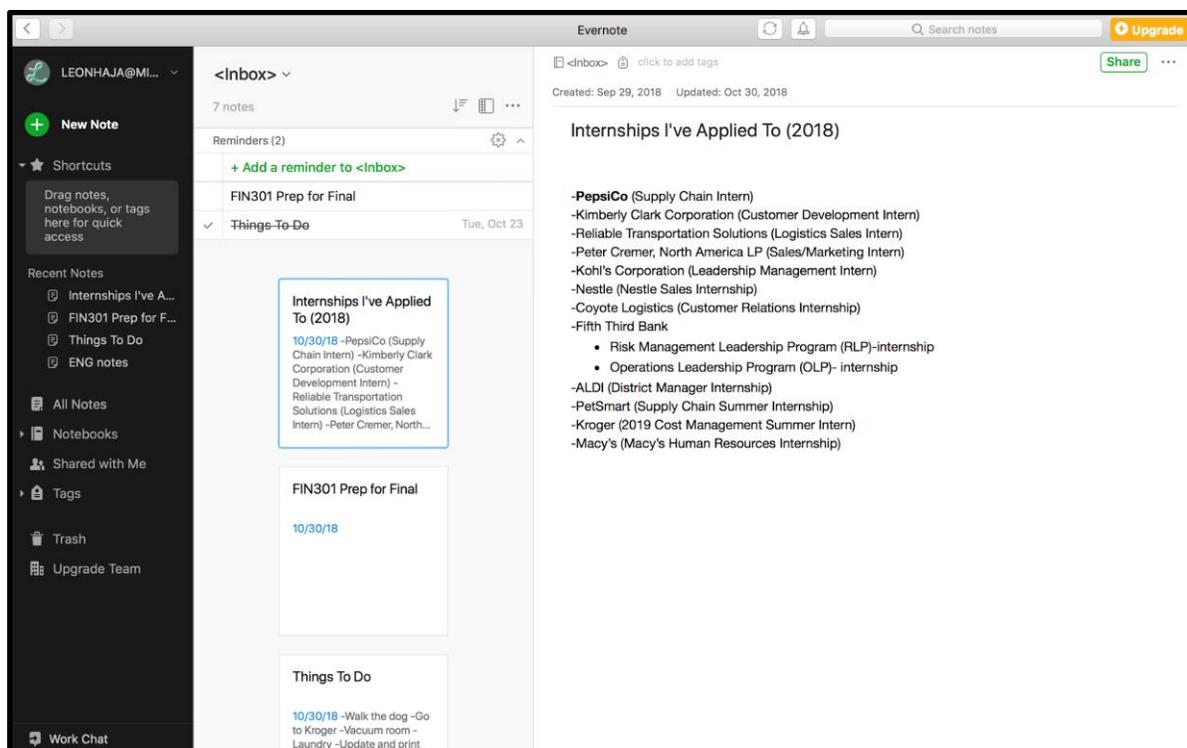
## Strengths

Evernote is a powerful organizational tool that has a plethora of helpful features for writers to utilize. Of course, the writer has the ability to title a note before writing down any details. Formatting is self-explanatory—the writer chooses the size of their font and may even color-code their note to personalize it further.

When a due date is approaching, a writer can set a reminder prompting them to finish up any last steps. To create a reminder, they can click on the three dots found at the top of the note and then select Add Reminder. The writer then has the option to set the reminder for a specific date of their choosing. On that set due date, with the

writer's permission, Evernote will send an email as the final reminder. Oftentimes, life is so hectic that we can only focus on a couple of things at once. A writer can also use reminders for to-do lists or projects that aren't high-priority now, but will be in a few weeks. Simply making the note and setting a reminder can ease a writer's mind temporarily, because they can rest assured that it will pop back up when it's time to get to work.

When a task with a reminder has been completed, Evernote allows you to mark the note as done. To do this, the writer simply goes to their inbox (where all notes can be found) and, underneath Reminders, clicks on the box to the left-hand side of the desired note. There is a line through the title of the note indicating its completion, as well as a check mark next to it. This feel-good feature shows a writer how far they have come and can be useful when a writer wants to refer back to a past project months later. Additionally, this feature serves as a perk for writers who would typically prefer handwriting their to-do lists. Marking a note as done is essentially the equivalent of crossing off a task that has been completed on a piece of paper.



*A screenshot of a user's Inbox—two notes have reminders and one has been completed*

Similar to other note-taking apps, Evernote allows the user to create folders to organize projects or occasions. What is unique, however, is that this application conveniently enables the writer to share notes directly with other Evernote users. Information can also be shared with non-users by inputting an email address or sharable link, and it's equally effective.

Communication and feedback are both crucial in order for a writer to succeed. In addition to offering a share feature, Evernote also has a chat feature that is useful for smaller conversations. A quick question or clarifying point can be sent without having to go through the effort of exiting your screen. If a writer chooses to utilize this feature, they will save a lot of time in the long run by having everything in one place. Instead of wondering if you sent an email, GroupMe message, Slack message, or text message to a colleague, you can assume that all conversations regarding a specific project occurred through Evernote messaging.

This application is particularly useful to writers who frequently engage in research. A writer can easily drag and drop previous research or supporting figures into a note. If they find a useful website, the writer can utilize the Web Clipper tool (instead of screenshotting) and continue to browse. The Web Clipper tool allows the user to choose what they would like transferred into Evernote, and the rest can be cropped out and left behind.

## Weaknesses

Of course, the free version of Evernote can only get you so much. In order to sync across all devices, you must upgrade to either Evernote Premium or Evernote Business. According to Evernote's website, Evernote Premium costs \$7.99 per month, and Evernote Business costs \$14.99 per user per month.

Evernote Premium gives an individual 10GB of monthly uploads, while the basic version only allows 60MB. This is a pretty big leap in storage size, considering you're only paying around eight dollars more. On top of that, Premium supports a much larger note size (200MB compared to 25MB). Not shockingly, paying more will also earn you better customer support. After purchasing Evernote Premium, a user can now turn to emails and chats when they need assistance, instead of simply using an online forum. If a user is hesitant to spend money on this upgrade, they can take advantage of a free trial before making their final decision.

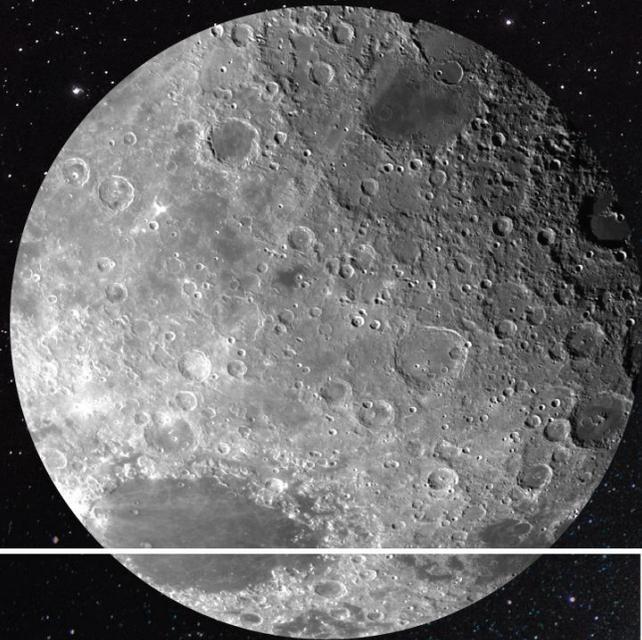
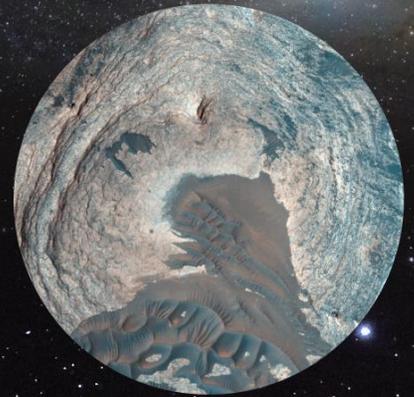
Evernote Business is the most developed version, allowing 24GB (or more) of monthly uploads. Someone who writes frequently and knows they will upload more than 10GB per month can trial the Business version at no cost.

Not everyone can afford to pay up to \$14.99 per month, and for this reason Evernote is lacking. It's unfortunate that users can't enjoy all of the different benefits of the app unless they pay a monthly fee.

## Conclusion

I would recommend Evernote to both friends and colleagues. While I do see the benefit of having additional storage space and more accommodating customer support, the free version of Evernote has exceeded my expectations both as a writer and as a student. I still make occasional to-do lists by hand, but I've found that my lists and projects are much safer within cloud-based storage than they are in a physical notebook. One of my favorite features of the application is its ability to accept Word and PDF documents that are simply dropped in from a user's desktop. I enjoy creating different Notebooks for my different classes and projects that I'm currently engrossed in.

*Jamie Leonhardt is a Supply Chain & Operations Management major with a minor in Rhetoric/Writing. She enjoys spending time outdoors, playing beach volleyball, and hanging out with friends. Her favorite space-themed movie is Star Wars.*



## Log 3: Moons

We're seeing so much and learning so many new things! Now would be a great opportunity to take some time to reflect on our adventure. Maybe these moons will be a good pit stop.

# Capture

by Janae Hutchins

Mode(s) of access	iOS
Cost	Free; \$2.99 one-time payment
Use case(s)	Dream journaling
Strength(s)	Detailed interface
Weakness(es)	Time-consuming for users to enter all information upon waking

## Introduction

It's 10 a.m. and my alarm is screaming at me to start the day. I check my phone for any stray texts that came to me in the night, and there is a notification from Capture, the dream journal app I have been using. "What did you dream last night?"

Capture is a comprehensive dream journal designed for people who want to keep track of their nightly sleep escapades. Dream recollection can not only inform the dreamer about their subconscious, but also provide creative and fanciful inspiration for stories. Carl Jung wrote in his essay titled "Individual Dream Symbolism in Relation to Alchemy,"

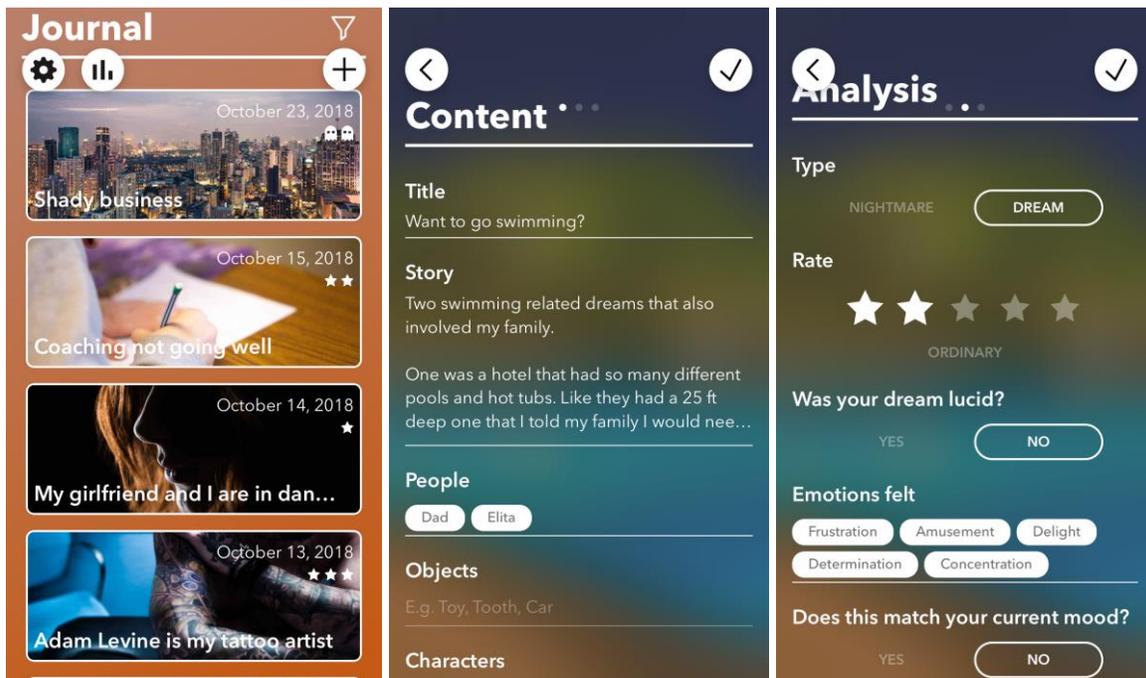
[H]ere we are not dealing with isolated dreams; they form a coherent series in the course of which the meaning gradually unfolds more or less of its own accord. The series is the context which the dreamer himself supplies. It is as if not one text but many lay before us, throwing light from all sides on the unknown terms, so that a reading of all the texts is sufficient to elucidate the difficult passages in each individual one. (qtd. in Bulkeley)

Thus, if dreams can be considered a series of meaningful narratives, then preserving the memory of them through a dream journal like Capture can be likened to keeping a carefully curated library of personal texts.

## Usage

Upon opening Capture, users click the plus icon on the top right of the app to add a dream. Users must first name the dream ("Shady business," "My girlfriend and I are in danger," and "Adam Levine is my tattoo artist," are a few of mine). Then, Capture has sections to input Story (with no word limit, for those with elaborate dream narratives),

People (Mom, your best friend, Beyoncé), Objects (teeth, car, money), Characters (teacher, lion, zombie), Places (home, amusement park, forest), Themes (fame, love, reincarnation), and Actions (driving, falling, eating). With the Image feature, users can upload a picture or choose from stock photos to find an image that best fits the dream.



*Capture's Home, Content, and Analysis pages*

Swiping right, under Analysis users can toggle whether they experienced a dream or nightmare, rate the dream on a scale of 1-5 (stars for dreams, ghosts for nightmares), toggle whether the dream was lucid, and add emotions from a checklist. Then, users can toggle whether the emotions felt in the dream match the emotions they felt in their waking life.

On the final screen, under Context, users can answer yes or no to the questions, "Do you think this dream is linked to an experience in your life?" and "Have you dreamed of this before?"

For \$2.99, users can access the premium features of the app. Here, they have access to a statistics and analysis screen that can assist in interpreting and tracking their dreams.

At the top of the screen, users can select the time window they want to analyze from any starting and ending date. The app then breaks down the information stored from the dreams within that time frame, giving users a web chart of emotions, the percentage of dreams versus nightmares, context (such as what percentage of dreams

were linked to an experience and what percentage of dreams were similar to other dreams they had), content of dream elements with Capture's possible interpretation and space for the user to write what an element means to them, and finally, conclusions about the user's dreams in terms of mood, uniqueness, and realism.



Capture's Statistics features, unlocked with a Premium membership

Once users add more dreams, they see a list of dreams on the main screen organized by date (newest on top) and identified by title, date, rating, and picture. Users have an option to apply filters or search dreams with any of the keywords, elements, and parameters they filled out when adding their dreams. This function can become extremely useful once a user has accumulated many dreams and wants to search within those.

## Utility (for writers and non-writers)

So why do all of this? Well, for one, it's entertaining to reminisce about past strange and interesting dreams. For me, when I read through my past dreams I can sometimes conjure up the images and feelings from them. As someone who has primarily unique and imaginative dreams, Capture gives me a tool to remember dreams I would have otherwise forgotten.

Second, Capture gives users multiple ways to help them understand their dreams and what these dreams may or may not mean for their subconscious. As stated by Malinowski, "According to Freud's wish-fulfilment theory, which is currently perhaps

the most famous and influential of all psychological dream theories, dreams symbolically picture waking-life wishes such as sexual or aggressive urges because they are unacceptable, and so the waking, conscious mind represses them” (118). With this in mind, analyzing dreams can provide key insights about your subconscious. What are some of the most recurring images, people, concepts, and places, and in what different contexts do they appear? How often do you really dream about your high school crush, visiting that beautiful imaginary vacation spot, or that birthday clown that scared you as a child? Finding the right answers can help you improve as a person and a writer.

From a fiction writer’s standpoint, dreams can be a rich, ever-replenishing wealth of inspiration, creativity, and unique narratives. Run out of ideas for your next story? Sift through your dream journal for something interesting. The more bizarre, the better. Famous novels that were inspired by dreams include Stephen King’s *Misery*, Robert Louis Stevenson’s *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*, Charlotte Brontë’s *Jane Eyre*, and E. B. White’s *Stuart Little* (Turner).

Are you more into writing nonfiction than fiction? Even memoirists have been known to include dreams in their narratives. As mentioned before, analyzing your dreams can help provide valuable insight and meaning to your experiences that may provide just the right spark of enlightenment for your life story.

## Conclusion

As someone who has always been interested in keeping a dream journal but never pulled the trigger, I found Capture to be a great low-hassle starting point to experiment with collecting, categorizing, and analyzing my dreams. Whether you are entirely on board with dream analysis or not, Capture’s insights give a nice starting point into figuring out your dreams or, at least, deciding whether you want to research more into dream symbolism.

And yes, in case you were wondering, the dream about Adam Levine being my tattoo artist was definitely worth documenting.

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# Day One

by Ally Croy

Mode(s) of access	macOS, iOS, Android
Cost	Free; \$34.99 annual subscription
Use case(s)	Journaling, lifestyle
Strength(s)	Easy to navigate, motivational tool
Weakness(es)	Expensive premium option

## Introduction

The Day One app is a journaling tool marketed to capture everyday moments. Voted as App of the Year and an Apple Design Award winner, Day One presents potential objectives users can meet, including creating habits, enriching life through benefits, preserving moments, securing memories, recalling all details from events, organization, and sharing memories. The app is free, with premium options, and is available in 24 different languages.

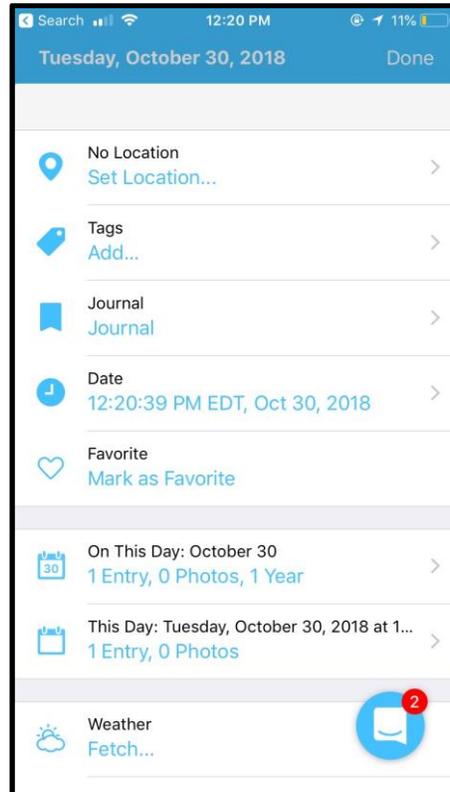
Users agree that the ability to journal online, as opposed to keeping a handwritten journal, is alone a huge benefit that Day One introduces. “I’ve kept paper journals in the past, but never stuck with them,” *Macworld* says in a product review of the app. “Filling those blank pages felt too much like a chore. Bloom Built’s superb Day One makes keeping a journal easier than ever, thanks to smart features and a beautiful, welcoming interface” (Alderman).

When I found Day One, I was looking for an accountability app—getting through my day-to-day responsibilities has never seemed easy. This app has provided me with the tools to hold myself accountable by logging day, time, the entry itself, and pictures.

## Design and Layout

The app’s layout is very organized and simplistic. For example, the calendar option allows users to locate entries from specific dates rather than having to dig through post after post searching for certain information or a specific entry. Entries are also shown in chronological order, which makes them easier to locate. The modern and simplified presentation of the app, especially in regard to the homepage, also makes it easy for users to create entries. Taking up approximately one-third to half of the screen is a large plus sign icon, which can be used to create an entry, and a photo icon used to upload pictures. Users are able to quickly locate these uploading tools and

transfer ideas and thoughts from mind to page almost instantly. It's hard to find easier journaling than that. A *Cult of Mac* review further discusses benefits of the app in everyday life, saying, "Day One's support for including weather information, daily step count, location data, and media make it a vibrant way to journal your life. Instead of Apple Notes packed with plain text or paper journals that don't give context to the day, Day One brings your journal to life" (Fuchs).



*Day One's layout*

## Usability

Because keeping a consistent journal can be difficult, Day One motivates users to continue completing entries with statistics on the homepage that showcase the number of total entries, when the app is used to create entries, photos uploaded, and entries created during that week and on that day. Some may view this as a way to guilt users into using the app more frequently, but others may view this as a mode of motivation, encouraging users to continue holding themselves accountable and reminding them to create entries.

There are many potential uses of this app, the overall goal being to maintain some kind of journal. With the features Day One presents, specifically day and time of entries, users can use this app exclusively as an accountability tool, such as tracking

medication dosage or frequency. The app can also be used to document a timeline, such as a weight-loss journey or pregnancy progression.

Day One can also be used to maintain an agenda, with goals and tasks to complete. An entry like this would list activities for completion with updates on each part of the agenda throughout the day—whether the activity was completed, what further steps need to be taken, any additional notes on the agenda as a whole or on certain goals, etc.

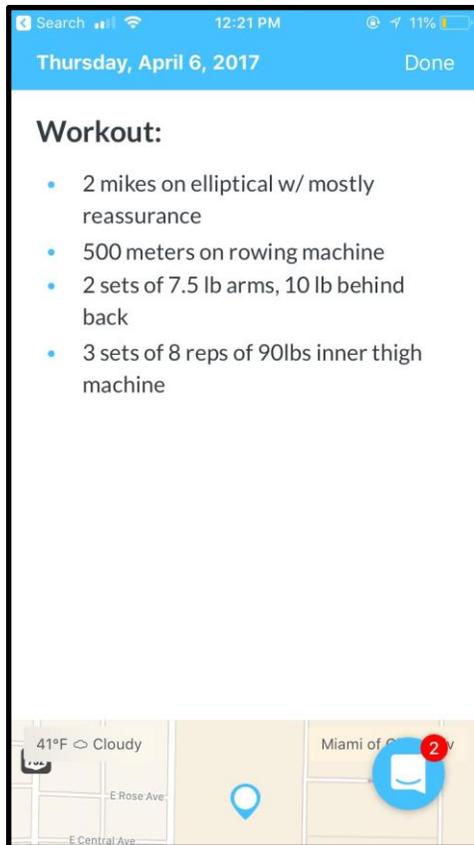
## Who Can Use This App

This app can be used by anyone with any level of experience in writing, but is geared toward non-professional and non-career-based writers. This is by no means a professional blogging tool, and while the information in Day One can be shared, the app itself is more for personal use than any other function. Experience-based writers can definitely use this app to their advantage, but their work would not be best-suited for this app.

Additionally, the ability to choose from a large selection of languages makes this app available to users all over the world. Regardless of where users live, the struggle to maintain a journal or to keep accountability for tracking tasks exists. Day One has the ability to change lives across cultures with different language options.

## Conclusion

The Day One app is an easy-to-use journaling and tracking tool for people on the go. This app is a great starting point for those who want to keep track of information but struggle with journaling; users can expect an easy transition into journaling with this app. One user on the App Store was impressed with how easy the app was to use: “When I started using Day One I was kinda of blown away at how easy it was just to have items flow from my head onto the app” (MaximoHemingway). Another App Store review described the app as “flexible, powerful, uncluttered user experience, great customer service, reliable and constantly tweaked [sic] and improved to make it better” (westclox). Users agree that Day One is one of the best journaling apps out there and is beneficial to anyone with basic technology experience.



*An exercise entry*

I would recommend Day One to my friends, family, and anyone that is struggling with staying organized or motivated in tasks. I've used Day One primarily as a way to keep myself accountable; I've kept track of my workout schedule, exercises, and other relevant information. While at times I did feel guilty if I didn't log my information, the guilt was associated with not working out. The issue wasn't the act of logging the information, it was the motivation to complete a workout because without doing that I didn't have any information to enter.

*Allyson Croy is a Professional Writing major at Miami University with a concentration in Public Writing and Rhetoric and Social Justice Studies. She plans to pursue her passion for communication in a professional atmosphere in the Human Resources field while continuing her passion for literature and writing in her free time. She enjoys spending time with her family, friends, and two dogs, Jedi and Piper. Her favorite space TV show is Rolie Polie Olie.*

# Grid Diary

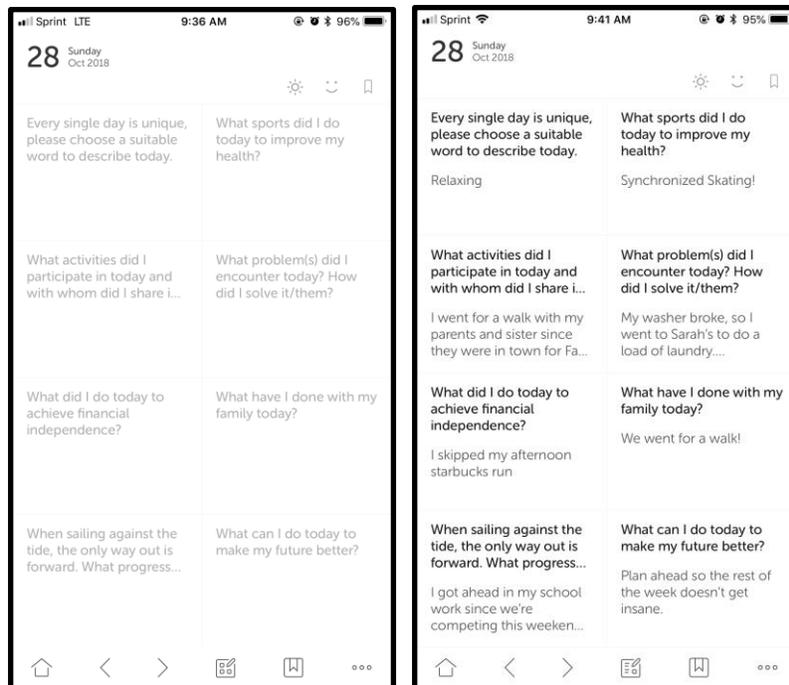
*by Bailey Styzinski*

Mode(s) of access	iOS
Cost	Free; \$1.99 monthly subscription, \$5.99 one-time payment
Use case(s)	Journaling, grid making
Strength(s)	Answering system in grid form, picture inclusion, personal prompts, helpful tutorial
Weakness(es)	Number of usable pictures locked behind paywalls

I'll be quite honest; I've never been a huge fan of journaling. Though I love to write, I've found it hard to dedicate time each day to writing without much of a purpose. I've gotten a bullet journal, those cliché 15-minute-a-day prompt books, and countless apps, but none of them have stuck. Though my commitment issues probably have something to do with my lack of dedication to daily writing, the main problems that often come up with the methods I've tried are time consumption, lack of interest, complexity, and difficulty reminiscing. Grid Diary has addressed each of these issues in a unique, refreshing way to create the perfect diary app for the on-the-go writing enthusiast.

## Time

One of the things I love most about Grid Diary is how quick it is to use. More traditional daily writing organizers encourage users to write as much as possible in multiple categories—who has time to write a novel about their day? Grid Diary allows users to edit each segment of their daily grid with specific prompts and dictate how much they write for each section, each day. Grid Diary offers access to multiple templates that adjust how many categories you write in. And if creativity isn't your thing, no worries! Grid Diary comes with premade templates and prompt suggestions for each section of the grid, so you can keep the app as is upon installation and still have a quick, easy-to-use diary. The unique user-dictated style of the app makes every aspect of the diary so much more personal— isn't that what keeping a diary is for?



*Grid Diary layout with unanswered questions (left); Grid Diary layout with answered questions (right)*

## Personalization

My second favorite thing about Grid Diary is how personal you can make it. With the ability to make each section of the grid a personal prompt, users can keep track of anything from intimate details of their days to general statements about the weather. Not everyone is looking to journal for the same reasons, so Grid Diary offers complete personalization of prompts for everyone, including basic users that don't pay any fees. If you're looking to attach pictures to your daily entries, Grid Diary allows users to upload and attach a picture to sections of their grid as a reminder of a particularly amazing thing that happened that day. After all, a picture is worth a thousand words.

## Simplicity

Everything, from the initial tutorial of Grid Diary to the grid layout, makes the app incredibly easy to use. The format makes every section clear and easy to read without disjointing it from other aspects of the grid. While the app offers many features, they aren't overwhelming. When I take a few minutes to journal, I feel motivated to continue answering my questions, not discouraged that I have so much left to write. The simplicity of the app truly encourages me to come back every day and write my new daily grid.

## Reminiscing

Grid Diary makes it easy to look back on what you've written on previous days. I've really loved this feature because I can see how my responses have gotten longer over time. Another thing that I love is how easily I can identify my personal growth since using the app, because my responses to similar prompts have gotten more positive. I think that I can absolutely attribute this to an increase in mindfulness after using the app daily. Looking back on pictures has also been a great daily reminder of fun things that I've been up to lately!

## Logistics

When I first ran Grid Diary, I was a little intimidated by the unusual setup of the app, and I only knew a little bit about the exciting features. Luckily, Grid Diary had an interactive tutorial that covered every feature so that I knew how the app worked before I started trying to figure things out for myself. After the tutorial, Grid Diary presented me with the option to upgrade to Grid Diary Pro or continue with the basic version. Almost all of the features offered in Grid Diary Pro are included in the basic version of Grid Diary, but Grid Diary Pro offers more freedom. For example, the basic version of Grid Diary allows users to put in a limited amount of pictures per grid, but Grid Diary Pro allows users to include as many pictures as they like. You can upgrade to Grid Diary Pro for \$1.99 per month or \$5.99 for life.

## Overall

I have absolutely loved adding Grid Diary to my daily routine. The app is a quick, easy, and fun way to keep track of what's going on in my life. My favorite part is that I can see personal growth through length in responses and increase in my overall positivity. The function that really sets Grid Diary apart from similar apps is how easy it is to look back on previous entries. Being able to track my personal growth is what keeps me coming back day after day!

*Bailey Styzinski is a Strategic Communications and Professional Writing double major with a minor in Ethics, Society, and Culture. Bailey is a member of Miami University's Senior Varsity Synchronized Skating Team and enjoys travelling the world with her teammates while representing Team USA. Her favorite space movie is Zenon.*

# Journey

*by Junho Moon*

Mode(s) of access	journey.cloud, macOS, Windows, Linux, iOS, Android
Cost	Free; \$3.99-\$29.99 subscription options
Use case(s)	Journaling
Strength(s)	Encourages consistent writing
Weakness(es)	Pricing options inconsistent, lack of security or privacy

Journey is a journaling app that is currently on iOS, Android, Google Chrome, macOS, and Windows. I primarily use an iPhone when I want to write stuff down, so when I found out about Journey it quickly became my digital journal.

So, what is the app all about? Journey is a place where you can have a seamless, future-proof, and motivational writing companion. It encourages you to write every day and in different ways. Want to add photos, videos, location, and fitness to your journaling process? Journey makes it easy. You can record as much or as little about your life as you want to.

After using the iOS app for a couple of days, Journey is now my one-stop shop for tracking what I do on any given day. To me, it's the perfect combination of Apple's Photos, Notes, and Calendar. Here are just a couple of ways I use Journey and what I think of them.

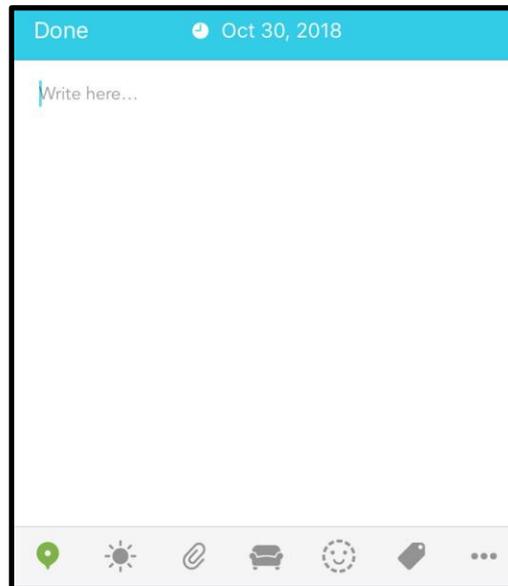
## Security

Not only are most phones password-protected, but Journey also offers the option of password-protecting the app. A quick 4-digit PIN unlocks your private archive of life, keeping snooping individuals away. It's a private diary just for you.

## In-depth Entries

Starting an entry in Journey is easy. On the home screen, hit the plus sign in the top right corner. It will pull up a text box with a toolbar. Here, you can label the mood you're in, what you did, categorize the entry into what it's about, and even attach media. So let's say I'm having a pretty good day. I get lunch with my friend and get all of my homework done. I take a picture of the front of the restaurant, mark that I'm in a good mood, and write about feeling relieved. It's a good way to reflect on the day and remember specifics about the people, place, and things that were there. It's a fun

way to unwind and make stuff just a little more special. I don't necessarily have the time to stop and take a picture of everything I did that day. If something is really significant, like a date I go on or a nice meal I make, I'll attach it.



*The journal entry section for Journey*

## Track Yourself

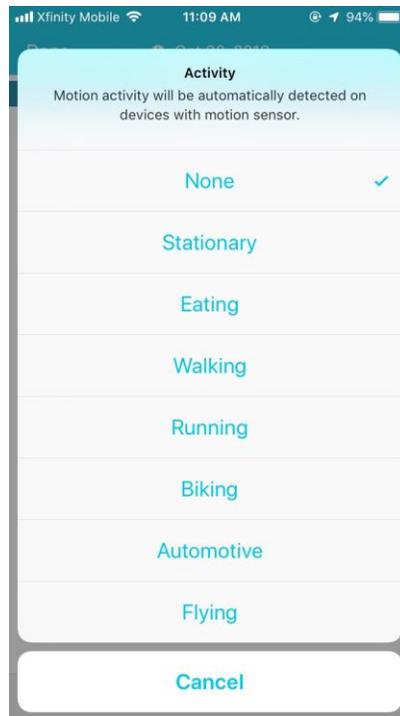
It's all on the map! Another cool thing about Journey is the ability to create a living, breathing map of where you make your entries. Being mobile on iOS means every entry you make has a location associated with it. After a little while of journaling, you're able to build a cool online scrapbook. Where you were and what you did is important. I personally thought this would be a little tacky at first, but it's really interesting to see your memories in locations. iOS has something similar in the Photos app, but this combines that aspect and pairs it wonderfully with journaling.



*Journey's mapping system*

## Fitness

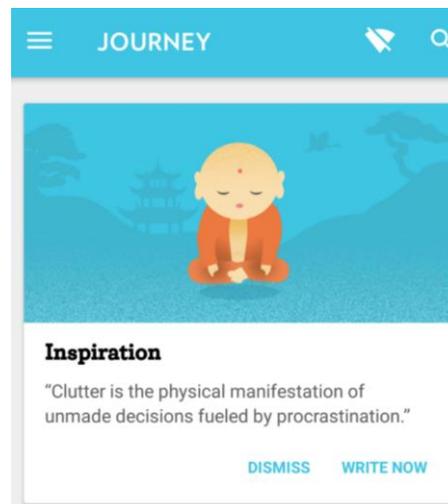
Sometimes we need that extra push of accountability to stay active. Journey has the ability to take your phone's recorded movement data and track fitness. After a workout, you're able to log what kind of activity you just did and write down how it went. This is something that keeps me sticking to my health goals. The great part is looking back and seeing how much you've accomplished!



*The menu to select activity types*

## Inspiration

Need a writing prompt? Journey will push you in the right direction. If you're experiencing writer's block, a passage is provided to guide you. Sometimes at the end of a day, I'll have a bunch of thoughts inside of my head but no way to articulate them. This app provides the extra step of inspiration to get you writing again.



*Journey's inspiration prompt*

## Pros and Cons

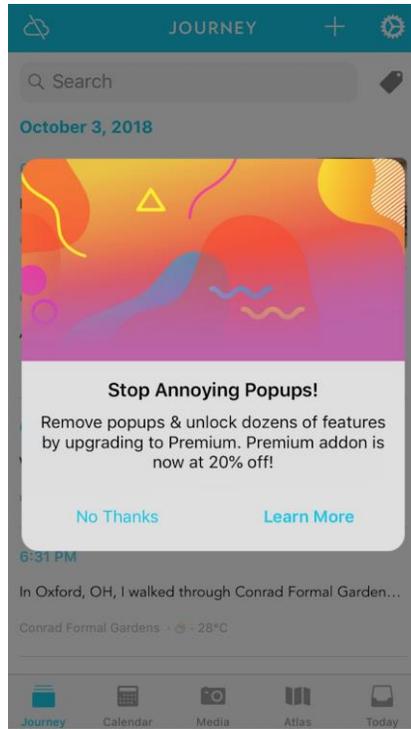
From their application description, Journey is all about “effortless” journaling. The app aims to get people in the habit of writing down everything from daily tasks to hopes and dreams. I would say it does a pretty good job.

### ***Pros***

The application itself is very smooth to navigate through and is aesthetically pleasing. The task bar at the bottom only has five essential functions. I was able to get the hang of Journey very quickly. With journaling, there’s always an accountability factor. When I used a physical journal, I found myself forgetting to open it up and write about days. In Journey, the app pushes a notification to remind you to log your things. Journey makes writing part of your routine. With Journey, you can “bring your memories anywhere” (*Journey*). It’s a digital library of everything you decide to put into it. Anything you log can be found with the search function. After using Journey for about a month, I’ve become a more consistent writer and thinker. It’s good to have a place to put your thoughts after a long day. One of the most interesting sights is looking back on all of my entries and reflecting on all of the cool things I have done with my family and friends.

### ***Cons***

This all-inclusive package is not free from some personal gripes. The main one I have is with the pricing model. Yes, this is one of those apps that has a premium version. Yes, this app will have pop-ups that tell you how great the premium version is. The worst thing about this is that apparently, premium doesn’t transfer across devices. If you want to have premium on your phone and your computer, you’ll have to pay the fee again. Not so effortless now, huh? The last gripe I have is about privacy and security. Some people might feel that this app is too imposing and encourages them to provide a lot of personal details. In this day and age where hackers are looking for valuable information, is it really that good of an idea to have every single detail of your life in one place? How much trust can you put into one company? That’s up for the individual to decide.



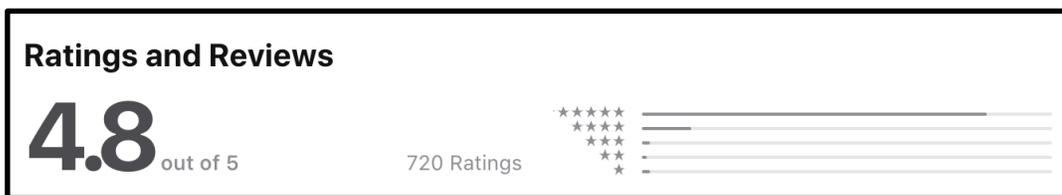
*Journey's built-in advertisement*

## User Reviews

Journey is doing pretty well on Apple's App Store. With a score of 4.8 out of 5, people often praise Journey's minimalism, ease of use, and inclusive features:

"With programs for nearly every platform and the ability to attach photos and videos, Journey is the ideal app that allows you to include all the information you want."

"The interface is fantastic and makes my entries efficient. I've migrated my day one entries over (an easy automated process) and never looked back."



*Journey's App Store reviews*

## My Verdict

Journey has become a one-stop shop for reflection, motivation, and relaxation. Every time I hang out with friends, do something interesting, or go for a workout, it'll be in

Journey. It kind of becomes a personal social media app where the only user is yourself. You're not posting to get any likes or sharing your experiences with other people; you're doing it because it means something to you. Journey is aesthetically pleasing and fast. It's very useful, and I've managed to make it part of my daily routine. Users might get a little intimidated by the pricing model and the amount of information they're putting into one application, but I believe the pros definitely outweigh the cons.

*Junho Moon is a Professional Writing major and Fashion Business minor. He's involved in Miami University's nationally ranked Mock Trial team, UP Fashion Magazine, and Pi Sigma Epsilon. His favorite book is Slaughterhouse-Five.*

# My Wonderful Days

by Hailey Biagi

Mode(s) of access	macOS, iOS
Cost	Free; \$9.99 one-time payment
Use case(s)	Diary writing, note-taking, journaling
Strength(s)	Connection to existing iCloud, sorting options, ability to move into PDF
Weakness(es)	Ability to make unlimited entries locked behind paywall

## Introduction

My Wonderful Days is a diary app available on iOS 10 to all iPhones and iPads as well as through macOS. The diary application allows you to write a note each day, but is meant to be more of a journal than a work space. The app is well-designed and is easy-to-use, making it a good option for users looking to chronicle their days.

## Subscriptions

The free version of the app allows users to make 14 new entries and edit or view those entries as needed. This means that they can go back and change the entries however they wish, but they are not given the opportunity to create more entries. However, if a user wishes to continue using the app, they can make a one-time purchase to unlock unlimited entries. The one-time in-app purchase to unlock everything costs \$9.99.

## Features

The application allows the user to create a note each day to explore their feelings and how or why they want to remember that particular day. In order to remind the user of their emotions, the app provides a “bar of happiness” to scale what level of happiness you were at in the moment. This tool functions as a way to track exactly how the user felt when writing the entry (e.g., the bar would be set at the lowest for a bad day, somewhere in the middle for an average day, and on a great day all the way at the top for peak happiness). Additionally, you are allowed two stickers per note to describe either your feelings or what the weather was like that day. These aspects are important to journaling because sometimes, with just words, it is hard to recall what you were going through on a specific day. Some examples of the available stickers are sun, clouds, coffee, flag, briefcase, present, hands praying, etc.



*The different icons for each tool that is available within the app*

My Wonderful Days is connected to the user's iCloud so that they have access to all of their photos and videos, which they can add to their journal. This feature is extremely practical for journaling and diary-keeping because it makes each entry specific and allows users to keep track of their memories with photo evidence of what they did that day. Additionally, a connection to iCloud means that if the user's phone were to break or if the app were to be deleted, all entries that had previously been made would be saved in the iCloud. This tool helps assure users that their work will never be lost.

Users are able to sort their entries in a number of different ways, such as happiness, starred days (special days), most viewed entries, etc. It is easy to find specific days by sorting and searching through your entries, but there is also a Shake feature which will bring you a random day to view. The sorting tool helps organize notes in a manner that is important to each user. This information can also be viewed as statistics in graph form to see the shifts in user's mood.

The content in the application may be extremely personal, so to ensure maximum privacy the app uses either passcode, touch ID, or face ID protection to keep information as secure as the user wants.

Airprint and Export to PDF allow users to print their entries if they wish to keep hard copies of their diary. To some users, physical copies of a journal are important, and this is a key component to keeping a hard copy of their work.

If the user wishes, they may turn on notifications for the app. These notifications include a daily reminder that is sent to the user to create an entry if they haven't already. The reminder can be set to a specific time each day that is convenient for each user.

The app offers an Initial Text setting to start off each note. Some examples of these are "3 grateful things today," "book I read today," "what I'm loving about life right now," etc. The user can change the Initial Text depending on what they prefer to write about that day.



*What an entry page would look like*

Finally, the font and font size can be easily changed to accommodate the visual needs of different users.

## Design

The design is overall visually appealing and looks as though the user is writing in a physical notepad or notebook. Creating a design such as this helps the user feel like they are actually using a diary or journal to track their life and less like they are using a piece of technology; the app has all the feel of an old school journal with all of the benefits of modern technology. The app opens up to a new note with three clickable buttons that lead to Search, Calendar, Settings, Feelings, and Statistics.



*The home page and the three clickable buttons*

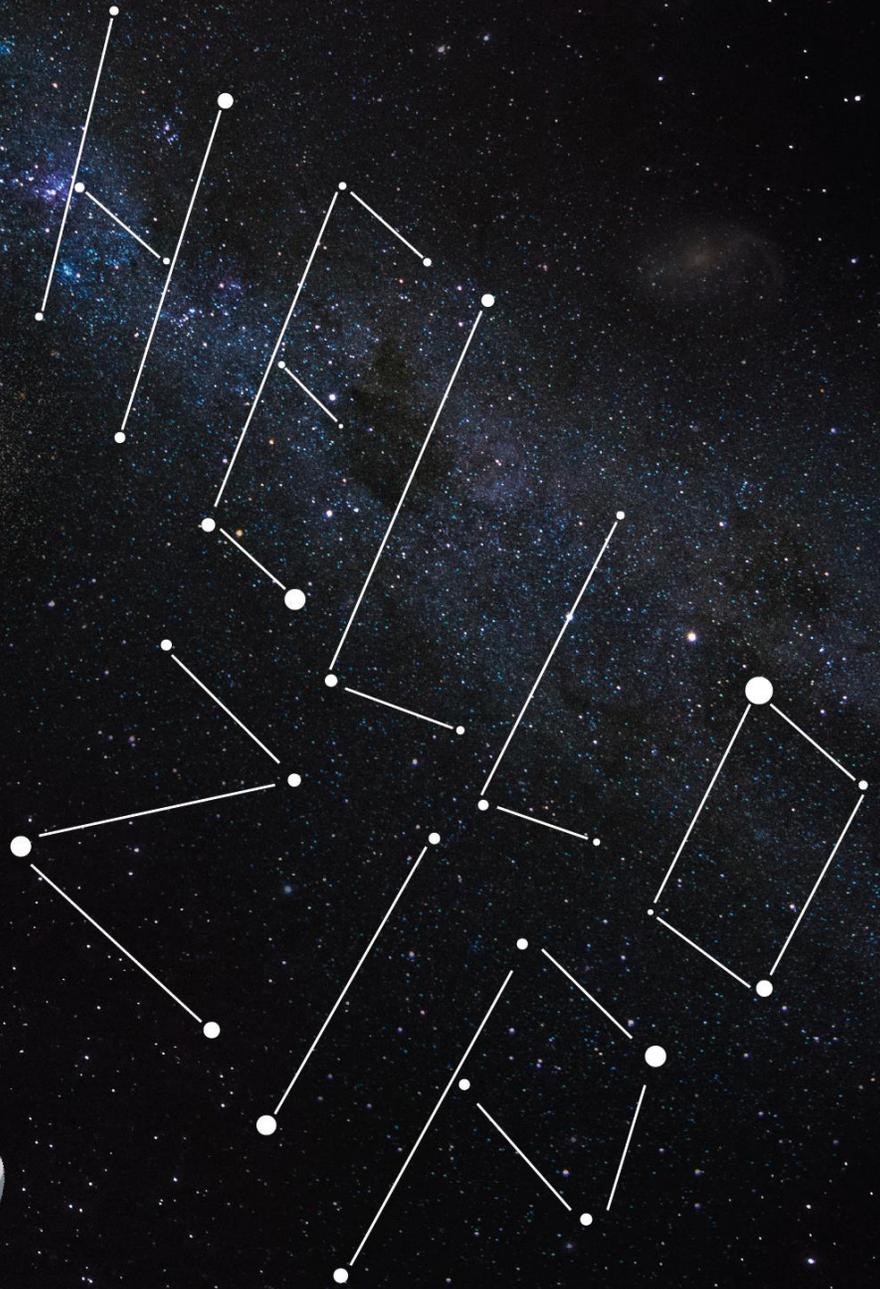
## Reviews

In the App Store, My Wonderful Days has over 1,800 reviews with an average of 4.7/5 stars. *The New York Times* reviewed this app, stating, "The most ideal app I've found to keep a brief journal is happily named My Wonderful Days" (Eaton). Users have reviewed this app, explaining that they were searching for a place to journal everyday, and that the app's simplicity and fun design attracted them. One user specifically said that "it's just so easy to figure out the mechanics of the App" (Giselle bby). Most users explain that they use the app to track everyday occurrences.

## Conclusion

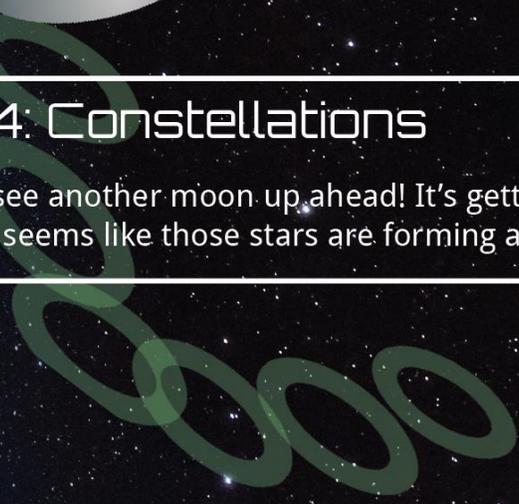
Overall, My Wonderful Days is an easy-to-use diary app that functions as storage space for users to generate content about their everyday lives. It comes with a plethora of customizable options, which make it easy for any user to make each entry their own. Its usability and functionality allow users to easily navigate the app and understand each component. With fine reviews, My Wonderful Days is an ideal way for people to journal about their lives.

*Hailey Biagi is a Professional Writing major at Miami University. She enjoys reading and discovering new music in her free time. She aspires to work in non for profit organizations helping underprivileged children succeed in school. Her favorite space film is Star Wars.*



## Log 4: Constellations

I think I see another moon up ahead! It's getting brighter... Oh, wait—that's no moon! It seems like those stars are forming a shape. We should take a closer look.



# Workflowy

by Justin Maschmeyer

Mode(s) of access	workflowy.com, iOS
Cost	Free; \$4.99 monthly subscription, \$49 annual subscription
Use case(s)	Outlining
Strength(s)	Endless outline
Weakness(es)	Limited capacity, lack of Outline Processor Markup Language

## Introduction

Workflowy is a cross-platform application and website that facilitates the outlining of notes and lists. A cross-platform application is one that allows its users to list items, nest them, edit them, and zoom in/out of them. With this type of interface, the user can write sub-lists into an item that will be nested inside the list item on the main menu. The process of sub-listing can seem endless, which may have some people feeling a bit lost. However, this application's new and easy way of thinking about information makes it a very plausible tool for general note-taking.

Workflowy's ability to provide the user with an endless outline is ideal for analysis because it allows the user to start at the surface of their thoughts and ideas with one document and easily create documents that follow with the details. On the flip side, Workflowy's progressive attitude in the digital note-taking world also allows for information to be inserted with few complications. The value of Workflowy arrives at the balance of the application's ability to foster detailed analysis while still allowing the frequent creation of notes.

## Review

Workflowy is an application that facilitates the user's desire to consolidate, connect, and navigate through text-only information. In a *Medium* article written about the application, Viswanath Subramani notes how several different note-taking applications are intended for specific use cases, with many having distinct features that complement each other. Amongst the several reviews for Workflowy on the Internet, the pros have been mainly feature-based while the cons have been mainly value-based. Although I haven't seen many, those arguing against the app for the most part seem to question the price of the app and its absence of helpful features found in

other applications. In a blog post by Bojan on *Alpha Efficiency's* website, he mentions that the app's subscription price is \$5 per month and that it only allows for 250 list items per month, which Bojan notes could be accomplished in a single brainstorming session. Bojan is indeed correct by these terms; because the app promotes the frequent creation of notes, it should in turn have greater item capacity. Another limitation that the app has been criticized for is its lack of Outline Processor Markup Language (OPML), which provides the ability to import and export text. The issue that those familiar with note-taking apps run into is the value of an \$5 per month-priced application that does not have OPML abilities. Other note-taking applications like OmniOutliner, referred to as "the best recognized outlining tool," (Bojan), provide the importing and exporting abilities that Workflowy lacks.

## Op-Ed

Prior to using the app, I was very hesitant about the value that the app could provide me given that I have Apple's Notes app on my computer. I have always been a fan of the Notes app; however, using the Workflowy app changed the way that I perceived the information I was typing in. With the app's simplification of format and design I felt free to create without feeling the stress of working with different types of text, fonts, and colors. What I enjoyed most about the app was the ability to balance its potential uses. When I thought about the app impartially, I realized that this app has an interesting audience. Its accessible interface means that it can appeal to a wide age range. However, the economic limitations, including the price and item limit of the app, push away low-income users and frequent note-takers. Because the app's item limit pushes away those that take notes on a frequent basis, and also because the app does not support exporting or importing, I feel that a large market segment is being omitted from consideration.

## Conclusion

While there are several people who cannot seem to understand the purpose of the app, many proponents of it claim that it allows for the free creation and organization of ideas. It is hard to compare Workflowy to an average note-taking app because it is indeed much more than that. You can now organize endless lists, plans, and reminders how you want because the developers have removed the emphasis on customization and instead chosen to focus on what you are thinking. The application is not for everyone, as we should know by now that each application has a different purpose and target audience. From what I have observed, those that are advocates for Workflowy are advocates for the use of outlining and lists when creating notes.

*Justin Maschmeyer is focusing his course of study on writing and digital communication and plans to enter the advertising industry as a copywriter or salesperson. He is from Chicago and he firmly believes it is the best city in the world. His favorite space movie is Star Wars IV.*



## Log 5: Asteroid belt

Oh no! I was so distracted by that constellation that I drifted into an asteroid belt! My ship is damaged. Mayday! Mayday!

# Citationsy

by Abby Gooding

Mode(s) of access	citationsy.com, macOS, iOS
Cost	Free; \$20 annual subscription
Use case(s)	Citations
Strength(s)	Advertisement-free, easy-to-use interface
Weakness(es)	Slow processing speed on app

## Citations Can Be Fun!

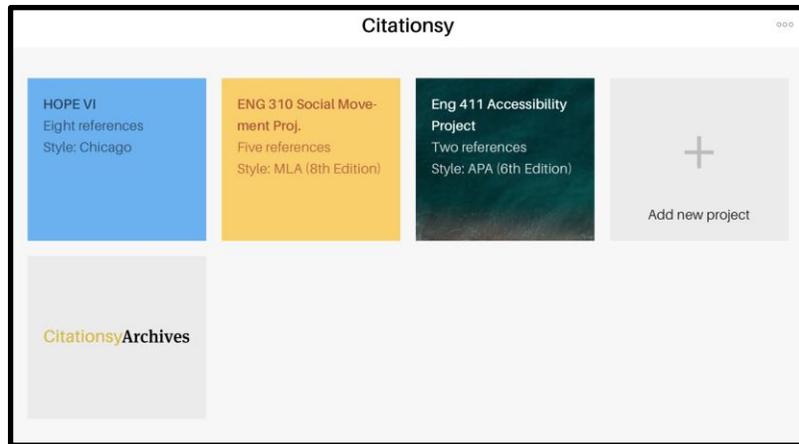
Anyone who has ever had to write a research paper knows that sometimes the worst part of the project can in fact be the tedious task of citing all your work. It can be challenging to remember which citation style calls for periods here and italics, rather than quotations, there.

Finally, there is an app capable of solving all of your problems. Citationsy defines itself as a “no-nonsense reference collection and bibliography creation tool for people who value simplicity, privacy, and speed” (*Citationsy*). I can’t help but agree with this self-characterization.

Citationsy is free and continuously accessible online for anyone with Internet access or via an app downloadable on the App Store for Mac and iOS users. There are no advertisements that I am forced to watch or weed through, and I can easily save all of my work into different projects, which are saved indefinitely until I want to delete them myself. Its simple but fun design allows its users to customize their account as they please, and there are over 8,500 citation styles to choose from when creating a bibliography or works cited. With Citationsy, I can honestly say I no longer dread citing sources.

## Using Citationsy

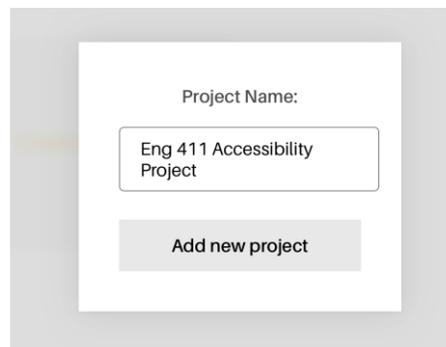
In order to start using Citationsy, you must first create an account (for free, indefinitely!) with your email address and a memorable password. Once you create your account, your citations are accessible online at Citationsy.com or, if you have an Apple product, on the app.



*Citationsy project page*

Upon login, the user is taken to the homepage where all of their projects live. On this Project Page, you can revisit older projects or begin a new one by clicking on Add New Project. This is an incredibly easy-to-use home page which organizes the projects by whichever has been most recently updated. When I first started using Citationsy, my Project Page had only one project, but after a few weeks, my Project Page had grown, and I still found it easy to use. To access an old project, all you have to do is click on it and your works cited or bibliography will appear just as you had left it.

If you feel like exploring, CitationsyArchives is an amazing tool that can be immensely helpful in saving time and finding new sources for your projects. All you have to do is click on the link and search for a book, journal article, author, or topic, and you will be presented with a collection of cited sources. Right away, you can cite a source or find additional sources that may be useful in your paper's argument.

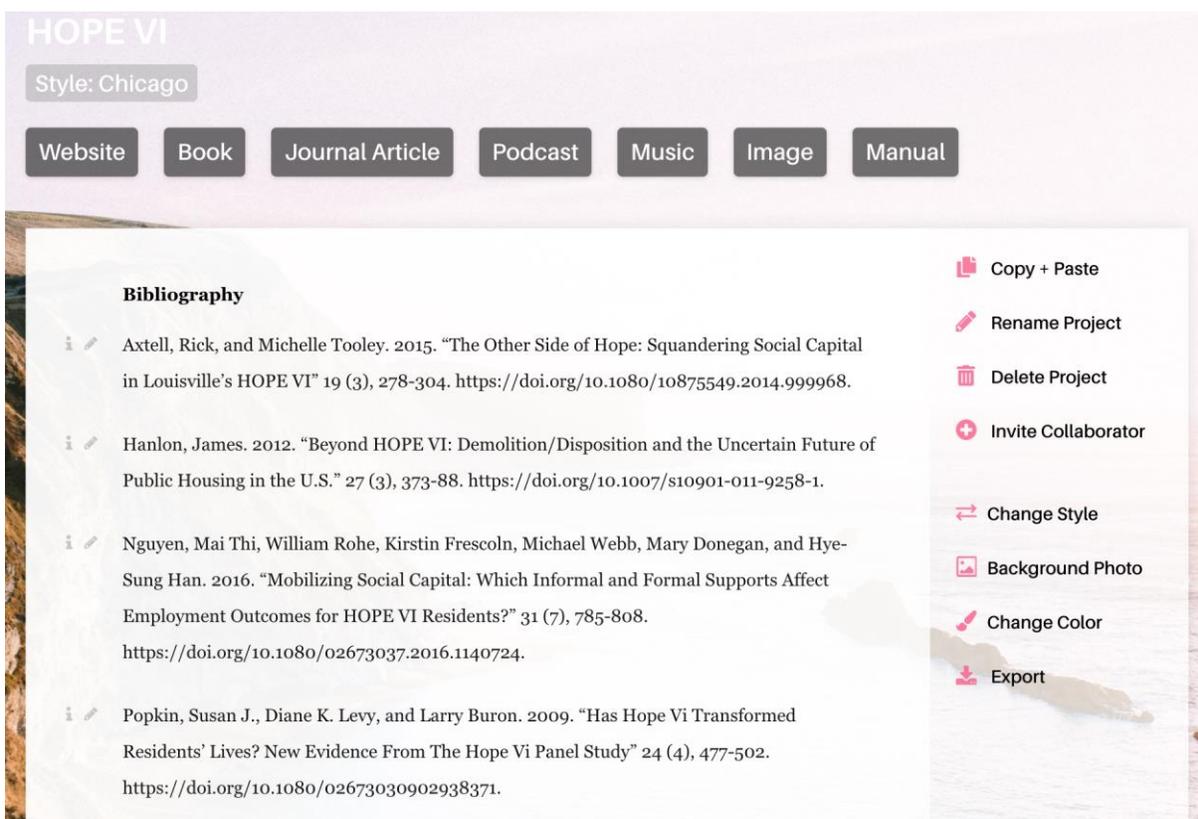


*Creating and naming a new project*

Let's say you want to begin a new project, so you click on Add New Project. You will be prompted to name your new project and then add it to your Project Page. Once you have successfully added a new project, it will be accessible at any time from your Project Page. The best part about Citationsy is that, right away, once you've created a project, you are prompted to select any citation style of your choosing. With over 8,500

styles to choose from, it is highly unlikely that you won't be able to find the style you are looking for at Citationsy.

Once you've chosen your preferred style, it will become the default style for all citations within that project. However, you can change the style any time you would like by clicking on the Style listing under your project title. In order to begin citing works, you can select any of the options listed in the gray boxes: Website, Book, Journal Article, Podcast, Music, Image, or Manual. Once you've chosen the corresponding category, the process of citing becomes very similar to one that you would complete on EasyBib or CitationMachine.



*A project page with completed citations and a personalized background*

In comparison to other common citation resources like EasyBib or CitationMachine, Citationsy is far easier to use. Without the crowded interference and distraction of annoying advertisements cluttering the page, I find it easier and quicker to successfully cite my sources using Citationsy. In terms of accuracy, Citationsy does occasionally screw up. I haven't run into the issue of obvious incorrect formatting, but I have noticed that, for example, when I want to cite a news article, sometimes the author's name is not formatted correctly the first time. This kind of error doesn't bother me so much because I like to read over the automatically entered information before accepting the suggested citation anyways. EasyBib and CitationMachine often

miss the date of an article's publication or the last name of an author as well, so I am accustomed to reading the citations over, and I recommend doing this regardless of which citation helper you use.

One weakness that Citationsy should seek to improve is that, at times, its app can be slow-moving. Most of the time it works at a normal pace, but sometimes I click on a project or a citation and it takes a few extra seconds for the new page to load, which can be frustrating. In instances like these, I either wait it out (it doesn't take more than a few extra seconds) or I just log in to my account on the Internet, which I've found is faster and just as easy.

What makes Citationsy stand out is easily the absence of advertisements that clutter other citation formulating websites. Citationsy is clean and precise, organizing every completed citation alphabetically and making it easy to edit or delete a citation, if need be. In comparison to similar resources, I would use Citationsy, period.

## Who can use Citationsy?

Everyone. Citationsy is free indefinitely, which means that anybody can use it as a resource. There is an upgrade option called Citationsy Scholar which costs \$20 a year. With this subscription you would receive everything from the free edition as well as a Chrome extension, night mode, photo backgrounds, and more. I don't feel that I am missing anything by not subscribing to the Citationsy Scholar, and I am in no way penalized for not subscribing as there are no interfering ads I am required to watch.

It's certainly most useful for those who are frequently expected to cite sources, like students or researchers. In fact, on its website, Citationsy boasts that it is "used by 38,708 students, researchers, and scholars," at a variety of institutions around the world. Of course, the fact that the tool is free means that anybody can use Citationsy whenever they want if they are in need of an accurate citation.

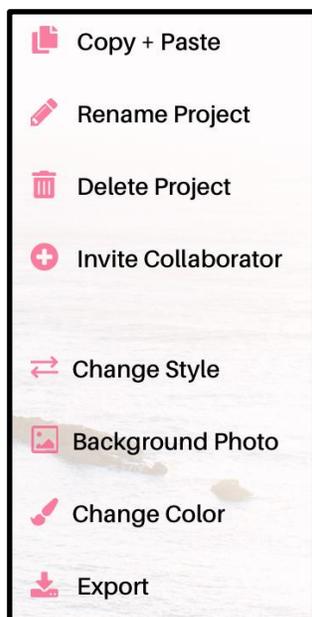
However, Citationsy needs to do a better job improving its accessibility for users who might be blind or visually impaired. There is no option to hear a citation or to verbally enter information necessary to complete an accurate citation. Therefore, while the site is free and easy to use for many, it is still not entirely accessible for everyone, and its platform needs to be improved in that particular area.

## Design and Unique Features

Citationsy is fun because it's easy, but also because it is clearly meant to be a more personalized, engaging home for your citations. Within individual projects, you can change the background of the page to feature a calming beach landscape or a misty

mountaintop. These backgrounds don't interfere with the quality or color of your citations, but they are just a way to make working on citations a little bit more engaging.

Additionally, on the right hand side of each project is a selection of options ranging from Copy + Paste to Export. You can change the color of the graphics beside each option by clicking on the Change Color option. This is another way to add a unique element to each project and really make the site your own, if that's important to you.



*Tools featured on project pages*

Personally, while I find these features fun, they're definitely not the most amazing feature of Citationsy because they're not immensely important in the process of citing sources. However, they are a creative way to set Citationsy apart from other citation helper sites and to make it more personalized.

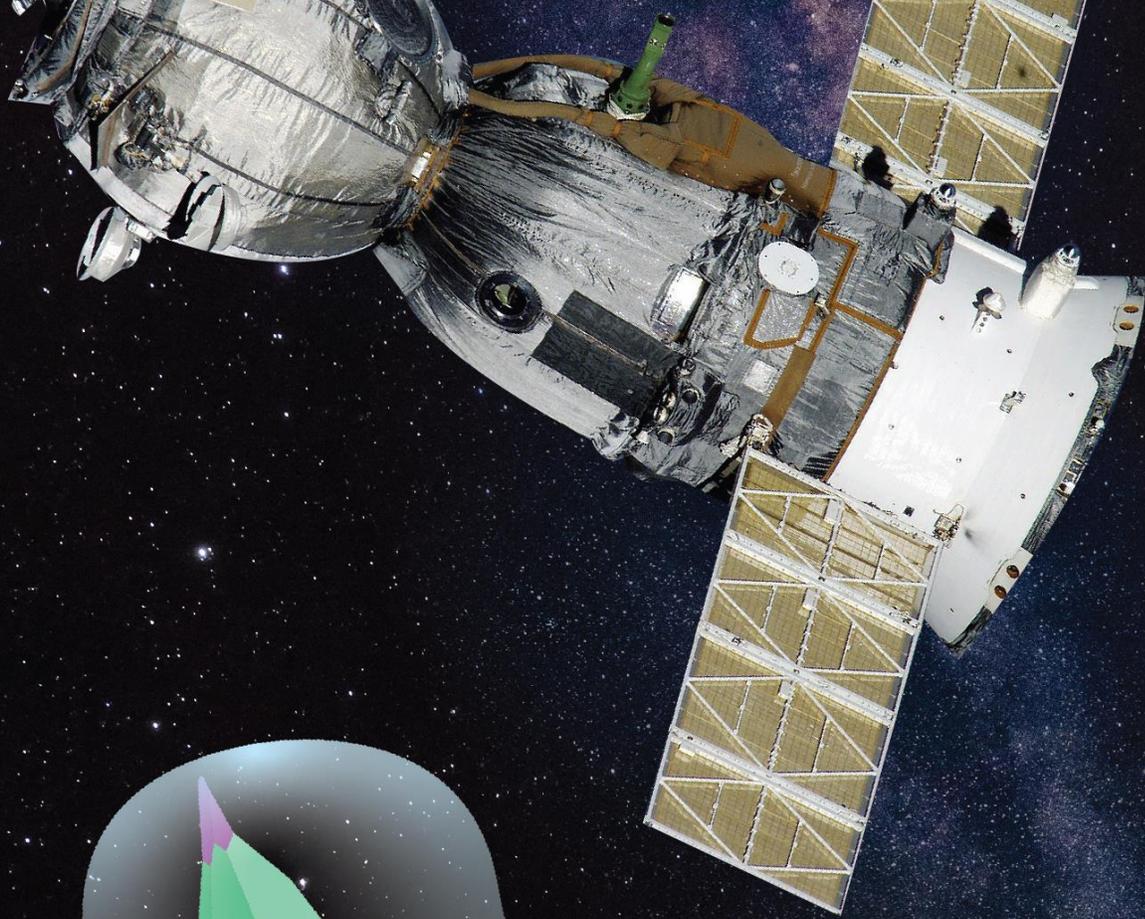
If you are working on citations with another faculty member or student, it is easy to share work with one another using Citationsy. I have not had to use this feature much yet, but I did find that the Invite Collaborator option was useful. In order for the invited party to contribute to the project, they must also have a Citationsy account. When you add anyone to a project, they are only able to see and contribute to the citations within the specifically chosen project.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, Citationsy is a valuable tool that I am grateful for and will continue to use as my primary citation generator whenever I need to cite sources. Though it still is

not perfect, the absence of annoying ads is a huge plus and is the primary reason I have switched from commonly using EasyBib to relying on Citationsy. Whereas EasyBib doesn't save my work for more than about a week, I can count on Citationsy to save all of my projects for as long as I need them. It is fun, clean, easy to use, and gets the job done. I highly recommend logging on to Citationsy the next time you need to cite a source.

*Abby Gooding is a Professional Writing/Urban and Regional Planning double major with minors in Spanish and Latin American Studies. She loves to read, travel, relax at the beach, and spend time with her friends and family. Her favorite space-themed media is definitely Star Wars.*



## Log 6: Satellites

That was a close one back there. Luckily I brought along my ship first-aid kit! It always pays off to plan ahead. Let's take this next stop nice and slow...

# Habitica

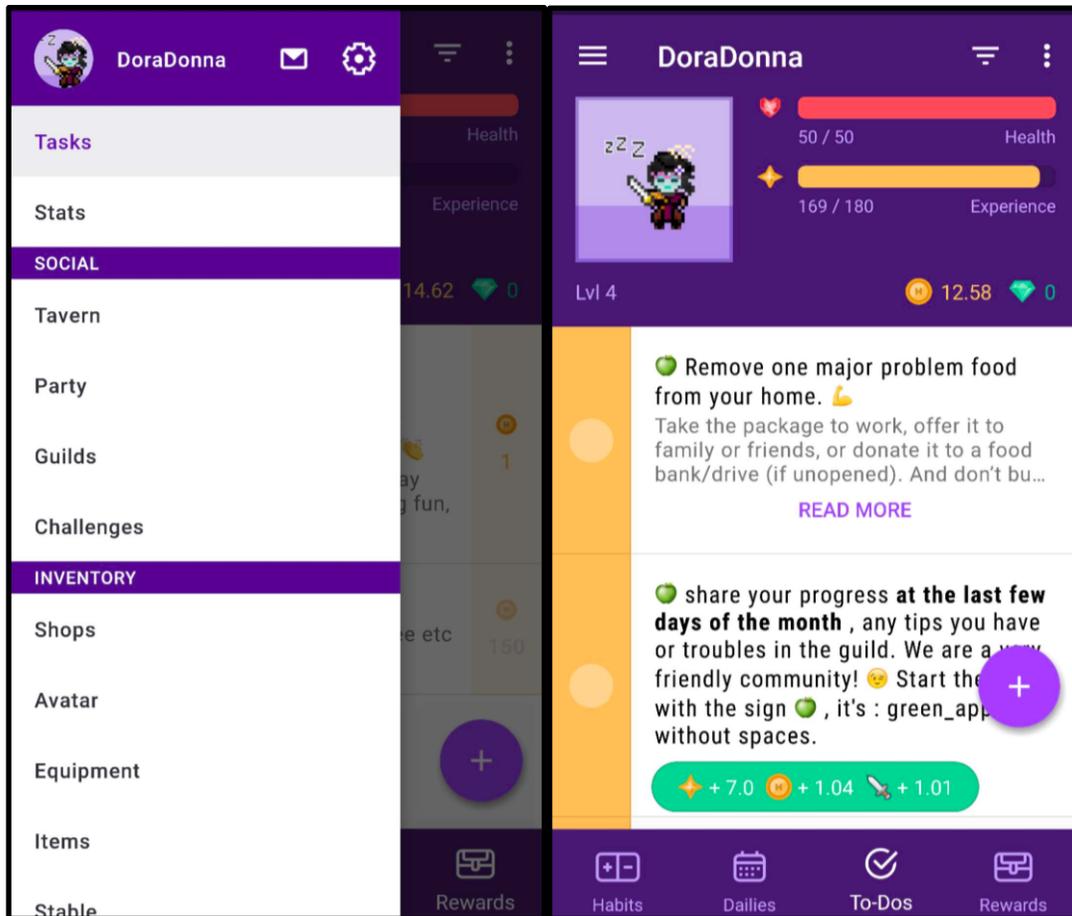
by Ruowei Deng

Mode(s) of Access	habitica.com, iOS, Android
Cost	Free; \$4.99-\$47.99 subscription options
Use case(s)	Planning and tracking
Strength(s)	Social, RPG style
Weakness(es)	Limited technical support

## Introduction

With the development of technology, game devices are becoming more varied and more videogames are being released; however, life simulation games like *The Sims* are still some of the most popular games on the market. People enjoy experiencing different lifestyles in a virtual world. Have you imagined your life as a game? Habitica will be your choice to gamify your life.

Habitica is a planning and tracking app that motivates you to achieve your goal. For me, the most appealing feature of Habitica is its classic pixel RPG (role-playing game) user interface (UI) style. As a big fan of videogames, I have grown up playing classic pixel RPGs like the *Final Fantasy* series. Although new gaming devices are now able to render images more realistically than ever before, the classic pixel art style still retains its unique value. And while I am addicted to virtual worlds, my parents are worried about my health and social life. But Habitica can solve this problem. It might not be the best goal-setting app I've used, but it is definitely the most interesting one.



Menu (left) and To-Dos (right)

## Why Habitica?

I downloaded a lot of apps on my phone, but in the end I will only leave the apps I need most, and Habitica has become one of them with its uniqueness. Habitica not only helps me achieve my goals, but also gamifies my life.

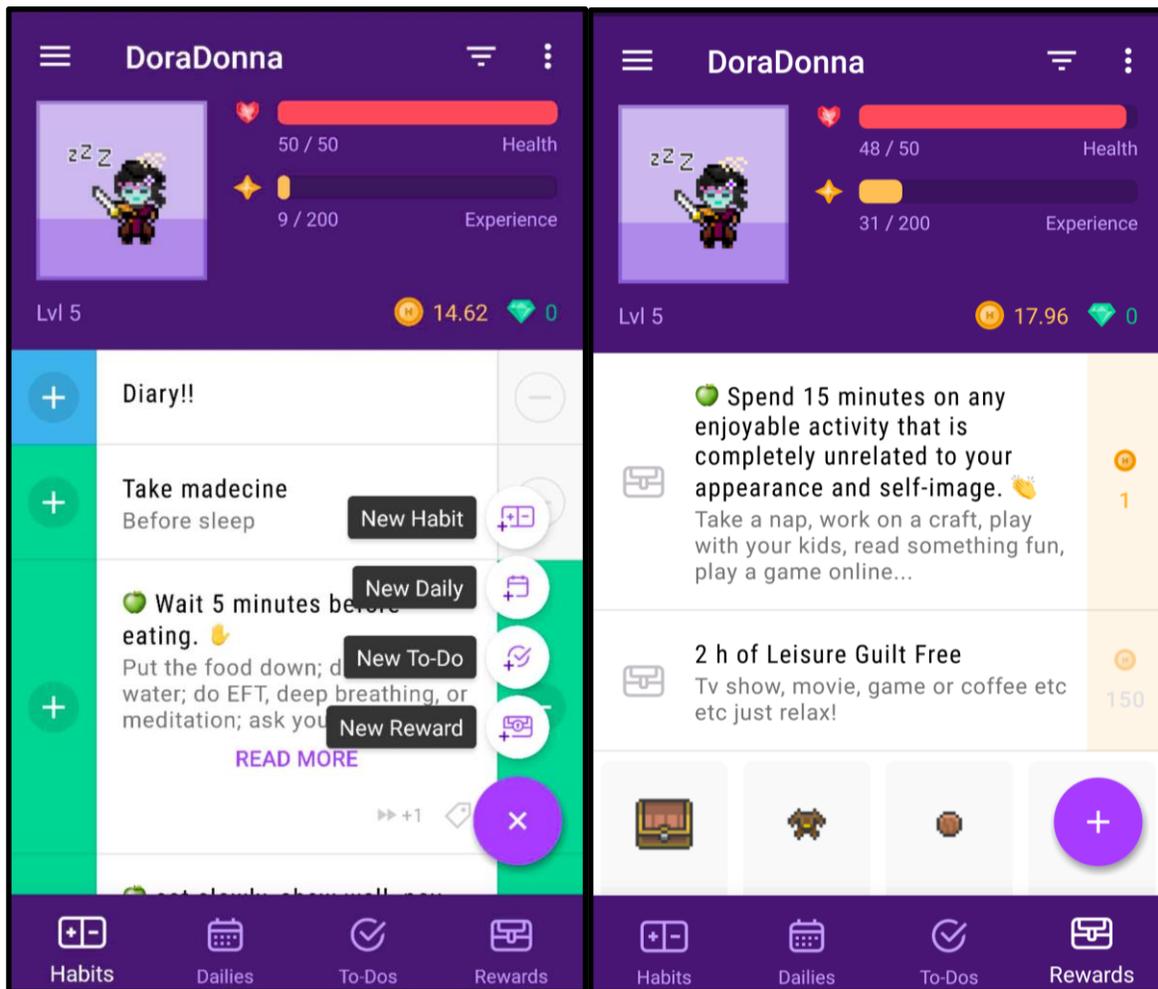
## Layout

You can sign in to Habitica with your Google account or Facebook account. Click the purple plus sign in the bottom right corner to choose to add a new Habit, Daily, To-Do or Reward. When you create a habit for yourself, you need to tell the app whether this habit is positive or negative for you. For daily goals, you can set the frequency of repetitions (like repeats daily every five days), so you will not be able to forget it. Finally, you can make a To-Do list for yourself, which is for the task you only need to accomplish once.

## Rewards and Punishments

In these activities, if you fail to complete the tasks on time or have a bad habit, your (or your avatar's) Health will drop and your Gold (which you earn and buy in the app) will decrease. On the other hand, just like any other RPG, you can get Gold and experience points to level up by doing the tasks and maintaining daily habits!

Gold is the in-game currency; you can only earn it and use it in Habitica. You can use it to buy the rewards you want for your avatar in the shop, or you can customize your own rewards and set a price for them.



*Build your Habits and customize your Rewards*

## Avatar

Another special feature of Habitica is that you can customize your avatar in this app! You can choose your skin color, the size of your body (slim or broad), your hairstyle, and so on. Habitica is a free app available on both Google Play and the Apple App

Store, but if you purchase Gems, you can unlock more rare items, quests, backgrounds, and pets.

## Social

You know what? You are not the only one who struggles with maintaining habits! At Habitica, you can easily find other Habiticans who have the same goals as you. By clicking the three dashes in the upper left corner of the main screen, you can open the menu and find Challenges. In here, you can spend Gems to create a public challenge and share your goals with other Habiticans. If you don't want to pay for it, you can join other challenges that interest you for free and see how many participants there are. You will have the opportunity to win the challenge and get Gems! In Habitica, paying is not the only way to get Gems. Competing with others and winning challenges can also get you Gems. Moreover, in order to maintain my interest in writing, I can join a challenge called "Daily Writing Challenge" to compete with others who have similar goals. I hope I can win the challenge so I can earn three Gems to buy a wizard's hat for my avatar. You can achieve your goals in both reality and Habitica.

## How to Use Habitica

Don't forget Habitica is not only a RPG in your phone, but also a habit tracking app! For me, I am trying to use Habitica to build my writing habits. At first, I set a daily task for myself: write at least a paragraph for my story everyday. It doesn't have to be a long paragraph, but at least a few sentences. At the end of the year, I should have a book for myself! And then I set up reading as my habit; it is not a necessary task, but I will treat reading as a good habit. I can create a to-do list to record what I need to do and set the deadline and the reminder, and Habitica will send a reminder prompt to me.

As I keep writing, the more tasks I complete, the more Gold I will earn. I can use my Gold to buy a new outfit for my avatar or a custom reward for myself. For example, I can set up a holiday as my reward. If I am tired of writing today, I can buy myself a day off.

## Conclusion

Overall, I have to say I really enjoy the app. Habitica successfully creates another world. I can feel the connection between my avatar and me; she grows with my growth. Sometimes it is difficult for us to feel our own changes and growth, and that's why I don't have the motivation to keep writing. It is hard to insist when you can't see your progress. Habitica is doing very well in keeping my motivation. I can clearly see the changes in my avatar and I will know that I have also leveled up in my real life.

*Ruwei Deng is a Marketing major with an interest in reading and writing. Outside of business, she enjoys playing video games and lying on the sofa for the whole weekend. Her favorite space book is The Three-Body Problem, by the Chinese writer Cixin Liu.*

# Todoist

by Emily Comos

Mode(s) of access	todoist.com, macOS, Windows, iOS, Android
Cost	Free; \$28.99 annual subscription
Use case(s)	Note-taking, task-managing
Strength(s)	Color options in customization, priority setting, karma points system, week glance feature
Weakness(es)	Features locked behind paywall



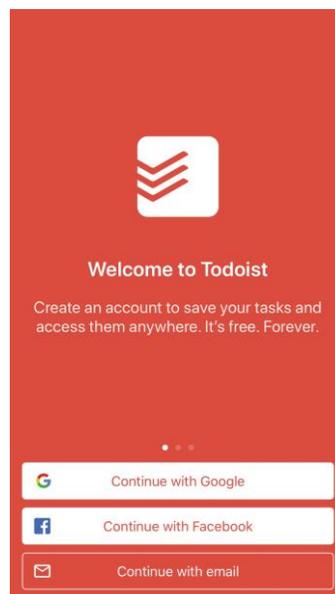
*This is the official logo for the Todoist app*

## Introduction

Todoist is one of the subsidiaries of the company Doist. Doist has created multiple applications that serve as platforms for both individuals and businesses to work and live a more organized and coordinated lifestyle. Todoist is ultimately a productivity app that manages all of your goals, assignments and responsibilities in one place. It's basically an algorithmic, high-tech, and carefully-calculated version of those sticky notes you keep leaving around your desk. Todoist also syncs with all of your devices, including Amazon Alexa and other writing softwares such as Google Drive and Google Calendar. Todoist is available on desktop for macOS and Windows 10/7/XP, along with any web browser, both the Apple and Android app stores, and Outlook and Gmail plugins. Todoist takes stress off the user by prioritizing tasks and delegating tasks to other team members. With some very simple steps and a few buttons, Todoist will take you from "overwhelmed to on top of it" (*Todoist*).

## The Basics

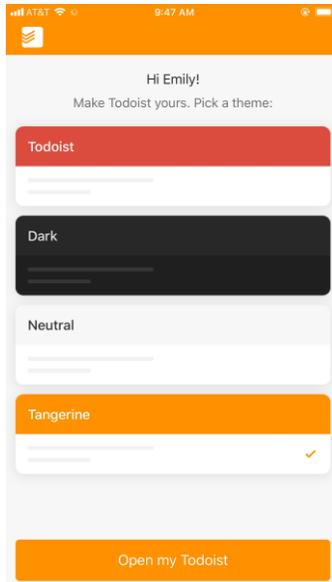
Todoist has a basic and a premium feature, the difference being \$28.99 per year. The premium version unlocks a variety of qualities, including “full collaboration capabilities, location-based reminders, labels and reminders, the ability to add tasks via email, and more. You can organize up to 200 projects and have up to 25 people in each of them with a Premium account as well” (Duffy). However, the basic feature still has many capabilities that are totally free. Todoist requires either an email address, Facebook account, or Google account to sign up for their services. This is beneficial for those who don’t have a Facebook or Google account, as it allows you to sign up the old fashioned way with your email address.



*The welcome screen of the Todoist app*

## Design

Todoist allows the user to decide when it comes to the personalization of the design layout. As you can see below, there are a few color options to choose from if you aren’t a premium member. The basic color being red coincides with the theme of the app and the feeling it tries to capture. According to Cameron Chapman, red is beneficial for design when trying to convey importance. These customizable design features provide the user with the ability to add a bit of personality to their Todoist. Stefan C. Asafti, a brand identity designer at *Medium*, discusses in an article about Todoist how big a role color can play within a software; many people attribute Todoist’s success to allowing users such freedom to utilize the power of color and design when labeling and remembering certain things.

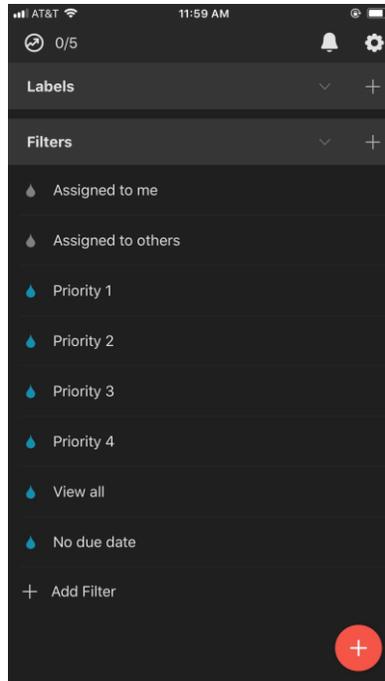


*The customization function where users are able to choose the color scheme and theme of their app*

## Capabilities

### ***Prioritization***

Todoist allows you to choose certain tasks that have priority over others. The app then allows for those tasks to be specifically divided into their own priority filter based on factors such as due date, importance of project, and more. The layout of the app provides a clear distinction between priorities and allows the user to focus on one priority at a time.



*The filters function that allows users to specifically place tasks into the various priorities tabs shown above*

## ***Productivity***

User productivity is tracked through a variety of ways on Todoist. Users are able to see both their daily and weekly progress and also have access to a streak of how many tasks they complete per week. This feature allows users to look back and reflect on the amount of work they have (or haven't) accomplished, in order to motivate them to continue how well they've been doing or help show them that they may need a bit of a productivity boost.

### ***Karma points***

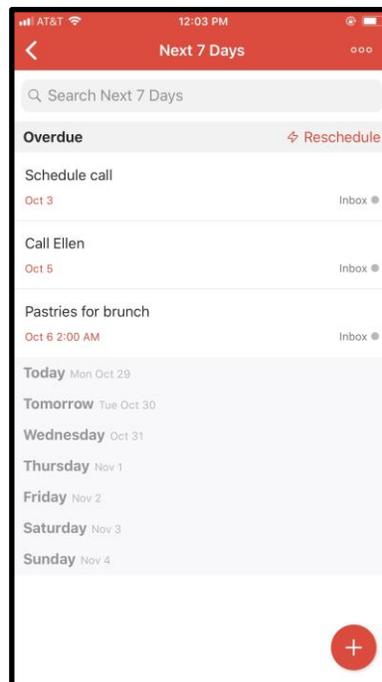
You are able to acquire karma points by successfully adding and completing tasks on time. You lose karma points when your tasks are more than four days overdue; however, Todoist has a vacation feature that allows you to put your karma points on hold for a period of time, so you don't lose productivity if you're out of town or away from your app. You start off in the 0-499 range, which qualifies you as a beginner, and once you reach 50,000 points you're considered to be at the enlightened level. By rewarding users with a points-based system, Todoist helps initialize their potential competitive instinct and motivates them to complete tasks quicker in order to achieve a higher ranking. This is an interactive way that Todoist promotes productivity and helps encourage users to complete their tasks on time.

## ***Inbox***

The inbox feature is where you're able to see all your tasks and their assigned due date in one place. Stefan C. Asafti calls the inbox the "brain dump bucket" where he is able to see all of his sporadic ideas, thoughts, reminders and assignments. With the premium feature, this is where you'll find comments and file uploads from team members, which is a helpful tool in terms of project management.

## ***At a Week's Glance***

This feature is beneficial for those who like to look at the larger picture and see all their tasks laid out for the entire week. Users are able to see 7 days ahead—that includes specific tasks with their due dates as well.



*The Next 7 Days screen where users are able to see their tasks for the week laid out according to the day they're scheduled for*

## **The Reviews**

Jill Duffy, editor at *PC Magazine* rated Todoist "excellent" for being the best to-do list app around, "one that works on all your devices, has great features for monitoring your productivity, and lets you geek out on the organization of tasks." Mike Vardy from Productivityist says that ubiquity is the main reason he chose Todoist above all other task management softwares. He explains how no matter what system you're using, whether it be Android, iOS, Chrome, or Windows, Todoist is a leader in appealing to the largest variety of user preferences. An article on *Keep Productive* mentioned a few

things that the basic structure of Todoist was lacking, including location-based reminders, filtering and sorting tasks, and the ability to comment on others' tasks (D'Alessio, "Todoist"). Overall, Todoist gets glowing reviews regarding its accessibility and functionality. The main thing critics say negatively about this app is that it's expensive to get the higher-quality version (\$29 per year).

## Conclusion

Todoist provides a supplemental organizational tool for those obsessed with planning out their lives. The various features, including prioritization and the karma points, encourage users to engage with the app by holding themselves accountable. This app is the perfect tool to quickly and efficiently keep track of anything and everything life throws at you.

*Emily Comos is a Strategic Communications and Professional Writing double major at Miami University. She enjoys traveling, conspiracy theories and Harry Potter movie marathons. Her favorite space movie is either Star Trek or Armageddon.*

# Toodledo

*by Lynn Vormbrock*

Mode(s) of access	toodledo.com, iOS, Android
Cost	Free; \$19.99-\$89.99 subscription options
Use case(s)	Planning and tracking, note-taking, outlining
Strength(s)	Wide variety of customizable features
Weakness(es)	Initially difficult to navigate

## Introduction

Toodledo is an efficient, easy to use organizational tool that is dedicated to user productivity. “Toodle-oo” is a British term associated with walking in a relaxed manner, and as a clever combination of “to-do” and “toodle-oo” Toodledo wants you to make your lists and relax—it will remember your tasks for you. It provides a variety of different formats and features that work best for your personal organization: tasks, notes, outlines, lists, and habits. Simply put, Toodledo wants you to get your work done. If you can spend less than an hour dedicated to customizing the website to fit your needs, you will save time in the long run. Toodledo has different levels of subscription options: free, silver, gold, and platinum. You can choose the amount that you are willing to pay for personal organization, but the free subscription works well for those who can accomplish tasks rapidly. Writers who tend to preserve their sanity by creating lists would especially find Toodledo useful.

## Tasks

Menial items are easy to keep track of with the Task feature, as it allows for complete organization of your to-do list. Each piece of your list can be easily created and customized to your heart’s content. When creating a Task, you are prompted to include a due date, a priority level, an active or deferred status, or a placement into a folder; each task on the main page can also be organized by any of those descriptors. The Task option works best for someone who likes to see a clear-cut list and likes to sort their to-do items in ways other than chronologically, such as priority or status. For example, I use this feature to create a to-do list of larger school assignments, and I organize them by due date. The Task option is easiest for those who prefer to group their tasks together rather than separate them.

Due Date / Time ↑	Task	Folder	Repeat	Priority	Status
Quick Add Task					
<b>Due in Nov-2018</b>					
<input type="checkbox"/> ☆ Nov 12	CCA 222 Draft of Object File	No Folder	None	1 Medium	None
<input type="checkbox"/> ☆ Nov 13	ENG 440 Abstract and Annotated Bibliography	No Folder	None	0 Low	None
<input type="checkbox"/> ☆ Nov 15	ENG 412 Usage Presentation	ENG 412 Homew...	None	0 Low	None
<input type="checkbox"/> ★ Nov 30	ENG 495 Draft Peer Reviews	No Folder	None	2 High	None
Must have a substantial draft by this time, final draft due one week later					
<b>Due in Dec-2018</b>					
<input type="checkbox"/> ☆ Dec 07	ENG 495 Final Paper	No Folder	None	3 Top	None
<input type="checkbox"/> ☆ Dec 11	CCA 222 Final Presentation Due	No Folder	None	0 Low	None
Presentation must be emailed to Mr. Sullivan by this time, but actual presentation is on 11/28					
<input type="checkbox"/> ★ Dec 11	THE 393 Final Exam	No Folder	None	1 Medium	None
Displayed Tasks: 7 active and 0 completed.					

Tasks here are sorted by due date/time

## Notes

The Notes feature is a simple and straightforward option that a writer could easily use to keep track of ideas or begin the brainstorming process. Notes are created with a click of your mouse and appear in a column; each note can be viewed in the column by All Notes or by Folder. You can sort your notes in various orders, such as alphabetically by title, reverse alphabetically by title, when it was added, when it was modified, or by folder. The user can also timestamp pieces of information on a note to keep track of when it was written. Anyone who uses Toodledo for free is limited to only 64,000 characters per note. You can, however, have up to 10,000 notes for free. The Notes option might not be the best way to write a book, but for organizational purposes it works well.

**Sample**

✓ Save   ✗ Cancel   ⌚ Timestamp

This is an example of a note in Toodledo.

Sep 30, 2018, 8:27:01 PM

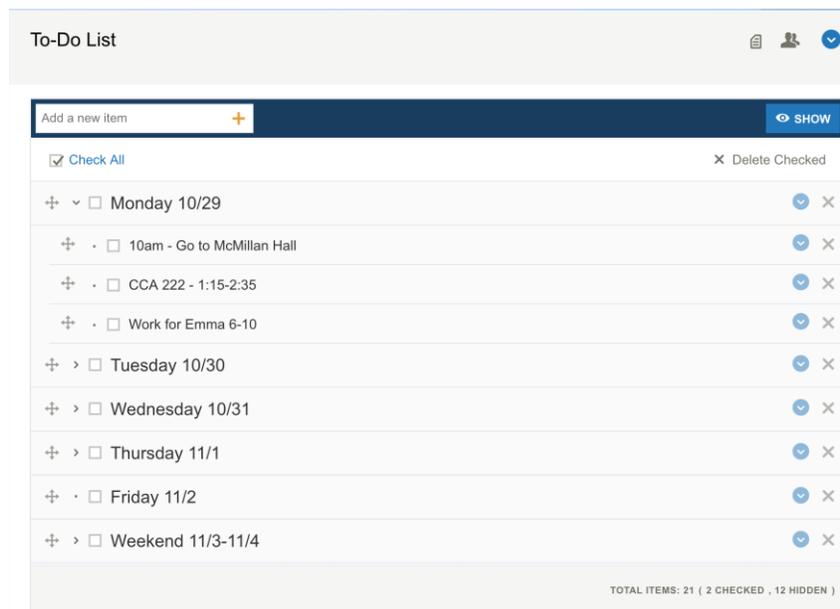
Here is another example of a note in Toodledo, but stamped at a later time. Be sure to hit save, or else you will lose your work!

Sep 30, 2018, 8:46:29 PM|

*The notes in Toodledo are a useful tool for smaller writing tasks*

## Outlines

The Outline feature might be a little tricky to customize at first, but once you master the basics, it can turn out to be the most useful feature in Toodledo's arsenal. Before you make your list, Toodledo provides a tutorial that helps you to create the list that works best for you—it even gives you suggested outlines, such as "Vacation," "Book Report," and "Buy a House." The Outlines feature works well if you like to break down your day-by-day activities into a hierarchical structure. You can list your points in one vertical list, or you can use subsets of points, like a bulleted list that you can check off one by one. I find that this feature works well if you like to make a weekly to-do list. For example, I create items on the list for each day of the week and make subsequent points that list my activities to be accomplished. The outline feature works best for those who prefer to use a checklist to manage their day-to-day tasks.



*Here, the Outline feature is used as a to-do list, which is just one example of a Toodledo customization*

## Lists

If the Outline option seems too time-consuming, then the List option is the next most helpful feature. After clicking the Add List button, you can modify the number of columns, the title of the columns, how they are sorted, etc. For example, Toodledo suggests that you create a grocery list with four columns: items, aisle number where it can be found, the price of each item, and a box to check once you have found the item. Once you enter the prices for each item, Toodledo automatically totals it up for you so you can also track how much you are spending on groceries. The lists can be easily modified to fit any type of list, but Toodledo suggests that the List feature be

used as a food log, address book, collection of recipes, or a bucket list, among many others.

Grocery						
SORT		FILTER		EDIT COLUMNS		
...	1	↑	Item	Aisle	Price	
<input type="checkbox"/>						+
<input type="checkbox"/>			Bananas	Produce	\$0.49	×
<input type="checkbox"/>			Whole Wheat Bread	8	\$1.99	×
<input type="checkbox"/>			Frozen Chicken	23	\$8.99	×
<input type="checkbox"/>			Carrots	Produce	\$1.99	×
<input type="checkbox"/>			Reece Cups	14	\$2.50	×
					Sum: \$15.96	
					Avg: \$3.19	

*The List feature is used best as a grocery list*

## Habits

The last feature in the collection is for habits. Not only does Toodledo keep you organized, it also helps you turn good behaviors into permanent habits. You can use this feature to track your progress, and Toodledo suggests tracking habits such as exercising, flossing, weight watching, and hours of sleep per night. After choosing a habit you'd like to track, you are given the option to either click a green checkmark for completing a habit, a red X for not completing a habit, or a manual entry (for tracking weight or hours of sleep). After signaling whether or not you've completed a daily habit, it takes you to a page where you can see a pie chart and a calendar with three colors that mark different outcomes for each habit. Green indicates a completed logged habit, red indicates an incomplete logged habit, and blue indicates no logged habit. These colors are combined into a pie chart to visualize the amount of each outcome you've completed, and the calendar uses the colors to display an outcome for a particular day. Toodledo also allows you to set an alarm each day to remind you to log a habit. These alarms can be through email, SMS text message, Twitter, the iOS app, or even through your browser. This is one of Toodledo's more unique features, but any busy writer who would like to remember to exercise every day or keep track of the amount of hours they sleep should take advantage of the Habits feature.

## Subscription

Each user has the option for a free, Silver, Gold, or Platinum subscription. You can join and use Toodledo for free, but have limited access to each feature. For example, you can only have 30 items per outline, track only 5 habits, and keep 1 alarm. The Silver subscription costs \$19.99 per year, gives you access to more features (such as subtasks, graphs, and a scheduler), and allows for up to 5 collaborators. Collaborators are other Toodledo members of the same subscription who you can share your to-do list with, as well as other shared features. The Silver plan also increases the amount of items you can have per account, such as 100 items per List, 100 items per Outline, and 20 Habits. For \$29.99 per year, you can upgrade to the Gold subscription, which gives you even more options per feature. This most popular plan gives you 10GB of file storage, up to 15 collaborators, and unlimited Lists, Outlines, and Habits. The highest subscription tier you can reach is the Platinum subscription. Listed at \$89.99 per year, it comes with the same amount of features as the Gold plan, but has a significant file storage upgrade at 50GB. Overall, there are many advantages to each subscription plan, but I would say the free version works well enough. If you didn't want to spend the money for a subscription, you could manage. But, if you have a busy schedule that you desperately need to organize and you don't mind spending a little bit of cash per year, then consider subscribing to a Silver, Gold, or Platinum plan.

## Conclusion

When all is said and done, Toodledo is a smart, easy option for busy writers to take control of their hectic lives. If you want to start making a list for your upcoming vacation or outline your new novel, Toodledo is a lump of clay ready to be molded and customized into the organizational tool of your wildest dreams. Its useful features can be modified to fit the specifications of any user. It is even available as an app of the same name for Apple and Android products. For the available features, easy customization, low price options, and convenience, Toodledo is a tool that will pay for itself a hundred times over.

*Lynn Vormbrock is an English Literature major with a minor in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies. When not working at the Wertz Art & Architecture Library, she loves to bake and read nineteenth-century British literature. Her favorite space movie is Hidden Figures.*

# Trello

*by Kayla Bodel*

Mode(s) of access	trello.com, macOS, Windows, Linux, iOS, Android, Kindle
Cost	Free; \$5-\$21 monthly subscription options
Use case(s)	Planning and tracking
Strength(s)	Security, collaboration
Weakness(es)	Limit to outside business extensions

## Introduction

There are several popular project management and planning applications out there that create an ease of mind when it comes to accomplishing tasks—as big as planning a company event and as small as personal chores.

Consistently among experts' top picks, Trello is one of these outstanding project management and planning applications. This app allows you to create tasks with deadlines along with the ability to collaborate and share with teammates to ensure a sequential flow to your project.

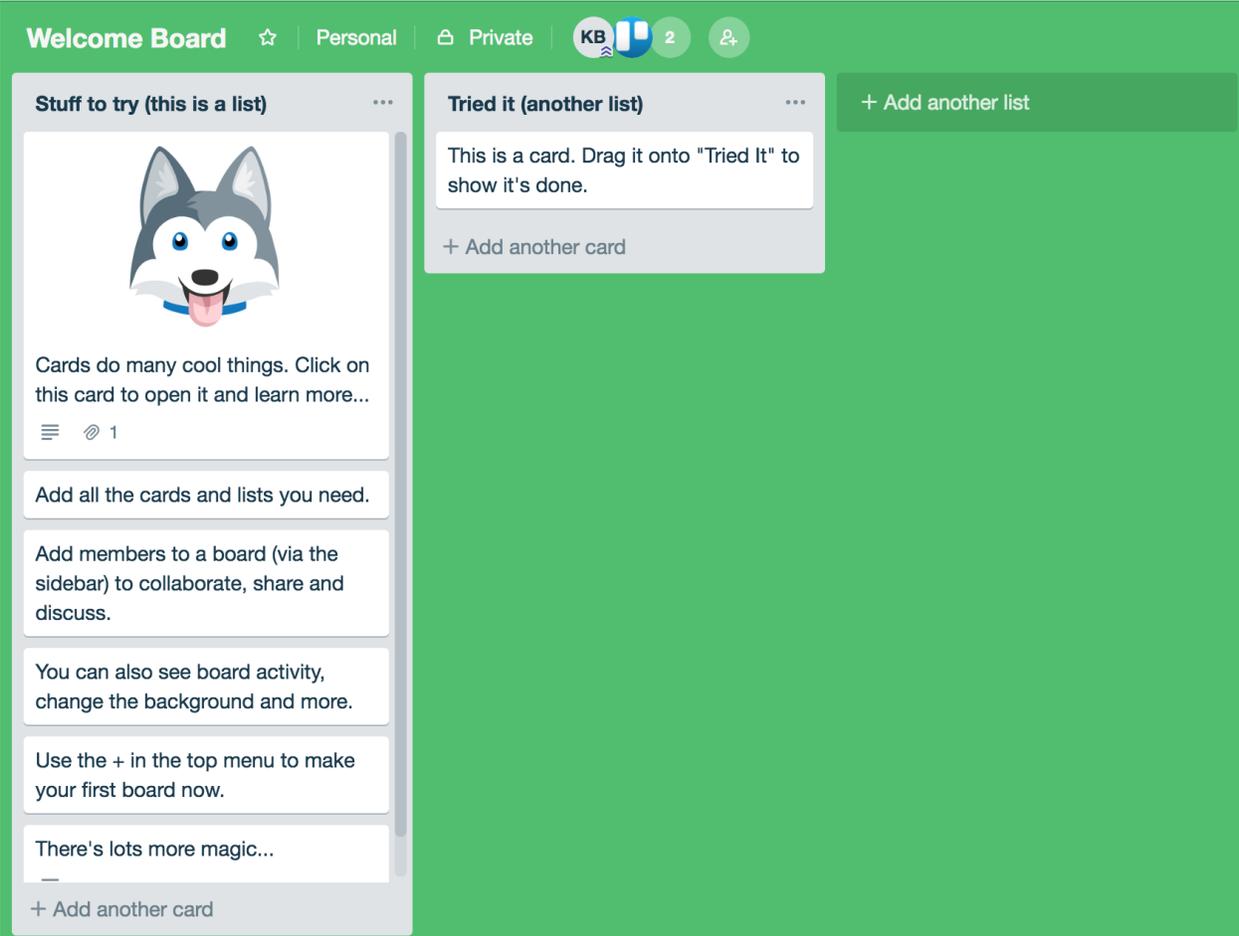
Whether your project requires working solo or with a team, Trello is a software fit for organizing your tasks for an event, assignment, project, or even a shopping list. This is done with the ease of an interactive board, organized by cards, to move tasks from To-do to Complete, or however you wish to order them.

This project management tool allows a simple way to collaborate on tasks. Through the use of these boards, lists, and cards, Trello offers an awesome and satisfying way to visualize how to get your project done effectively and efficiently.

After downloading the application myself, I found it rather simple to navigate and learn how to use from the beginning. The visual aspect of dragging and dropping cards throughout the lists makes this app fun to use.

Offered to all web sources, iOS, Android, and even Kindle users, this one-of-a-kind planning app brings your collaborations to one simple work space.

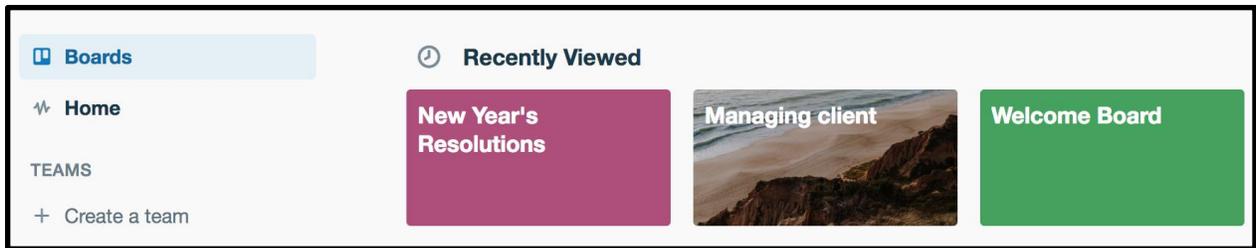
# Boards



*On each board you can view the layout of lists and cards*

Boards are individual to each project. Boards are what you can create tasks on and the overall viewing page for these tasks. Once you create a board, you may add members to view and manage it with you. This allows for collaboration on projects. Are you in charge of planning the next family reunion? Managing your next product launch? Have a huge client presentation coming up? Create a Trello board.

These boards are for you to get your ideas flowing. What I love about them is their simple design. With options to customize everything from your background picture to colors of task labels, these boards are beyond helpful in organizing your ideas and requirements for your next big assignment.

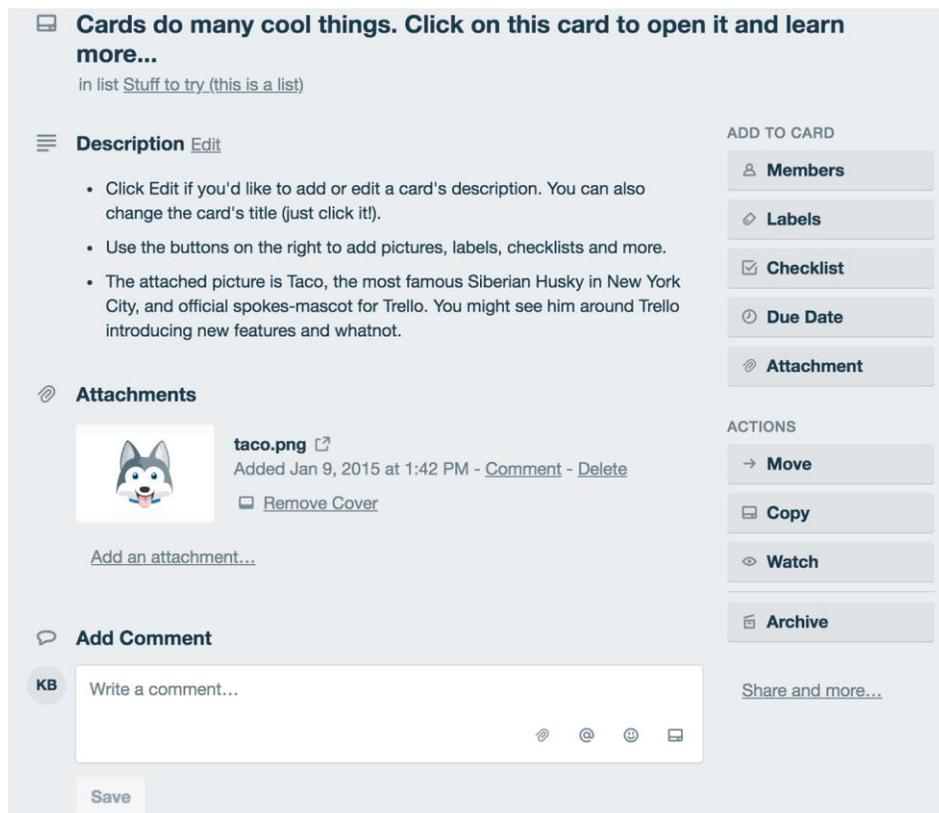


*On the welcome page of Trello you can view all your boards*

When you first open Trello, you can easily see your boards divided into sections whether they have been recently viewed or are personal or team boards. On the left side of this welcome page, you can also see that you have the option to create a team before creating a board. Within this team you can then create the boards needed to complete your project.

## Cards

On these boards is where you add your cards. Cards are similar to post-it notes—they are essentially a way for you to label your tasks. These tasks can then be assigned to members of the board, who can then mark them as complete when done.



*When you click on a card, you can view all of the different customizable material*

What I like about these cards is that when you open one, you can add files, images, comments, and notes to what needs to be done for that task. You may also add a deadline to the card which allows for even more efficiency for the project as a whole. These deadlines, visible on the overview of the board, change color to alert you when you are closer to the date, which is a nice way to visualize the priority of the tasks.

If you are working with a team, you can add members of the team to the different cards to assign tasks. This is a simple way to categorize your tasks and track the progress of the project.

## Lists

These cards can then be moved down the board to its respective “list” as mentioned earlier. These lists can be titled anything you want to help track the different levels of progress throughout your project. They can be labeled to simply define the categories of your cards or they can be labeled to show the actual progress the cards are going through to reach your deadline.



*An example of categorizing your lists*



*An example of having progressional lists*

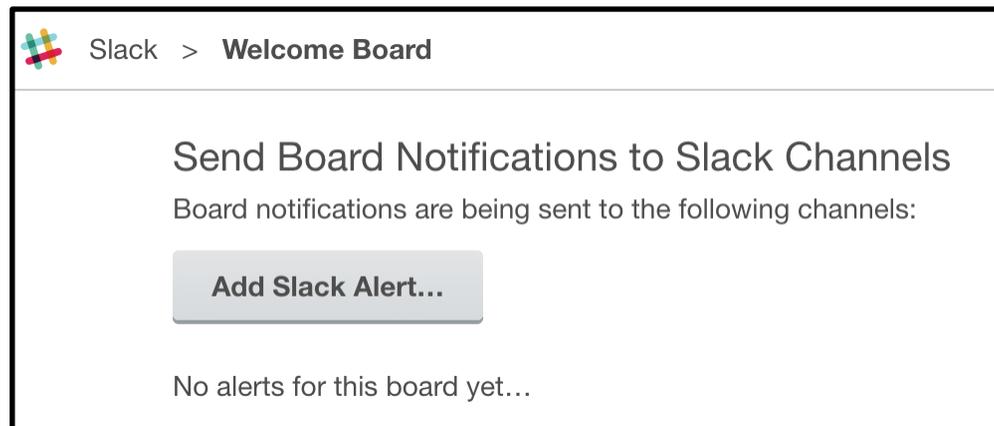
When I first started using Trello I created boards to keep track of my weeks to essentially replace my planner. On these boards I labeled my lists things like To-Do, Project Checkpoints, and Complete so I could keep track of the progress of my cards. What I love about these lists is that satisfaction of dragging and dropping my assignment cards to the Complete list at the end of my board.

## Power-Ups and Cost

Trello is free to use with very few limits. You only have to start paying for a Trello subscription if you wish to have unlimited Power-ups. Power-ups are application extensions that can be added to your boards. Your company may be using other applications for communication and collaboration such as Slack, Google Drive, and

Evernote. Trello allows for you to integrate these other platforms into your boards with the ease of Power-ups.

For example, many companies use the popular communication app, Slack, to instant message between colleagues. If you were to enable the Slack Power-up on your board, you could have all notifications from your boards sent immediately to your Slack Channels.



*Enabling power-ups allow you to send notifications to your other workplace platforms*

There are hundreds of Power-ups to choose from. On the Power-ups page, they are categorized by type of service they provide, such as analytics, file management, and social media. This way you have complete power to customize your cards and interact across other platforms within your Trello board. There is even an option to design your own Power-ups along with coding tutorials to do so.

This is where the cost of Trello comes in. With the free version, you are only allowed to use one Power-up per board. If you wish to add more, there are different subscription levels to choose from that allow you to do so, as well as to upgrade to professional privacy that is required by larger corporations. There are three additional levels of Trello's subscriptions that you need to pay for: Gold, Business Class, and Enterprise.

The Gold level (\$5 per month or \$45 per year) of Trello is the basic way to simply increase your number of Power-ups per board allowed to three, your customizability of the board (i.e. colors, stickers), and your file size from 10MB to 250MB. This level can also be obtained by sharing Trello with your friends via social media to earn up to 12 months of Trello Gold for free.

The Business Class level (\$9.99 per month) offers a wider variety of features including unlimited Power-ups and higher security regarding who can be added to your boards. This level is recommended to businesses (obviously) and anyone who wishes to

increase the security on their projects by controlling who is added to their teams with restricted member invitations and private boards within a team.

The Enterprise level (~\$20.83 per month) offers larger corporations enhanced software monitoring and two-factor authentication for managing multiple teams. This elite level allows for encrypted files and legal services to keep your company's projects at the highest level of security.

These levels are all awesome options to make sure your projects are safe and secure. After playing around with a few of the Power-ups, I realized there truly are so many things you can do with Trello. It is an awesome space to bring all your apps together. I definitely suggest browsing through their Power-up library when deciding if a Trello board is the best approach for your project planning.

## Conclusion

Overall, I would absolutely recommend Trello to my peers and future employers. It is what you need to tidy all of your collaborative material into one electronic source. Through its system of boards, cards, and lists, Trello creates a fun and satisfying space to watch the progress of your projects unfold.

*Kayla Bodel is a Professional Writing and Strategic Communications double major. She enjoys bingeing Friends on Netflix and traveling with her family. Her favorite space movie is Interstellar.*

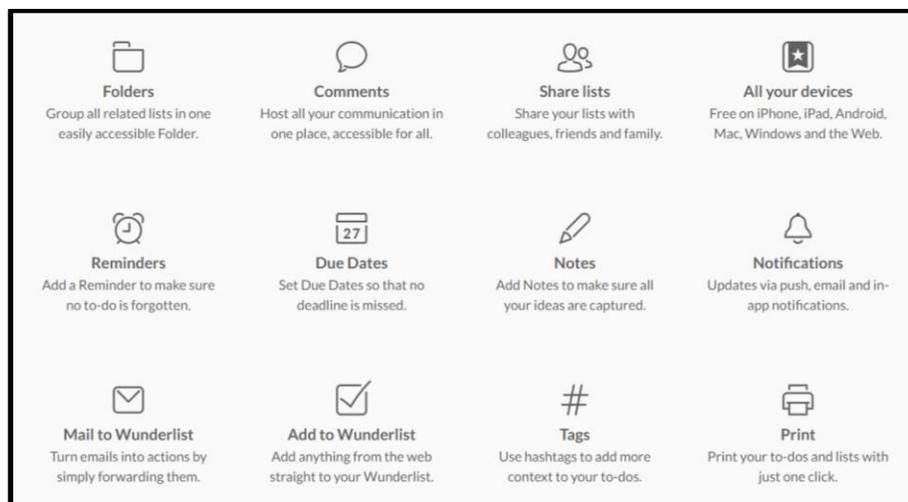
# Wunderlist

by Tyler Sagendorf

Mode(s) of access	wunderlist.com, macOS, Windows, iOS, Android
Cost	Free
Use case(s)	Planning and tracking, note-taking
Strength(s)	Easy-to-use design, ability to sync across multiple devices
Weakness(es)	Limited reminder options

## Introduction

As a college student, being able to keep a detailed, efficient, and up-to-date to-do list is crucial for staying ahead of assignment due dates and ensuring that I do not become overwhelmed by the sheer size of my list of tasks. Since I discovered it in fall of 2017, Wunderlist has been my go-to app for task management. Aside from the basic features of a to-do list, Wunderlist offers users the ability to create and organize lists by folders, set reminders and recurring tasks, attach files, write notes, and sync To-dos across devices. The best part—it's free.



*An overview of the features offered by Wunderlist*

## Layout and Customization

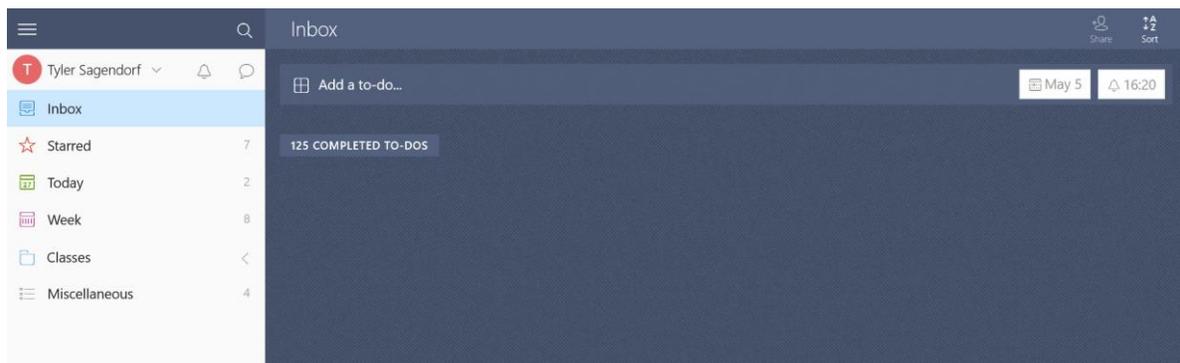
Wunderlist is an app that boasts an aesthetically pleasing red and white color scheme. The icon is white, with an orange border, a red banner, and a white star in the center. The simple color scheme minimizes distractions during task-making, and the colors

red and orange are oftentimes attributed to energy and a sense of determination—an apt set of feelings for an app focused on getting work done.



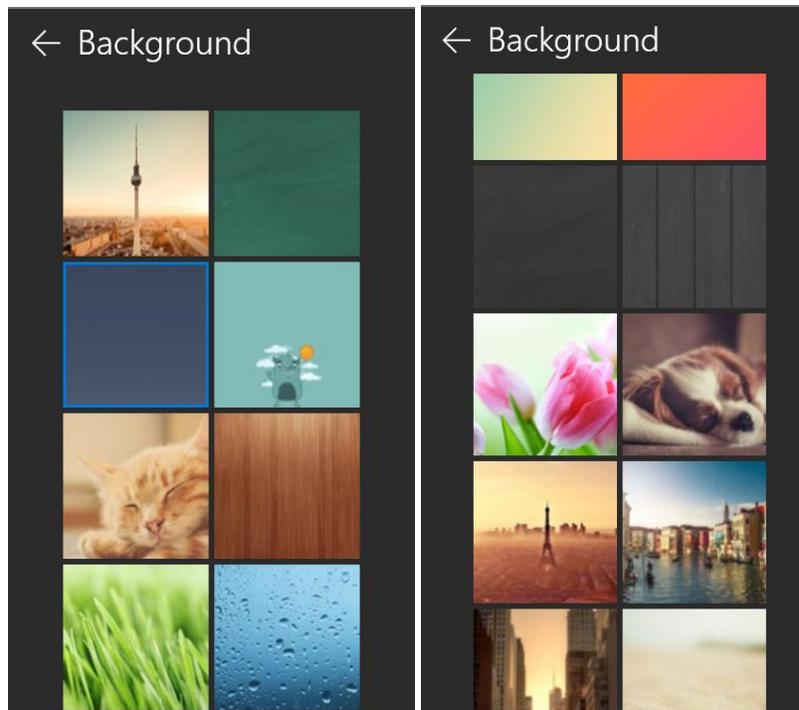
*The Wunderlist app icon*

Much of Wunderlist's functionality comes as a direct result of its form. Like many other to-do list apps, it has an uncomplicated design that allows for the creation and completion of tasks without cluttering the workspace. The main body of Wunderlist is for displaying the To-dos. Clicking or tapping on a To-do will bring up a menu on the right side of the page with details that the user can edit, such as due date and notes. The left side of the page is devoted to the various lists, both already-available and user-created.



*The layout of Wunderlist as viewed on the desktop*

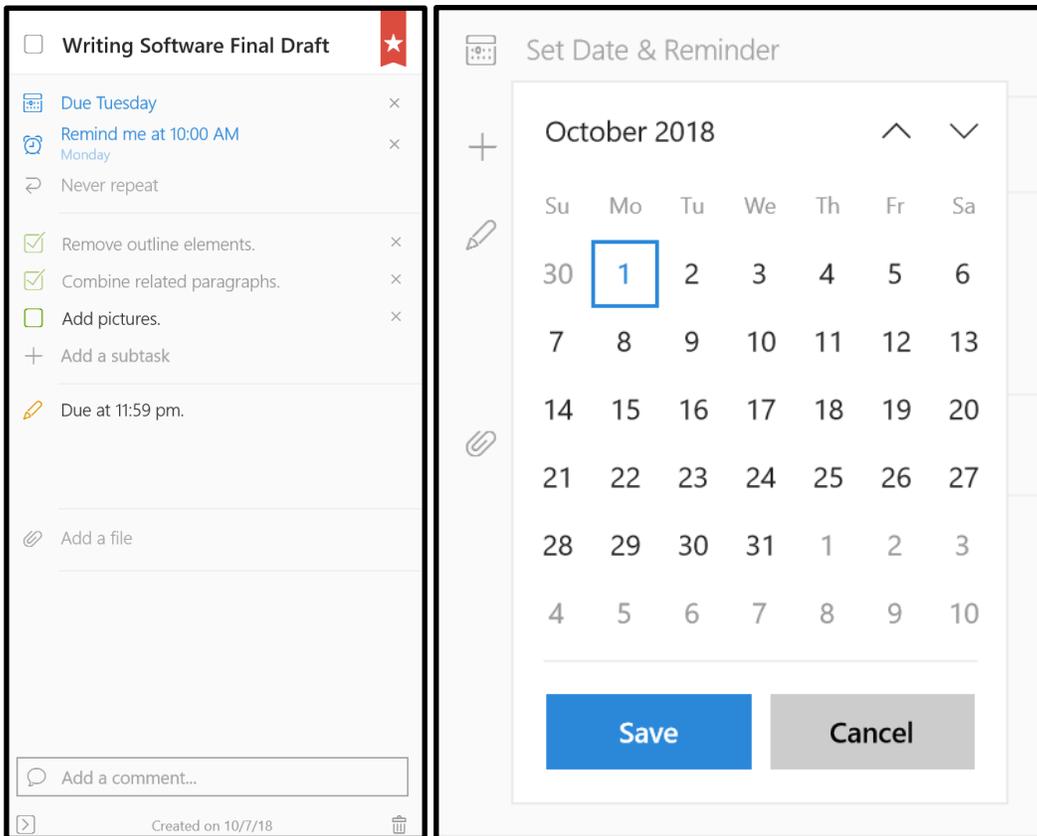
Wunderlist also offers users a choice between 30 unique background options to enhance the appearance of their lists. These options range from a close up of grass blades to rain drops on a blue gradient to picturesque skylines to a sleeping kitten. More reserved options are also available, with solid colors and simple gradients making up about a third of the choices. Personally, I opt for the blue-gray (shown above) or wood-grain (shown below) backgrounds to minimize distractions.



*Some of the backgrounds offered by Wunderlist*

## Tasks

The first step in making a to-do list is to create a task. Tasks can be created by clicking or tapping on the field that says "Add a to-do..." Whether you are using the app on your smartphone or on your desktop, you must first give the task a name, hit Enter to create it, and then tap or click it to edit the details. Within each task, users can specify a due date and reminder date and time, as well as set the task to repeat. Due dates are set by selecting the desired date from a basic calendar interface. Reminders use the same calendar layout, but users can set reminders to be on days that are different from the due date. Reminders also require users to set a specific time during the day where the reminder will be sent either through email reminders or push notifications. These notifications can be toggled on or off through the settings.



*An example of the parts of a single to-do (left) and what the calendar looks like (right)*

Larger, more complex tasks with multiple parts can be broken down by subtasks. They can be incorporated by interacting with the “Add a subtask” field within the main To-do. Each subtask can be checked off once completed, but the completion of all subtasks does not automatically mark the main To-do as complete. These more detailed tasks can also be given external files, user notes, and user comments. Attached files may provide more detail on the task at hand than can be accomplished by notes, or it may be a file where the work is to be completed. Comments are more for tasks that are viewed by multiple users, as users can leave short messages regarding their thoughts on a particular task. With a single user, the notes feature may be better used—though it comes down to personal preference, especially since the comments cannot be deleted.

When a duplicate or otherwise superfluous To-do has been created, sometimes the only course of action is to strike it completely; individual tasks can be deleted by interacting with the trash can icon at the bottom of the To-do’s details. Clicking or tapping on this icon will prompt the message “Delete To-Do: [Name of To-do] will be deleted forever.” The two options presented are Delete and Cancel, ensuring that a misclick does not cost your careful planning.

## Lists and Organization

While Wunderlist offers a default list, simply named Inbox, users can create their own to-do lists. To do this, click or tap on “Create a list” on the bottom left of the app, and give it a name. Afterwards, any To-do created will be in this list. One feature for shared lists is the option to have email and/or push notifications for To-dos that are added or completed. That way, people can keep track of who is doing what, and stay up-to-date on what still needs to be done. In addition to the ability to create lists, Wunderlist offers users the option to organize related lists into folders; however, folders cannot be imbedded within other folders, so there are only two levels of organization. Lists can be sorted one of five different ways: alphabetically, by due date, by creation date, by assignee, or by priority. The default is to sort by creation date. More important lists can be pinned to the Start menu on the desktop, so that (for Windows 10 Pro) they are visible immediately upon startup, along with your most used apps.

## Syncing Between Phone and Desktop

Whether you are on the go or find yourself constantly switching between your phone, laptop, and tablet, Wunderlist offers the ability to sync your to-do lists across multiple devices so that you can always stay on top of what needs to be done. The only drawback, however, is how long it sometimes takes for the lists to sync. It doesn't happen immediately when you open the app, so you may find yourself looking at To-dos on your phone that were previously completed on your desktop, or vice versa. Usually, closing the app and reopening it will cause it to update, fixing the problem. For the desktop version, you must manually sync your To-dos by clicking the dropdown menu on your name and selecting Sync.

## Sharing the Workload

Wunderlist offers users the option to share lists with their friends and colleagues that also use the app. To do so, simply navigate to the list that you would like to share, tap or click Share in the upper right-hand corner, and enter the email addresses of your list members. This is useful when there are To-dos for a project that need to be completed by different people, and when you need to keep track of all the work being done on one list, rather than everyone having their own, private To-do lists.

## Importance of Tasks

When you find yourself with too many tasks and too little time, it sometimes helps to be able to divide and conquer by importance. This is one case where the Starred system comes into play. With a simple click of a button, users can Star an item. These

tasks then occupy their own part of the left-side menu called Starred, where users can view all of the most important To-dos across all of their lists. Not only does this set the task apart from the rest of the list by appearance (by placing a red banner with a white star on the right-hand side of the task), but it also causes it to move to the top of that particular list. This feature is especially useful when you have multiple things to do on the same day, each with different shades of importance or urgency. Being able to distinguish what needs to be done is indispensable.



*The visual distinction between regular and Starred tasks.*

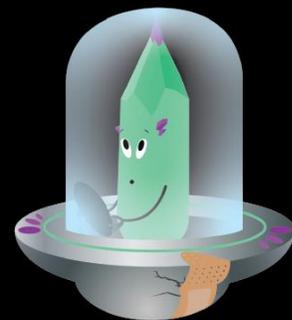
## Drawbacks and Suggestions for Improvement

While users are given the option to set items to repeat on a daily, weekly, monthly, or yearly basis, one improvement that could be made is to allow for items to repeat on specific days of the week. At present, if I wanted to set a task to repeat every Monday and Friday, I would have to create the same task twice, one for Monday and the other for Friday; this adds unnecessary clutter. The same argument applies to tasks occurring multiple times a day.

## Conclusion

This free app is best utilized by people with lifestyles that require some extra assistance with task management. It is perfect for college students, but it is not limited in this regard. With the ability to create and organize lists, set reminders, embed files, write notes, and sync To-dos across devices, anyone with a need for a to-do list will find Wunderlist to be an asset.

*Tyler Sagendorf is a Statistics major with a minor in Rhetoric/Writing. He enjoys spending time with his friends; playing with his cat, Scarlett; cooking; and reading. His favorite space-themed book is The Martian Chronicles by Ray Bradbury.*



## Log 7: Black hole

What... what is that?

# Twine

by Tobias Paul

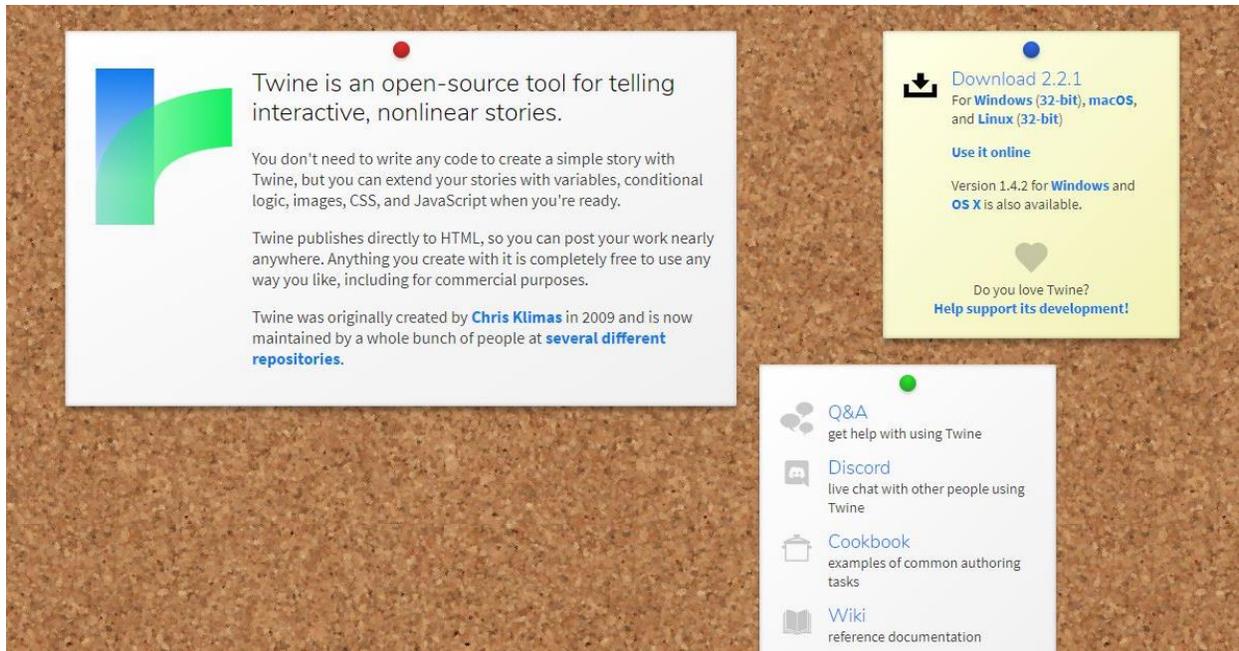
Mode(s) of access	twinery.org, macOS, Windows, Linux
Cost	Free
Use case(s)	Creative writing, storyboarding
Strength(s)	Easy to use
Weakness(es)	Lacks most word processing features

*“You are standing in an open field west of a white house, with a boarded front door. There is a small mailbox here.”*

This opening is intimately familiar to many gamers of the early '80s. *Zork* was one of the earliest text-based interactive fiction (IF) games in the genre. These games tell stories by presenting the player with situations and allowing them to explore the narrative by typing simple commands or selecting actions from presented options. In the early days of the videogame industry, text-based IF games gained popularity as a means of creating games without wrestling with memory-intensive animation and graphics on computers. By the '90s, however, this subculture of gaming was largely underground—until now. Today, a new program is revitalizing the IF scene: Twine.

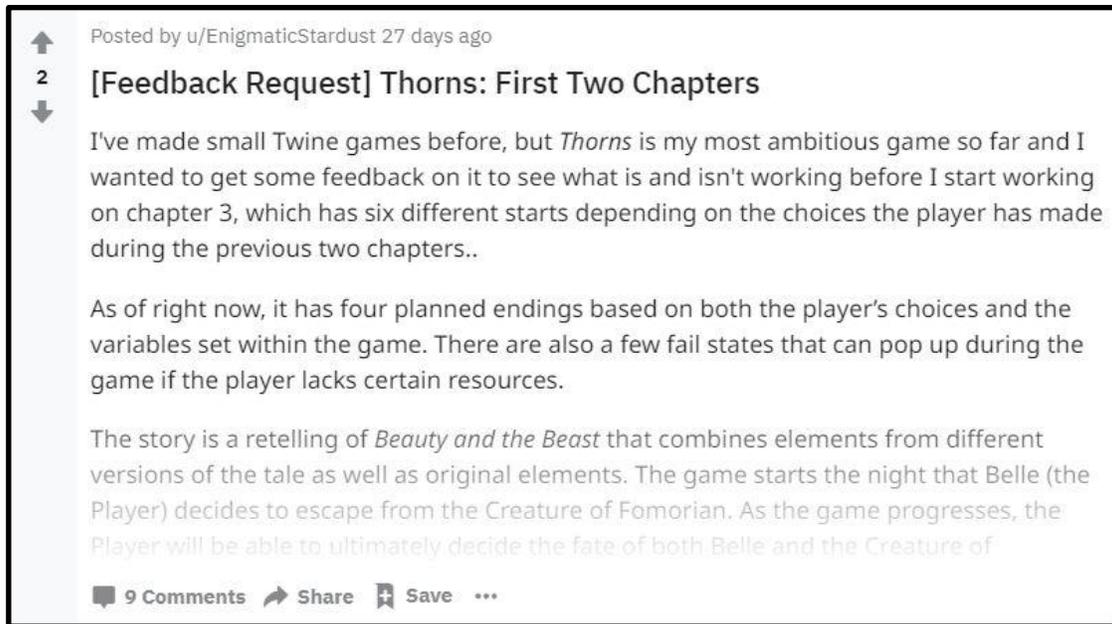
## Storytelling Reimagined

Twine is described on its website as “an open-source tool for telling interactive, nonlinear stories.” The software’s biggest draw—aside from being free—is that a creator does not need to know any programming languages to use it. Coding can add advanced features and multimedia elements, but many users are able to create complex, compelling narratives without ever entering proper code. This quality has led some to dub Twine “the video-game technology for all” (Hudson).



*Twine's homepage*

Adding to Twine's accessibility is the range of options a creator has for sharing their finished product. Twine games save as HTML files, meaning that the author can upload a game directly to their own website, share them for offline play, post them to a hosting site like *philome.la*, or add them to the *Interactive Fiction Database's* online catalog. Some creators upload their games on sites like *itch.io* or *Gumroad*, which allow them to price and profit from their content. Twine's site itself showcases users' creations on its homepage, and openly informs creators that, "Anything you create with [the software] is completely free to use any way you like, including for commercial purposes."



*A request from a Reddit user for feedback on their Twine game (EnigmaticStardust)*

Even as free and open-source software, Twine offers a number of troubleshooting and support resources. There is a community Q&A for specific queries, live chat help available through a Discord channel, a wiki for more structured information, the *Twine Cookbook* that provides guidance on the more technical elements of the program, and an unofficial subreddit ([r/twinegames](https://www.reddit.com/r/twinegames)) where creators can ask questions and get feedback on their games. These resources make it even easier for people to get started with the software and create their own games.

## More Users, More Uses

In part as a result of its accessibility, Twine's userbase is nontraditional compared to the broader gaming industry. A survey of game developers in the USA by the International Game Developers Association found that 74% of respondents identified as male, 68% identified as white, and 81% identified as heterosexual (Weststar et al. 11-12). By comparison, many of the most prominent Twine developers are women. Further, two of the platform's best-known creators, Porpentine and merritt k, are queer transgender women.

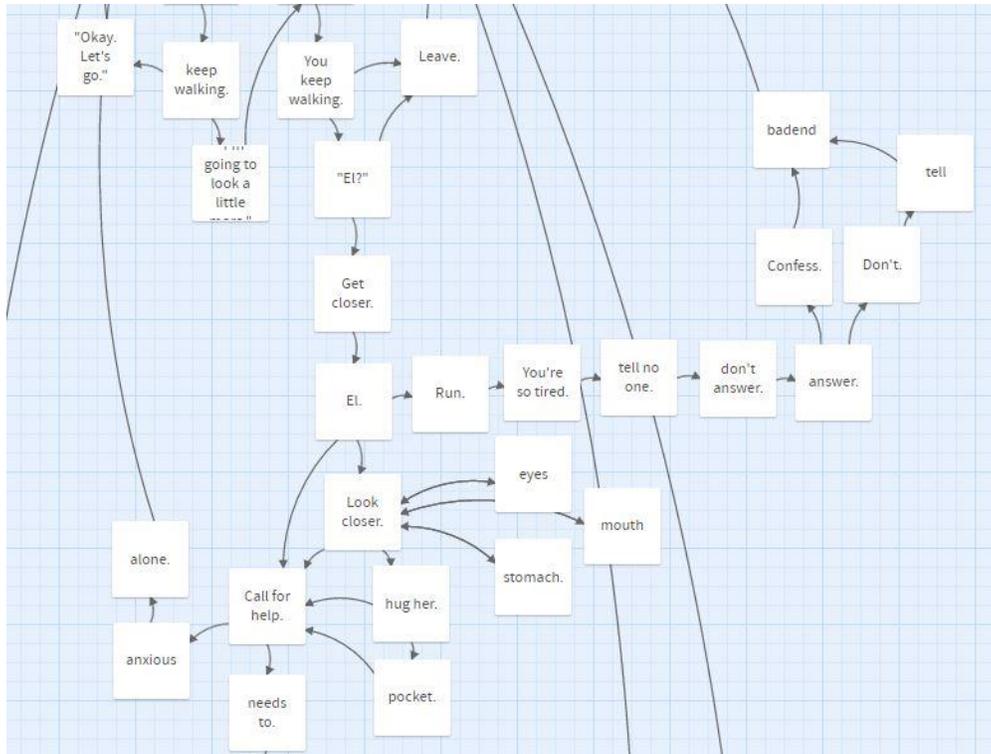
One morning at dawn the nurse shook him awake because his sobs were being heard in the next room. Once he was awake he could hear that not only was the patient next door but the two hundred dogs kept in the hospital courtyard for use in the laboratory had also been threatened by his sobbing and clearly were howling **still**

*The opening sequence of Porpentine's most well-known Twine creation, howling dogs (Heartscape)*

Already, then, Twine games have the potential to tend toward different topics, with different approaches. The games are created by and for these diverse demographics, fostering a unique culture of exploration and experimentation. Additionally, because Twine is available to users who may have no experience with videogames, the content these creators produce has the potential to be markedly unconventional. "If you're someone who hasn't played a lot of videogames and you're handed this tool where all you need to do is write, maybe you're just going to write something about you," says game developer Anna Anthropy, whose book *Rise of the Videogame Zinesters* put Twine on the map in 2012. "Maybe you're going to write something about your pet. There's no reason you have to create something that's about space marines" (qtd. in Hudson).

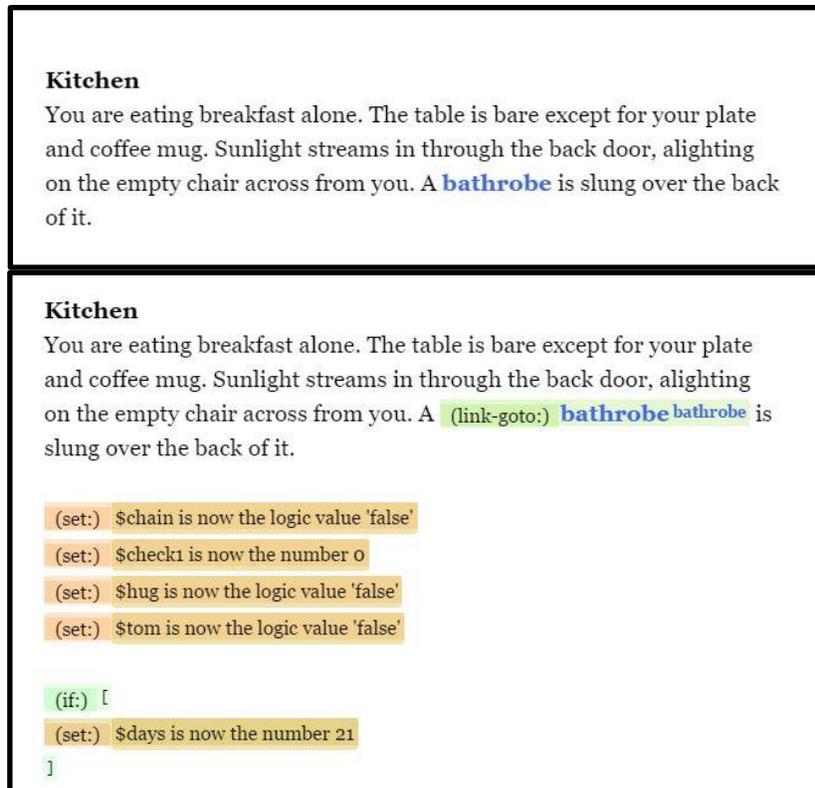
## Tools of the Trade

Twine's interface provides a grid which can be filled with square boxes, each one containing a passage of the story. Once a user creates a hypertext link by enclosing a word or phrase in double brackets, another box is generated and visually tied to the first by a line. These boxes can be arranged however the user wants, and, no matter their placement, a curved line will link each passage to the next set of options.



*Excerpt of a Twine file for the game tombs of earth and oak (@beqveath)*

Twine's Debug Mode is especially helpful in the context of game development. The mode allows a creator to play through a draft of their game, and it includes alerts when a link or other component is not working. This feature provides greater ease in troubleshooting more complex elements of a game.



*A passage from tombs of earth and oak, in its standard display (top) and in Debug Mode (bottom)*

Twine also incorporates a feature which allows the user to find and/or replace words throughout a story, supplementing the interface one might encounter in a standard word processor. The one aspect in which Twine falls short compared to such programs, however, is in the absence of an Undo button. If a large portion of text is accidentally altered or deleted, it is difficult to get back without reloading the last save file. As a result, some users prefer to construct their passages in a program like Microsoft Word, then copy the text over into Twine's interface.

In this sense, Twine may be best-suited as a secondary writing space—that is, after a user has written a basic draft of their content in a word processor, they can then move to Twine as a space in which to format and further explore their creation. Once in Twine, writers might place sections of their story into an intertwining web, linking one to the next and creating offshoots from one section to lead to multiple potential paths. Twine's strengths lie more in its opportunities for customization and sharing of one's creation than in its utility as an initial drafting space. Even so, some writers may find a use for the software as a digital means of early brainstorming and storyboarding, taking advantage of the ability to rearrange passages with relative ease. Twine's greatest asset, then, is its versatility; the use of the program depends on the user.

## A Story to Tell

### Forest, one week prior

You stand among the trees. They tower above you, crisp air snaking among the trunks and seeping into your skin. Tree branches tear gaping holes in the sky with claws stripped bare of leaves.

The night is black, angry. The forest has never looked the same since she disappeared.

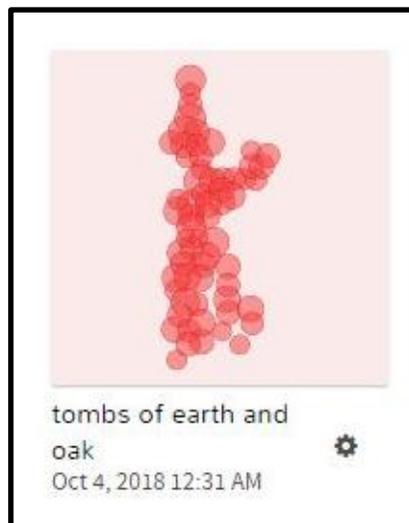
You don't think it will ever look the same.

The path splits ahead of you. You grip your flashlight, shining its beam in either direction.

You can go [north](#) or [east](#).

*A passage from tombs of earth and oak featuring two clickable hypertext links in blue font*

Twine has developed into a piece of writing software that goes beyond its original use. It is best known as a medium for hypertext fiction, a kind of electronic literature where the user navigates the story through the use of hypertext links—essentially a high-tech *Choose Your Own Adventure*. However, Twine's interface lends itself to broader application. Not only has it been co-opted by game designers for other kinds of text-based games, but even writers with no interest in games or electronic literature can use the software to organize and develop their own projects.



*A preview of Twine's branching-path mapping*

The map of a Twine story functions as a kind of narrative flowchart, plotting out how a player might progress from one passage to the next depending on the choices they make. Today, some game developers use this branching-path visual mapping as a means of storyboarding before taking the content to another medium. Such is the case in *Firewatch*, an indie game which incorporates a branching-path sequence in its opening gameplay. The sequence, while in the end run on a separate user interface, was first authored in Twine (@ja2ke).

Even if Twine is not someone's primary writing platform—particularly in the case of non-game developers—its accessible interface and user-friendly functionality make it an asset to a variety of media. Someone writing their own *Dungeons & Dragons* campaign could use the branching-path visualization of Twine to plot out various paths their players might take, and could even use it to follow along with players' actions in real-time. An author might create a visual map of their story in Twine as a brainstorming tool or to further develop their plot. They might even play through their story in Twine as a means of experiencing the narrative in a new way. For these individuals and many others, Twine offers a powerful organizational writing tool.

## Conclusion

Although Twine's origins paint a narrower image for its functionality, users have proven in recent years that the software is engaging, accessible, and versatile. It is revitalizing the text adventure scene, providing a platform for marginalized voices, and opening up the world of gaming to everyone. Even as an organizational apparatus, the software offers a number of benefits, such as visual mapping and customization. From storyboarding to interactive fiction to indie game development, Twine's assets as a storytelling tool make it a valuable resource for any writer for whom *The End* isn't so clear-cut.

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Whoa! I don't recognize this corner of the universe! We must have gone through a wormhole back there. These are all the notes I have for now, so I hope you find this guide helpful. These documents don't cover everything, so feel free to explore the technologies for yourself! It looks like I've got a lot more to see. Onto the next great adventure!

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