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Topicscape

## What's new in Topicscape Pro 2.0 (currently in Beta)



New items since Feb 26<sup>th</sup> Beta version are highlighted

- Tagging (added edit or delete tags throughout Topicscape)
- Halo menu and associated dynamic help
- Innovative swinging panels
- Topic footprints
- Keep Topicscape active but out of view
- More Association line choices
- Topic name layout improvement
- Hotkeys on menus
- Neighborhood views
- Customize the Home view position
- Choose different skins for different Topicscapes
- License installer
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- Two new zoom options
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## Tagging

There are several 'big deals' with version 2.0 but the biggest for some will be tagging.

We've had many requests from users wanting to be able to tag topics ... we listened ... and now you can do it. Not only topics but occurrences as well. Any topic or occurrence can have tags - up to ten - and these tags provide a new way of finding things: tag filters.

When you apply a tag filter, in the 'Scape you will see only topics matching the tags that you filtered on. The others disappear until you turn the filter off. Matching occurrences appear in the Topic Center in bold italics, for easy identification.

This means that you can tag things as, say, "urgent", "personal", "do with Jenny", "delete on Dec 31", "marketing", "blog", "reading" or "check". The tags are independent of the hierarchy or other structure.

So, let's say Jenny walks in the room. You apply the "do with Jenny" tag filter and all you see in your Topicscape are the items to work on together and you can get down to work with all the material you need but without distraction.

A tag filter is a type of search. As with other searches, the matching items all appear in the Hit List, but there's another place to see the results of applying a tag filter: The tag pool. This is to the left of the Hit List and shows all tagged items filtered in - topics and occurrences - set out alphabetically in 3D ranks.

There are several ways of working with tags in Topicscape. You can use keyboard shortcuts, the new Halo menu, the main Edit menu (Search) or a new button on the Details panel. The Halo menu appears when you hover over a topic (see example on the right) and is described in the next section.



For simplicity at first, we will mention just one tag control for each operation. For full details of tag controls, see *All the controls* at the end of this section.

### **Adding or removing tags**

To tag topics, click on the tag icon  in the Halo menu.

This will show a tag cloud with any tags already selected for that item highlighted in orange (see next page). The tag cloud will include all tags you have already used in this Topicscape, plus the standard tags (see *Mechanics of tags* below). The more frequently used a tag is, the larger will be the lettering, and it



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may be bold.

The cloud appearance has been greatly improved. A Beta user stung us into action when he gave them a valid description: 'twinky'. We appreciate constructive criticism - thanks Ian!



To add a standard tag, or a tag that is already used somewhere else in this Topicscape, just click on it.

To remove the tag on a topic, click the highlighted word and the highlight will disappear.

To add a new tag, one that's not already in the cloud, type it in the text box and click the Add button. Then click OK. See below for information about the second option with this panel, changing tags throughout the open Topicscape, which is controlled by the radio button at the top.

The Clear button is used when you want to clear all tags already assigned to this topic.

To tag occurrences, select the occurrence and click the Tag button at the top left of the Details Panel. The same tag cloud will appear. You can select multiple occurrences in the Topic Center and tag them in once operation.

### **Filtering by tags**

Bring up the tag cloud by clicking the tag button in the toolbar. The tag cloud that appears is a little different to the previous one, because it's designed for searching, not for modifying tags.

In the tag cloud, you will see all tags you have already used in this Topicscape.



Choose the tags you want to be included in the results, decide if you want to filter by occurrence or topic only - checkboxes are provided for that - and press the "Filter" button.

If you are inspecting an item's tags in its tag bubble (see below) and



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you want to see what other items are tagged the same way, the controls are right there in the tag bubble. Simple click on the tags you're interested in, and click the Filter button.

### Viewing the results

After applying a tag filter, you will see the Hit list as usual, with items matching the chosen tags. A topic containing an occurrence with a matching tag will appear in the list, even if it does not have a matching tag itself.

Or you can press Ctrl+3 to see the Tag Pool. The items associated with the tags you chose, topics and occurrences, are shown there arranged in ranks.



If you press the Home key, you will see the 'Scape, with only the filtered-in items showing. Topics that are filtered out will leave empty spaces. To provide a reference point, the Current Topic always remains visible.



While a filter is in effect, you'll see a tag status bar near the bottom of the window that reminds you of the tags selected.

### Case sensitivity

Tag filtering is case sensitive. "Urgent", "URGENT", and "urgent" are different tags.

### Cancelling a filter

If you press the Escape (Esc) key, the 'Scape will show all topics once again, while the Hit List and Tag Pool will still hold the filtered results.

### Inspecting an item's tags

To see how a topic is tagged, you can hover over the tag icon in the Halo menu (see below) and a bubble will appear showing the tags assigned to that topic.



To see how a topic or occurrence is tagged, whether the Halo menu is in use or not, select the topic or occurrence, and in its Details Panel, hover over the Tag button.

### Searching within a tag filter

If a tag filter is in effect (which you will know by the tag status bar), you can do a search in the normal way, by just typing the search term. However, the search will examine only items that match the tag filter. To remind you that you have requested a search limited





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by the tag filter, Topicscape shows a blue border round the search-term box.

### Changing tags throughout a Topicscape

If you wish to make a global change to a tag word, or delete all references to a tag throughout a Topicscape, you can now do so.

For example, you might want to change all references in the current Topicscape to the tag "Tuesday meeting" to "Sales meeting", or even delete all references to "Tuesday meeting". This can now be done in one operation.



First, press the radio button for "throughout this Topicscape", and the Add button will be replaced with Edit and Delete buttons.

Key in the tag you want to change. Then you can press Delete to remove all references to that tag

anywhere in this Topicscape. Or you can press Edit, and key in the replacement tag.

### The Mechanics of tags

Tags that you add are linked to an individual Topicscape, rather than appearing in all Topicscapes on that computer. This avoids having many irrelevant tags in all your Topicscapes.

Tags are built up as you use them, but there are a few standard or default tags that are present even in a new Topicscape. They are: *calendar*, *contact*, *image*, *mail*, *money*, *personal*, *reference*, *task*, *today*, *urgent*, *web*.

When you drag in objects of specific types that Topicscape can identify, it will automatically tag them. Examples of this would be image files, emails from Outlook, tasks from Outlook, and web page shortcuts or archives.

### All the controls

The quick introduction above mentioned just one control for each function. Depending on what you are doing at the time, and whether you like to use the keyboard as much as possible or the prefer the mouse, you may want other ways of accessing the tag functions. Below, you will find all of the tag controls listed, followed by a handy table.

But we find that most of the time, the simplest way to handle tagging is 1, 2, 3!



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That means Ctrl+1 to add tags to the selected topic, Ctrl+2 to filter by tags, and Ctrl+3 to go to the Tag Pool.

**Adding or removing tags:** Select an item and press Ctrl+1; *or* click tag icon in Halo menu; *or* click "Tag" button on Details Panel; *or* click button in item's tag bubble.

**Filtering by tags:** Press Ctrl+2; *or* Edit menu | Search | Filter by tags; *or* select tag button in toolbar; *or* click "Filter by tags instead" button in search panel. Then choose tags to be included from the tag cloud and press the Filter button.

To filter on just tags in a specific item's tag bubble, select tags from the bubble and click its Filter button.

**Viewing results:** In the Hit list; *or* press Ctrl+3 to see Tag Pool; *or* press Home key to see 'Scape, with only filtered in items showing (topics that are filtered out will leave empty spaces). **Note:** Topics that do not match the tag filter but contain one or more occurrences that do will be filtered in.

**Cancelling a filter:** Press Escape (Esc) key; *or* press Close button on tag status bar.

**Inspecting an item's tags:** Hover over Tag button in Halo menu; *or* Hover over Tag button on Details Panel.

For reference:

	Main menu	Halo menu	Details Panel	Item's tag bubble	Keyboard shortcut	Quick jump button	toolbar button
<b>Add or remove tags. View tag cloud (assigned tags are highlighted)</b>	n/a	click tag icon	click tag button	click [ + ] button	Ctrl+1	-	-
<b>Filter by any tag used in that Topicscape</b>	Edit   Search   Filter by tags	-	-	-	Ctrl+2	-	Click tag icon
<b>Filter by tags of selected item only</b>	-	-	-	select tags, click Filter button	-	-	-
<b>View the tag pool</b>	View   Tag pool view	-	-	-	Ctrl+3	click left-most button	-
<b>View item's tags in its tag bubble (only tags assigned to that item are shown)</b>	-	hover over tag icon	hover over tag button	-	-	-	-

### ***A note about tags from PB***

3D Topicscape Pro already imports tags from PersonalBrain. They were not visible in 3D Topicscape Pro 1, but they *were* stored in the database. They will now appear as tags in 3D Topicscape Pro 2, even if your PB files were imported by Pro 1.

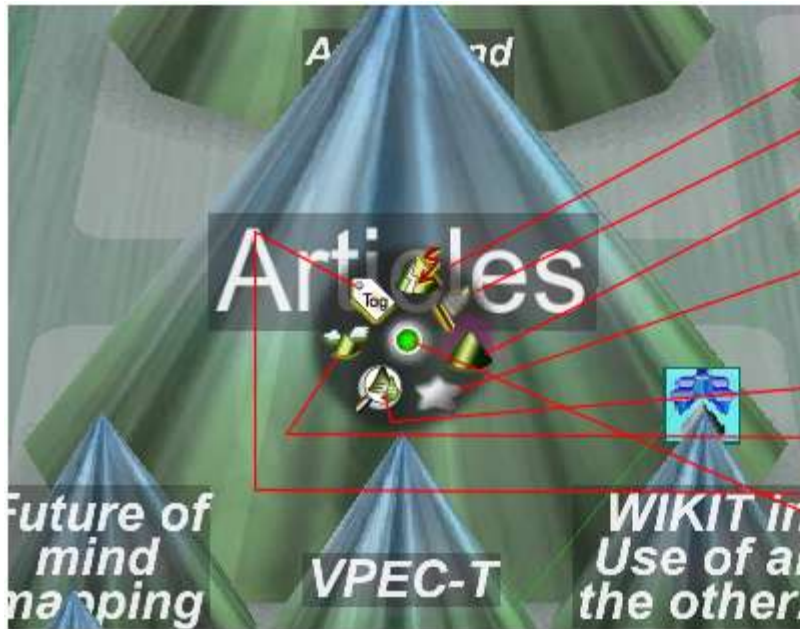


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## The Halo menu

The next big deal (we think) is the Halo menu. Hover your cursor over a topic in the 'Scape or The Lists, and this forms in front of your eyes, giving immediate access to eight controls:



- Enter the Topic Center
- Flag (or un-flag) the topic
- Make the topic into the Current Topic
- Make the topic a favorite (or remove its 'favorite' status)
- Search this topic group
- Move the topic
- Tag the topic
- Change to the topic's associations



Bear in mind that if you choose "Search this topic group", your search will look in only the topic on which the halo appears and all its descendants. To remind you that you have requested a search limited to a topic group, Topicscape shows an orange border round the search-term box. For a full search, you just start typing the search terms, as you do now.

Two controls have added capabilities on hover:

Hover over the 'Enter Topic Center' icon (ringed in red in the illustration) instead of clicking it and you will see a simple list of the contents. You can click on an item from that list to open it, if it has a file attached.

Hover over the Tag icon and you will see the tags assigned to that topic.

The Halo menu brings often-used controls into a highly visible position, and allows the right-click, pop-up menu to be simplified. If you like, you can turn it off. Existing controls still work, if you prefer.



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This menu also has built-in dynamic help as you can see on the right. Hover your cursor over an icon and the blue help bubble explains the icon's purpose. It is headed by the topic's name, in case the name panel is covered by the Halo menu.

There are checkboxes in the help bubble, to suppress the Halo Help and the Halo menu itself. Switching them on



again is done from the Options panel:

Tools | Options | User Preferences | Enhanced Menus

If you select a topic, it's Halo menu will disappear until you move the cursor away and back again to hover over the topic.

The Halo menu shows anywhere in the 'Scape where a topic appears: Cones, pyramids, 3D Hit List and History list items (for topics, but not occurrences), and even the 2D lists.

## Swinging panels

Then there are the Swinging Panels. Adjust the appearance of Topicscape's landscape easily and without hunting through menus: 3D Topicscape Pro's new and innovative "Swinging Panels" provide a way of controlling software with the minimum obstruction to the view that is so important to quickly grasping where you are in your information landscape.

Most of the time, the panels swing back and are only just visible, but move your cursor over them and they swing out to allow you to see them fully and use the controls.

There may be two swinging panels, one on each side, though by default you will see only the one on the right. Press Ctrl+h to trigger the other, which is the 2D hit list on the left-hand side.





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### Quick Options

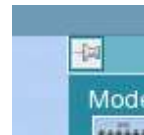
The swinging panel on the right of the Topicscape window, "Quick options", gives you fine control over many aspects of the appearance of the Topicscape scene, either through direct controls or by bringing up one of the tabs in the Options panel.

### 2D Lists

If you have chosen to view the Hit and History Lists in 2D, the swinging panel on the left shows these lists. As always, pressing Ctrl+h toggles between use of the 3D Lists and the 2D ones.

### Swing or pin open?

If you want to have either or both of the swinging panels permanently in full view, click the small thumb-tack icon at the top of each panel.



### Transparency

The transparency of the Quick Options swinging panel is controlled by the same spinner as controls the transparency the 3D/2D hit list (on the Skins tab of the Tools | Options panel).

## Topic footprints

Now you can get confirmation of the 'Scape's structure without a moment's thought: The topics in front of the Current Topic now have footprints to show how they are grouped.

If you like to use different colors for topic cones, the color of the parent topic of each group will be used to shade the footprints. Try the Festival skin (right) to see this.



## Keep Topicscape active but out of view

To reduce distraction, you can have the Topicscape window auto-hide while you work on other tasks. Topicscape has been capable of this for a while - until now, it has been an undocumented feature.

This is customizable option. It defaults to OFF so this won't happen unless you select it. Make sure you are in User's Mode, then in the tools menu, select Options | User Preferences | Minimize Topicscape's window when it loses the focus.



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Then, when you click on another window, Topicscape will minimize to an icon in one corner. Which corner it goes to is up to you. It is initially set to go to the bottom right corner, but a small drop-down box near the "Minimize Topicscape's window" radio button allows you to choose.



There are two ways to bring Topicscape back: Either click once on the icon, or if you want to drag something into Topicscape, drag the file (or folder or favicon) over the corner icon but don't drop it. The Topicscape window will be restored, and then you can drop it in the appropriate place.

### More Association line choices

If you like to have a visible connection between related topics, there are now more choices of how you see association lines connected to the selected topic. In addition to seeing just parent connections or no connection line, now you can also choose to see parent and child connections, or parent, child and sibling connections.

This is controlled by four options under "Topic association lines" in the Quick Options swinging panel.

As before, holding down the F7 key shows all association lines.

### Topic name layout improvement

The name panels on Cones and pyramids are wider, so they are less likely to break words at unwanted places now.

But better still, you can control hyphenation of long words in topic names on the cones as well. Simply add soft hyphens with Ctrl+- when editing in the Details Panel. The hyphens are only visible when Topicscape cannot fit the word on a line, or when you are editing the topic name in the Details Panel. They show up as white hyphens with a blue background like this: This is a hyphenated example.

Soft hyphens are only used in two circumstances:

- If the name requires more than three lines or
- If a word is so long that it cannot fit on a line by itself

The presence of soft hyphens in words will *not* affect searching. So in the example given earlier, a search for 'hyphenated' would give a hit.

### Hotkeys on menus

Like to keep your hands on the keyboard? Long overdue, the menus now have hotkey operation - Alt key + a letter - so that you don't need to reach for the



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mouse.

There is a change to an old shortcut: Repeatedly pressing Alt+U cycles through many field textures so that you can choose your preference easily. (Changed from Ctrl+Alt+U.) Don't forget that you can change the color of the field as well.

## Neighborhood views

Want to find the tag pool quickly? Or Topicscape Orphans, Topicscape Islands, the Lists, or the Home position? There are shortcuts and menus for all of these, of course, but on the swinging panel there's a new way: Five icons, shown here:



give a quick jump to the neighborhood you want, with just a click.

## Customize the Home view position

The new swinging panel affects the visible area a little. We had adjusted the view point for the Home position to take note of that (including allowing for cases when you pin the panel open. (You arrive at the Home position when you press the Home key.) A user commented that the positioning was not as he wanted it. (Thanks for the prod Mark.)

We have therefore introduced a new control near the foot of the Quick Options swinging panel. You can permanently slide the view point in and out, and left and right to your taste. The same proportional adjustment will be applied to the Home position for any Current Topic.



You can only make this adjustment when you are at the Home position and as you move somewhere else, the control will be disabled and the Lock checkbox will be checked. To adjust it again, press the Home key or uncheck the box, and your viewpoint will be taken back to the home position.

## Choose different skins for different Topicscapes

In the past you had flexibility to choose one of 20 skins for your Topicscapes. You could also make your own customizations to those by changes to topic shape, color, texture and transparency, as well as ground texture and color. And you could change again after a while if you were feeling adventurous.

But any change you made applied to all your Topicscapes.

Now, you can choose a skin for each individual Topicscape, while still being able to specify the standard (or default) skin that will be used for new Topicscapes, until you decide you want something special.



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Once you move away from your standard skin you will see a warning "You are about to permanently disconnect the skin for this Topicscape from the standard (default) skin settings." At that point you can confirm or cancel.

## License installer

There is now an entry "License Loader..." in the Help menu that simplifies installing your license file when you buy Topicscape, or need to re-install. Simply drag the attachment from the license email we sent you to your computer's Desktop, and select Help > License Loader...

If your copy of Topicscape has expired, you won't be able to reach the Help menu, of course, so please use the alternative:

Go to the Windows Start button > All Programs > Topicscape > Topicscape Pro License Loader

This information is provided as a description of 3D Topicscape Pro 2.0. It does NOT apply to (and will not work with) the Beta version, which has a fixed expiry date of March 31st 2009.

## Demo

There is a new demo entry in the Help menu that shows new users how multi-parent topics work.

## Two more zoom options

1. Following a user suggestion (thanks Vipin), we have modified the mouse-wheel zoom so that rolling the mouse wheel zooms the scene towards the location of the mouse pointer in the Topicscape window. Unless it is in the center of the screen, you will need to track the object as it moves

If the mouse pointer is outside the Topicscape window, the scene zooms towards its centre, as it does in the present live version of Topicscape.

2. Existing users will know that if they hold down the Shift key and click on a topic cone, they will immediately zoom in to a convenient viewing point for that topic and its surroundings. They will also know that depending on whether they release the Shift key or the mouse button first, they will either stay in that position or zoom back.

Well, now the same applies to items in the 3D Hit and History Lists on the left of the 'Scope. This means that you can quickly zoom to a position to see the back items. Some users prefer to use the 2D lists instead, but for those who like to keep working in the 3D environment, this new zoom is a convenience.



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## Delete Topicscape

Drastic, but convenient for those who don't like digging around in Windows Explorer, is the new function that will delete a Topicscape.

You can find it in the File menu. This will delete the Topicscape database (3DT file), all the occurrence files in its folder, Description+ files and settings specific to this Topicscape (such as favorite settings). This is an irreversible action, and it will warn you of that twice. You cannot delete a Topicscape when it is open, so you must select another one first.

To be clear, files that the Topicscape *links to* but which are stored *outside its folder* in My Topicscape, will *not* be deleted.

## PB import update

Import of PersonalBrain data has been extended so that changes to the PB5 database are handled, to acquire data that is not exported by PB itself. See also A note about tags from PB above.

There is a special version of the PB Import Extender that installs in your Topicscape Beta folder if you try to do an extended import of a PB and check for an update.

## Topicscape Pro Beta 2.0 -- administrative details

### *Period of use*

Topicscape Pro Beta 2.0 will work without a license until March 31<sup>st</sup>, whether you have previously installed Topicscape or not, whether you have a licensed version or an expired one.

### *Live release*

We plan to release the live 3D Topicscape Pro 2.0 before that date. Purchasers of earlier versions of Topicscape may need to purchase an upgrade license. (All versions of Topicscape Pro 1 will continue to function as now.)

### *Conversion*

If you are still using an older version of Topicscape, the database may need to be converted - this will be done automatically, and the original database file will be retained.

The converted database will still work on the current live Topicscape (version 1.63), though of course, that version will not see any tags you have added and customizations new to 2.0 will not be visible.



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## Bug fixes

### *Windows Desktop search on Vista*

When running under Windows Vista, Topicscape's capability to use Windows Desktop Search (WDS) for searching file contents, was broken.

This has now been fixed.

### *Editing in the Details Panel when brought up from minimized position*

When editing information in the Details Panel, it was possible to lose the changes made if the Details Panel had been minimized and was brought up for editing by hovering over it. This now does not happen.

Also there could occasionally be a problem with similar editing when the large text panel was used (by pressing Shift+F2 while in text editing mode).