



# **Topicscape**

## **Lite**

The 3D work organizer,  
concept-mapper,  
and study aid

### **Quickstart Guide** (Topicscape Personal Edition Lite)

Also available in the Start | Programs | Topicscape menu  
and on-line at <http://www.topicscape.com/>

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**Some have a photographic memory . . .  
the rest of us use Topicscape**

**Topicscape**

## **Create a new Topicscape – a walkthrough**

This is not a manual for Topicscape Lite. It is a step-by-step guide to building a small sample Topicscape and aims to give you a quick start. For more detail later, when you need help on a specific action, please refer to Topicscape's Help system. You can open this Quickstart again from the Programs menu (Start | Programs | TopicscapeLite | Quickstart Guide). We suggest you print this out for easier reference while trying out Topicscape Lite for the first time.

A built-in demonstration runs at start-up until you suppress it. This auto-runs through a similar set of actions to those below. Once you have suppressed it with the checkboxes that appear in the demo panel, you can run it again any time with Help | Demonstrations | Topicscape operations.

If you have not previously started Topicscape Lite since you installed it, you will need to work through the three steps 11 – 13, described in the Topicscape Personal Edition, Installation Guide first.

### **1 Open Topicscape**

- Then select File | New Topicscape.
- Key in “Computer security” when asked for a new name (no quotes).
- Soon you'll see a cone called “Computer security”, left-click on it once.
- You'll see a blue panel - the details panel. More about that later, but for now drag the panel to the bottom right of the window, using its title bar.
- Left-click on the cone, hold the mouse button down and drag the dot to the green field – release it there.
- Topicscape Lite will ask for a new topic name.
- Type - Hardware | - Software | Network | Policies | Internal users | External attackers (The | character is Shift+\ on common keyboards)
- Click Add (or press Enter). You will see six new cones for the topics just entered.
- Click one of the new child topics.
- You'll see a faint red association line from the association line to its parent. This type of line shows the connection(s) from a topic's cone or pyramid to its parent(s) only when the topic is selected.



### **2 Try Undo and Redo**

- Press Ctrl+Z, then press Ctrl+Y. Undo and redo are available for most operations that result in changes to your Topicscapes.

### **3 Add more topics**

- Single left-click on the “Software” cone, drag its green dot to the green field and release it.
- When asked for a new topic name, type: Defenses | Vulnerabilities

### **4 If the lettering is getting too small – increase the window size or . . . fly!**

You can make the Topicscape window full screen (double-click title bar), or fly closer to a group of topics using cursor keys or the mouse. The scene-size adjusts with the



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### Topicscape

window, and, as Topicscape uses 3D graphics, you will not experience 'blocky' or jagged edges.

- To start with, try using the four cursor-control keys: ←↑↓→
- then try these with the Shift key held down.
- Try the PageUp and PageDown keys, too.
- For full help on flying, you can left-click on the little aircraft image next to 'Level of Detail' in the blue toolbar across the top of the window or you can watch the 3D Flight controls demo.
- To see a top view, press Shift+End.
- If you get lost when flying, press Home. To see everything, press Shift+Home.
- Finally, please try the Quickzoom: Hold down Shift and with the mouse click on any topic cone or pyramid and hold the mouse button. Your viewpoint will be zoomed to place the selected topic near the center of the screen and at a comfortable viewing distance. Release the mouse button and you will be back where you started. If instead of releasing the mouse button you release Shift first, the viewing point will remain there when you then release the mouse button.

### 5 Make some children of “Vulnerabilities”

- Click on “Vulnerabilities” and drag the green dot that appears from it.
- In the box that appears, type new names: Viruses|Worms|Trojans|Spyware

### 6 Focus the Topicscape on a new area

- Double-RIGHT click on “Policies” (or right-click and select 'Make topic current').
- The 'Scape re-organises itself around the “Policies” topic (“Software” appears as a parent, “Computer security” as a grand-parent. All the rest will be siblings and their children).

### 7 Introduce a file to the Topicscape

Drag a Word file (say) from your desktop or My Documents and drop it on the Policies cone – the cone shows blue to confirm the destination topic.

- Select Copy so that your file is not actually moved during this walkthrough.
- Double-LEFT click on the Policies cone (or right-click and select 'Go to Topic Centre'). You'll go inside the cone and see the file you just dropped there.
- Double click on it, and it will open.
- Close the Word window, click on Topicscape's window to give it the focus.
- Hover over the name in the details panel and you'll see a text insertion cursor indicating that you can edit the name, author, description, source or authority. Click and try it. Press Enter.
- This file is now what is referred to in Topicscape as an 'occurrence' of that topic.
- Press the “**Backspace**” key or the left-pointing blue arrow in the toolbar. You'll be outside again. Backspace allows you to backtrack over your path whether you have been flying, making a different cone the Current Topic or entering a topic's cone.
- If Topicscape does not grab the focus when you drag a file over its window, you may wish to change this behaviour. This can be done with a PowerToy from Microsoft: – TweakUI.

### 8 Double-RIGHT click on “Software” – the landscape will be re-drawn around this topic.

- Then select Defenses and drag its green dot to the - Hardware cone and select 'Defenses is to be a parent of - Hardware'. A new association is formed and both of the affected topics' surroundings change to show that.



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### Topicscape

- Multiple instances of the same thing are indicated when you select (click on) one instance. White “fireworks” go up above the other instances that are not directly selected. Click on Defenses, then Hardware to see this.

### 9 Add an occurrence from a web page

- Using a web browser, go to [www.topicscape.com](http://www.topicscape.com).
- Drag (with the right mouse button) the browser icon from the address bar to the Software topic cone. (You can only do this with MS Internet Explorer – but see the last item about LEFT-click drag, just below, and look up Other Browsers in Topicscape's Help system)
- It makes an MHT file for you automatically and adds this as an occurrence of Software. It takes a few seconds, but queues up the save and lets you go on working. Don't close Topicscape until the save is done, though.
- If you LEFT-click drag, you'll get a choice of shortcut, plain HTML or MHT file. Opera users will be glad to know that this one *does* work for you.

### 10 Building a 3D structure from your folders

Find a folder on your PC with a few files and a few subfolders also with files, to a depth of three or four levels.

- Drag this to the main topic cone near the middle of the landscape (the one with a glow behind it) and drop it.
- Select Copy, not Move as you are just experimenting for now. Topicscape will build the structure in 3D. Depending on what you drop (how deep the folder structure is), you may not be able to see it all at once. You can drill down by double-RIGHT clicking on the new topic cones.

### 11 Now try a whole-Topicscape search

- Type (without quotes) “hardware”.  
Notice that no preparations are necessary: No Ctrl+F, or F3, or menu item to select, just type the search phrase. Topicscape is always waiting for search words unless you are editing text (or, naturally, if its window doesn't have the focus).
- As you typed the 'h' you will see the Advanced Search panel. When you finish typing 'hardware' and press Enter, you will soon see the 3D hit list.
- Press Ctrl+h and you'll see the 2D hit list. Ctrl+h toggles between the two.
- When the 3D hit list is visible, you can press End to go to a position at the end of the list that lets you see results. This works, even if you were inside the Topic Center at the time.
- If there's more than one page of results, the arrows at the front of the list let you page through them.
- There is another type of search – a group search that limits your search to one specific concept and its sub-topics. There is more about that in the manual.

### 12 Multiple parents for any topic

- Double-RIGHT click on the - Hardware item in the 3D hit list.
- It will become the new Current Topic (central topic) around which others are shown with their relationships indicated by their position. Parents are indicated by the red lines that can be toggled on and off with F8. To see all relationships in the visible landscape, you can hold down F7.



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### **Topicscape**

- You'll see that Hardware has two parents: Computer security and Defenses. Topicscape allows as many parents as you like for a topic, unlike the folders/directories of an operating system, or the hierarchy in a mind map.
- This means that if you have a useful article about corporate email policies, you could classify it under 'Corporate security', 'Email', 'Policies', 'Internal users', and so on. It would be multiple instances of the same thing, so if you edited it, they would all be changed.

### **13 Search variations**

- When you searched for 'hardware' above, you were performing a keyword search. If you gave two keywords, both would have to be present in the target for it to be displayed as a hit.
- Phrase search is also supported (enclose the phrase in double quotes).
- There's limited wildcard support too: a single \* will show everything; \* with the selection of file types will limit hits to specified file extensions; and XXX\* gives a prefix search. So searching on v\* will show 'viruses' and 'vulnerabilities'.
- File content searching is supported for many common types of file.
- You can limit a search to a specific topic and all its children.

### **14 There are many more drag and drop, copy and paste functions**

- You can drag a file to the field (instead of dropping it on a cone) – more details in the Help system.
- Copy part of a file and paste with paste special inside a topic (it makes a wrapper for you and gives the choice of linking to the original file or embedding the extract).

### **15 A Topicscape like this would be used as a repository**

- You would add to it as you collect information, and refer to when you want to look things up.
- Of course you can look things up in Google and will continue to do so. But this is personalised, focused and contains any of your own material that you want to hold in it too.
- The difference is that you can search by concept, by flying and making different topics the current one, as well as doing keyword and phrase searches. And you have a broad view of your material in a subject area that is impossible in a 2D environment.

### **16 Other types of Topicscape**

- The other major use that you will make of Topicscape is in organizing your work.
- It has proved useful to many people as a 3D mind-mapping tool, a way to structure the planning for a new project and a place to keep track of all the information that a project or your job generates over periods of months or years.

### **17 What happens to the files I drag in?**

- You decide yourself how the files that form part of an occurrence are treated. They can be copied or moved, or the occurrence can refer to them in their present position (a 'point to' occurrence).
- So, how to decide which option to use? We recommend using the 'move' option whenever possible. If you use the 'copy' option, there is a significant risk that the two versions of the file will become out of step if you make changes. It is difficult to be sure, when updating one copy, that you will remember to bring the other copy in line. If you use the 'point to' option, that won't be a problem, but when using Windows® Explorer to move or re-organize files, it's easy to forget that a file is referred to by Topicscape.



## Some have a photographic memory . . . the rest of us use Topicscape

### Topicscape

- As to where the files go when under Topicscape's direct control: Say you have a Topicscape called 'Family records' and you add a file called 'Family Tree.doc'. If you took the default option for the location of your Topicscape data during installation, Topicscape will place the file here:  
..\My Documents\My Topicscapes\Family records\Family Tree.doc  
Where the My Documents folder is will depend on your operating system and installation. If you installed Topicscape with the option that all users can see your data, the location will be ..\Shared Documents\My Topicscapes\Family records\Family Tree.doc
- You can move a Topicscape's folder to, for example, your notebook computer, and none of the links to files in that folder will be broken. However, 'point to' links will be broken unless you have the same file in the same place in your notebook computer.

### 18 Others – see 'Help'

- The Toolbar has 'hover' hints to tell you what the buttons do.
- The Pending Tray allows you to park topics and occurrences while you find somewhere else that you may want to associate them with.
- The History list to the right of the search results ('Hit list') show which topics and occurrences you've touched recently. This stores up to 35 entries from run to run.
- There's a data repair wizard (Tools menu) which not only repairs errors but also does database housekeeping.
- Structured text files can be imported to build a Topicscape or part of one. This allows Mind Manager mind map files to be transferred to Topicscapes. It also allows a well-structured Word file (Headings 1 to 9, used as MS intended them to be) to be imported *after it has been turned into a txt file*.
- The Topicscape Box Lite is a separate, small application that is integrated with Topicscape, but can run independently. It has many of Topicscape's own drag-and-drop special functions and allows you to make notes about files or web pages as you save them for later inclusion in a Topicscape.

### 19 Topicscape Pro compared with Topicscape Lite

Topicscape Pro has many capabilities beyond Topicscape Lite's. You can find a full and up to date list of the differences at <http://www.topicscape.com/Pro-features.php>

These include:

- live links (internal URIs) to Outlook items & other supporting software packages
- greatly extended import and export functionality
- more advanced capability to capture web pages locally as they appear on line
- preview files in the Topic Center
- Loose Associations between topics
- user definable association types (like concept maps)
- inter-Topicscape links to a specific topic
- many skins and the ability to customize Topicscape's appearance
- color schemes to indicate structure or link topics to the user's choice of colors
- flagged topics
- favorites menu for topics and occurrences
- extended history, searching and sorting
- toolbar Out Tray for quick access to Topicscape Box and export / deletion
- quickly fly on autopilot from a search result topic to its position in the 'Scape