



Sticky Brainstorming

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Introduction

Brainstorming is a method for generating a large number of ideas in a group. Sticky Brainstorming is based on brainstorming using sticky notes, where the participants write ideas on sticky notes during a quiet session and the group later categorizes and discuss the ideas together.

The traditional method is popular but has a few flaws:

- Post-It-notes (or other sticky notes) can only be read from up close. It is difficult to get an overview of all the notes, and results in decreased involvement for participants who are not physically involved in moving the notes around.
- After the meeting someone need to stay and document the notes and their position. This can be tedious work and delays the feedback to the participants.
- Some participants can have illegible handwriting.

Sticky Brainstorming addresses these flaws by:

- Having the sticky notes and category titles on the computer where they can be shown using a projector for all participants to see.
- Storing the results electronically, from where they can be reopened in their original form, exported as PDF or as text.
- Providing client software (for Mac and iPhone) for participants to send in virtual sticky notes without any special settings or configuration.

System requirements

Mac OS X 10.6.6 or later.

For best results we recommend using a projector with at least 1024x768 pixels.

Terminology

(skärmavbildning)

1. A **toolbar** with shortcuts for commonly used actions.
2. A **queue** for incoming notes.
3. A **workspace** where notes are placed and categorized.

Session	A meeting where brainstorming using sticky notes is used.
Note	A virtual sticky note.
Category	A group of notes with a common headline.

Usage

Time for thought

During the quiet period, when participants are expected to write down ideas on virtual or actual notes, the session host can show a question or subject on the display / projector by clicking 'Subject view' in the toolbar. After entering the phrase or question the text is shown in full-screen mode. In this mode the participants get a receipt for each virtual note sent in the form of an animation on the display.

Notes can be submitted in two ways:

- With actual Post-It or sticky notes. The session host collects the notes after the quiet period and enter them by clicking 'Add note' in the toolbar and typing in the text for each note.
- As virtual notes using the Mac or iPhone clients. The notes are sent wirelessly to the session host. The notes can be sent when the host is in subject mode or in normal mode (but not when in text mode). For more information on the clients, please see the section 'Connecting clients'.

When there are too many notes in the queue for them all to be visible a small indicator at the bottom of the queue shows the number of incoming notes that aren't visible.

If you want to parallelize the task of entering paper notes and the subsequent work of categorizing them, someone using one of the clients can enter ideas from paper notes even after the categorization work has begun.

Categorizing and prioritizing

In the next phase the session host takes each note out from the queue and drags it out onto the workspace. The notes can be categorized by position on the workspace and by their color. Furthermore, notes can be grouped into categories which are given a common title or headline. Notes are moved by dragging-and-dropping them in the desired location.

You can select multiple notes by pressing shift (⇧) as you click on them. Alternatively you can select all notes and categories within a single area by dragging (with the mouse button pressed) over a region of the workspace.

Notes can be deleted by selecting them and pressing Backspace(←), alternatively using the menu item Edit→Delete.

Zoom

When the number of notes grow you may need to zoom out to see all of them. Use View→Zoom out. You can also use View→Zoom in to zoom in.

Categories

With one or more notes selected (where at least one of the notes not already part of a category), click 'New category' in the toolbar. This will create a category and allow you to edit its title. Notes within a category are automatically arranged within the category.

You can remove a category by removing all text in its title.

Axes

You can create axes to add additional meaning to the position of notes and categories, for example ordering them according to priority. Use the button 'Axes' in the toolbar to open a panel where you can choose settings for the horizontal and vertical axes.

If you wish to do a SWOT analysis you can forego the normal axes settings and instead select the SWOT mode checkbox. The axes will be shown without labels, but the four quadrants will have the labels Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats.

Colors

The color panel is opened using the 'Colors' toolbar button, or with the keyboard shortcut ⇧⌘C. The chosen color affects the background color of all selected notes. By choosing a color while editing text (either a note or a category heading) you can affect the text color. You cannot assign different colors to different parts of the text; all text in a note or a category title will be given the same color as the first letter of the text when text editing ends.

Fonts

Using the 'Fonts' button in the toolbar, alternatively with the keyboard shortcut ⌘T, you activate the font panel. This panel lets you select the font used in the application. The same font will apply to all notes; category titles will appear in the same font but with twice the font size.

Showing or hiding the queue

By selecting View→Hide queue you can hide the queue to provide more screen real-estate to the workspace. When the queue is hidden you can select View→Show queue to show it again.

If the queue contains more items than what you see, you can scroll up and down using a mouse wheel or trackpad while keeping the mouse cursor in the queue. Double-clicking the cork background of the queue will return the queue to the top.

Afterwards

Printing

Choose File→Print... to print the workspace with notes, category titles and axes. You can affect the page size, paper orientation etc. using File→Page setup...

PDF export

To export the workspace to PDF format you first initiate printing (see above) and then use the 'PDF' button in the printing panel.

Text mode

The content of the workspace can also be shown in text form, using the button 'Text mode' in the toolbar. This text can be printed, copied and pasted into other applications, but also modified. The modifications made in text mode will be reflected in the workspace, with a few conditions:

- Each row starting with '- ' (a dash followed by a space) is interpreted as a note. Notes not previously on the workspace end up on the queue.
- Each row starting with a tab and then a '- ' is interpreted as a note part of the previous section.
- Blank rows are ignored.
- Rows not meeting any of the above conditions are interpreted as the title for a category.

The text representation of the workspace that is initially presented is on the above form. If you use the same form when adding new content things will work as expected.

The text is sorted alphabetically (according to category title) or according to one of the axes labels if any are defined. You can choose the sorting mode using the popup button at the bottom.

Connecting clients

Participants with an iPhone or a Mac laptop have the opportunity to send virtual notes wirelessly to the session host. The iPhone client is available on the iOS App Store (as a free download) through [this link](#), and the Mac client is available on the Mac App Store [here](#).

In order for clients to be able to connect to the server without any configuration they need to be connected to the same WiFi network as the session host (or in a similar local area network configuration). The clients locate the host using Bonjour.