

How to ORGANIZE Your CREATIVITY?

Only one possible way to do so — look what suits you and what you want to adopt ...

CREATIVITY

One definition

Cre|a|tiv|ity here: the deliberate creation of something new and useful

Open for randomness but planned

must know what is already available and move past that

no insanity, must be „comprehended“, connect to the existing

must be implemented!

Goal: have good ideas and realize them

ORGANIZATION

Creativity is more than just **one** idea. An idea for a book (Idea for a book) consists for example of diverse ideas for plot, characters, settings, quotations, objects, etc. pp. While it is possible to remember one single idea, the usage of many ideas for a creative project requires organization.

Idea for a book

OCCUPATION WITH THE TOPIC

esp. acquire Knowledge and Skills

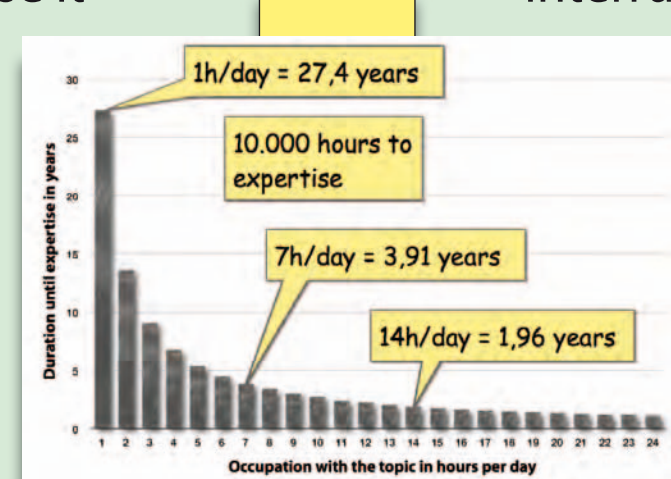
Even if the creative solution looks simple afterwards, the creative work requires an extensive occupation with the topic — knowledge must be acquired and skills must be trained. This may sound trivial, but many „creatives“ do not give this step the attention it deserves. Einstein once said that imagination is more important than knowledge — if you have the knowledge of an Einstein you may allow yourself this remark. Michelangelo probably said the more relevant thing: „If people only knew how hard I work to gain my mastery, it wouldn't seem so wonderful at all.“ Real creative work requires extensive self-directed learning and a disciplined training of the necessary skills. The time and the hard work are the price to pay for the recognition of creative work.

Persistence is more important than intelligence here!

Ideas are usually occur automatically when you occupy yourself with the topic.

How long does it take until you acquire expertise in a topic? According to Simon and Chase it takes about 10.000 hours to acquire expertise in an area. The diagram on the right shows what this means in hours per day. You need to have this time available. You will never „accidentally“ have the time you need — you need to create and defend your time.

The example comes from expertise in chess but it is useful anyway.



Possibilities to create time

- avoid internal & external interruptions place without Internet access
- ditch the competition
- define criteria of success and use them to evaluate your success
- say „No“ and establish limits
- break down task in easy-to-do subtasks
- create a learning-list with topics
- start with a simply project
- choose teachers and settings consciously

I remembered a time when my grandmother had asked me to explain television to her — the guts, not the funny pictures. There are things which cannot be taught in ten easy lessons, nor popularized for the masses; they take years of skull sweat. This be treason in an age when ignorance has come into its own and one man's opinion is as good as another's. But there it is. As Star says, the world is what it is — and doesn't forgive ignorance. „Glory Road“ by Robert A. Heinlein

No empirical evidence but some nice quotes as memory aid.

„I have to do x, y, and z. Which of these shall I cancel if I also do k?“

„He who has imagination without learning has wings but no feet.“ Unknown

When people say to me: „How do you do so many things?“ I often answer them, without meaning to be cruel: „How do you do so little?“ It seems to me that people have vast potential. Most people can do extraordinary things if they have the confidence or take the risks. Yet most people don't. They sit in front of the telly and treat life as if it goes on forever. Philip Adams

GENERATING

esp. having time for ideas

There are a lot of creativity techniques — but no silver bullets which you can apply everywhere and anytime. And even the best creativity technique is useless if you do not have the necessary knowledge. In many cases occupying yourself with the topic intensively and having the time to think about the experiences will already generate ideas.

Examples for Creativity „Techniques“

- **Structure:** Change the way you work, e.g., keep your independence, have time for ideas, ignore authority and traditions, ...
- **Perspective:** Question assumptions (even those you like), keep the goals but change the methods, question the methods, look at the data, ...
- **Inspiration:** Analogies, use the idea collection, travel, ...

- **Help:** work with smart people, ask experts for the relevant area, ...
- **Distance:** take a break, take a step back, ...
- **Options:** Limit work and activities, set new goals, change the methods, ...
- **Changing yourself:** use your mood, dream, ...
- **„just do it“:** produce a lot, experiment, ...

Idea

Time for Incubation/Ideas

- walk
- bath/shower
- listen to your thoughts when lying in bed
- Meditation/Yoga
- mid-day sleep
- follow daydreams
- „use“ presentations and meetings
- classical concerts
- travel alone
- solo endurance sport

When inspiration does not come, I go for a walk, go to the movie, talk to a friend, let go... The muse is bound to return again, especially if I turn my back! Judy Collins

„I thought about it all the time.“ Sir Isaac Newton, on how he discovered the law of gravity

Impara l'arte, e mettila da parte. [Learn art to forget about it.] Unknown

Chance favors the prepared mind. Louis Pasteur

Under normal conditions the research scientist is not an innovator but a solver of puzzles, and the puzzles upon which he concentrates are just those which he believes can be both stated and solved within the existing scientific tradition. Thomas Kuhn

„I don't care about what something was designed to do, I care about what it can do.“ Gene Kranz in „Apollo 13“

CAPTURING

Immediately!

If you first have to think about where you put it or have to search for pen and paper, you either lose the idea or the motivation to write it down.

Ideas are fleeting and often they do not return. Thus, ideas should be captured always, immediately, fast, and without effort. The focus is on capturing, sorting comes later. This requires simple and flexible methods. The quality should be „sufficient“ — the notes do not have a value on its own but you have to be able to understand the idea later. Capturing ideas has nothing to do with having a bad memory — you just have too many ideas to remember all of them and it would be a shame to lose them. It is also not unprofessional — even professionals like Helmut Newton or Robert A. Heinlein have written down their ideas to have them available later.

Advantages of Capturing

- no idea is lost
- frees mental resources
- can stimulate further ideas
- conscious quality control
- makes flow of thought visible
- enables larger projects
- calming feeling

Missed Ideas

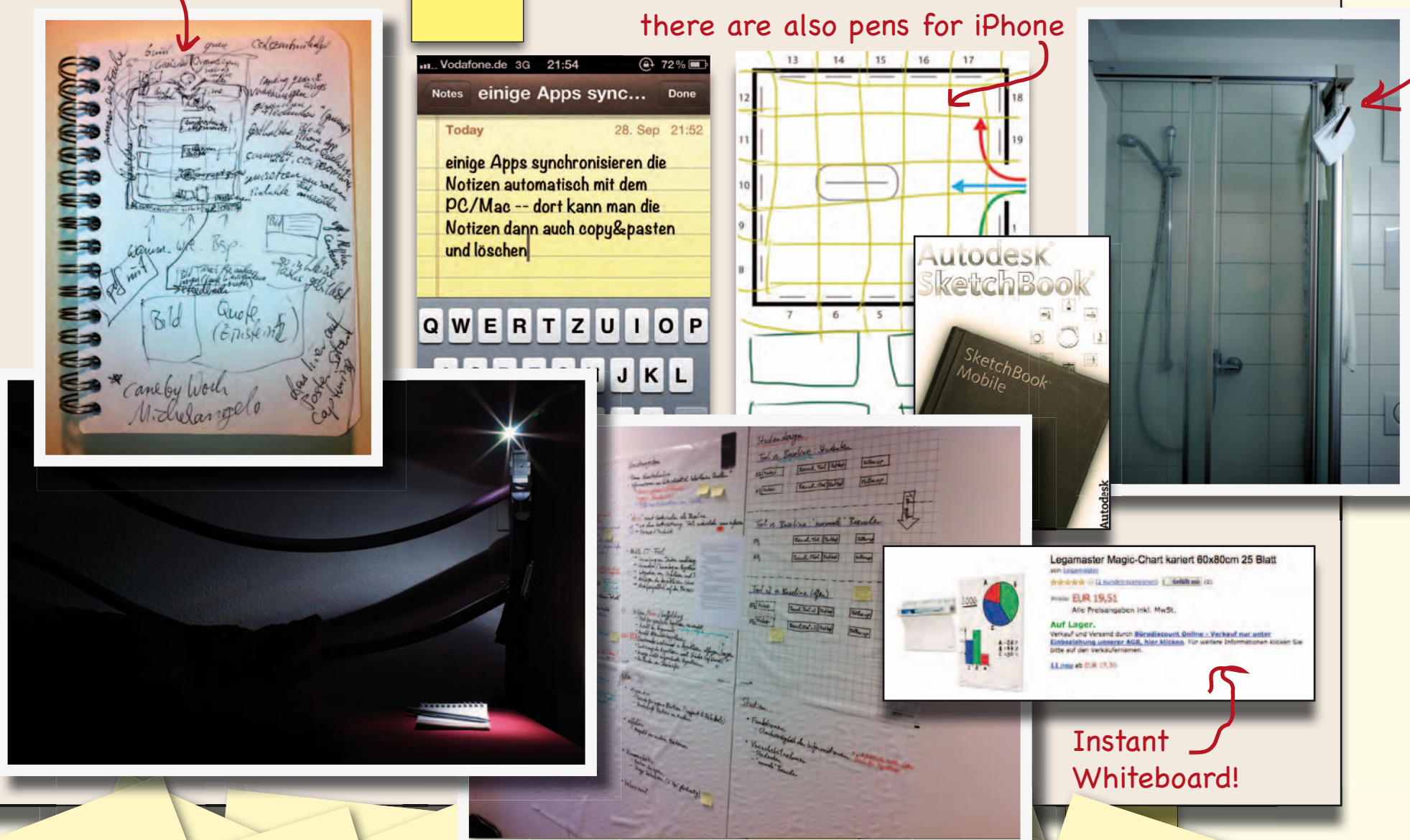
- retrace the steps to the idea
- reduce arousal
- try it again later

Idea

Ways to Capture Ideas

- Pen and Paper
- Cellphone (SMS, Voice recorder, call your own mailbox, Note-taking-App, ...)
- Stationary Methods (e.g. blackboard, whiteboard, MagicCharts, pinboard, ...)
- PC (put textfile on taskbar/dock, open with Spotlight/Quicksilver)

quickly available



Just down ideas without interrupting the shower

COLLECTING

Letting ideas grow for projects.

The structured collection makes the difference to an insane with a drawer

The aim of an idea collection is to let creative projects grow over time. An idea collection requires work and needs to be „trimmed“ regularly. But due to its structure it allows you to integrate ideas, thus making larger projects possible. You can work with your ideas and have them available whenever you need them. A good collection allows you to easily remember ideas (you stumble upon them while using the collection), stimulates the generation of new ideas, allows the quick finding of specific ideas, and the enlargement and restructuring of ideas. The collections grows over time — if a project is ready you can implement it, while the other projects do not get lost but continue to grow.

Criteria for the Collection

- speed
- easy backups
- comfortable „look & feel“
- flexibility
- supported media formats
- availability
- security

Recommended: Collection Inbox

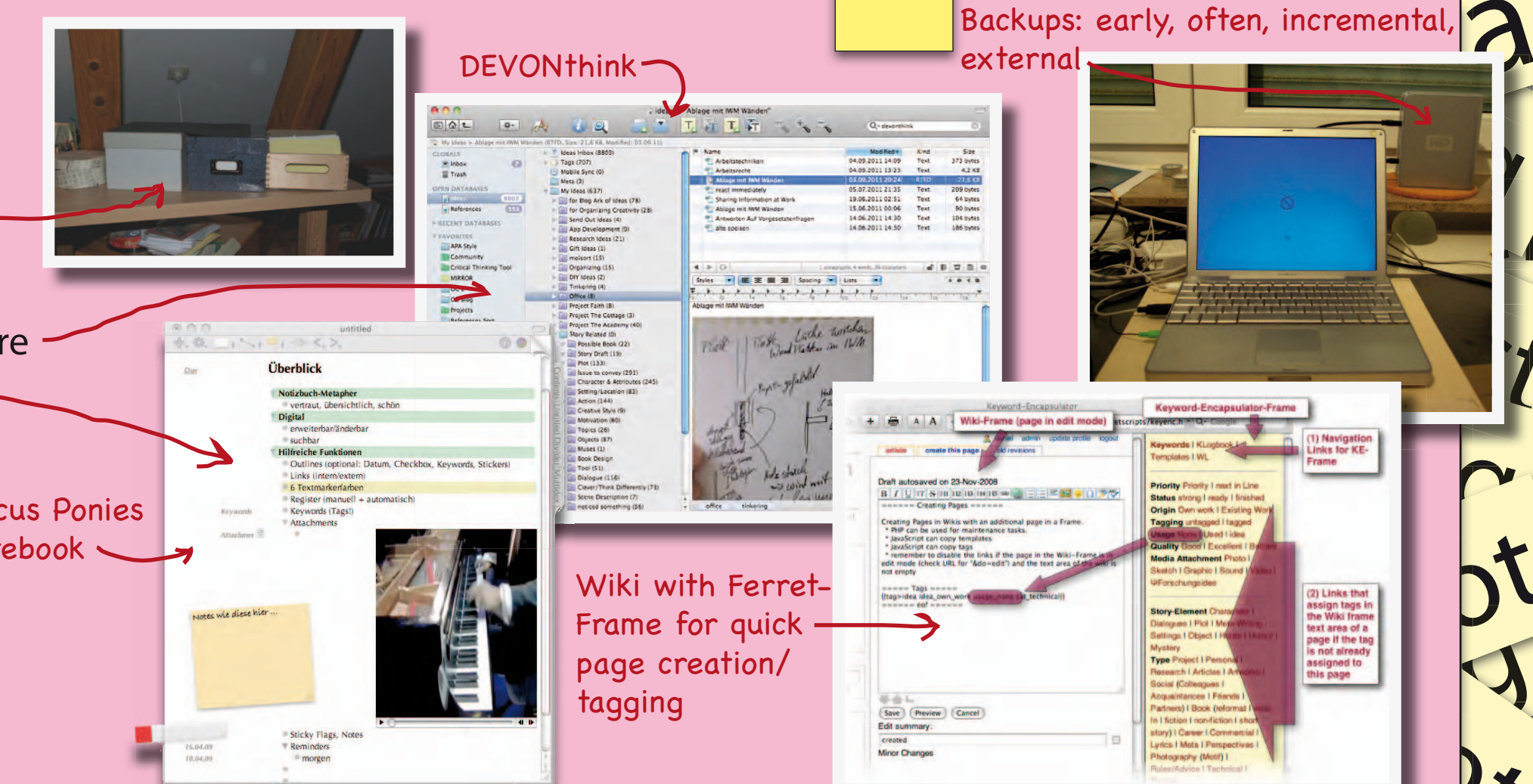
One file/folder where you put new ideas first — sorting takes time and this way it is backed up like the collection.

Idea

Ways to Collect Ideas

→ „Ways to Capture Ideas“

- Index Cards
- Mind-Maps/Concept Maps
- Outliners
- Note-Management Software
- Digital Notebooks
- Wikis
- Databases
- and much more



Backups: early, often, incremental, external

REALIZATION

Creativity must be realized.

Having an idea is easy, but only when the idea is realized it shows whether it was a creative work. Only while realizing you see without a doubt whether the idea works, whether it is new and useful, whether the knowledge and the skills were sufficient and whether you have enriched the domain with a new creative work. Again this takes a lot of time and hard work. A common problem is having too many ideas, which a person wants to implement all (and at best, at the same time). Often people change the project if problems occur and in the end they realize none. The idea collection helps to concentrate on one core project, while the other (not currently implemented) projects

do not get lost but get enriched with further ideas over time. They are neither inactive, nor do they consume a lot of resources. They grow and will be readily available once the core project is finished.

Aim achieved! :D

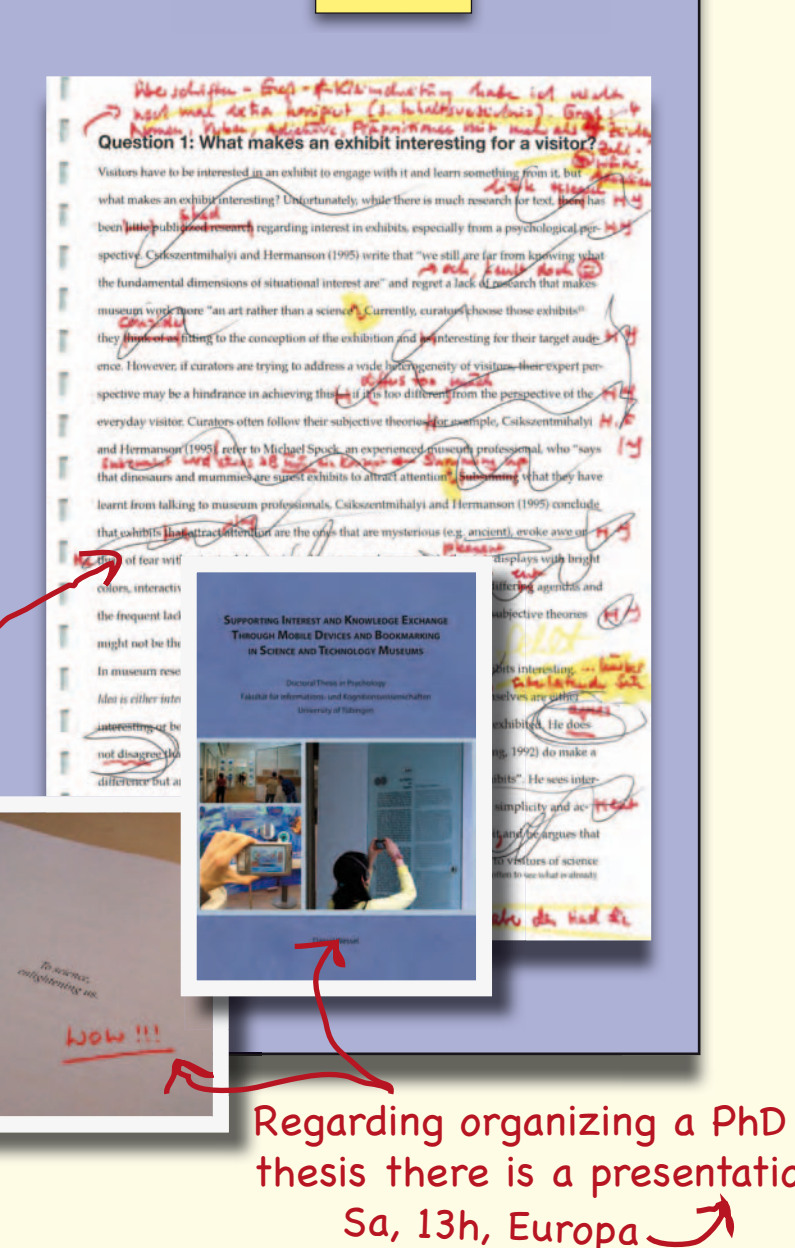
Choosing a project

Check with the collection: Do you have all ideas (sort them/outliner)? Can you realize the project? Do you have the necessary knowledge and skills? Do you have the necessary time?

Feedback

Good feedback aims at improving the quality of the current and future work. A good critic takes time, tries to understand the work, wants the creative to be successful, understands the creative, the domain and the target audience. Even if feedback sometimes appears to be harsh, it is not an attack on the person but aims to improve the work.

It is very satisfying to cross out the things you have corrected.



Regarding organizing a PhD thesis there is a presentation. Sa, 13h, Europa

Yup, the poster is a little bit complex. I did not have the time for a less complex one.

some examples, mostly just-for-fun