

## Strategies, Tools and Resources for Productivity

Presentation available: [http://tiny.cc/FallPPF\\_2014](http://tiny.cc/FallPPF_2014)

### Goal Setting & Organizing

David Allen's "Getting Things Done": <http://goo.gl/22D41>

David Allen discovered the "Getting Things Done" system of organizing your projects, tasks and life through trial-and-error, but cognitive psychology has since caught up and demonstrated that there is strong science behind the system.

Merlin Mann's "43 Folders" System: <http://www.43folders.com/>

Merlin Mann has developed a system for handling all of your to-dos that has gained popularity amongst many people. It is built off of the tickler-file system recommended by David Allen.

### Monitoring Progress

RescueTime: [www.rescuetime.com](http://www.rescuetime.com)

RescueTime is a program (both free and subscription-based service available) that tracks what you do on your computer in order for you to get some clear data on how you are spending your time. Klok ([www.getklok.com](http://www.getklok.com)) is another time tracking website/app.

Google Forms (an example can be seen at <http://goo.gl/BpYq1>)

All U-M students, faculty, and staff have access to Google Docs. Using the "Forms" function, you can easily create a personalized daily tracker of progress toward meeting your goals.

"Don't Break the Chain"

Made famous by Jerry Seinfeld, this method of tracking your progress provides a distinctive visual cue as to how well you are doing at establishing a new habit. You simply take a calendar and put an X over every day in which you accomplish the pre-determined task. Once you've done what you've set out to do for a few days, a chain forms, and your goal is to avoid breaking the chain. One website and app designed to serve the same purpose is <http://chains.cc>

750 Words: [750words.com](http://750words.com) and Written? Kitten!: [Writtenkitten.net](http://Writtenkitten.net)

These website provides a (relatively) distraction-free environment (a blank white browser window) in which you can write daily. They track your word count and provide incentives to keep writing.

## Managing Distractions & Maximizing Willpower

Freedom: [www.macfreedom.com](http://www.macfreedom.com)

Freedom is a program (for both Mac and PCs) that allows you to switch off Internet access on your computer for a user-specified amount of time. StayFocused is a web browser extension that will limit your time on websites (specified by you). For many tools like these, to get Internet access re-enabled, you have to reboot your computer; for some, you just have to wait out the time limit you set. The company that produces Freedom also produces a less dramatic tool called Anti-Social, which just blocks you from social media sites and any additional user-specified websites.

Pomodoro Technique: <http://www.pomodorotechnique.com/>

The Pomodoro Technique is a mechanism to build your attention span and willpower. The name is based on the timer used to cook Pomodoro tomatoes.

Vitamin-R: <http://www.publicspace.net/Vitamin-R/>

Vitamin-R is an application that can be used to implement the Pomodoro technique and has other useful goal-setting and idea capturing features.