

Strategies, Tools and Resources for Productivity

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Presentation available: http://tiny.cc/CRLTpff_quickstart

1. What behaviors and mindsets do you think are the keys to being successful as a faculty member?
2. What are the challenges you face, as a graduate student or post-doc, which prevent you from being productive?

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

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) 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 is <http://chains.cc>

750 Words: 750words.com and Written? Kitten!: 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

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. To get Internet access re-enabled, you have to reboot your computer. The same company 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.