

# Mentoring the Writing Process through Technology: A Critical Review of Organizational and Productivity Apps

Rebecca Long  
[rebeccajalong@gmail.com](mailto:rebeccajalong@gmail.com)  
 Kristen Wallentinsen  
[Kristen.Wallentinsen@gmail.com](mailto:Kristen.Wallentinsen@gmail.com)

## Organizational and Productivity Apps can help facilitate good writing habits

- Successful research requires the ability to manage time, manage tasks, organize resources and ideas, and write.
- Students don't necessarily come to college or graduate school with these skills
- Mentors often teach only their own personal research habits (which may be outdated)
- Studies (Stevenson et. al. 2015, Ewoldt 2017, Reiterer et. al. 2012) have shown that apps can facilitate many of these lower-order research tasks, freeing up mental space for higher-order writing processes.

## Productivity Strategies that are facilitated by mobile and desktop apps

- Time tracking • Pomodoro Technique® • Mind Mapping • Kanban Board (notecard style visualization) • Eisenhower Priority Matrix • Storyboarding • Distraction Free Writing (Hemingway Mode)


### Methodology

- Five Categories of Apps:**  
 Time Management • Task Management • Resource Management • Project Visualization/Management • Writing
- Five popular apps were chosen from each category
  - Testing occurred across five weeks, during which we evaluated the primary and secondary features of each app
  - Apps were assessed based on **variety of features, intuitiveness of use, facility for collaboration, accuracy, platform availability, and price** according to rubrics created for the purpose.


## RECOMMENDATIONS

*We like...*                      *We also recommend...*


Time Management:



**Forest**




**ATracker**




**Brain Focus**

Task Management:




**Wunderlist**

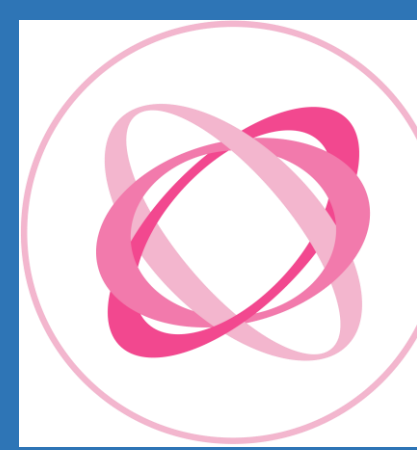


**Habitica**

Project Management:




**Trello**




**MindMeister**

Resource Management:

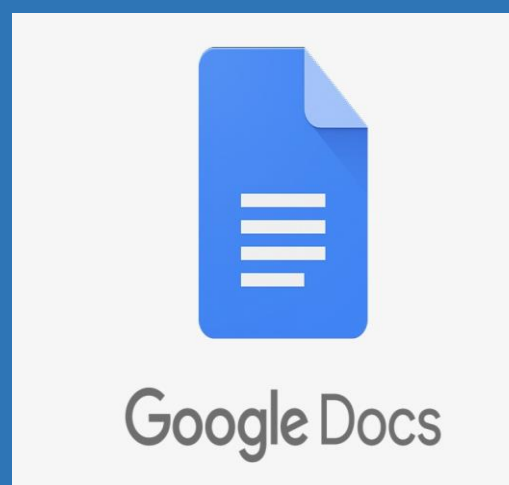


**Zotero**


Writing:




For formatting and citation



For collaboration

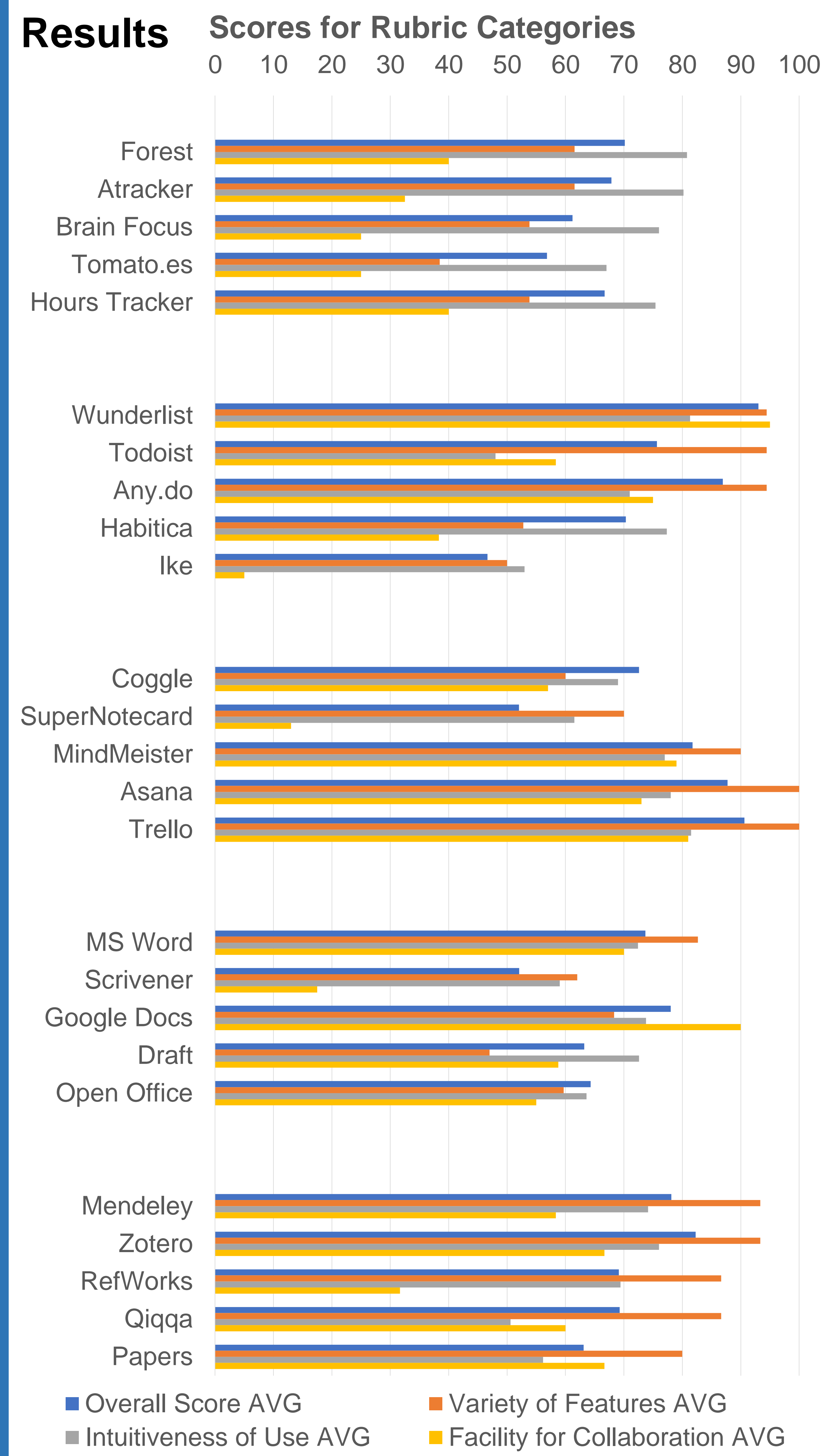


For storyboarding and drafting



For distraction free drafting and editing

**Apps to Avoid:**  
 Todoist • Ike • SuperNoteCard • RefWorks • Papers • Open Office



### Discussion

Quantitative results agreed with our qualitative assessments regarding the best apps, but there were significant differences in styles of apps. Therefore, we recommend a few different apps for each category, representing useful productivity strategies for different working styles.

