

# Inspiration: Organising your ideas

Student Guide

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# Inspiration: Organising your ideas

2010-2011



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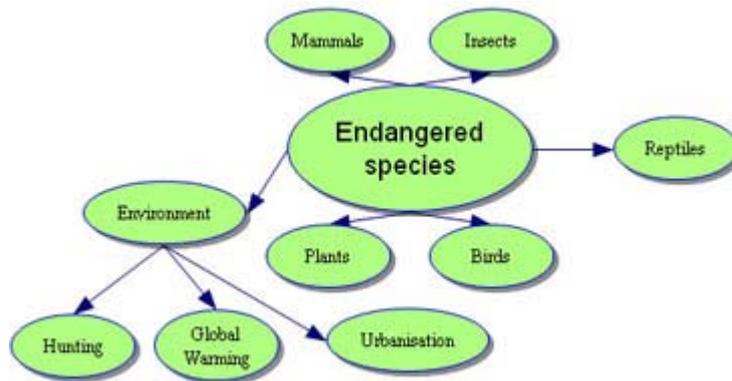
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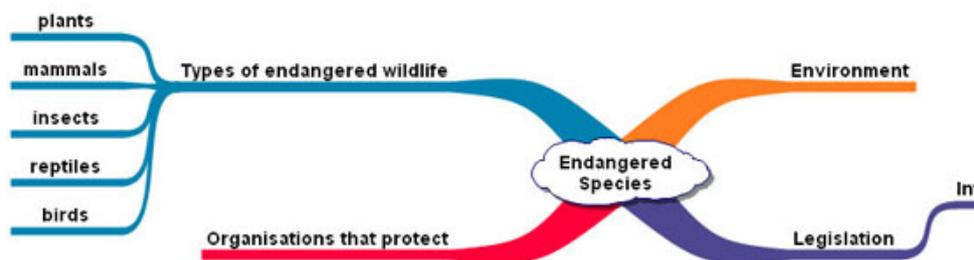
# Introduction to Inspiration

Inspiration allows you to create a visual representation of your ideas and concepts. This can be used to visualise the relationships between concepts, to organize and structure your thoughts, or to create the outline of a document such as an essay.

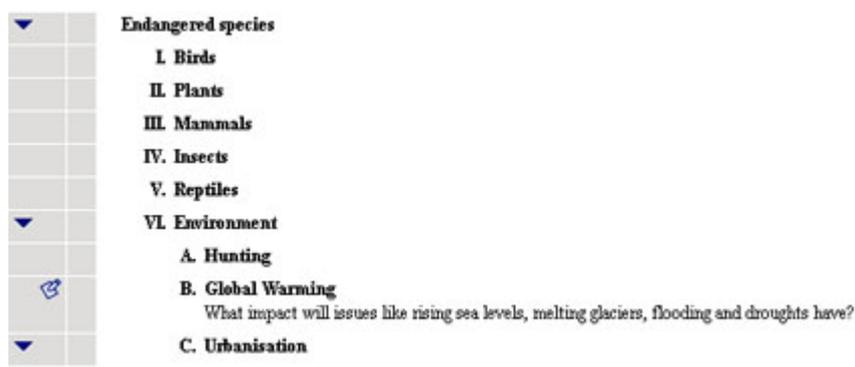
There are three types of Inspiration document you can create. A diagram consists of a number of ideas, connections, and notes:



A mind map is similar to a diagram, though with a different appearance. It is also simpler and more structured, though somewhat less flexible:



An outline has a hierarchical structure like that of a diagram or map, but the ideas are displayed as a list. You can change between diagram or mind map view and outline view:



An **idea** in a diagram is equivalent to a **branch** in a mind map, or a **topic** in an outline.

## Diagram view

### *Creating a new diagram*

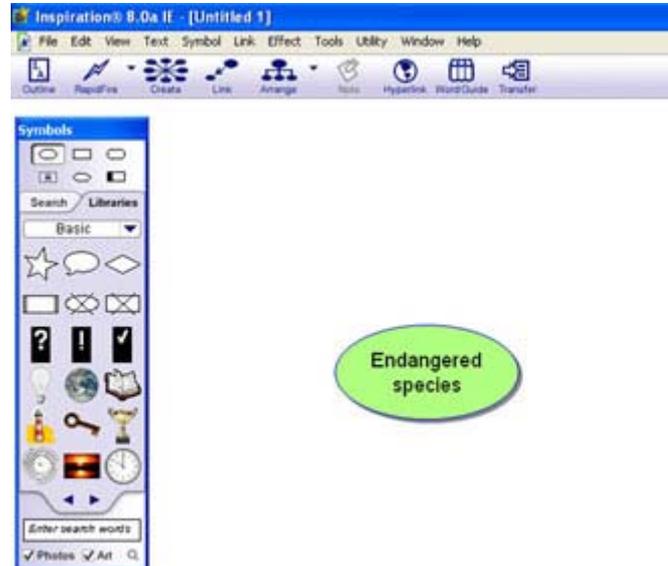
When you open Inspiration, the dialogue box shown below will be displayed.

- Click on **Create a diagram**.



A new diagram will be created, with one circle representing your **main idea**. Every diagram must have a main idea. This is usually the title or theme you are exploring, or the title of your essay or assignment. The main idea serves as the starting point of your diagram.

- If the text of the main idea is not selected, double-click on it.
- Replace the text with your title.



Now you can add more ideas and information to develop and clarify your main idea.

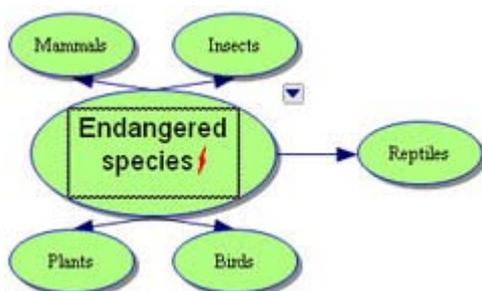
New ideas can be added quickly using the RapidFire tool. This tool enables you to add a series of ideas that are connected to an existing idea or add a series of unconnected ideas. By using the RapidFire tool, you are able to concentrate on getting your thinking displayed in a visual format. Later in the document you can learn more about organising and rearranging the information.

## Adding connected ideas with RapidFire

- Click on the idea you want your new ideas to connect to, to select it - in this case, the main idea.
- Click the **RapidFire** button in the toolbar. A red lightning bolt will appear after the title of your main idea.



- Type the name of a new idea and press **[Return]**. The new idea will be put into a new symbol and connected to your main idea.
- Repeat this for all the new ideas you wish to add.



The red lightning sign in the main idea symbol indicates that RapidFire is still turned on. Click the RapidFire icon again to turn it off, or simply click anywhere else in the diagram.

You can double-click on the text of an idea to edit it. You can also move ideas around by clicking and dragging.

Click on your main idea. On its upper right hand side, you will find an arrow symbol. Click it to hide all the subtopics of that topic. Click it again to show them.

## Adding unconnected ideas with RapidFire

The RapidFire tool can also be used to add unconnected ideas.

- Select your main idea.
- Click on the **down arrow** next to the RapidFire icon to open a drop-down menu. Select **Without Links**.



- Type in your ideas, pressing **[Return]** after each one.

This works exactly the same as RapidFire for connected ideas, except that the new ideas are not connected to any of the existing ones.



### *Adding ideas without RapidFire*

To add an unlinked idea, simply click on an empty part of the page, and start typing. This will insert an unconnected idea into your diagram.

Linked ideas can be added in any direction using the **Create** button in the toolbar.



- Select the idea to which you want to add a new subtopic.
- Move the mouse pointer over the Create icon (but don't click it yet). The different branches on the icon change colour as the pointer passes over them. Choose the position you want your new idea to be added at, and click the appropriate branch on the icon. Then type in the name as usual.

### *Adding or changing connections between ideas*

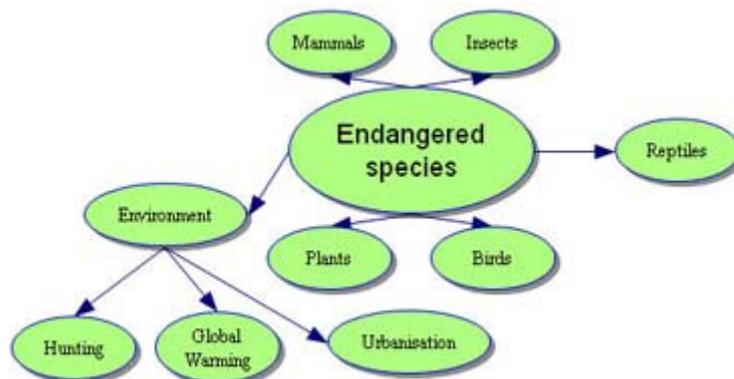
Links are automatically created when you use the RapidFire (with link) tool or the Create tool, but you can also add links manually.

- Select the first symbol, then click the **Link** icon in the main toolbar.



- Click on the second symbol.

An arrow appears, symbolising a link between the two ideas.

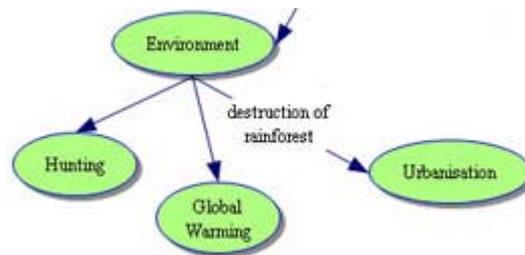


You can also move existing links.

- Click on the link you want to move. Two white boxes will appear, one at either end of the link.
- Click and drag one of the boxes, either to a new idea, or to a different position on its current idea symbol.

Links can also be labelled.

- Click on the link you wish to label. A text field will appear in the middle of the link.
- Click in the text field and type in the label.



## Adding notes

Adding notes is a way of attaching text to an idea. Notes are useful for holding large amounts of text or information you don't want to be part of the document structure. To add a note:

- Click on the idea to select it.
- Click on the **Note** button in the main toolbar.



- Type in your text.

Once a Note has been created, it can be hidden and opened again at any time for reading or editing. If a symbol has a note attached it will have an icon in the top right hand corner. To open or close a note, click on the icon.



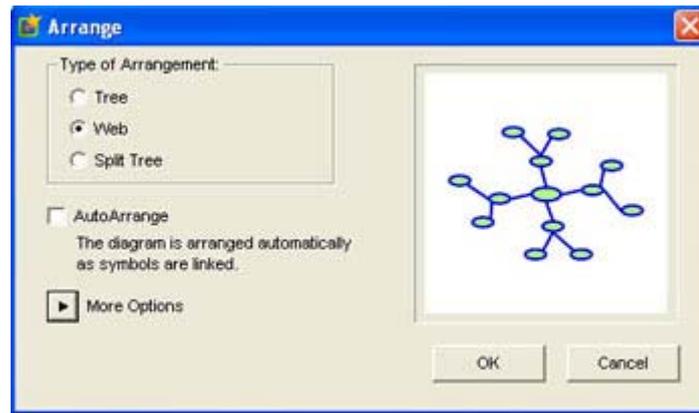
## Arranging the diagram

You can manually arrange your diagram by clicking and dragging the ideas, but there are also three layouts that you can apply to your diagram to make it easier to read. To arrange your diagram in Tree, Web, or Split Tree format:

- Click on the **Arrange** icon in the toolbar.

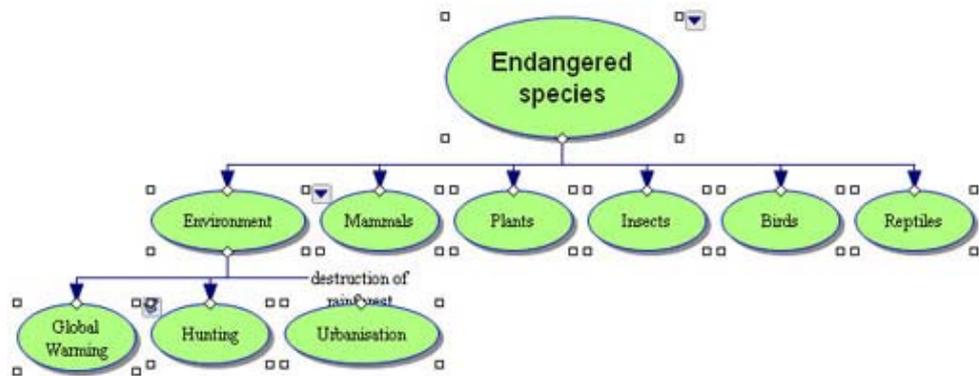


This will open a dialogue box.



- Select one of the options - **Tree**, **Web**, or **Split Tree**. (You may wish to experiment to decide which layout is most suitable for your diagram.)
- If you want your diagram to keep its automatic layout, even when you drag ideas around or add new ones, tick the **AutoArrange** box.
- Click on the **More Options** button if you wish to customise the automatic layout.
- Click **OK**.

This diagram is in Tree layout:



### *Formatting text*

You can change the format of the text in ideas and notes using the formatting toolbar at the **bottom** of the window.



## Map view

### *Creating a new mind map*

- Click on the **File** menu and select **New** (if the Inspiration Starter box is not already displayed).
- Click on Create a mind map.

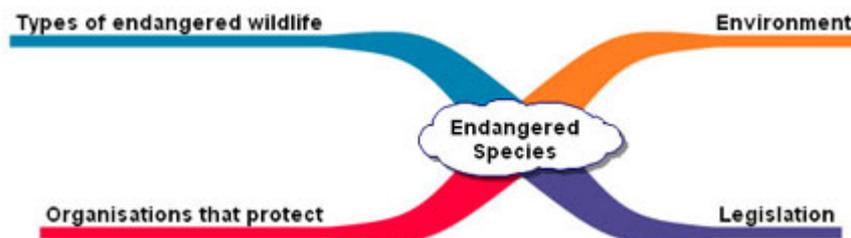
A mind map must have a single, constant **central idea**. This is usually the title or theme you are exploring. The central idea then has a number of branches and sub-branches connected to it.



- Click on the **central idea** symbol (if not already highlighted).
- Type in your title.

To add a title to a branch:

- Click on the branch, and type in the title.



Inspiration will put your title on a single line. If you want a line break, press **[Return]** between words.

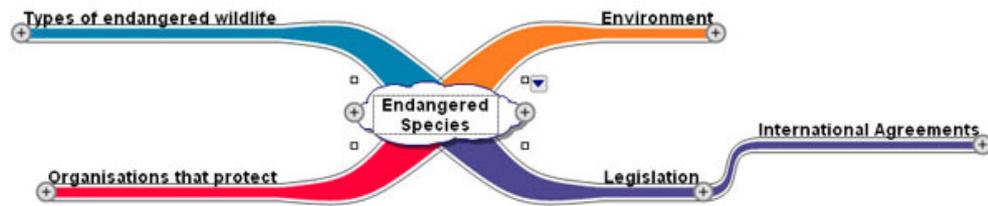
### *Adding subtopics*

- Click on a branch to select it.



- Click the **plus sign button** to add a subtopic to this branch.

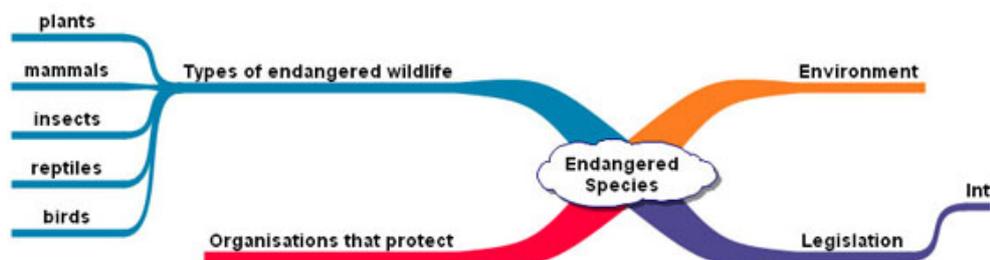
You can add extra branches to the central idea in the same way. You can use the triangle button to hide and show each branch's subtopics, as in Diagram View.



## Adding ideas with RapidFire

You can use the RapidFire tool to add connected or unconnected ideas to your mind map quickly, in the same way as in Diagram View.

- Click on the branch you want to add sub-branches to.
- Click the **RapidFire** icon in the main toolbar. A red lightning bolt will appear after the branch label.
- Type the name of a new idea and press **[Return]**. The new idea will be put into a new sub-branch.
- Repeat this for all the new branches you wish to add.



RapidFire can also be used to add unattached ideas:

- Click the **down arrow** next to the RapidFire icon and select **Detached** from the menu.
- Type in your ideas as before.

## Adding individual unattached ideas

You can add individual unattached ideas in the same way as in Diagram view.

- Click on an empty part of the page, and start typing.

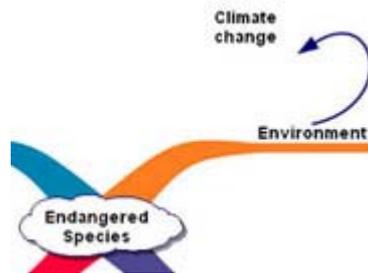
## Relationships between ideas

Inspiration enables you to add arrows to your mind map to indicate a connection or relationship between two ideas. The connected ideas can be sub-branches of the same branch, separate branches, or detached ideas.

- Select the first idea.
- Click the **Relate** icon in the toolbar.



- Click on the second idea.



You can also label relationships:

- Click on the relationship.
- Click in the text box and type your label.

### *Adding notes*

Notes can be used to attach text to ideas as in Diagram View. To add a note:

- Click on the idea to select it.
- Click on the Note icon in the toolbar.



- Type in the text.

You can hide and show the note by clicking the little note symbol next to its idea.

### *Arranging the mind map*

Unlike Diagram View, Map View does not have preset arrangements for you to select. However, if you wish to make your map easier to read you can click and drag the branches around.

You can also move an idea to a different branch.

- Click and drag the idea until the mouse pointer is over the branch you want it to connect to, and the new branch is outlined in green.
- Release the mouse button.

The idea and all its subtopics will be moved to the new location.

### *Formatting text*

You can change the format of the text in branches and notes using the formatting toolbar at the **bottom** of the window.



## *Setting and changing symbols*

As in diagram view, you can change an idea's symbol:

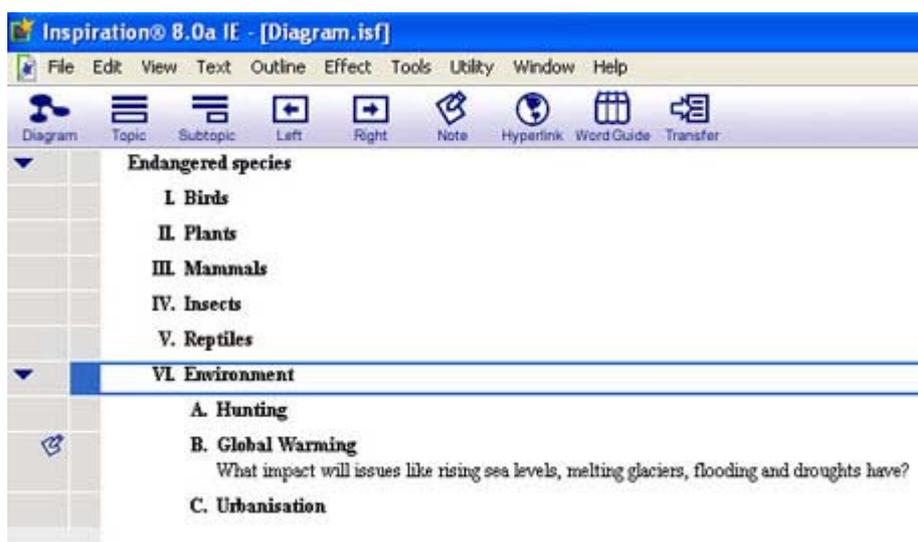
- ➔ Click on the idea to select it.
- ➔ Click on the new symbol on the Symbol Palette.
- ➔ To see a wider range of symbols, click on the drop-down menu, and select another set of symbols.

## Outline view

### *Converting to outline view*

Diagrams and mind maps can be viewed as outlines.

- Open your diagram or map.
- Select the **Outline** button in the toolbar.



If you wish to hide an idea's subtopics, you can click the little triangle symbol to the left of the topic. Click it again to show the subtopics.

### *Adding a new topic*

- Select the topic above the place you want to add the new topic, by clicking on it. A box will appear around the topic to indicate that it has been selected.
- Click on the **Topic** button in the toolbar.



- Type in the topic's name.

### *Moving a topic*

- Click on the topic and drag it up or down. A grey line indicates the potential new position.
- A red dot on the line indicates the level of the topic in its new position. If you want to change the level, move the cursor over one of the grey dots on the line.
- When the topic is in the correct position, release the mouse button.

Inspiration will automatically adjust all topics' prefixes. It will also move any subtopics the topic might have.

### *Changing the level of a topic*

The level of a topic or subtopic can be changed using the Left and Right buttons in the toolbar.

To move a subtopic up a level:

- Select the subtopic by clicking on it.
- Click the **Left** button in the toolbar.



Use the right button to move topics down a level.

### *Adding notes*

Notes can be added to topics in outline view just as they can be added to ideas in diagram or map view.

- Click on the topic to select it.
- Click on the **Note** icon in the toolbar.



- Type in the text.

A topic with a note attached will have a note symbol in the left-hand column. Clicking on that symbol will hide or show the note.

### *Formatting text*

You can change the format of the text in topics and notes using the formatting toolbar at the bottom of the screen. You can also change the default format, so that your changes will also be applied to text you add in the future. The default format can be changed for topics of a specific level, or for all text.

- In the formatting toolbar at the bottom of the screen, click on the **Topic Default** button.



The **Topic Defaults** dialogue box will be displayed:



- In the top half of the box, select which topic levels you want to format.
- In the bottom half, select the changes you want to make, and click **OK**

### *Changing the topic prefixes*

You can also change the type of numbering used for prefixes - for example, changing to numbers, letters, or Roman numerals.

- Click on the **Prefix** button in the formatting toolbar at the bottom of the screen.



- Select the new prefix style from the menu.

The change will be applied to the whole document.

### *Switching back to diagram or map view*

If your document was created as a diagram or outline, you can freely switch between Diagram and Outline view.

- Click on the **Diagram** button in the main toolbar.



If your document was created as a mind map, you can switch between Map and Outline view.

- Click on the **Map** button in the main toolbar.



Note that documents created in outline view cannot be viewed as mind maps.

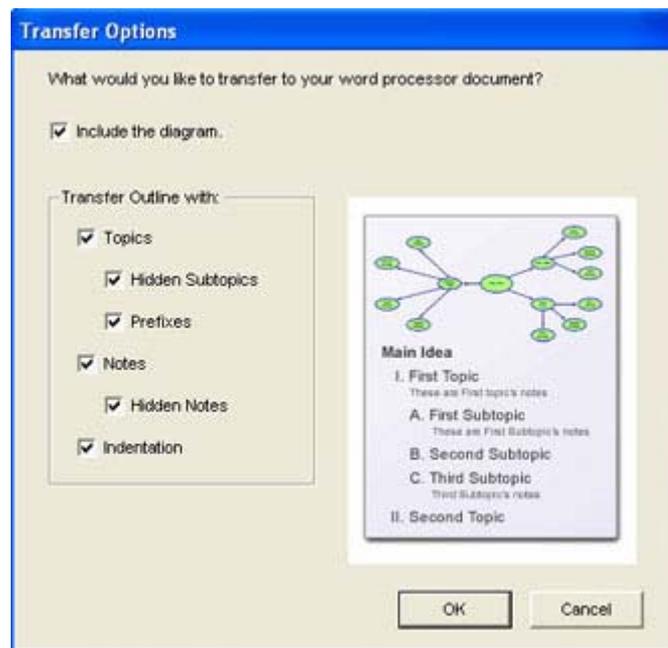
## Exporting to Word

If you want to use your outline as the basis for a large piece of writing, such as an essay, it can be easily transferred to a Microsoft Word (or Appleworks) document.

- ➔ Click on the **Transfer** button in the main toolbar.



- ➔ Select the parts of the document you wish to export. (A preview is shown on the right.)



- ➔ Click **OK**.
- ➔ Select the word processor you wish to use - Microsoft Word or Appleworks - and click **OK**.

Inspiration will automatically open the appropriate word processing software and save a new document containing the information you selected.

## More help

### *Help within Inspiration*

Like most software packages, Inspiration comes with built-in help facilities including online documentation and training videos. These can be accessed by selecting the **Learn to use** option in the **Help** menu.

### *Help from the IS Helpline*

Email: [IS.Helpline@ed.ac.uk](mailto:IS.Helpline@ed.ac.uk)

Phone: +44 (0)131 651 51 51