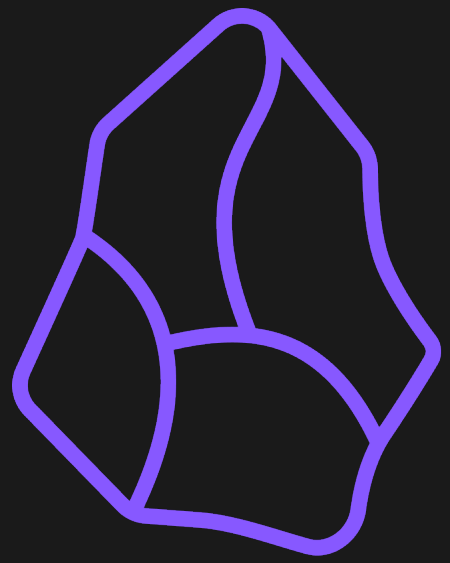
# EFFECTIVE NOTE-TAKING WITH OBSIDIAN

Selina Baldauf



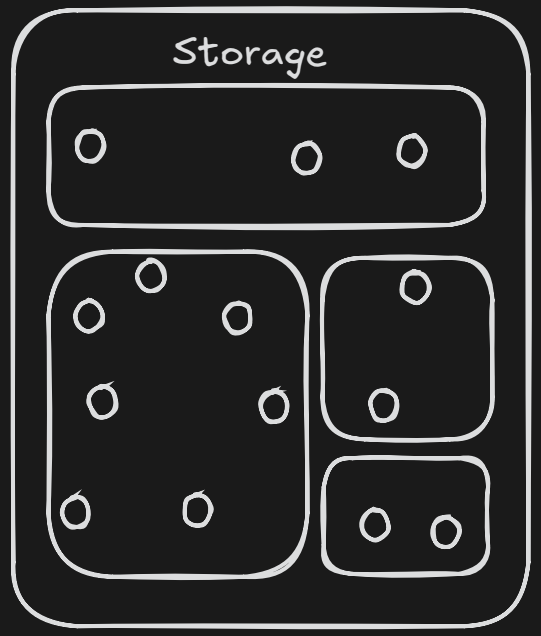
## Session 3: Knowledge management

# Knowledge notes

- Notes on
  - Ideas
  - Concepts
  - Thoughts
  - …
- We want to use them creatively
  - Write papers
  - Develop new ideas
  - Find new research topics
  - …

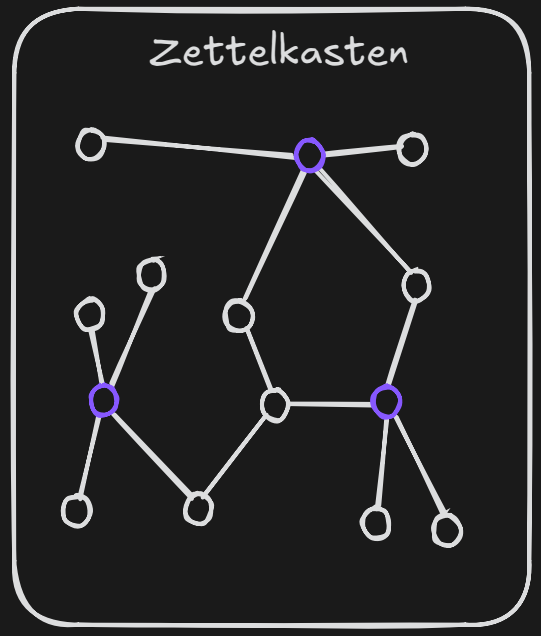
# Two ways to organize notes

These approaches are **complementary**, not alternatives!




**Predefined** structure through **categories**

Perfect for most notes




**Emergent** structure through **links**

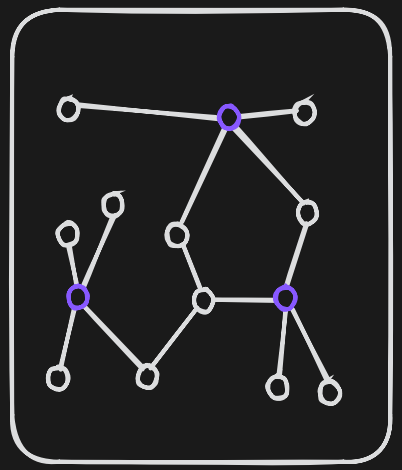
Perfect for knowledge notes

# Today

- The Zettelkasten (second brain) method to **organize knowledge** notes
- Reference notes
- Slightly more theory and demo + 1 hands-on exercise
- Demo notebook in the end

# ZETTELKASTEN

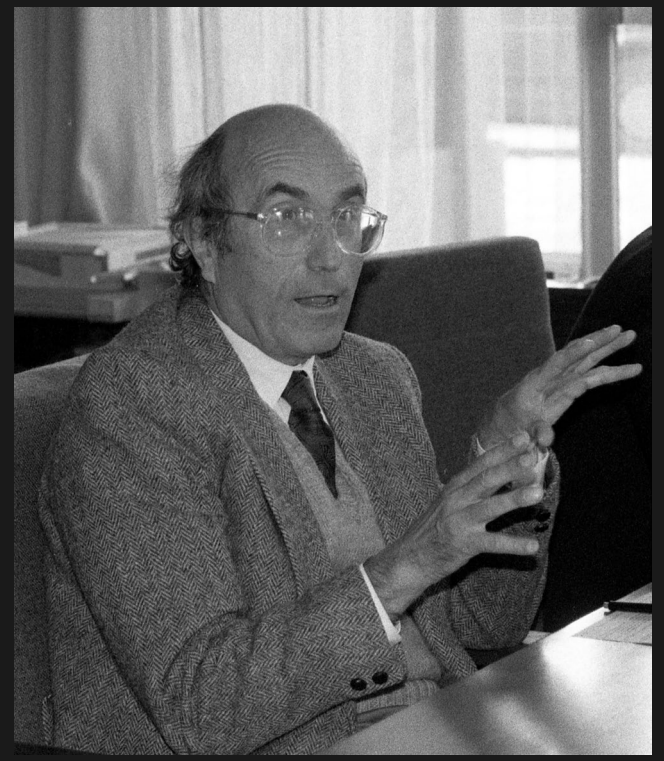
Synonyms: Slip box, second brain, digital garden



# Origin

- Long been used and developed by scientists
- German sociologist **Niklas Luhmann**
- Zettelkasten as a thinking partner and co-author

> I don’t think on my own; rather, this largely happens in the Zettelkasten.
>
> Original: „Ich denke ja nicht allein, sondern das geschieht weitgehend im Zettelkasten.“



Niklas Luhmann (1927-1998)

By Universitätsarchiv St.Gallen | HSGH 022/000941 | CC-BY-SA 4.0

# Basic idea

2 Types of notes:

📚 Reference notes

- Books, articles, other reference material

📄 Zettel notes

- Permanent knowledge notes in the Zettelkasten

# The Zettel note

- **Atomic**: one idea per note
- Write in your **own words**
- Add **reference** to original source
- **Connect** to other existing notes

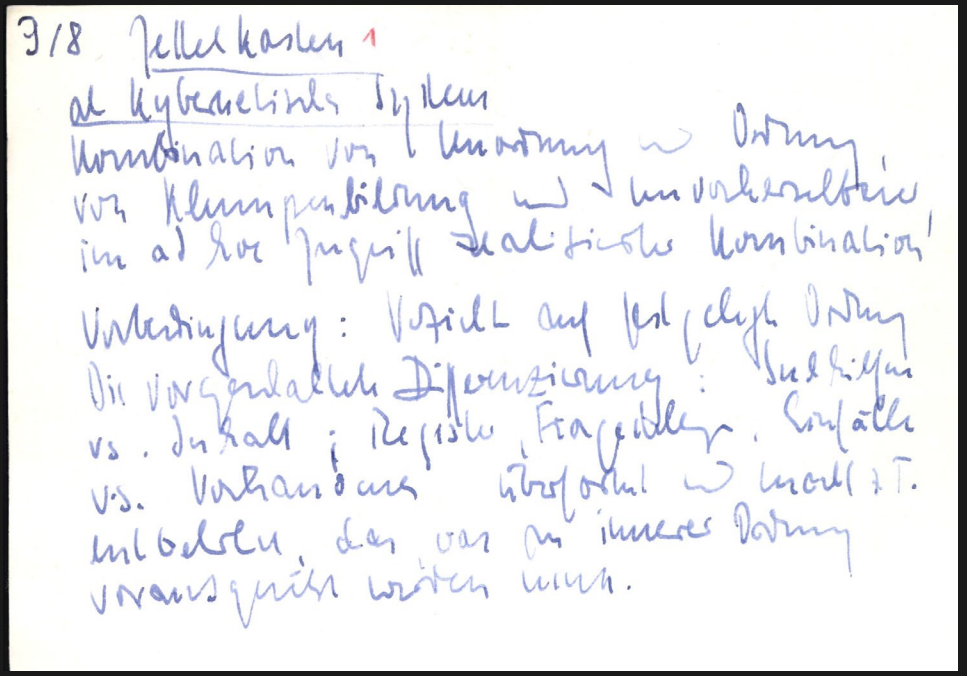


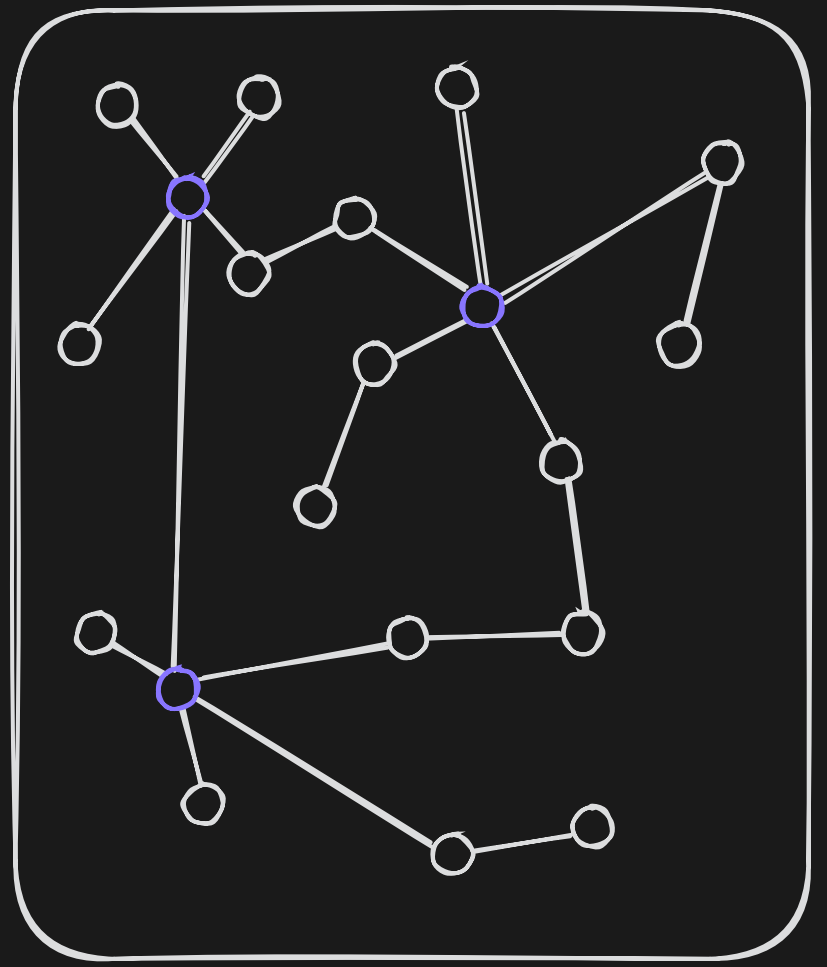
Image: Niklas Luhmann Archiv

# Luhmann's Zettelkasten

90,000 paper cards in physical drawers

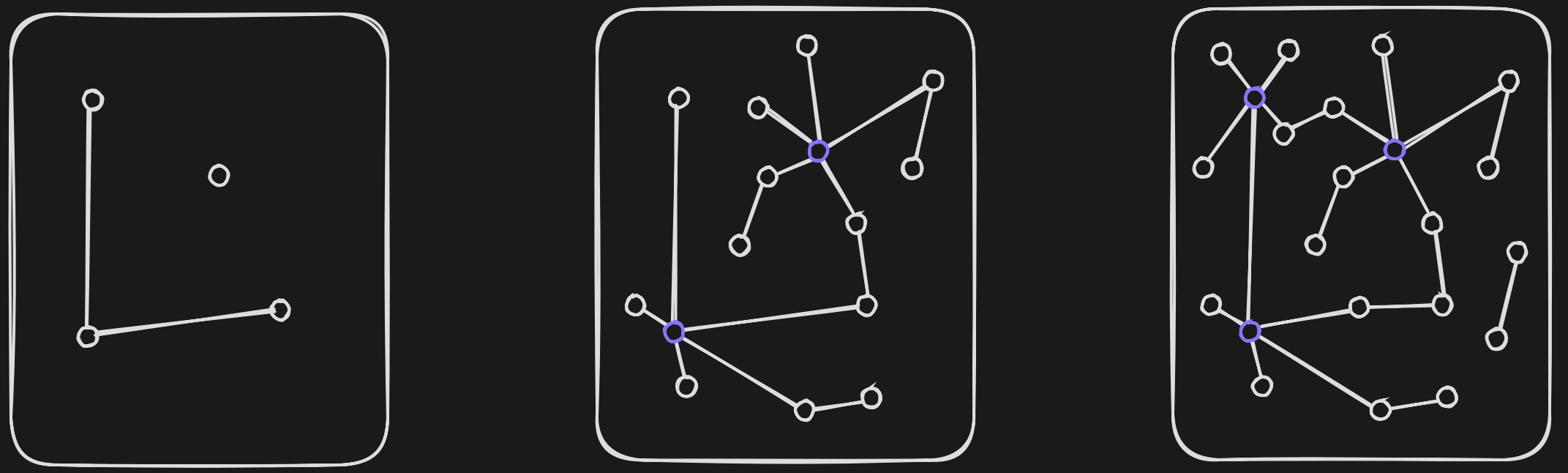


Images: Universität Bielefeld, Niklas Luhmann Archiv



# Evolution of the Zettelkasten

A Zettelkasten is a living, dynamic system



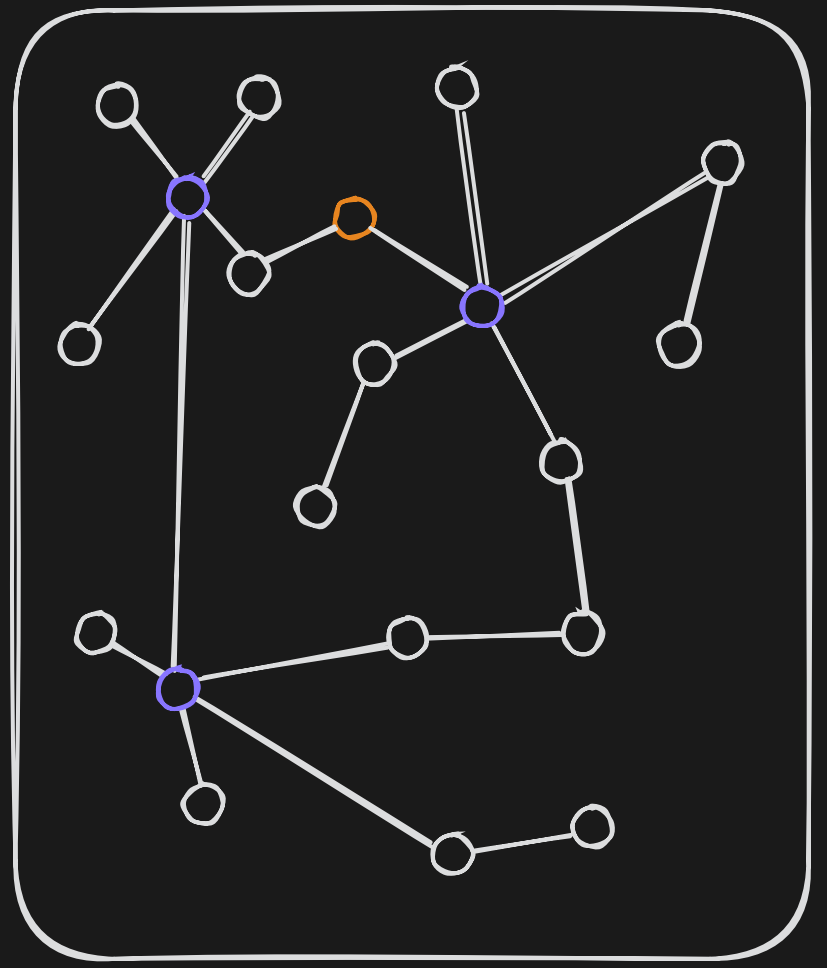

First: few ideas and connections

**Central hubs** emerge and **connections between topics** arise

**Notes** become **hubs** and **connections change**

# Use the Zettelkasten

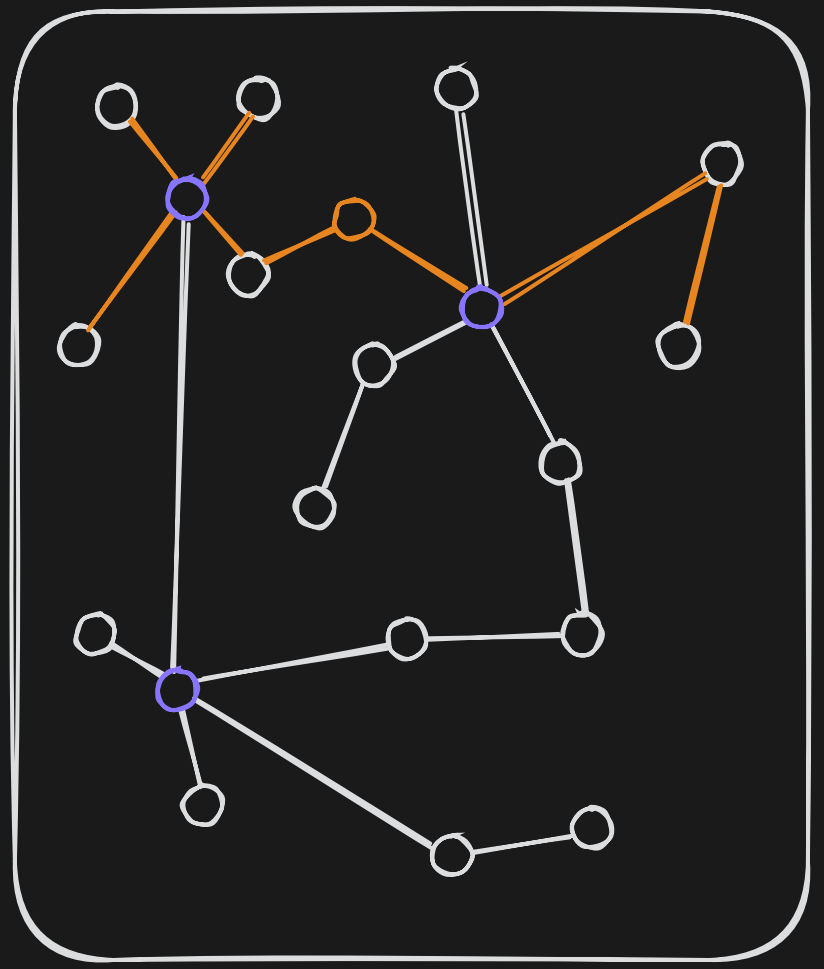
- Supports
  - Brainstorming
  - Creativity -> Making new connections
  - Develop new research questions
  - Writing
  - ...
- Start with a concept or context you are interested in



# Use the Zettelkasten

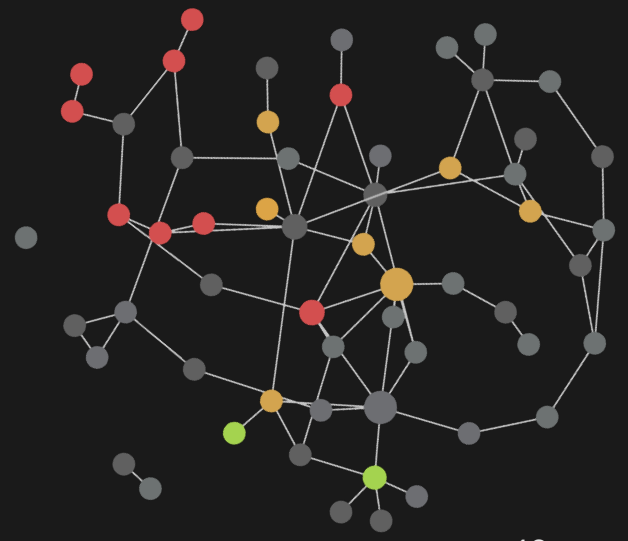
- Supports
  - Brainstorming
  - Creativity -> Making new connections
  - Develop new research questions
  - Writing
  - ...

- Start with a concept or context you are interested in
- See what it is connected to



# OBSIDIAN ZETTELKASTEN

ⓘ Don’t follow along, there will be an exercise afterwards

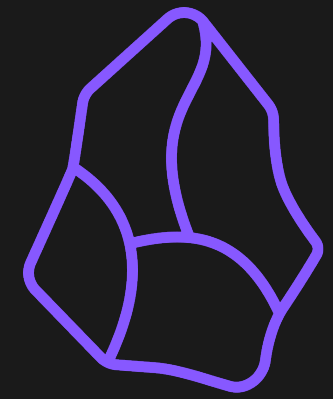


# EXERCISE 1

25 min, link to the exercise

Explore the demo Zettelkasten

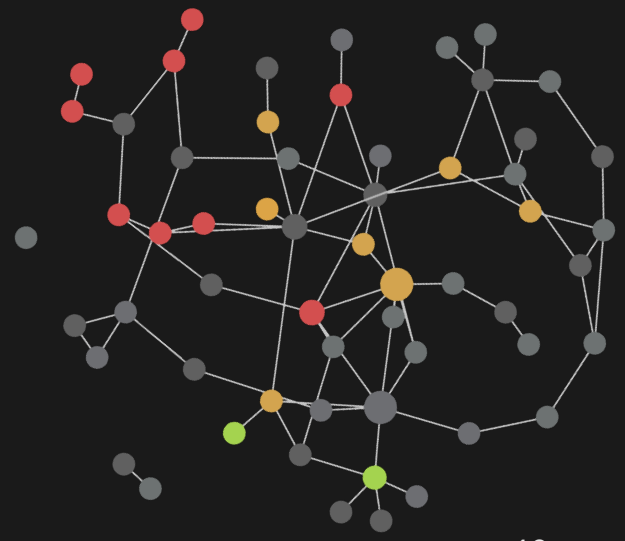
- Stay here to do the task
- I will be in the breakout room “Questions”
- If you have questions or problems: Join from **Breakout rooms** in meeting controls



# What goes in?

- No general rule, but starting point
  - Concepts
  - Arguments
  - Insights
  - Connections

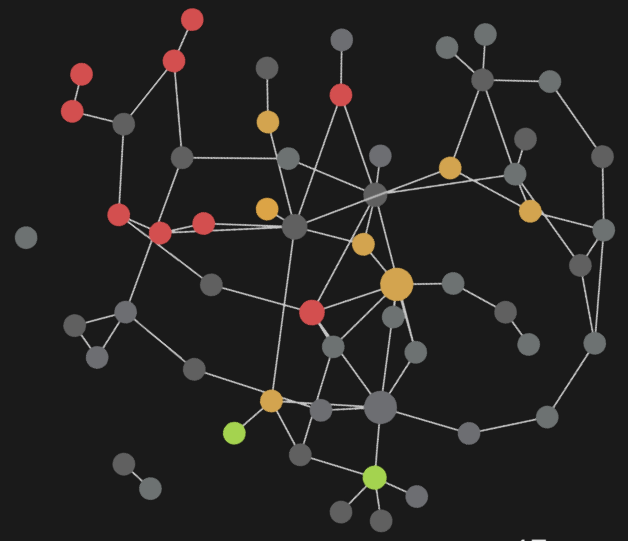
- Put what
  - Resonates
  - Makes you curious
  - Is related to the (research) questions you ask yourself



# What does (probably) not go in?

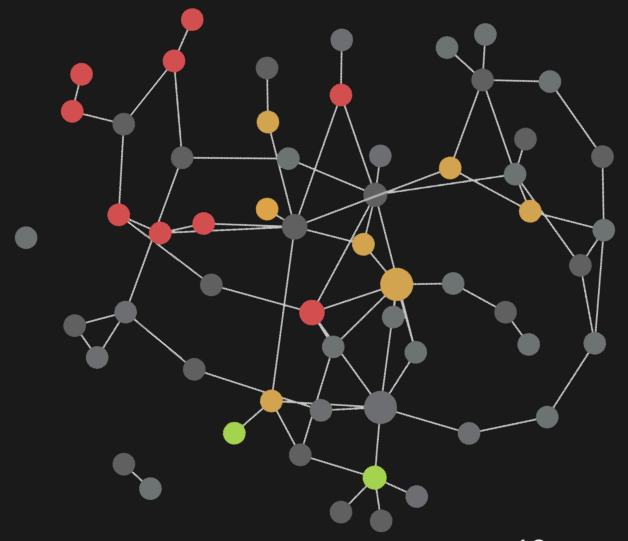
- Technical information
- Tutorials
- Documentation
- Meetings
- Project-related notes
- …

For these you have your storage (folders)!



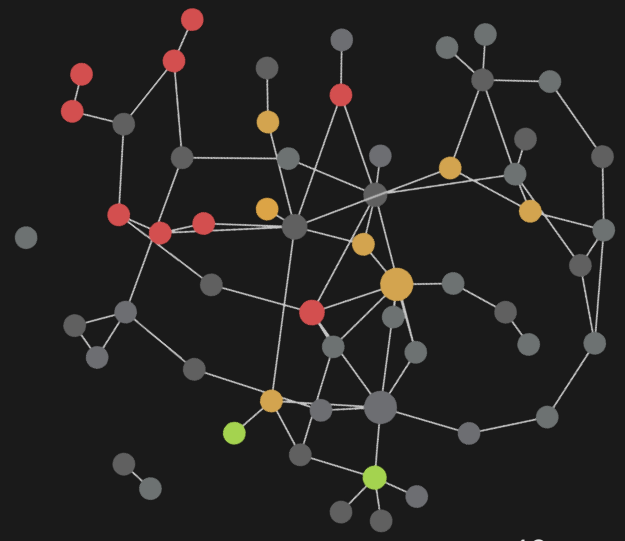
# The value of a Zettelkasten

- Investment in the future
- AHA moments
- Helps with
  - Writing
  - Developing new ideas
  - Discovering new connections

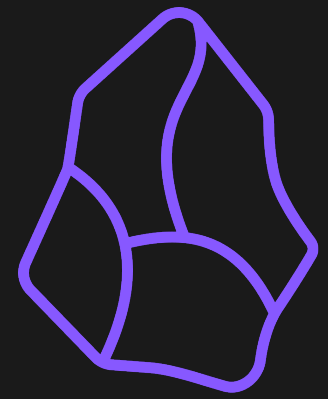


# How to get started

- Zettelkasten as a digital garden
- Start simple, adjust workflow over time
  - Simple templates
  - Simple reference notes
  - Focus on writing the Zettel notes well
- Give it a few months
- Trust the system



# WRAP UP



# We looked at a lot

- Basics
- Canvas for brainstorming
- Periodic notes for planning
  - Tasks plugin to collect tasks
  - Templates
- Project hub notes
  - Obsidian base to create overview tables of notes
- Knowledge management
  - Zettelkasten for knowledge notes

# And now?

- Resources:
  - Demo-vault with templates and workflows from the Workshop
  - Exercises on the Website for step-by-step guides
  - Additional resources on the Website

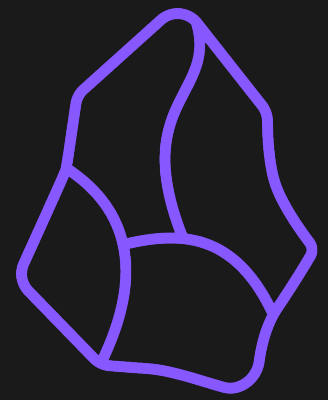
- Adjust workflows to your own needs
  - Keep what helps
  - Throw out what creates friction

- Take notes

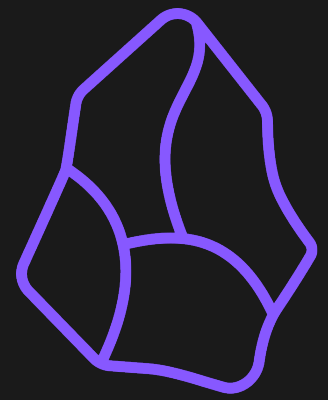
# THANKS FOR YOUR ATTENTION

Happy note-taking!

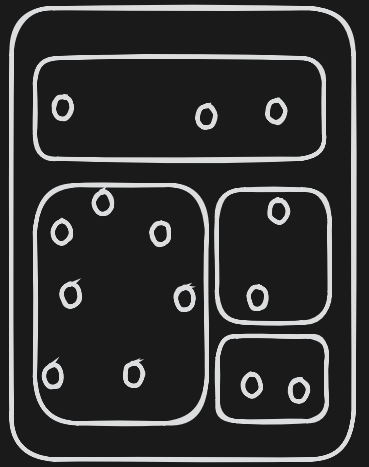
For questions: selina.baldauf@fu-berlin.de



# APPENDIX

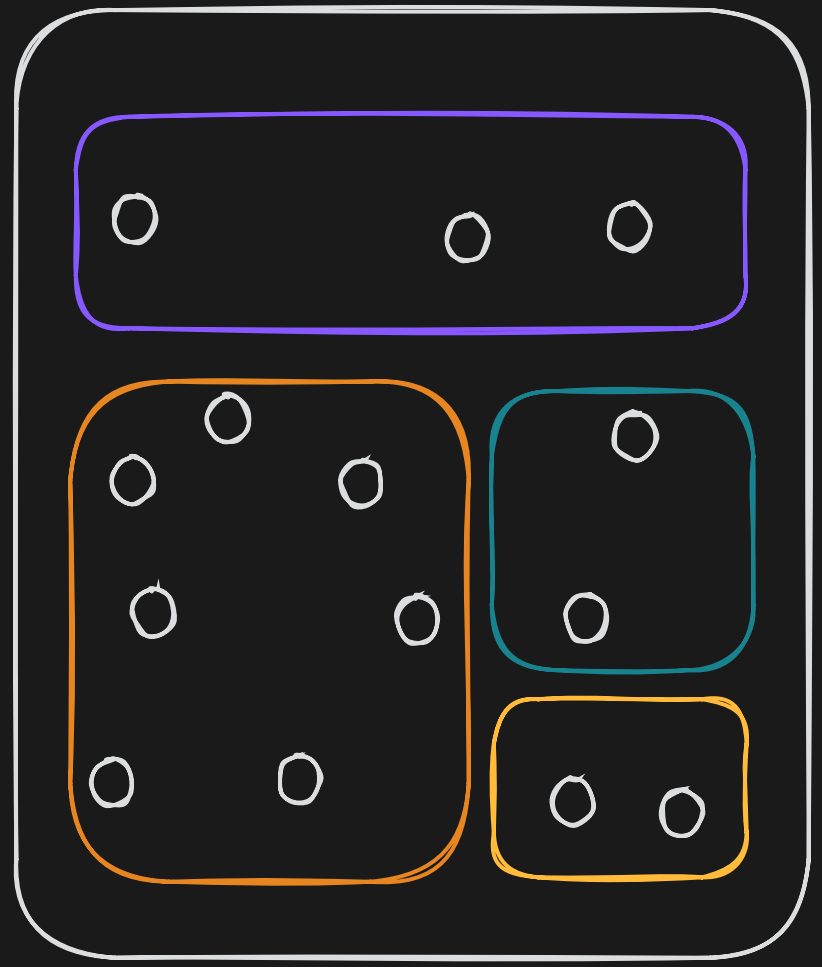


# THE STORAGE



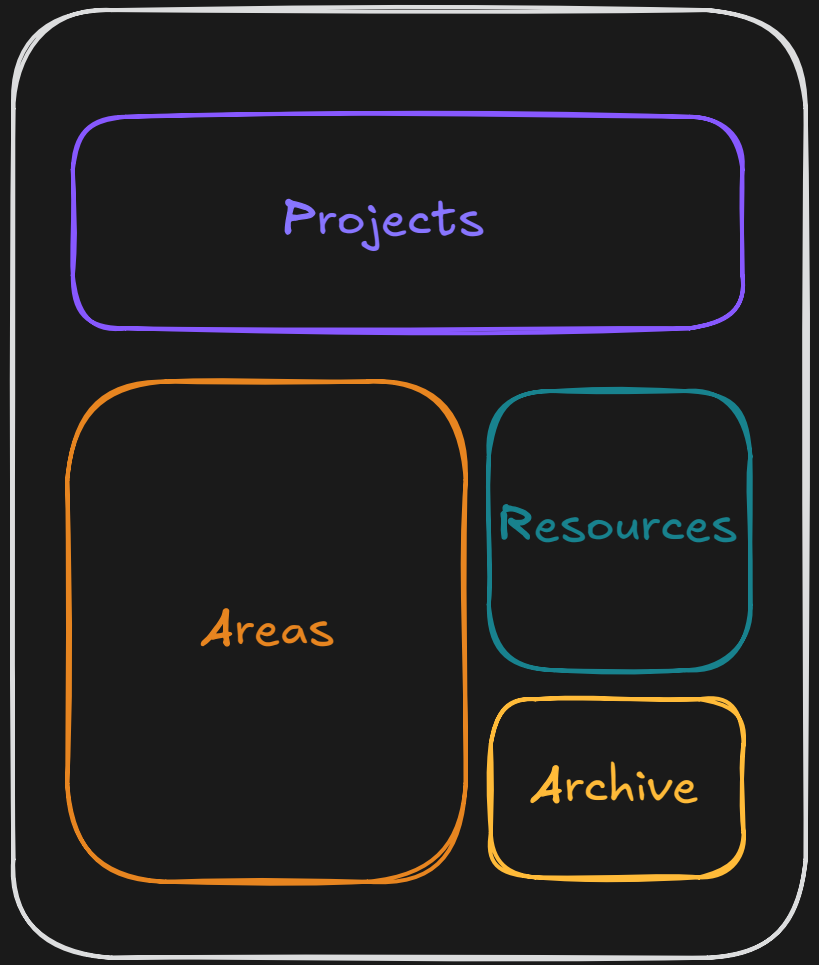
# The storage

- Goal: **store** and **retrieve** note
- Basic idea:
  - System of labelled drawers
  - Sort your notes o into the drawers
- Structure and categories (folders, subfolders) are crucial



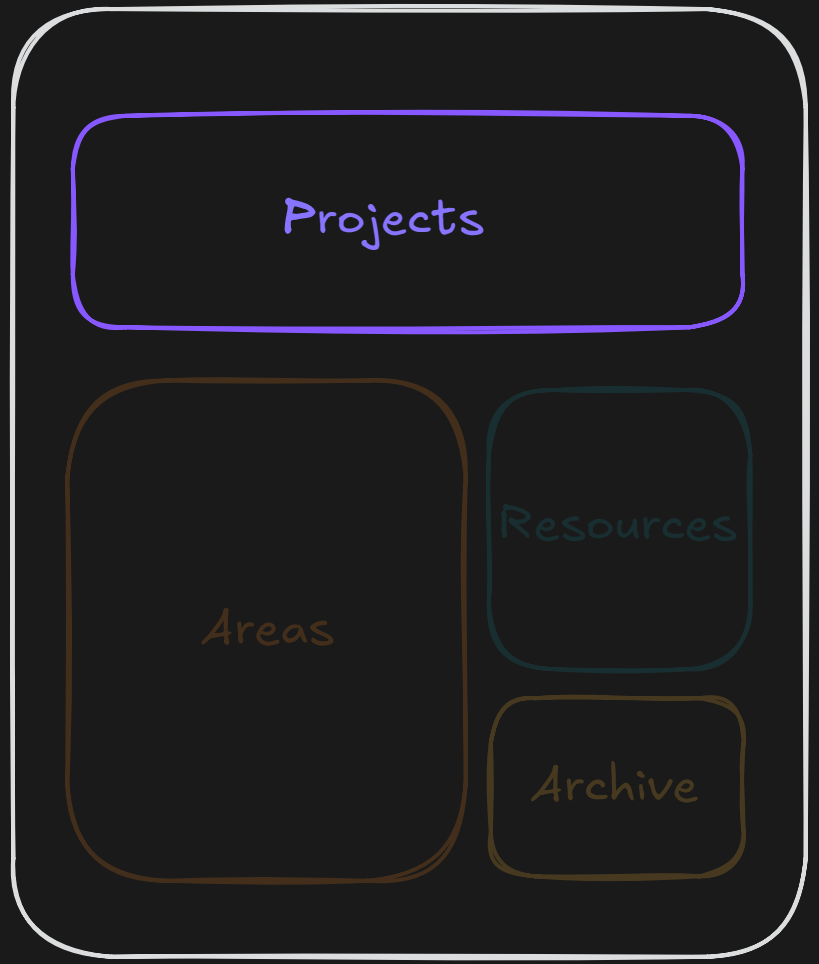
# The PARA system

- By Tiago Forte
- 4 **core** categories (i.e. main folders) to sort your notes



# Projects

- Things you work on right now
- Things with a deadline
- Examples
  - Paper XYZ
  - Prepare workshop XYZ
  - Renovate my living room
  - …
- Subfolders for each project



# Areas

- Ongoing **responsibilities** without a concrete deadline
- Examples
  - PhD
    - Bureaucratic things
    - Overarching topics
    - …
  - Lab
    - Notes on your research group
  - Finances
    - Notes on your finances
  - …



# Resources

- Reference and learning materials
- Topics you are interested in
- Useful for the future
- Examples
  - Literature notes
  - Tutorials
  - Documentation
  - ...



# Archive

- Old, finished work and projects



# The PARA system

- By Tiago Forte
- 4 **core** categories (i.e. main folders) to sort your notes
- Add **additional folders** as you need, e.g.
  - Meetings
  - Labbook: Daily and Weekly notes
  - Templates
  - Attachments
  - ...

