

Ten (free!) productivity tools for editors – Part 1 of 2

Laetitia Sullivan



Time – something we wish we had more of, yet we all have the same 24 hours per day. So, how to make the best use of them? Hello, productivity tools! These days there is an app or tool for everything, so let's look at some productivity tools that can streamline your work as an editor.

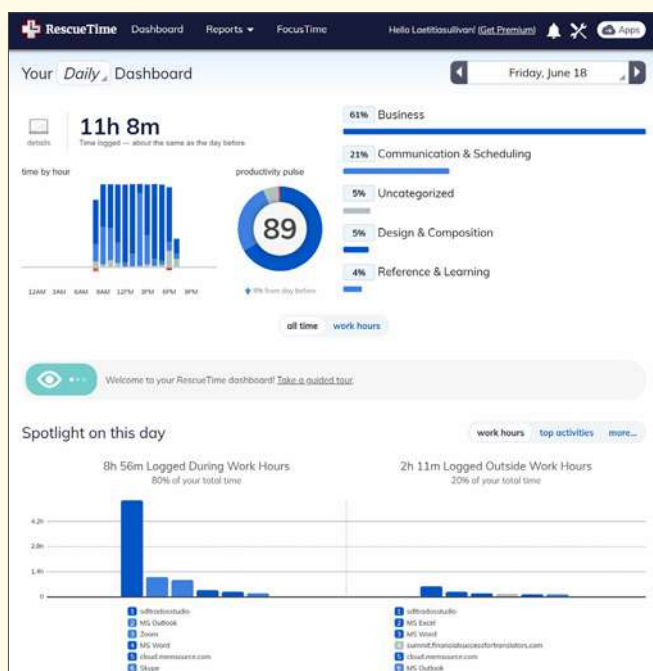
Time tracking: RescueTime Lite

If you are a bit reluctant (read: lazy) about time tracking or can't be bothered with starting and stopping a timer, **RescueTime Lite** is the perfect intuitive time-tracking tool for you. After installing, the app runs in your PC's background and tracks the programs and websites you spend your time on, the hours you are least/most productive,

and your best/worst work days of the week. It logs this information in 15 different categories, which you can customise according to your type of work. Your time spent behind the screen is displayed in daily, weekly, monthly and even yearly dashboard format, showing exactly how long you were fidgeting in Microsoft Word, fiddling with emails or faffing about on Facebook.

This app is great for editors who charge by the hour or need to provide time sheets to clients as part of invoicing requirements. Other editors will also benefit from its many time-tracking features, eg logging those CPD hours or even just becoming more aware of how productive you *truly* are.

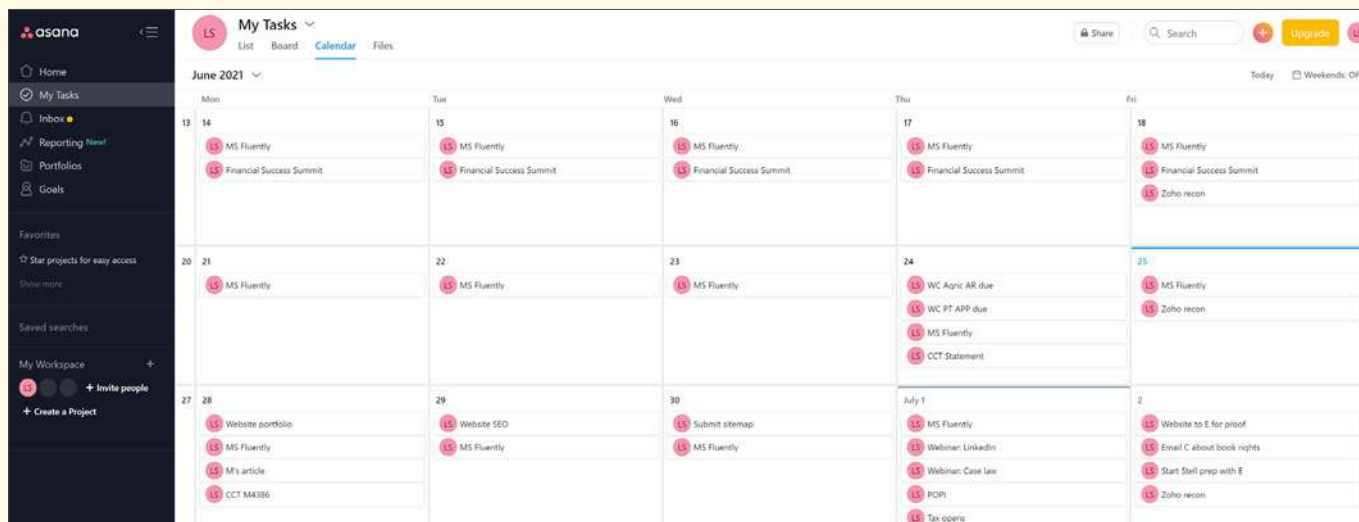
Other free time-tracking tools to try: toggl track, TimeCamp, Clockify. ➤



RescueTime to the rescue



Stay focused with Forest



Juggle editing projects in Asana

Fighting procrastination: Forest

Time tracking and focused time go hand in hand, but sometimes the procrastination devil is stuck to your shoulder. What to do? Use a specific app such as **Forest** to take away all distractions for at least 30 minutes, so you can hunker down and just get that 300-page edit done! This app can be downloaded on your phone or used on your PC as a Google Chrome extension. What makes it fun to use is that you are literally 'planting' a forest while staying focused on your work, because you can exchange your virtual coins earned for real trees to be planted around the world by an organisation called Trees for the Future. On the flip side, you turn into a 'tree murderer' when the distraction devil gets the better of you.

This type of app works well when you are trying to fight an Internet addiction or have trouble focusing on one task at a time because you just *have* to watch one more cat video.

Other free anti-procrastination tools to try: StayFocusd, Freedom, Cold Turkey.



Scheduling: Asana

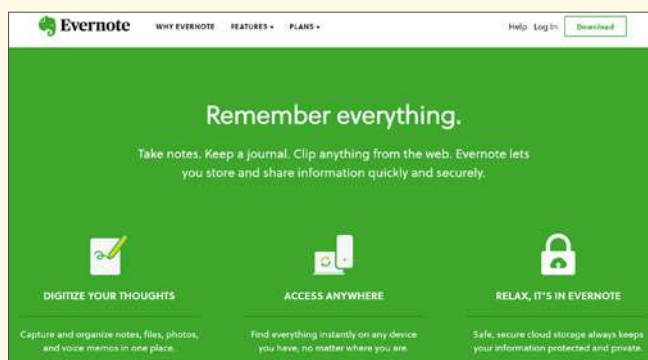
Once you have a grip on where your time is going (or being wasted!), it's a good idea to find a tool that makes scheduling or planning ahead easy, especially when you need to juggle several projects. **Asana**, available in your browser or for download on your phone, is one such scheduling or project-management tool where you can set up projects and divide them into different tasks to make sure you stay on top of things. All tasks are presented in list or calendar view, or in a Kanban-style board view. In the free version, up to 15 people can join your project and add attachments to your tasks – eliminating the need for shuffling around large jobs via email.

This app will suit editors who work as part of a team and need to follow certain workflows, such as for an editorial calendar or managing editors who need to keep track of all the moving parts of a publishing project.

Other free scheduling tools to try: Todoist, Trello, Remember the Milk.

Note-taking: Evernote

If full-on project management is beyond your needs and you are looking for something simpler to keep all your notes and ideas together, a note-taking app might do the trick. **Evernote** functions as a digital scrapbook to save and organise all your thoughts, notes, images, documents, emails, audio notes, freehand sketches and, my personal favourite, webpage clippings. Another powerful feature is the app's ability to make all text in images searchable, even handwriting or scans – perfect for a haphazard note-taker like me.

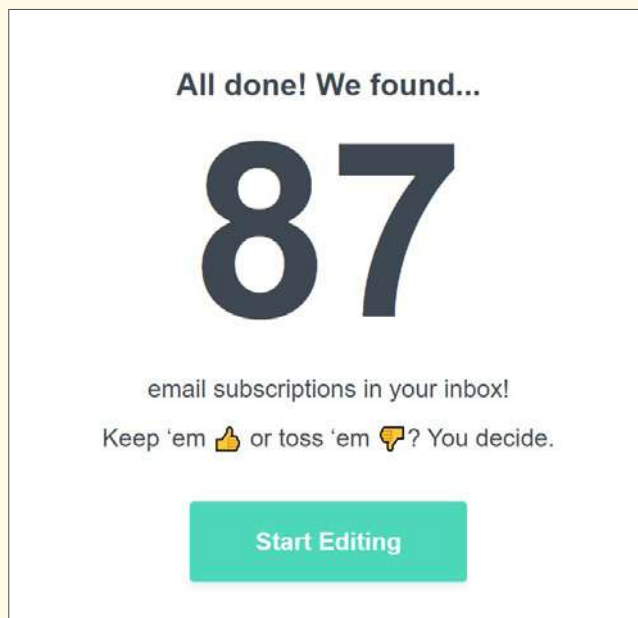


Digitise your thoughts in Evernote

The search function means I don't have to put too much effort into organising my random clippings, images and notes.

Editors who find value in writing thoughts down the minute they occur will love this app. It can also help those of us suffering from 'shiny object syndrome' to dump all those new ideas, trends and goals in one place before they take over the mind.

Other free note-taking tools to try: Microsoft OneNote, Google Keep, Simplenote. ➤

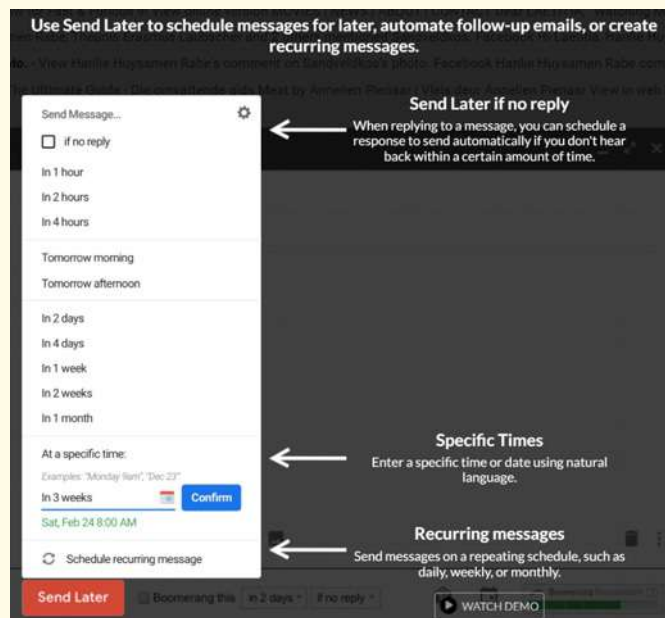


Get a grip on email with Unroll.me and Boomerang

Email management: Unroll.me and Boomerang

We all receive way too much email, and studies show that the average office worker spends almost a third of their day just reading emails. To help manage this deluge, **Unroll.me** bundles all your favourite email newsletters in a once-daily digest called 'The Rollup', so you can open and read them when you feel like it instead of letting them clutter up your inbox. You can also use the handy unsubscribe option to opt out of those newsletters you no longer want to receive.

If an avalanche of client email is your problem rather than newsletters, **Boomerang** might be just the thing. It's a dedicated email-management app for Gmail to schedule and set email reminders. The handy Send Later button will schedule your email to be sent automatically at a time of your choosing. If you are an



'inbox zero' disciple, the app also allows you to 'boomerang' an email back to your inbox (much like the built-in Snooze function in Gmail), so you can deal with it when you are ready, or when you want to follow up on client emails and invoices.

Other free email management tools to try: Right Inbox, Mixmax, SalesHandy.

The machines are coming!

To truly appreciate the beauty of productivity tools and what AI can do for you as an editor, there is a whole new world of automation apps out there, such as **IFTTT** (If This, Then That) and **Zapier**. These apps let you set up sequences or 'applets' ranging from the useful, such as 'Send a weekly digest of your Zoom meetings' and 'Send an automated response to a new client and add their details to a Google Sheet', to the unusual, such as 'Get yourself out of an awkward situation', which triggers a phone call so you can avoid speaking to that person you *really* don't want to talk to. The customisation is endless!

Be brave and download some of the tools in this article to see if they make a difference to your productivity as an editor. But if you feel it's too much like cracking a nut with a sledgehammer, you know you can always trust good ol' pen and paper to never let you down.

Part 2 of this article will be published in a future *PEGboard*. 🐦

References

- Coulson, A 2020 *What's e-new? 21 for 2021*. <https://blog.ciep.uk/whats-e-new-2021>
- Kashyap, V n.d. *44 productivity tools that will make your life much easier*. <https://www.proofhub.com/articles/best-productivity-tools>
- MacKay, J 2020 *How to be more productive at work: 21 productivity tips, hacks, and tools to help you get more done in 2020*. <https://blog.rescuetime.com/productivity-in-the-workplace/>
- Martelli, A 2014 *21 free tools and utilities for translators*. MTM Translations.
- Saffrey, A 2020 *How can I be more productive? Part 1*. <https://blog.ciep.uk/productivity-tools-1/>
- Saffrey, A 2021 *How can I be more productive? Part 2*. <https://blog.ciep.uk/productivity-tools-2/>
- Whitty, T 2018 *Favorite productivity and organization tools for translators*. <https://marketingtipsfortranslators.com/tools>
- Zetzsche, J 2020 *The translator's tool box: A computer primer for translators*. International Writers' Group.