

Tablet for taking handwritten notes - saving to server

I've been seriously considering buying a relatively inexpensive tablet this year (and particularly today with the sales) to replace my pen-and-paper note-taking for client conferences and for some other functionality. I've had tablets before at home, but primarily use as ebook readers and for play. I don't want to use a laptop in client conferences for multiple reasons - prefer a flat, unobtrusive tablet, or just plain paper. I have a few questions.

I have a traditional server where all our firm documents/files are saved. All computers are PCs. We also have both a wireless and wired network. I'd like to, when in the office, take notes on the tablet, then save directly to the server, without having to go through the internet or do something like email it to myself. (Right now we scan my paper notes).

I'd also like to be able to pull up draft documents from our server when in with clients, and make a quick change, then print to a networked printer. Is this possible? Should I get a Windows tablet - would that make this easier? Is another piece necessary to make this possible (I read a bit about tethering to a laptop, but wasn't sure if that applies).

Also, I have some standard format intake forms that I use internally (so I don't forget to ask for certain information). They are currently in Word, but of course can be converted to other formats. Is this something I can open on a tablet and use in OneNote and/or Evernote?

I've read up, and it seems a digitizer pen is the way to go if I'm going to

be writing a lot. Also don't want to spend a ton. So I'm looking most closely at the Toshiba Encore 2 Write and a Surface 3. Other comments?

Although its price is likely higher than you were hoping to spend, I've recently been intrigued by the Microsoft Surface Book. Rather than being a trade-off between a laptop and a tablet, this seems to be primarily a laptop--with laptop performance and functionality--while still offering many tablet-like features. You might just take a look and see what you think.

<https://www.microsoft.com/surface/en-us/devices/surface-book>

Drew McDannold, law student, Florida

The Surface 3 and a Type Cover are on sale from Microsoft for \$150 off today. It seems like the Surface 3 and OneNote would do what you want.

http://www.microsoftstore.com/store/msusa/en_US/cat/Cyber-Monday-Sale/categoryID.68246700?icid=en_US_FY16_Holiday_Homepage_hero_1_CM_112915

John Varde, Illinois

I'm sort of in the same boat as you -- I'd like to have a good all-around tablet, of course, but I also would like to replace my pen/paper notes. I

find that is much more difficult to do than I expected it would be. I have attempted it so far with my HP tablet (low-end, nothing fancy) but the results re: handwriting ended up with more frustration than anything else. I did a bit of background reading and I believe your choice of stylus will have a significant impact on your experience, but I'm not in a position to splurge on a really nice one to check that theory. It does hold some water, though, because I have some cheapie stylus (stylii??) that I have tried to use and they just didn't work -- incomplete strokes, have to write in giant letters etc.

The second problem is more ergonomic, but I can't think of a good workaround: wrist/arm position. When you use pen & paper, you never even notice this unless you end up with smudged ink on your arm or something. But, when writing on a tablet (i.e. screen = touch-sensitive), I can't rest my forearm/wrist like I do when I write on paper. So, I have to either prop up the tablet at an angle or write with my arm hovered in the air - both being counterproductive.

I'm a PC veteran, to be sure, but I don't have a lot of experience with tablets, so make what you will of my \$0.02 -- maybe someone with some more insight could chime in.

Seth Combs, Kentucky

That's pretty much what I found; it's not that easy using a tablet to take good notes. At least by hand. I bought an iPad and figured I would use it here at the office; but it quickly became apparent that, to be

blunt, it was more trouble than it was worth; writing on table is not the same as paper, and frankly it was distracting. There's a lot to be said for a Legal Pad.

Ron Jones, Florida

Hand written notes was a priority for me when I bought my Google Nexus tablet a couple of years ago. Pretty big disappointment.

I have recently been thinking of getting a Samsung Note 10. It seems to be designed for using a stylus. For now, my reluctance comes from the fact that what's available is the 2014 model. Really? It's almost 2016!

Any comments comparing the hand writing abilities of the Samsung Note and the Surface would be hugely appreciated.

BTW, it's time to upgrade my cell phone; so I'm going to get a Note 5 and will at least see how the hand writing works on that device.

David Masters, Colorado

In case it's helpful, I have the Samsung Note and can share my experience with it. I love the S Note feature for handwriting notes with the stylus. My handwriting on the Note looks identical to on paper--surprisingly so. My hand rests on the Note as I write with no interference / trouble.

I don't know how it compares to the Surface as I haven't used one.

Shireen K. Gandhi

I'm glad you asked this question because this is something I've been looking at as well.

There have been a couple of reviews for the Apple Pencil and it looks pretty good... you may find the discussion and comparison pictures here helpful -

http://www.iphonejd.com/iphone_jd/2015/11/review-ipad-pro.html

https://www.reddit.com/r/apple/comments/3te8iw/a_med_students_review_of_the_apple_pencil/

Tatiana Melnik, Florida

Agree with Shireen re: Samsung Note, but Ron makes a good case for the traditional legal pad.

For my handwritten notes on a legal pad, I scan them into Evernote, and let OCR do the rest.

Even with my unbelievably bad handwriting, Evernote gets it right about 98% of the time.

Hope this helps.

Dave Rakowski, Pennsylvania

So...I ordered a Microsoft Surface 3 and a Microsoft Surface Pen yesterday when both were on sale. Took the plunge. I've spent hours at night looking online and researching it (the only local places that sell tablets are the Walmart and an AT&T store), and rather than continue to spin my wheels until I could go to a brick and mortar in one of the neighboring cities to try stuff out, I figured it was more efficient to just get one and try it long-term.

I appreciate all the feedback so far, and several folks have sent me notes that they are in similar situations, so please continue to post your comments as I think several others are using this thread as a reference.

I'll give a review once I've received it, set it up, and started using it.

Thanks again!

Cynthia V. Hall, Florida

I have the Surface Pro 3 and LOVE its note taking capability with the pen and OneNote. I use it a lot, and I don't encounter any of the problems that Seth mentions he's had with other tablets (and that I had in the past with my iPad). The screen is touch sensitive, but you can configure it so that it will recognize only the pen when writing on OneNote. The precision is amazing. You can save your notes in OneNote as a OneNote document, convert to .pdf, or even convert to text (if your handwriting is "good enough" that it will recognize it). You can also record voice notes, all in the same program.

The Surface Pro 3 is pretty expensive, though. But you won't be disappointed. It runs the full version of Windows 10. It is my only computer, as it replaced my trusty HP laptop a year ago.

Lilka B. Martinez, California

Please explain using Evernote and the OCR - and then where the document goes from there -- thank you!

David A. Rubin, Missouri

OR the Samsung note. I usually take my notes in Evernote, which is synced to my laptop and office computer and the notes I take with the stylus become typeface notes I can plug into a word doc or do anything else with them. Much easier than typing on a keyboard at a meeting.

Nanci Bockelie, Utah
