

iPad Air or Galaxy Note?

I would like some help with this decision. I spent a lot of time looking on-line this weekend and trying to decide between an iPad Air and a Samsung Galaxy Note 10.1 (2014). I can't go to a store and compare (tried Office Depot, Target, and Walmart; that's all we have).

The device would be used in my practice for reviewing (and annotating) PDF files and for taking notes. Working with PDF files would be a key feature, so I need ease of use plus professional grade tools. Note taking would be the second most important function and because we have been PDF paperless for 10+ years, the notes need to end up as PDF files.

We use Time Matters for calendar, email, etc. Accordingly, I don't see a tablet having a role in that part of the practice. Likewise, we use PCLaw for time and billing, so no need for integration there.

It really comes down to working with PDF files and note taking. Then, of course, the convenience of web browsing and entertainment.

I use Goodreader on iPad to view and mark up pdfs. My Galaxy S3 phone has led me to prefer Android to iOS for ease of use, but I'm not familiar with an equivalent app for Android. If there's a good one my next tablet will probably be android.

Wendell Finner, Florida

No idea about what works on a Galaxy. But here's my perspective as an iPad2 user

iAnnotate pdf is pretty damn awesome for PDFs.

So is TrialPad for on-the-fly presentations.

Big fan of SlideShark for presentations (including PowerPoint). Especially when walking around the courtroom talking to the jury using my iPad untethered through Apple TV. Sweetest.

Andy Simpson, U.S. Virgin Islands

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I'm sure Jeffrey would join in but he's a bit busy snuffling Tot#4:

<http://instagram.com/p/jFdSa4kiZy/#>

Not-an-atty

Andrea Cannavina

I had the original iPad and used Goodreader to read and mark up pdfs. In my opinion that is the best program period. Last spring I retired the iPad and switched to the 2012 version of the Samsung Galaxy Note 10.1. I have not regretted my decision. The major factor for the switch is that the handwriting recognition is far superior to what I experienced on the iPad. It will convert what you write into text. It is fairly accurate even with my horrendous handwriting. You can then take those notes and file them away in your client file and they are searchable. I have been somewhat disappointed in the PDF readers. exPDF Reader Pro and iAnnotate are good but they are not a replacement for Goodreader (that does not make an android version).

Michael L. Pisauo, Jr., New Jersey

If in note taking, you want to write long notes by hand, I would say don't get an iPad. But if you don't mind typing your notes, go with the iPad.

Michael Wright

I'm not sure if you use a PC or Mac normally, but if you are a PC, why not get a Microsoft Surface Pro that is less expensive and comes with OneNote for notes as well as easy synching of Adobe. I know this is a rarely suggested alternative, but honestly, it is seriously easy to use and comes with everything you need. No need for external apps. Of course, I am also using Office 365 and a Windows phone so my work is so amazingly and easily synched with all my devices. Just another thought. Thanks.

Lyza Sandgren, Paralegal

I have a Samsung Tabs, when I upgrade I will probably get the Note. I recently downloaded the trial version of OfficeSuite Pro 7 by Mobi Systems, I was attending a meeting where we had large PDF files I needed to access and mark up on the fly. I have two other office programs on my tablet, both of which advertised ability to work with PDFs, but neither of them did what I needed.

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The Mobi System app worked great. I haven't tried it for editing or creating Word docs yet, but will keep it just for the PDF capabilities. You can try the Pro version for free for 7 days (which I did). The full Pro version costs \$14.99, which I was happy to pay after trying it out.

I don't think the free non-pro version has the PDF editing capabilities.

Nanci Bockelie, Utah

OfficeSuite Pro 7 makes great Word docs:
<http://thedroidlawyer.com/2012/09/how-to-create-documents-on-an-android-tablet/>,
and even though I've recommended the app a dozen-plus time, I just realized I haven't actually reviewed the app. Guess we know what a new blog post will be.

Jeff Taylor, Oklahoma

Thanks to all who commented. I am, we are, a PC office and I upgraded from a Blackberry to a Galaxy S4 (in case this makes any difference to your comments).

Jeff, I'm now intrigued by the Nexus 10. Good enough apps and flexibility for working with PDF files and note taking?

Can I use an "active" pen/styli with the Nexus (e.g., Wacom Bamboo feel)?

David Masters, Colorado

Your upgrade doesn't matter, I use a PC. Android devices coordinate a little better with Windows-based desktops, but I know a number of people (including some at Google) who are Apple desktops and Android devices.

Anything (minus Samsung's split screen) you can do on the Samsung tablets can be done on Nexus 10. All of the pens work great. Check out this post, with a video, on signing a pleading using an Android tablet:
<http://thedroidlawyer.com/2013/01/how-to-sign-a-pleading-on-an-android-device/>.
And that's not even a Nexus tablet.

As for apps, you'll be fine, too. Here's my list of 2013's best:
<http://thedroidlawyer.com/2013/12/2013s-best-android-apps-for-lawyers/>.

Jeff Taylor

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Looking at the Nexus I don't see that it has a Micro-SD slot. Is that correct, no expansion?

David Masters

Correct. I doubt you'll need it.

Jeff Taylor
