

Note-Taking 2.0

A recent report by Forrester Research on note-taking habits.
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I am, by all accounts, a rabid notetaker.

I scribble barely legible scrawls on scraps of paper at Starbucks while meeting with potential clients over a decaf latte. I pound away on my iPad during conferences to capture the words of [wisdom](#) being spouted from the front of the room, and I keep extensive handwritten and online lists on everything from business development to-do's, to actions I need my assistant to execute.

However, all this list making and note taking can take its toll. At one point, I had so many notes in so many different places that finding what I needed was like locating a needle in a haystack. I knew I needed help; I just wasn't sure where to get it.

A recent report by [Forrester Research](#) on the note-taking habits of American information workers (employed adults who use a computer for work) concluded that while 87 percent of workers make use of handwritten notes, 75 percent see value in the ability to computerize, index and search handwritten notes and associated audio.

The survey also found that 38 percent of workers use handwritten notes to organize their priorities through to-do lists and 67 percent of workers felt that better note-taking would improve both their personal job performance and [decision making](#) within their organizations - my thoughts exactly.

So it was with traditional pen in hand and hope in my heart that I set out to find a few tools I could easily (and quickly) integrate into my data-filled day to transform my note-taking from chaotic to the composed. Here's what I found:

Evernote: This is the cloud software solution that has as its tagline "Remember Everything," and using [Evernote](#), I do. The system, which functions as a digital filing cabinet, allows you to capture in one easy-to-search digital storage location all the notes you create for any topic, client, project, idea, etc.

It also enables you to add snapshots of web pages, link a URL to a particular note and attach audio files and photos. It's set up to constantly synchronize across all platforms, so it's accessible wherever you go. If all the above is not enough to make you click on the live link, consider this - it's free.

The Livescribe Pen: I came across this at a conference recently when I saw a colleague holding an intriguing pen-like object in her hand. When I inquired about this high-tech device, she told me it was an Echo smartpen by [Livescribe](#).

The pen, which has a built-in microphone, can capture meetings and lectures and then, via a USB connector, transfer both the audio and corresponding written notes (penned on special paper provided by the company) to your computer.

On the spot, I sent myself an email to look into buying one. As serendipity would have it, I was invited to attend a press conference two weeks later revealing the results of Forrester's note-taking survey hosted by the study's sponsor, none other than Livescribe. I asked for and received a pen to take home and test and was hooked from the first demo.

Today I never go to a meeting, interview, conference or seminar without it, and my ability to focus on what is being said, rather than worry about getting every detail nailed down, has been vastly

enhanced. Cost: US\$99.95

Zenbe Lists: Billing itself as "simple, shared task lists," this app was built so that you can easily share your grocery list with your spouse or [collaborate](#) with a co-worker on a project. But what I like best about [Zenbe Lists](#) is its simplicity.

I've used other similar to-do programs in the past and always found them too cumbersome or complicated. When it comes to list [management](#), I am a firm believer in the K.I.S.S. method. This app automatically synchs across all platforms and has the basic key features I need such as due dates, priority and custom sorting. Cost: US\$5.00

Today, with these three technology solutions, instead of emailing myself a to-do or scribbling my brainstorm on a Starbucks's napkin, I can note what I want to note in simple 2.0 style.

What's your biggest note-taking challenge? We would love to hear your comments.

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