

EXPLAINED!

iPad Productivity



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iBooks Author

A note from Chris

You have your iPad, now what? You could continue to use your tablet as an excellent web surfing tool. You could also use it to play one of the many, many games out on the App Store. Or, you could simply turn it over to your spouse or your kid(s) for their enjoyment. I suggest a different path, a path that will keep your iPad in your own hands...a path that will put you on a road towards increased productivity!

What follows are some of the apps and processes that have helped me on my own productivity journey. Please give some or all of them a try and let me know how they may have helped you!

Happy tapping and swiping!



Get Started Here

Got an iPad, but are still not sure how to use it to improve your productivity? Sick of wasting money on apps that never seem to deliver what they promise? Afraid to even try an app because there are simply too many to choose from? Why not try out a few apps that are free and are guaranteed to improve your productivity.



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Start using your iPad to track your Tasks! The best way to improve your productivity is to simply start tracking your tasks. Seems obvious right? The reality is that what is obvious is not often easy. This is why the task app is important...it has to be easy and fun to use. Check out [Remember the Milk](#) as it is both fun and easy to use! In fact, I just started using this app full time myself. [My full review here...](#)

Stop taking notes on Paper! You have to stop writing stuff on legal pads, notebooks, looseleaf pages, etc. Every-time you take a note on a piece of paper that paper must be processed (or lost) in some way. This means that you have to spend time later either filing the note or attempting to find it. [Check out this post](#) for information on writing on your iPad using [No-tetakerHD](#) which is a great note taking app, but it costs \$4.99; a small price to pay for a great app. However, if you are still not sure about writing on your iPad give [Upad Lite](#) a try ([full review here](#)) which is a great app and it is free!

Stop loosing stuff with your iPad! Ever find something on the Internet that you wanted to keep for later and simply printed it out? Do you use the native Notes app on the iPad, but find it difficult to organize and search your notes? Ever wish you had one place to store all your information? [Evernote](#) is the app that can do all of this on all of your devices and its free! [Check out this post](#) on how to leverage Evernote and your iPad to remember everything you want!

That's it for your first lesson. Once you have tried the apps above take a look at some more detailed ideas and processes below.

The Process

I believe that productivity on the iPad can be broken down into 4 distinct categories. These categories are as follows:

Collect

Process

Organize

Review



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The Process

Yes, each of these categories maps directly to the first four of the “[Five Stages of Mastering Workflow](#)” in the Getting Things Done System by David Allen. if you are truly trying to re-define your entire productivity system I would strongly suggest you order a copy of David’s excellent book [Getting Things Done](#). However, the topic of this eBook is not to re-hash what David has already written; the topic is to both describe how the iPad can fit into the first 4 of David’s 5 Stages for you GTD people out there as well as to simply describe how the iPad can fit into any productivity system...even the lack of one. The iPad is simply a tool that can help you be as organized as you want with as little busy-time paper-filing effort as possible!

For every app and/or process I describe below there are numerous apps and processes that I have not written about. Consider this eBook as a good starting point in your own productivity experiment. Try the suggestions I make here and then branch out on your own with new apps and processes. I only hope that this book provides you enough confidence to strike out on your own iPad-guided journey!http://www.flickr.com/photos/_bio_/152976882/in/photostream/http://www.flickr.com/photos/_bio_/152976882/in/photostream/



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Collect

Think of Collect as the process of finding and saving your “stuff” whether it be information at work or information you find on the Internet.

Tons of stuff to remember and process

- Online newspapers or magazines
- Professional Journal(s)
- Bloggers
- Etc, Etc, Etc.

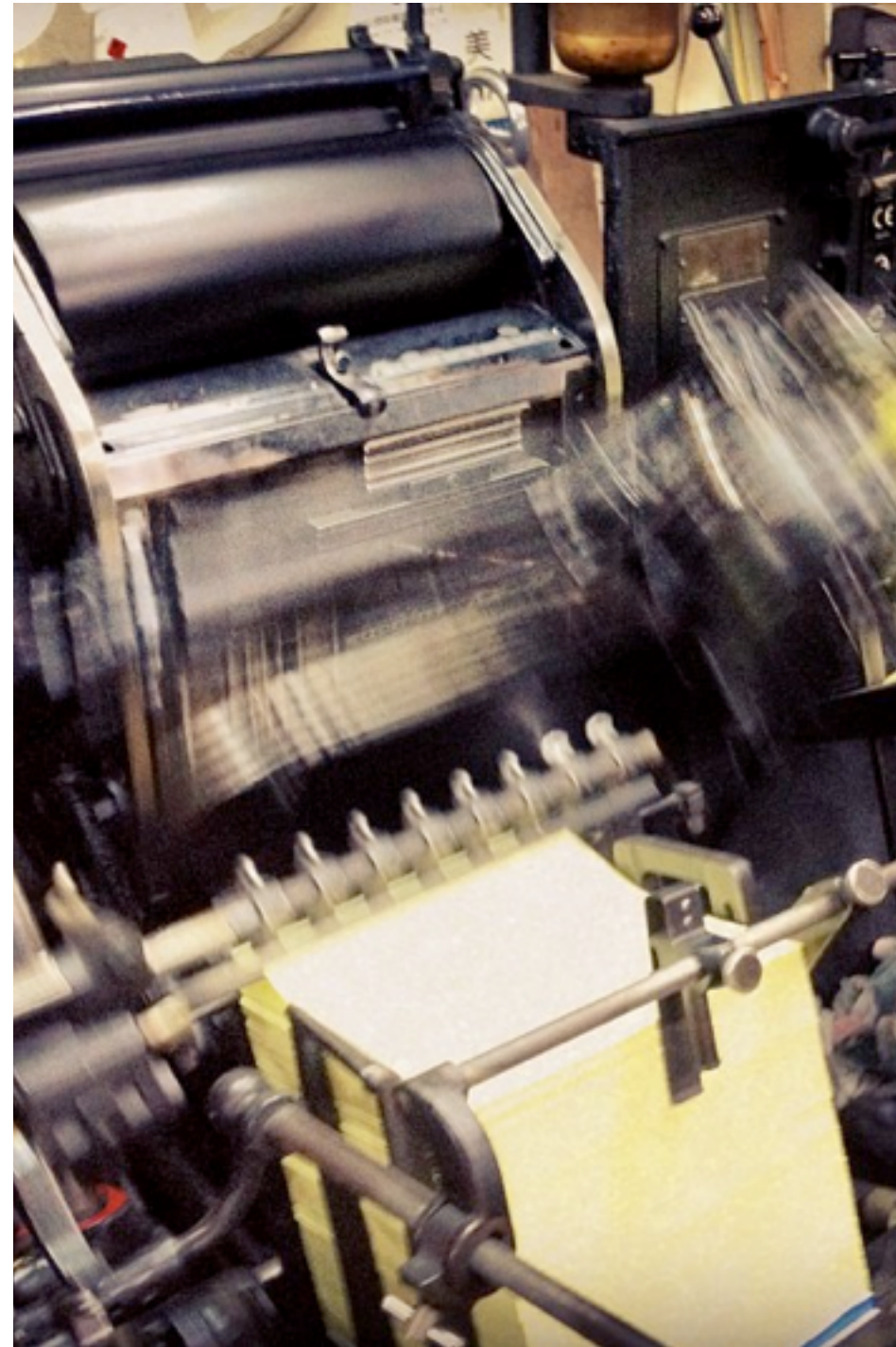


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The good news, Collect is where the iPad truly shines

Here are just a few of the apps that work extremely well in this space:

Evernote (free)

Instapaper (\$4.99)

USA Today (free)

Zite (free)

Dropbox (free, 5GB online storage)

Evernote

I'm an Evernote fanatic...there, I said it! Ever since my very first note way back on May 14, 2008 I have been diligently capturing links, notes, pictures, emails and now various other documents. Being the techy nerd that I am I've tried many applications out there that do some (and sometimes all) of what



Evernote does. But, for whatever I reason I have not wandered from this great app cum service cum virtual networked memory. I heard once that because we are connected through our various devices that our memories have basically exploded in potential as every piece of informa-

tion we may want to remember is instantly available to us. This is especially important for memory-challenged folks such as myself.

I once wrote that a tablet can not be embraced as a serious productivity tool without snapping the pencil in two and simply storing information directly into the tablet. Instant information capture is a great way to store your notes in a more virtual fashion, but to truly leverage your virtual expression you

are going to need some way to intelligently store and index all of these notes. Without this intelligence, your notes will wallow in the same way that your notebooks do. For me, Evernote provides the intelligence that I need.

To be honest, my implementation of Evernote is far from the most creative or efficient out there. I have read about tons of different ways to setup and utilize Evernote and will provide some useful references below. However, if you want a simple way to utilize this great tool look no further than my basic process.

Install Evernote everywhere! Evernote literally can run on just about every computer, smartphone, tablet and browser currently in use. Don't believe me, click [here](#). The best places to start are with the web clipper on each computer you browse on, the desktop version on your work computer (if allowed), home computers and finally on your tablet.

Open the desktop version and start creating your notebooks. The easiest way to do this is to create a logical notebook to match each of the paper notebooks you are using now. I have created over 27 different notebooks in the three years I have been working with Evernote. Seems like a lot, but consider all of the projects you work on, the staff you support or manage, the clients that you serve, etc. All of the information you generate through your life needs a logical home that is easily

found. For example, I have 7 direct reports and another 3 I indirectly support; each of these folks has their own notebook in Evernote where I organize all of my communications with each of them. I have a notebook for my boss, a general notebook for general stuff, a notebook for this blog and many others.

Create one additional notebook called "unprocessed" and set this as your default notebook. I recently created this additional location to keep track of all information that has not been categorized yet. Think of this as your stack of unprocessed paper in GTD terms.

Figure out your Evernote email address by visiting the Settings screen. This simple little email will allow you to literally capture anything and everything from any device that has email capabilities. I use this functionality from my Blackberry and it is here that I utilize the "unprocessed" folder. Any email I send to Evernote is automatically stored in this folder. Whereas if you are utilizing the Clipper or the Desktop version you can drop your notes directly into their proper location.

Start creating tags for each note you create. A tag is simply another way to cross-reference information. As an example I have regular meetings with each of my direct reports called "PMIs" which is simply an acronym for "personal management information" or something similar. Because I have a notebook for each direct report I will place my notes for each meet-

ing in their appropriate notebook and tag the note as "PMI" as well. This allows me to find notes by people and by topic without having to utilize the search tool.

That's it! Simply following the above steps will set you on your way towards a true virtual filing cabinet. In fact, I am slowly moving away from physically filing paper in manila folders by scanning most every piece of paper I want to save. I have found that it is faster to do this up front and a lot faster later when I am trying to find things. Think of filing a piece of correspondence into a folder and 2 years from

now you try to find that same piece of paper in your two or four drawer filing cabinet after having forgotten how you labeled the folder. What you end up doing is going through 2-3 different potential folder names trying to locate the folder and then in the end you go through every folder in your cabinet. Now, if you had scanned that document, placed it into a vir-



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tual folder on Evernote and added a tag most likely you would have found what you were looking for in about a minute...on your iPad wherever you may be working at that moment! Amazing!

If you are already using Evernote and find my process a bit simplistic, check out some of the resources below for some additional ideas.

Other Alternative Evernote GTD/Productivity Implementations:

<http://www.jasonowens.com/evernote-gtd-and-more-to-get-organized/>

<http://darrencrawford.com/my-simple-gtd-evernote-combo/>

<http://www.40tech.com/2009/08/25/getting-things-done-gtd-in-evernote-with-only-one-notebook/>

Random ways to use Evernote:

<http://www.openforum.com/idea-hub/topics/the-world/article/14-practical-ways-to-use-evernote-guy-kawasaki>

<http://evernote.tumblr.com/>

A real balternative to Evernote - Springpad:

<http://www.40tech.com/2011/02/03/springpad-gets-even-better-again/>

Processing

Get rid of paper now! Get rid of the legal tablets, the spiral binders, the scraps of paper, the napkins and your sweaty palms! You will never truly leverage your tablet while still using your paper and pen as a crutch! Kind of like riding a bike, you can never truly ride on two



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Why get rid of the paper? Well, what is the point of having an iPad at work to simply read email, surf the net in meetings and play Angry Birds? You can do all of these things on an iPhone or a Droid. Use your iPad to surf the internet and your co-workers will think you are wasting their time in meetings! However, if you use your iPad to save you time later and provide value for your co-workers by taking and sharing notes immediately; you will truly justify owning such a convenient device. So, how is possible to take notes fast enough with an iPad?



Step 1, get a good stylus

In all honesty, the best way to truly leverage the value of the iPad is to start writing on the screen. Everyone who has tried to type on an iPad knows that the keyboard is not ideal for ex-

tensive typing. For me, I did not really understand how the iPad would improve my productivity until I was able to take advantage of the electronic notes I took using a stylus and note taking app. Taking notes by typing on the screen just did not seem realistic.

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one of the biggest problems I used to have with productivity and data capture was the process of processing all of the notes I generated on a too regular basis at meetings. This information would wallow in my notebooks which was fine as long as I had the notebook with me, but not so fine if I slacked from processing the action items on each page. I would love to say that I am the GTD poster child, but I am far from it; I just was not consistent at processing my daily notes. And, even when I was consistent; I was never great at taking all of this knowledge from my notes and placing them into an index-able filing system. Trust me, I tried everything from legal pages which I would file into neatly labeled file folders to loose leaf pages that I would place in project binders; both of these methods worked, but the processing work to maintain these systems was just too much of a pain for me to be consistent.

Step 2, get a good note taking app



The first app that relatively worked for me was Penultimate. Finally with this app I was able to take notes in a meeting and then send these notes to

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Evernote for archiving. This all worked great until Penultimate changed the interface a bit almost forcing the user to take notes in Portrait Mode. This drove me nuts, as I like to take notes with the iPad sitting in landscape sitting on the conference table in front of me.

So, after a recommendation from my brother-in-law I tried NoteTakerHD (a detailed review can be found below). This app really worked for me for almost 6 months. NotetakerHD truly allowed me to keep up with notes at a meeting and it allowed me to easily archive all of my notes to Evernote for easy organizing.

So, if you want to truly start leveraging the iPad and you are not confident in your typing abilities on the iPad, buy a stylus ([Stylus Reviews here](#)) and try out one of the numerous note taking apps out there.

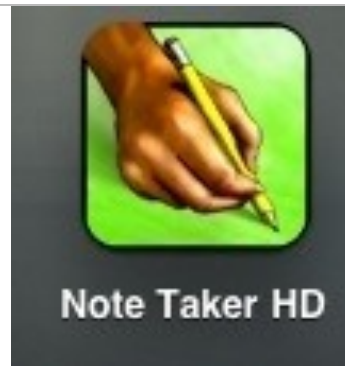
SECTION 1

Notetaking Apps

The testing process was definitely not scientific but I believe I gave each application enough of a stress test to warrant my conclusions. In summary I tested all of the apps at a conference where I needed to take lots of notes across about 10 different 60 and 90 minute sessions. The idea was to use a different app on each of the three days that I was there which I felt would yield sufficient data. I ended up changing things a bit by using Evernote with the iPad keyboard during one session and then attempting to use Penultimate during another session only to quickly abandon the effort for the much more usable UPAD. What follows is a summary taken from each of my detailed reviews as well as some parting thoughts on each and a link to the app on the App Store.



NotetakerHD



[NotetakerHD](#): \$4.99

First Impressions at the conference

Writing is very smooth and natural

Screen layout is clean and non-distracting

Open-In to Evernote worked well, but the note name in Evernote is not in anyway related to the page name in NotetakerHD, wish I did not have to name the note twice

PROS

Still amazingly powerful tool focused on hardcore note taking

Documents can now organized in folders...much easier easier to organize lots of notes

Still easy to insert pictures into a note page, the pictures are appropriately sized to the page and very easy to manipulate

A lot easier to name documents, in the older version you had to click on settings and then navigate between two screens, now the user just has to click on the file name

Much quicker and more intuitive access to manipulate the file, I.e. export options, stapling, deleting, etc.; whereas before the user had to press and hold on the file-name to be presented with the options

Easier to staple documents together right from the navigation screen

CONS

Complicated to learn for the casual user, even for the experienced user moving to the new version; read the release notes and the documentation!

V6 update takes some getting used to with a slightly different look and feel

Lots and lots of buttons! See con #1!



SUMMARY

After having worked with UPAD, Writepad and Penultimate NT is still my go to note taking application. The interface is pleasing to the eye, the writing is smooth, the functionality is vast and NT simply works consistently.

[My detailed review is here.](#)

Writepad



[WritePad](#): \$9.99

First Impressions at the conference

Very distracting to watch the recognition while taking notes, distracts from the presentation

After almost 2 hours of pre-training I still found it hard to keep up with the speakers

Even with improving recognition, it still was not good enough to eliminate errors

Sync with Evernote worked great and provided a nice text document that could be easily filed and shared

Consider mode where you simply view your writing and then review the recognition later like VR systems in radiol-

ogy; editing later is not a big deal especially if this helps improve recognition

PROS

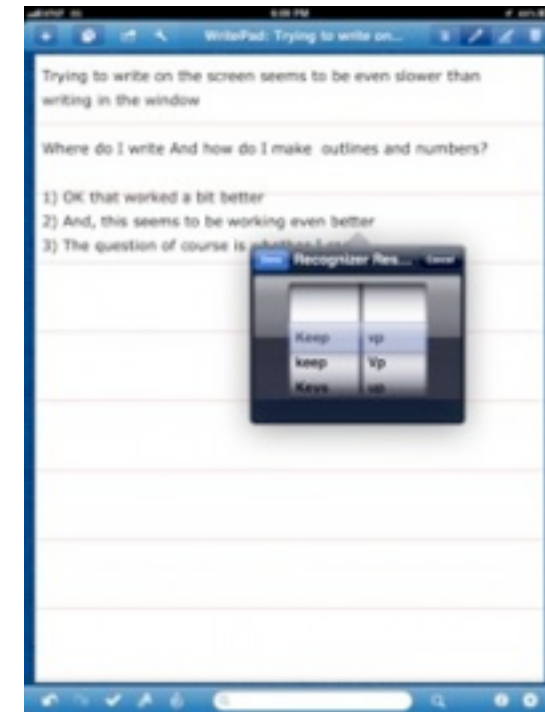
I love having my notes transcribed, better than my terrible handwriting

Excellent sync options, although you can either sync to Evernote OR sync to Dropbox; not both at the same time

There are lots of options for customization, it would take a 2000 word review to cover all of the options this app provides

CONS:

A real long learning curve! I literally practiced for an hour along with reading the release notes and the documentation before attempting to use the app to take notes during a conference



The process to correct words with the alternatives window is difficult and requires several clicks. Editing may be best left for another application like Evernote

Takes a real skill with your fingers and your stylus to be efficient with this app. I found that it took a combination of writing smoothly and navigating with my fingers to get the words down

The recognition and the function layout is just not efficient enough to take lots of notes in meetings, classes or any other function requiring a lot of writing.

SUMMARY

Overall I love the concept of this app. Working in radiology I am utterly convinced about the benefits of computer recognition applications, specifically voice recognition. However for the office worker the concept of hand-writing recognition makes sense as well. The problem in Writepad's case is that it just does not work well enough to allow the note taker to be efficient. The whole experience reminded me of a failed voice recognition project I managed about 10 years ago. I oversaw an upgrade that was supposed to make the application more efficient for the Radiologists so that they would not be wasting so much time editing their own dictations. Well, I also got to oversee the de-install of the application; the upgrade did not improve the experience for the radiologists! Even now with our newly installed voice recognition application we

have dedicated transcriptionists that validate that the recognition is working correctly for each individual radiologist! So, until hardware gets faster and the software gets better I feel that handwriting recognition may take some time before it is truly efficient enough for the professional.

[My detailed review is here.](#)

UPAD Lite



First Impressions at the conference

Nice writing feel

Nice screen layout

New pages are added to the front of a notebook, rather than behind, kind of annoying

Like the different ways to set the background

A lot of functionality for a free app....honestly

Note page layout very similar to Penultimate

Export functionality is neat, easy to choose which pages to export

PROS

Nice writing feel

Nice screen layout

Flexible background, i.e. grid, lined, blank, etc.

Tons of functionality for a free app....honestly

Export functionality is neat, easy to choose which pages to export

CONS

New pages are added to the front of a notebook, rather than behind, kind of annoying

Blurry output in Evernote (JPG vs PDF utilized by NotetakerHD)



SUMMARY

You are probably wondering what exactly is the difference between the Lite version and the full UPAD version. I really did not know until I checked out a comment board which stated that the Lite version limits the user to 5 or less notes/pages.

This would be a problem if you plan on keeping all of your notes in UPAD or if you like to keep a different notebook for every topic. I would suggest that the better process would be to have a few notebooks for your standard items of business and then simply keep these sync'ed with an Evernote account (see Evernote section above) for storage and reference; remember that Evernote does try to recognize writing in an effort to better index your info. With this said the Lite version is simply an excellent hand-writing app to start with as the functionality is complete, easy to use and smooth.

[My detailed review is here.](#)

Notability

I was first intrigued by [Notability](#) by its \$1 price tag (a short lived promotion I believe), second by some nice comments out on the [iPad Productivity LinkedIN group](#) and third because the reviews in the app store where just glowing. So, without further delay; here is the review.

PROS:

Clean interface that is extremely easy to understand and learn

Excellent Dropbox support that is simply seamless

Nice note organization features including support for folders and easy note movement between folders

Wonderfully seamless transition between typed notes and hand-written notes

Efficient PDF notation features vastly easier and cleaner than Good Reader

Multiple themes to change the look of the app, varies from “Clean” to “Colorful”

Useful image editing feature including cropping and annotations

CONS:

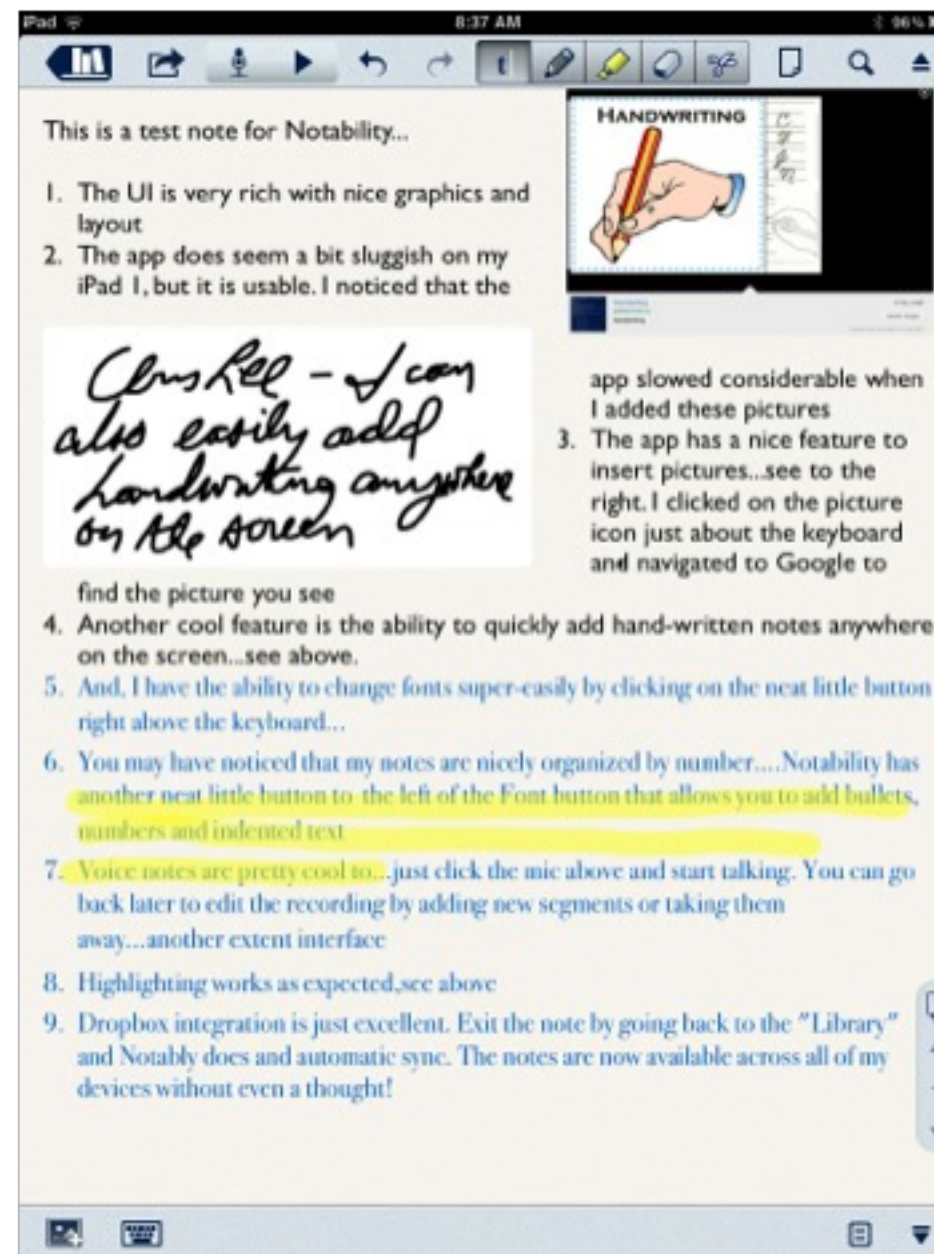
Slow on the iPad1 (mitigated by killing background apps)

SUMMARY:

After using this app for about a week at work and at home I can honestly say that I am dropping it on my

launchpad. In fact, I may even stop using Apple Notes and Good Reader altogether. Notability works great for me and even with a touch of sluggishness I am more productive with Notability than I am with my old setup, [again described here](#).

I think the best way to show how the app works is to show what the app looks like while being taken through the paces of note taking. Below is a sample note I created that shows some of the different modules and functions within the app. As you can see, Notability is easily able to integrate lots of media types all in one note. The “theme” used below is “Colorful”.



Like other hand-writing apps Notability has a writing “region” or “zone” that appears at the bottom of the screen for easy writing entry. Here is a picture of what this zone looks like (app setup using the “Clean”



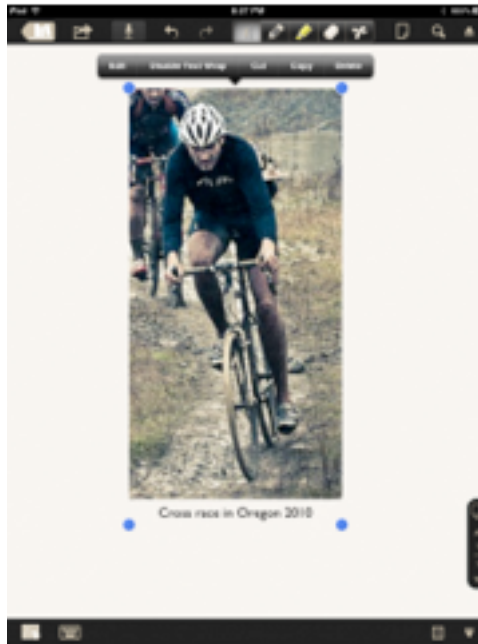
Theme).

Notice the adjustable auto-advance feature that is standard on most well-designed note apps. The window that appears on the sheet above is adjustable in size and position with a select and drag as well. [NotetakerHD](#) does have the ability to switch the auto-advance region from the right to the left, but Notability limits you to just the right.

One of the coolest features of Notability is its image editing functionality. The app lets you crop, resize and even annotate pictures that have been imported into a note. Check out the picture below in its original form.



Now, here is the picture after a bit of painless cropping.



In the year and a half I have worked with the iPad I have yet to find an app that seamlessly combines so many functions in one... a feature-packed text editor, a complete stylus-note-taker, an annotator, a dropbox accesser, a productivity organizer and even a simple image editor all wrapped in one for the low, low price of \$.99! Given these features why would you wait to try Notability! For \$.99 just give Notability a try and see for yourself!

For a few more photos [check out my slideshow out on Google+](#).

A special thanks to [Dvortygirl](#) on Flickr for the great notebook picture at the top of the post. [Check her out here](#) for some excellent photos across many genres...most are **“Creative Commons-licensed content for commercial use”**.

Another thanks to Bikeranger out on Flickr. [Click here for more of his creative commons-licensed content!](#)

SUMMARY

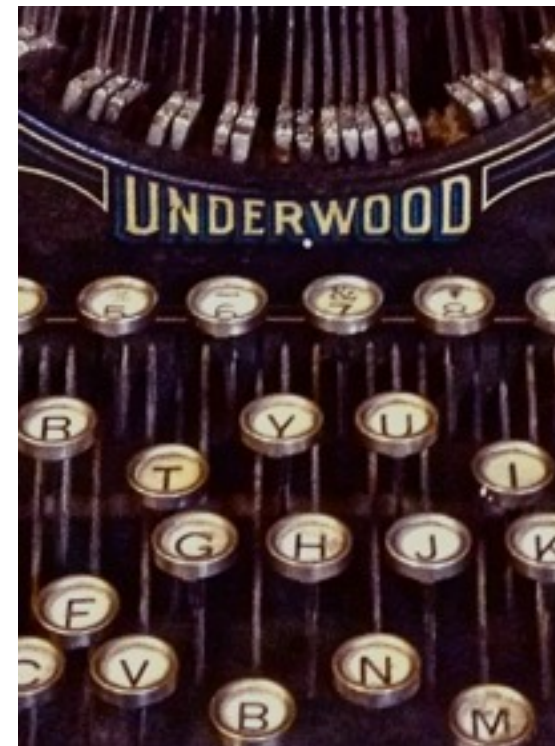
As you may have seen on the app store there are far more than 3 hand writing apps, in fact there was 44 when I checked yesterday. A review of four of them is hardly an exhaustive review. after having only reviewed the three apps, I would not hesitate to recommend NotetakerHD as the tool to you if you are ok paying out the \$4.99. That said, if you are still not sure about writing on an iPad give UPAD Lite a try, you will not be disappointed. As I mentioned in my WritePad Post; just stay away for now.

Typing or Writing?

DATA INPUT ON THE IPAD

Not convinced that writing with a stylus on the iPad is the best way to go? are you pretty comfortable typing on the iPad? Do you already have a keyboard iPad case or an aluminum Apple Keyboard? Well, read on because the stylus may not be the way to go for you...in fact writing may just be slower.

Not convinced that writing with a stylus on the iPad is the best way to go? are you pretty comfortable typing on the iPad? Do you already have a keyboard iPad case or an aluminum Apple Keyboard? Well, read on because the stylus may not be the way to go for you...in fact writing may just be slower.



I have been wondering about whether writing or typing was faster for sometime. In the first post above I recommended that the easiest way to transition into storing information digitally was to simply purchase a stylus and one of the numerous note taking apps described above. is the stylus truly the best method? I decided to truly find out for my-

self.

Before I get into the results of my "science" project, I want to give a little history. I received my iPad as a gift almost a year ago and initially found typing fairly awkward, so much so I

convinced myself that I could never be efficient enough typing in meetings or writing long emails. So, I took my own advice and went down the stylus/note taking app road. This worked great through most of last year into early summer 2011. I had developed a decent workflow with NotetakerHD where I had notebooks for each of my direct reports as well as a general notebook for meetings. These notebooks were stored locally to my iPad and then sync'd to my home computer as a backup; there is no automatic cloud syncing with NoteTaker. My "ideal" workflow would be to send pages from the notebooks to Evernote for archiving. In reality, I often slacked on this export step which resulted in a whole bunch of hand-written notes in Notetaker that had not been archived/saved. This was never a real problem because I could always find the page I was looking for...until disaster struck! I dropped my original iPad while walking down a set of stairs which of course killed the screen. So, I ended up losing about a month of notes...bummer!

So with new iPad in hand (free thanks to the Apple Store in Chicago) I decided to simply start typing directly into Evernote. Surprisingly, typing ended up working quite well as I was able to keep up with most note taking opportunities. I did have to struggle with keeping eye contact with whoever I was meeting with, don't want to be rude of course. The real benefit came when I needed to share the notes as my typing was a lot more legible than my hand-written scribbles. Now, after about two months I am completely stylus-less.

Now, for the empirical evidence! As I mentioned above I really wanted to test my theory that typing directly into the iPad would be quicker and easier than writing on a note taking application. To test the theory I chose a paragraph of 117 words from my most recent Cyclocross Magazine. I entered this same paragraph using the iPad, my PenGo Stylus on NotetakerHD and then on an old laptop. For the iPad and the laptop, I typed directly into Evernote whereas with the stylus I wrote in NotetakerHD, sent the note to Evernote and then filed it in the appropriate notebook with an appropriate tag. The clock started when I started entering and stopped when the text was filed in Evernote in the same location with the same tag. So, here are the results:

1. Typing on the iPad: 4:41 minutes total
2. Writing with the stylus: 7:11 minutes total
3. Typing on the laptop: 3:38 minutes

There you have it! For me, typing on the iPad is clearly faster and surprisingly is not a lot slower than typing on a full and familiar keypad. Writing is obviously slower and requires the additional steps with the data export and the filing in Evernote.

In summary, what works for me may not work for you. But, I would guess that with a little practice on the iPad keyboard you will be able to see similar results. I would also guess you could get your proficiency extremely close to a standard key-

board with with one of the numerous compact Bluetooth keyboards on the market. Seems to me to be a nice topic for a future blog post!

Let me know what your experiences have been with data entry!

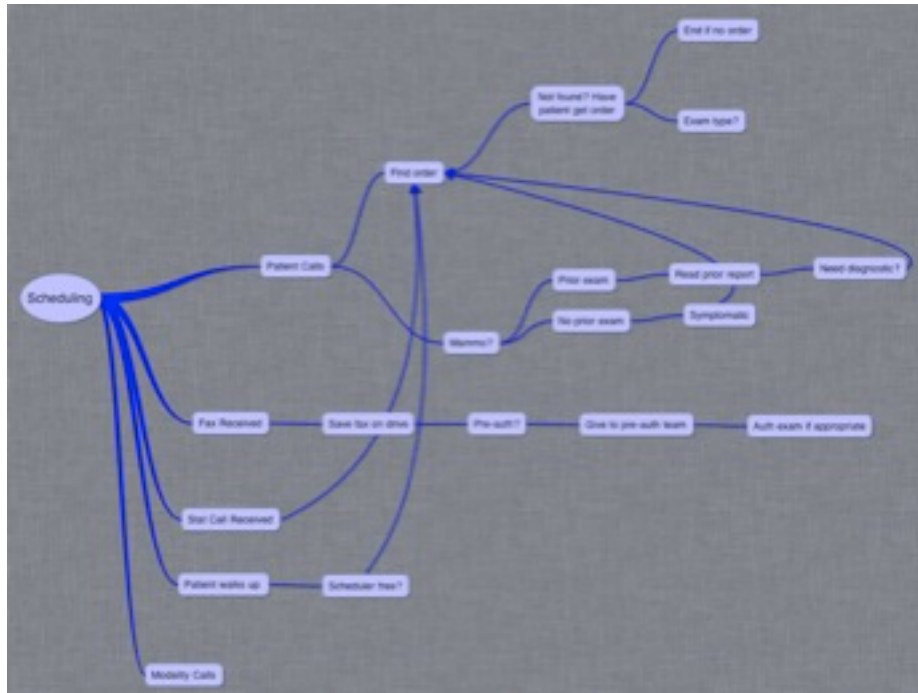
I have included a two additional resources [here](#) and [here](#) on the this topic as well as an [iPad typing guide here](#). I am definitely not the only person to come up with the idea of this sort of test and in fact there is even a [YouTube Video](#) essentially doing the same experiment.



[illegible]

 **iBooks Author**

Organize



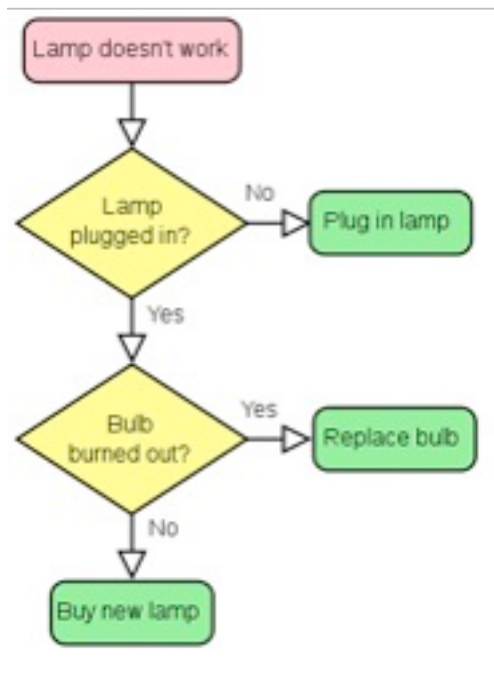
I do not intend to create a full mind mapping app review in the same vein as my [note taking app guide](#) (dynamic post that will be updated as I use new and/or updated apps) as I feel this review does such a great job comparing the major apps out there that I do not feel that I can add much to the discussion. Where I can add value however is in the case to use mind mapping in the first place, specifically on the iPad. And that is the topic of this initial post. With that, here are my first experiences with mind mapping on the iPad.

This post will focus on my initial thoughts and experiences with using mind mapping, but first, a little history. Mind mapping came into my consciousness when I started researching the productivity apps out on the [LinkedIn Getting Things Done discussion tool discussion](#). For this research I took a sample of over a hundred responses to see what tools the members were using to manage their productivity. What I found is [documented in detail on this post](#). The really interesting thing I noticed was that 19% of all respondents utilized some mind mapping software and of those respondents who had iPads over 20% utilized mind mapping. What was I missing? Why have I not used mind mapping yet? What the heck is mind mapping?

Let's start by checking out the easiest starting point for any research (maybe not the best), Wikipedia. [The post on wikipedia defines](#) mind mapping as follows;

"A mind map is a diagram used to represent words, ideas, tasks, or other items linked to and arranged around a central key word or idea. Mind maps are used to generate, visualize, structure, and classify ideas, and as an aid to studying and organizing information, solving problems, making decisions, and writing."

How is mind mapping different than a [flow chart](#)



or a [swim lane diagram](#)? How would mind mapping help in a [Lean process improvement project](#)? These are all of the questions I have going into my mind mapping project on the iPad!

I could simply quote from the Wikipedia post or do some additional research to answer these questions. However, what I really want to do is utilize mind mapping on my own with my iPad and then write about how mind mapping fits into my work life. I want to know how and where mind mapping helps with my work, specifically; how does mind mapping help me (and my teams) understand our own processes? How can mind mapping help us to break through some of the challenges we have at work? Can mind mapping help us to come up with more creative solutions to complex problems?

So, with the above questions in mind I start on my mind mapping research project. I have already started two mind maps, the one included above is the starting point for the process of scheduling a radiology exam. This is a very pertinent topic as I am currently acting as a coach on a Lean Project to improve our scheduling process. The second map is for the process of maintaining this blog. As a new blogger I am still learning all of the ins and outs of creating, maintaining and growing a blog...seems like a good process to mind map!

So far it seems clear that the iPad is a natural tool to utilize in mind mapping. Obviously the iPad is portable and easily brought to meetings and brainstorming sessions. Second, mind mapping is very visual and benefits from the use of a tablet as a diagramming tool; at least it does on iThoughtsHD. So far I am starting to see the benefits of using mind mapping on my tablet.

After over a month of heavy use iThoughtsHD continues to be surprisingly intuitive app for a rather complex focus. And, I have not really learned all of the short-cuts and more advanced tools yet. I wish I could find a task manager that worked as well. I fear that Omni is that too....just don't want to drop the 30 bucks yet.

In summary, I have to say that I have been thinking about problems in a whole new way since starting to mind map. Problems that seemed so complex and overwhelming to me in the past are now much more concrete and almost "solv-

able". In fact I had a major breakthrough during a long morning ride which resulted in the map I described above. Even if my boss does not see value in the product, I certainly have. In fact, developing the map itself was enough to provide a new focus for me over the coming months. And, this I think is one of the main benefits of Mind Mapping!

Review

As I wrote above, I use Evernote to capture web pages I come across at work or at home. I also archive important emails to Evernote using the Outlook Evernote Macro in addition to emailing articles that I receive through various mailing lists.



Photo by <http://www.flickr.com/photos/moleskineart/>



Instapaper

Instapaper

The problem is that these are not the only places I gather and process information. I spend lots of time on twitter via Hootsuite on the iPad and UberSocial on my Blackberry and have gotten into the habit of flagging interesting tweets as "favorites" so that I can read them later on the iPad in my "favorites" window. This works, but the information must be processed in Hootsuite which is really just a sophisticated twitter client that displays the shared URLs in a browser window; i.e. an active internet connection is required AND I have to read the articles in a browser rather than a "reader" application.

Instapaper acts as a wonderful intermediary processing application equally comfortable online or offline. And, the reading interface is nearly as pleasing as a Kindle (well, sort of) and equally as pleasing as the Amazon reader or the iBooks reader on the iPad.

Here is my Instapaper workflow:

Find something that I want to read on the internet (work computer, iPad, Blackberry, etc.)

Send the information to Instapaper using the appropriate interface (bookmark on computer and iPad, email using a special address, email a tweet from the twitter client)

Read later on Instapaper

Decide to: a. Delete, b. Favorite, c. Archive to Evernote, d. Send to someone else

That's it! Instapaper automatically pulls the full web page from the shared URL or Tweet and places the text in a format that is pleasing to the eye and easy to navigate. I then get to read the information and decide what is appropriate for deep archiving in Evernote. The real advantage here is as follows; Instapaper becomes a processing queue and a MUCH better interface to digest information than Evernote.

Sign up for your free Instapaper account today and give it a try on your computer. If you like how it works go ahead and download the client (\$4.99) for your iPad and tell me what you think.

Here are a couple of pictures to show you a graphical representation of my workflow:

My Reading Queue:



A Tweet I sent to Instapaper



Archive to Evernote



Summary

I hope you enjoyed this short eBook introduction to improving productivity on the iPad. As you will find the topics above only scratch the surface of utilizing your wonderful tablet to truly transform your productivity!

Feel free to leave comments out on the blog or by sending me an email to chris@tabletproductive.com!

Dropbox



Photo by <http://www.flickr.com/photos/moleskineart/>

The first step in leveraging your iPad for productivity is to start utilizing [Dropbox](#) (free) and [GoodReader](#) (4.99). These two apps when used together give an excellent 1-2 punch against the wasted time and paper. I have written many posts [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#) on why you would want to eliminate paper in the first place...in short, eliminating paper will make you more efficient. There are tons of apps out there that will help you do this, but I have found that the combination of Dropbox and GoodReader is the easiest way to get efficient. Not sure what Dropbox is or what it is used for, then check out the following links [here](#) and [here](#). Not sure about GoodReader either, well check this out [here](#), and [here](#). My post is a simple how-to on how to install and use both apps on your various computers (home, work, etc.) and your iPad. Give both apps a try and let me know what you think!

1. [Install Dropbox](#) on your PC or MAC

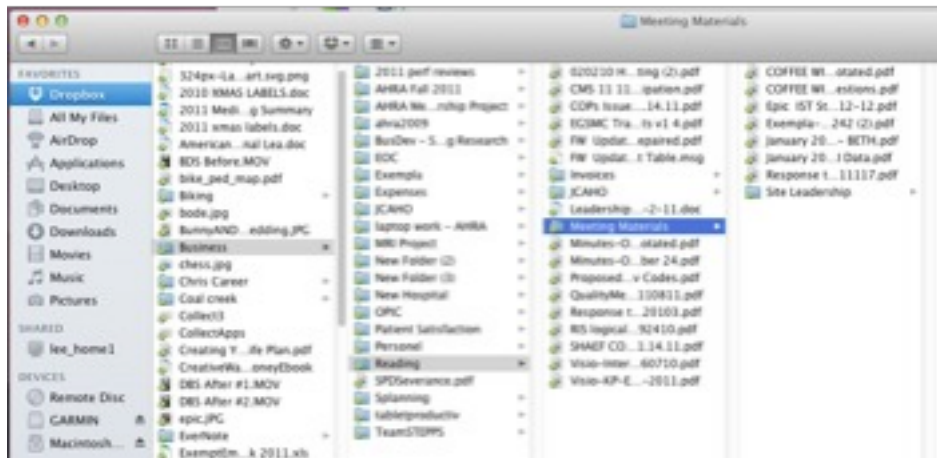
Dropbox creates a new directory in your “My Documents” folder on a PC or directly in your Finder screen on a Mac.



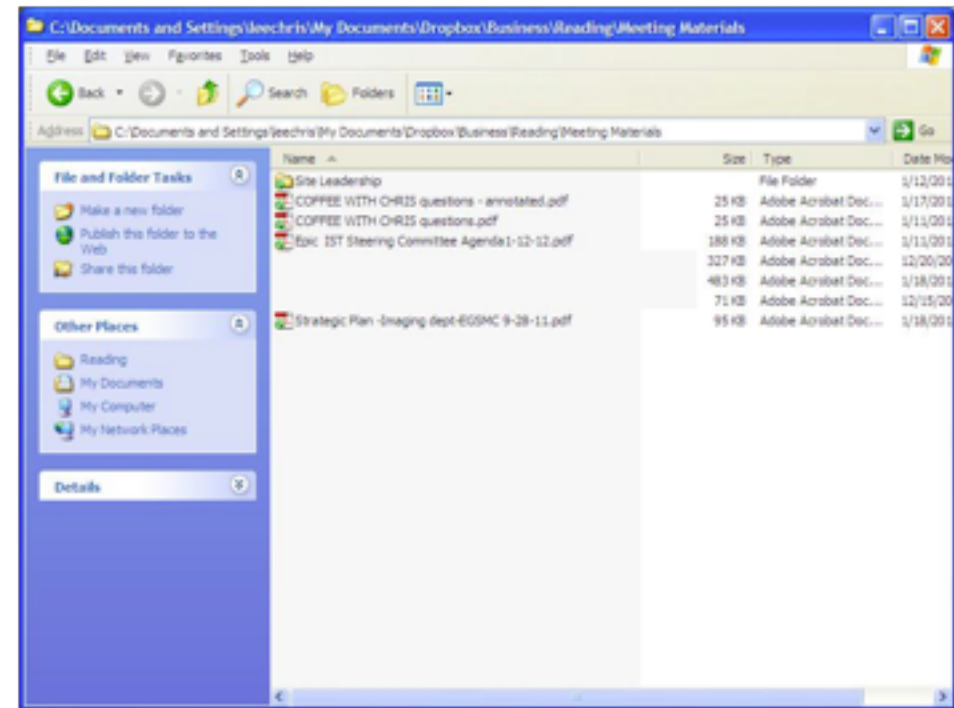
2: Setup a specific directory in Dropbox for your work information

I use Dropbox for a combination of work and home storage 1st to provide a secure backup of my important files and 2nd to share files between the various places I work. For work use, I created one specific directory called “**Reading**” where I copy all files that I need to access in meetings, on the road or even in a coffee shop. Think of this directory as your virtual printer, i.e. put any file you would typically print for any reason into this directory.

Here is my home setup on my Mac Mini:



Here is how the directory looks on my work PC (Window 2003); notice how Dropbox appears automatically under “My Documents”.



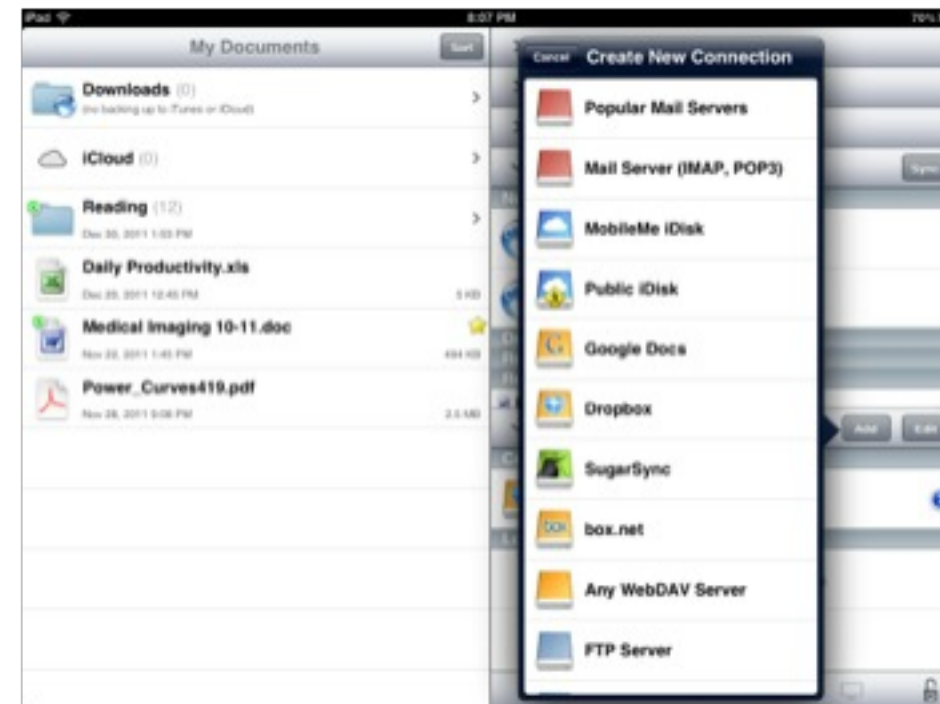
Just to review, Dropbox keeps the files between both computers synced in real-time without manual intervention.

I also created a shortcut on my work desktop directly to the my “**Reading**” directory. This allows me to quickly copy files from email or from applications directly to my Dropbox sync folder. Here is a photo of what my desktop looks like:



3. Install GoodReader on your iPad.

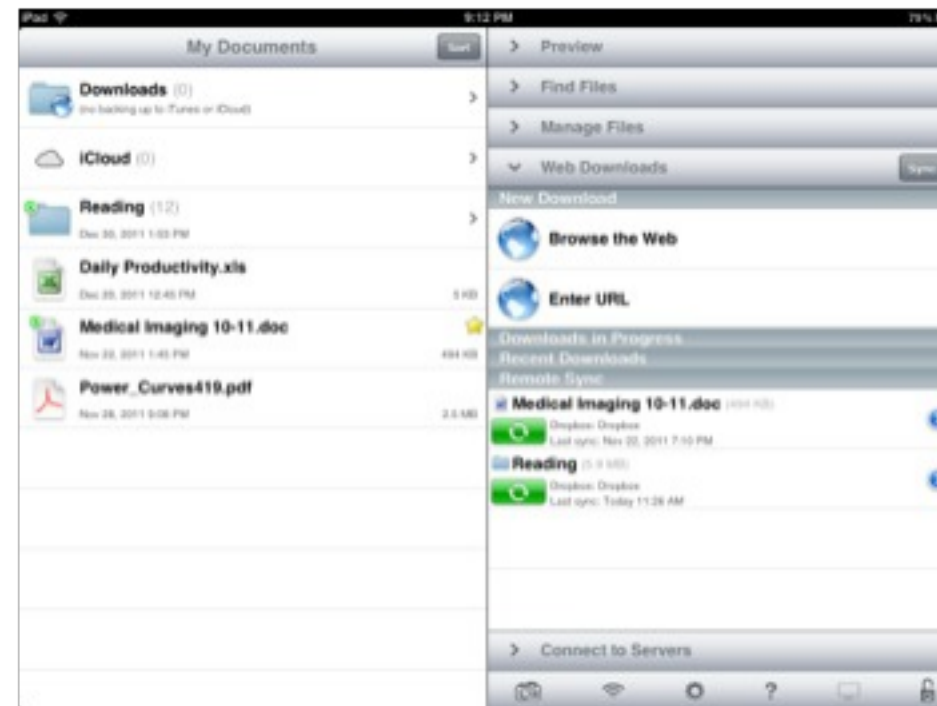
Once installed, you first need to connect GoodReader to Dropbox and then choose your specific sync directory specified above. Here are a few pictures to illustrate, the first shows the process of connecting to your Dropbox account by clicking “Add” in the “Connect to Servers” menu option. Select Dropbox and then enter your login information.



Once connected to Dropbox click on the word “**Dropbox**” under the server list. This will bring you the listing of files and folders in your Dropbox account. Now tap on your selected folder, in my case “**Reading**”. You will note a “Sync” button at the bottom of the screen; click this button and you are done!



Now that you are connected, minimize the “**Connect to Servers**” item by clicking the small arrow next to the title. You should notice your newly synced folder in the “**Remote Sync**” section just above “**Connect to Servers**”.

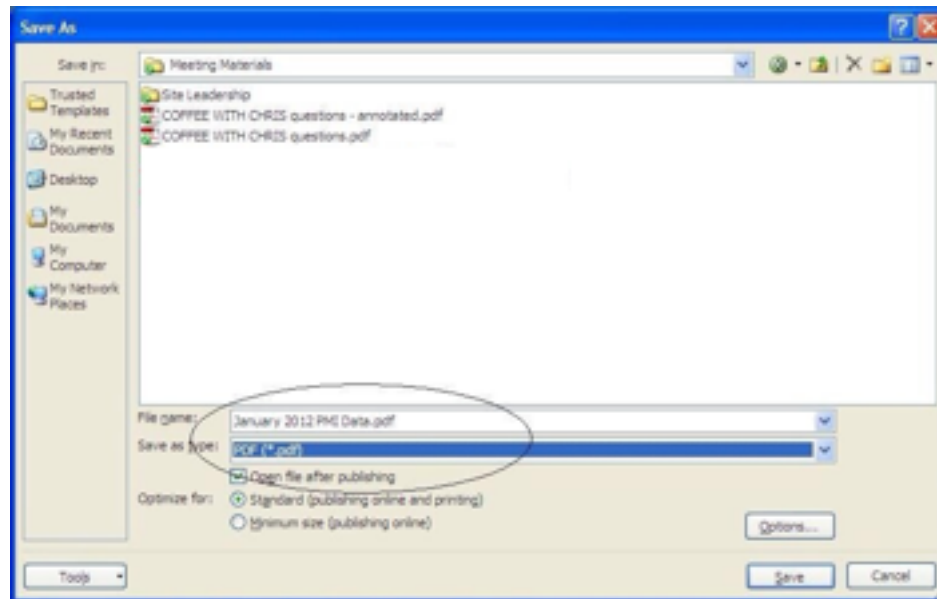


Click on the refresh button (circular arrows) right under your folder name, “Reading” in my case. This will now sync all the files you have copied to your folder, if any.

4. Start copying files to your Dropbox sync folder

GoodReader works best when you sync only PDF files. Good will display other file types, but it will not allow you to annotate the files with free hand annotations or typing. The best process is open any attachments you receive from co-workers like agendas, minutes, spreadsheets, etc. directly from email. With each of these attachments select File->Save As and select the PDF file type. Then, save the file directly to your sync

folder on your PC. Don't have the PDF file type? Just ask IT to upgrade your Office to 2010.



That's it! Give the above workflow a try at your next meeting and see how much easier it is to pay attention without all the paper!

For more resources on Good Reader check out [Stephen Glass-keys'](#) blog. He has a [whole series of posts](#) just on Good. For some great ideas on how to use Dropbox [check out this post here](#)...I am just getting started with some of these suggestions myself!