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A short guide to electronic note making for Postgraduate Taught students



Note making

Obviously, you will want to make notes when you read on-screen documents. You might want to make paper copy notes, or you might want to consider using one of the new note taking software products such as the free product Evernote® (2015). This is a well-known and sophisticated product used by many students. Its main rival has been the Microsoft product OneNote (Microsoft, 2015), which is now free. Needless to say, other brands are available.

The advantages of note making software are that:

1. You can quickly copy either web addresses or actual web pages directly into an electronic notes system.
2. You can therefore index or tag individual pages to find them quickly in the future.
3. You have immediate access to the original text, which is helpful to make sure you are not plagiarising.
4. You can take a series of notes and then manipulate them to help you decide how to structure an essay.
5. The material is available, well organised, compact and safe; it is not going to go missing, nor get lost, like paper notes so often do.
6. Best of all, it does not need to be retyped.



The downside of electronic note making

Plagiarism is a potential problem. So you must always be completely certain which words in your electronic notes are yours, and which words are quotations from other people. We recommend a **colour coding**

system, or very different styles of type to distinguish between:

- quotations from authors
- your summary of the text of other writers
- your own thoughts and comments.

Below are some examples using Evernote® software.

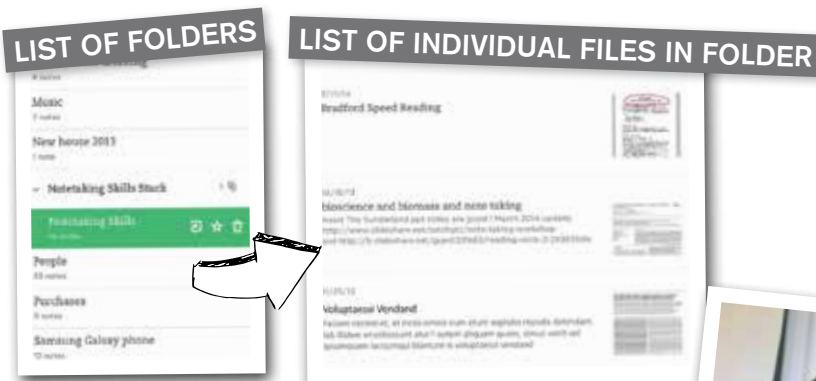


Figure 1a & 1b. Evernote® folders (Source: Personal collection).



Individual pages can be annotated and highlighted

Figure 2. Evernote® highlighting using Skitch™ software (Source: Personal collection).

The advantages of note making software continued:

Combining different kinds of materials which contribute towards your assignment.

If you are able to use a scanner on a PC, laptop, or take a photo on

a phone, tablet or other device, you can combine electronic note taking and paper copy notes. Simply scan the images of your paper copy notes and incorporate them into your electronic note system.



TOP TIP

Use electronic note taking software to collect class notes, webpages, downloads, scanned images, sketches and your random ideas when you are on campus. Then synchronise your material and it's all available for instant access, wherever you are.

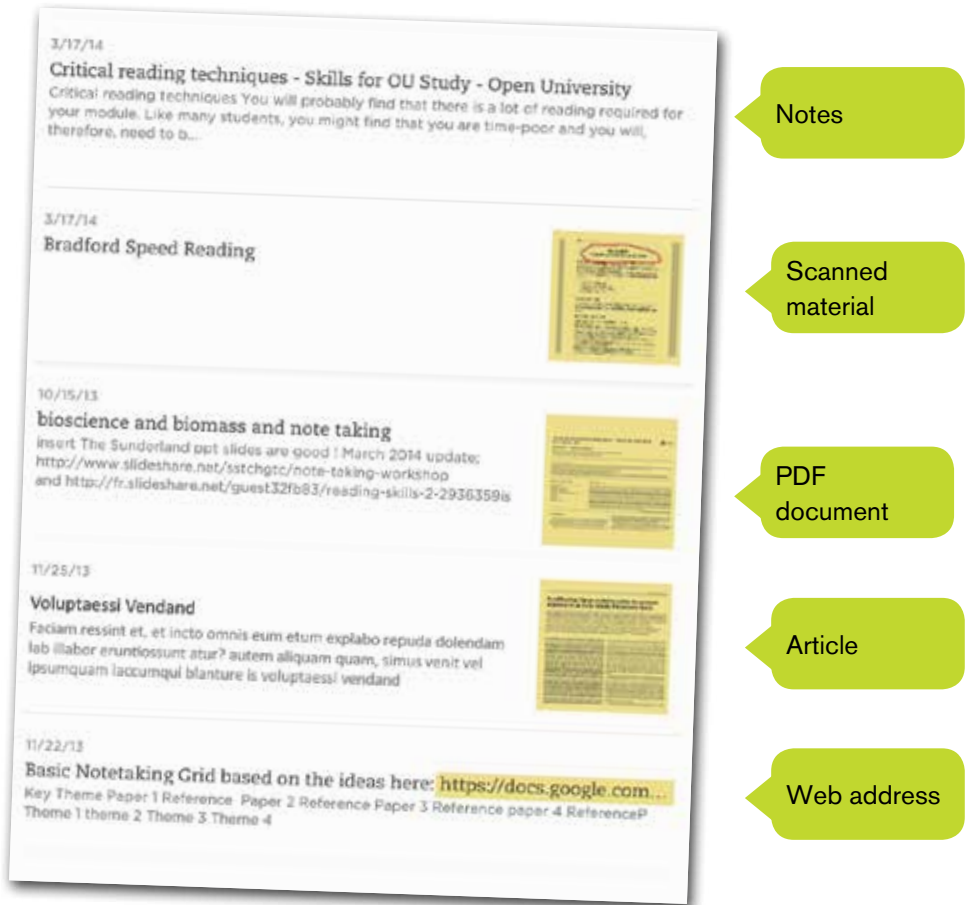


Figure 3. Range of material in an Evernote® folder (Source: Personal collection).

There are lots of YouTube™ videos about both OneNote and Evernote. However, they tend to be of variable quality and a lot of the participants are very enthusiastic and speak too quickly!

EverNote Clearly® is an especially useful application. It strips the background text and images from

website pages, and just leaves you with plain text, which you can annotate or highlight using Evernote.

It's available here:

<https://evernote.com/clearly>

There is much to say about electronic note making software. You may find it a particularly useful addition to your study skills.

References

Evernote (2015) **Evernote website** [online].

Available from: <http://www.Evernote.com>

[Accessed 25 February 2015]

[Market-leading electronic notes package. Includes an extremely useful add-on called "Clearly".]

Microsoft. (2015) **OneNote website** [online].

Available from: <http://www.onenote.com>

[Accessed 25 February 2015]

[Microsoft's very well reviewed note-making package. It was made available for free in March 2014].

Academic Skills Centre. February 2015.



Name	Function	Web address
Dropbox	Cloud-based storage and sharing software	www.dropbox.com
Evernote	Online personal note service	https://evernote.com
Flux	Screen brightness	http://stereopsis.com/flux
Google Drive	Cloud-based backup and document creation software	https://drive.google.com
iDrive	Cloud-based back up service	www.idrive.com
Instapaper	Saves material for later and syncs it across different devices	www.instapaper.com
Microsoft OneNote	Online personal note service	http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/onenote
Microsoft OneDrive	Cloud-based storage software	https://onedrive.live.com/about/en-gb
Narrator	Screen reader	http://windows.microsoft.com/en-us/windows/hear-text-read-aloud-narrator#1TC=windows-7
NaturalReader	Screen reader	www.naturalreaders.com/download.php
Pocket	Saves material for later and syncs it across different devices	http://getpocket.com
Readability	Cleans up clutter within online text	http://readability.com
VoiceOver	Apple screen reader	www.apple.com/accessibility/ios/voiceover

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