

Writable Tablets Case Study

Device: Sony Digital Paper

Author: Ray Zwiefelhofer

Having spent three decades in the legal market, paper workflow is at the heart of most discussions. How is it printed? How is it stored? How is it retrieved and distributed? While there are great scanning and storage solutions in the market, two things keep me in the paper world, hand written notes, and printed paper for review, markup or signatures. I have tried many times over the years to fix this last issue. In fact, when the iPad came out I thought it would be the solution. However, writing on the iPad just hasn't worked for me. While I can retrieve documents on it, I'd prefer a larger view when reading or editing.

Along came Sony to the rescue. Several years ago, I was approached by the Sony folks to check out and provide feedback on a new up-and-coming device they call "Digital Paper". From the point of being handed an early device to look at, I knew I just had to have one of these. I am now on my second generation of Digital Paper and my excitement for this product and its usability is still high.

The device is no bigger or heavier than an 8 ½ by 11 legal pad. It looks like a legal pad version of the Sony eReader device but gives you the additional and surprising ability to write on it! It has two modes that were of interest to me. The first is a digital notepad that looks like a piece of paper. If you had this device in your hands, you'd really understand how cool it is. It saves notes in PDF format and the device's built-in memory is large enough that I could probably save years of my handwritten records. The second notable feature is the ability to store PDF documents on it. When reviewing a PDF document on Digital Paper, I must say it looks (and almost feels) like a piece of paper. One of my favorite options is that a new print driver (Digital Paper) is installed so that you can directly print to the device. Now any email or document can be printed to Digital Paper with one click. This comes in very handy as I travel a lot and have documents that I need to sign. I simply print to Digital Paper, sign, and then email back to the recipient. The device handles large PDFs with ease and allows me to easily swipe through pages with the handy scroll bar at the bottom to quickly navigate to any place in the document.

For comparison, I weighed one of our training manual PDFs and the 900 pages came in at 10 pounds, not something you want to casually throw in your briefcase. Sure, you could copy files to your computer. However, when it comes to an overall document review, the presentation and experience on a Digital Reader device is far superior to that on a notebook. My notebook only shows half of a document at a time, which is fine for reading content, but not ideal for when I want to review the entire page layout. Attorneys can especially benefit from the Digital Paper's split-screen view, since they can inspect contracts and make notes at the same time, while keeping everything digital. Another great feature is the tips on the stylus are replaceable, so you can add tips that feel like your writing with a pencil, rollerball, etc.

In today's security conscious world security is important, the Digital Paper device has password protection and encryption at rest, so we know your contents are safe even if you lose the device. Syncing is not a problem as the device supports WIFI, Bluetooth, or direct cable to sync to your PC. Just launched is a mobile app which is very handy for me at times I

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don't want to boot up the laptop to transfer a document. my paperless world is getting closer thanks to Digital Paper. As I was writing this article, Sony launched a smaller 10" version that will be fantastic and even more portable than my current 13". As you probably can tell, I'm sold on Digital Paper. With noteworthy innovations like this, it is very promising that my office will indeed be fully paperless one day.

Specifications: <https://www.sony.com/electronics/digital-paper-notepads/dpt-series/specifications#specifications>

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Device: Microsoft Surface

Author: Brownie Davis

Since introduction, I have been an avid user of the Microsoft Surface. Interest in the platform began years ago on a visit to the Microsoft campus which involved a session in their “Home of the Future” which ended up in a room full of prototypes. At the time, the concept of the Surface was rolled into a cabinet reminiscent of the old sit down pacman arcade games where the screen was below the level of a see through table top. It functioned with Windows, had multi-touch and seemed pretty neat. This was before touch screens were really as prevalent as they are now. We had a tester Surface Pro and Pro 2 devices, but I really started using them as daily driver starting with the Pro 3. Move on to today, I’m using the Surface Pro 2017 Refresh with Windows 10 1709. The device itself is very light, and a good usable size. The keyboard folds flat, protecting the front, and fairly strong magnets attach them pen when not in use. Some discussion has been had with hybrid tablets in how mobile notes taken on the device are and how easy it is to move the notes to a Desktop PC. This isn’t really an issue with a Surface. I no longer even have a desktop, using the Surface as my sole machine. Being on the Microsoft platform, it is very to share notes with other devices and co-workers using OneNote and SharePoint. The similarity of the experience on the Surface to writing on paper is only passing. There is a written word input mode, which is very good at deciphering even my terrible hand writing, but it pales in efficiency and accuracy against the attached keyboard. Drawn diagrams are the exception to the superiority of keyboard and mouse, but the drawing experience still feels quite different from paper. Then pen itself is well designed and not awkward to use, even over extended periods. There have been a few versions released over time, including a new one that has greater sensing ability for the amount of pressure applied to the tip. The device itself is very durable, showing little wear and tear over long periods of use and frequent air travel. The detachable keyboards utilize a soft cloth covering, which while nice does wear more quickly. They tend to fray around the edges over time and you might go through 3-4 keyboards over the life of a surface device. Moving on to the pen, they are pretty sturdy as well, with one exception. The tip of the pen can be fragile if the pen is dropped, with the outer black writing surface breaking and exposing the springy grey core. Microsoft has dealt with this by making the tips easily interchangeable, and in fact offering tips with different shape profiles for different users’ preferences and usage needs. Though it may not be popular to say, the Surface is a laptop/desktop replacement first and tablet second. It has many of the great tablet features, but is a workhorse, designed to fill the power laptop slot, while adding tablet niceties. As a result, many of its tablet features come as third party, or standard offerings from Microsoft. Since they are secondary, the native tablet feel is lost. I’d still recommend the Surface Pro as a worthy addition to the comparison, especially if you have heavier workloads and don’t want to carry two tablet/laptop sized devices.

Questions for the Case Study:

- 1) Platform and device being used
 - a) Windows 10 1709

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- b) Surface Pro 2017 Refresh
- 2) How convenient is it to carry the device around from meeting to meeting?
 - a) Very easy, it is light and compact. The pen magnetizes to the side.
- 3) How much effort is involved with moving your notes to your desktop computer?
 - a) I only use the surface.
- 4) How close is the experience to writing on paper?
 - a) Not very close. The tool of choice for written notes in Windows is OneNote, and then typing is generally faster and less error prone for note taking. Drawn diagrams is the exception.
- 5) How comfortable is the writing experience over time?
 - a) Being a laptop replacement, typing is always a better note taking experience, with the exception of hand drawn diagrams.
- 6) Durability of both device and pen
 - a) Device: Very Durable.
 - b) Pen: Generally good, but the top does break requiring replacement.
- 7) What were the compromises in a multi-function design pen tablet vs. laptop (surface being a laptop replacement)

Surface is a solid laptop replacement, even a desktop replacement, with enough capability and power to do pretty much anything you would expect of an office workstation, including compiling code.

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Device: iPad Pro

Author: Justin Dodd

This case study focuses on the 12.9" version of the iPad Pro. I have used this device for over a year in my daily routine and I hope that my analysis will assist you in determining if the iPad Pro is the right device for you or your attorneys. Let us start with the accessories: if you are planning to use the iPad Pro for business purposes, a pen and external keyboard are almost necessities. These are purchased separate from the device itself. Regarding the keyboard, the iPad Pro features the "Smart Connector" which eliminates past headaches of Bluetooth keyboards. No more are the days of re-pairing your keyboard or being unable to use it because the battery is dead. Simply connect your keyboard to the Smart Connector and it is ready for use. The Apple Pencil does function over Bluetooth. I have had no problems with needing to re-pair or loss of connectivity. The pencil receives its charge from the iPad itself, so if you head into a meeting and find that your pencil is dead, plug it into your iPad to charge it. According to Apple a full charge takes around 10 minutes, however it receives enough of a charge in just 30 – 60 seconds to last you the length of a meeting. The iPad will alert you when the pencil battery is low so that you know to charge it. Now that we have discussed the accessories, let us discuss the device itself. The iPad Pro weighs around 1.5 pounds naked and closer to 3 pounds once you attach the keyboard and case. It runs Apple's iOS operating system and is compatible with most apps that are available for the iPhone. For many people, there is no base level training required on how to use the iPad because it is so similar to the iPhone. The Microsoft Office suite is available from the App Store and I use Microsoft's OneNote for note taking on this device. The interface for OneNote on the iPad is very similar to that of the Windows client, so if you are familiar with OneNote for Windows you should have no problems navigating OneNote for iOS. If you want to synchronize your notes between your PC and your iPad, you need to have a Microsoft account. This is free to create if you do not already have one through work. Once you sign into the same Microsoft account on your iPad Pro and your Windows computer, your notes will synchronize seamlessly between the two devices without intervention. If you use Outlook for e-mail, there is an add-in for OneNote that gives you the ability to right click on an e-mail and send it along with any attachments into a OneNote page. This is particularly helpful for gathering correspondence in a single pane before heading into a meeting. Typically, I will gather my correspondence from Outlook into OneNote on my PC and then grab my iPad and head into a meeting. Personally, I prefer to write over type, so the majority of the time I am taking handwritten notes on the iPad instead of using the keyboard. The iPad Pro has excellent palm rejection technology and, as a left-handed person, I experience no screen jumping or unintended gestures when using the pencil. The pencil glides effortlessly across the screen and, more often than not, I find it easier to write with the Apple pencil than I do with a traditional pen or pencil. After returning from my meeting, I open OneNote on my computer and my handwritten notes are already in OneNote for my review. My handwriting is neat, so if the notes are solely for me, the majority of the time I will not convert them to text and leave as free-form handwriting. If I am collaborating or want my notes to be searchable, I will convert from handwriting to text. The OneNote application has a great 'Ink-to-Text' feature that is surprisingly accurate. If there are many notes, I will take a screenshot of them prior to conversion for comparison

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post-conversion. Once converted, I now have handwritten notes in text form that are searchable and easily sharable.

Overall, the iPad Pro is an excellent writeable tablet. Many of my attorneys have opted for the iPad Pro instead of a laptop to use as their travel device. For me, a heavy technologist who administers servers, SANs, switches and routers, the iPad Pro cannot replace my PC just yet. I have integrated it into my daily life however and after a year with it, I could not live without it.

Questions for the Case Study:

- 1) Platform and device being used
OneNote and iPad Pro (12.9")
- 2) How convenient is it to carry the device around from meeting to meeting?
Very convenient. It is lightweight and feels about the size of a yellow pad
- 3) How much effort is involved with moving your notes to your desktop computer?
No effort if using OneNote. Your iPad and computer constantly sync with the cloud, so they are always in sync with no effort
- 4) How close is the experience to writing on paper?
It is close, but different. Think of writing on glass with a pen and you're close
- 5) How comfortable is the writing experience over time?
It is comfortable. Occasionally I will readjust the orientation of the iPad, similar to what you would do with a piece of paper when you get near the bottom of the page
- 6) Durability of both device and pen
Pen is durable. The device, like most Apple devices, is somewhat fragile. I recommend a good and strong case for your iPad Pro just like you would buy a good case to protect your iPhone. If it is unprotected and you drop it, especially on a corner, chances are good that you will crack the screen
- 7) What were the compromises in a multi-function design pen tablet vs. laptop (surface being a laptop replacement)
I think it depends on what you do. For me, a heavy technologist, this is not a replacement but rather a supplement to my laptop. The lack of a mouse makes it difficult to use, for example, to remote desktop into a computer. For many of our lawyers the iPad Pro is a direct replacement for a laptop

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Device: The Moleskin with Pen+

Author: Kevin Sullivan

Concept – The Moleskin with Pen+ uses Moleskin notebooks with special paper and “smart” ink pen. The Pen+ is a Bluetooth device that you pair to your Win 10, iOS or Android device. As you take notes the pen uses a built-in camera to record your writing and then transfer the recording to an app on your mobile device. There is a purpose-built Moleskin app but it also supports other apps such as OneNote and Evernote. There is also the ability to record during the note taking process to capture anything spoken during your meeting.

This is a product that makes sense for some uses, particularly places where electronic devices might not be practical or allowed. You can write on the paper now and synch later.

Questions for the Case Study:

- 1) Platform and device being used – Moleskin with Pen+, platform is paper with iOS for the smart Pen+
- 2) How convenient is it to carry the device around from meeting to meeting? – Very convenient, no more effort than any pen and paper.
- 3) How much effort is involved with moving your notes to your desktop computer? – You can sync your notes live, as you write and there is on-board memory capable of storing up to 1000 pages of notes in off-line mode so that you can transfer them later. There is also a handwriting to text conversion feature that works fairly well. My one gripe is that if you take a long page of notes and convert it to text, the conversion process keeps the line breaks of your handwriting, it doesn't format the text into a logical paragraph flow.
- 4) How close is the experience to writing on paper? – It actually IS writing on paper.
- 5) How comfortable is the writing experience over time? – The Pen+ is a little bit larger and heavier than most pens but it isn't uncomfortable.
- 6) Durability of both device and pen – Same as any notepad and pen.
- 7) What were the compromises in a multi-function design pen tablet vs. laptop (surface being a laptop replacement) – Since this is a pen and paper the compromise is that it is a single purpose system.