

MS Office 2003 OneNote or How to Write Organized Without Really Trying

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I'm excited about the software program that I am using to write this article on. Usually I am grateful, pleased, or interested, or 90% of the time frustrated and foul mouthed about computer software. This is not just any program, mind you, but one that everyone with AD/HD can use and benefit from no matter what they do in life; students, educators, therapists, parents, writers, executives, professionals from all genre, and of course coaches, just to name a few that come to mind. And, just possibly, everyone else in the world. Mind you now, I am definitely NOT one to suggest that you put more money into the over bulging pockets of Bill Gates, but this program is an ADDer's dream. Actually it's been on my

computer for 3 years, and I've probably checked it out, tried it, did 'the tour', but have no memory of that moment in time.

Flashback to the S.A.T.'s: Office OneNote is to organization as chocolate is to depression. Eliminate post-it notes/loose pieces of paper and Prozac in one fell swoop, but keep the chocolate! (Just kidding about eliminating the Prozac - but post-it notes and loose scraps of paper are an ADDer's nightmare.)

This program automatically puts dates, times, and titles on everything. It has folders labeled "Projects" and within each 'Project' is: 'Miscellaneous'-(an ADDer's nightmare by the way!), 'Meetings', 'Helpful Tips', 'Research', 'Sections', and 'Subsections' (replacing post-it's), 'New pages', and 'Subpages' (again replacing post-it's). There are 'Folders' labeled "Classes" with all of the above subfolders for each class.

Also for students, there is a variety of stationary: 'Simple Lecture Notes', 'Detailed Lecture Notes', 'Lecture Notes and Study Questions', 'Math/Science Class Notes', and 'History Class Notes'. And as if that isn't enough, the L.N.S.Q. stationary has positioned throughout the page 'Today's Topics', 'Announcements', 'Homework', 'Lecture Topic: during the lecture take notes here' (honest, I swear, it really says that), 'Summary: after the class summarize notes here...'. The 'History' stationary has positioned on the page 'Topics': 'Important Dates', 'Important People', and of course 'Lecture Topic: during the lecture take notes here'.

Everything can be combined, saved anywhere, exported to MS Outlook, email, MS word, your cell phone, and lets not forget the ever useful PDA, which it loves to interact with.

Also, you can insert and move around audio, video, and picture files anywhere on the page, just as you can place and rearrange text anywhere on the page. At last, you can stop wrestling with 'word wrap' when you want to position a clipart. You can even share the notes with others on your network or the university/work network. That includes starting or joining a shared session! It has privacy passwords built in to keep your stuff safe for when you send it out into cyberspace. Oh yeah, and each page can be color coded!

Of course it has all of the bells and whistles that MS Word and MS Outlook have, like formatting and flags, including all of these ink pen colors that are beyond my knowledge, which I think has something to do with the Tablet PC that it can also interact with. And lets not forget about the fantastic stationary choices you can download that are too numerous to count, and far beyond anything that Hallmark could dream up. Some of which are practical and many are fun.

This program is the ultimate organizational tool. Check it out. I am hooked. Sadly, it is time to retire "notepad", my trusty and fast 'grab that info' tool that sits on my Quick Launch taskbar. After 10 years of service, may it rest in peace!

A TIP

At the risk of loosing your techie status; TAKE the TOUR to get an overview of the program and READ the HELP FILES to learn all about it. Actually, read the help files more than once. If you are one of those people who jump in first, mess up, and then read the instructions, you might not get all of the enjoyment and usefulness out of this amazing program and discover all of the special tools that it has to offer. And that also is the surest way to make it a complicated program that could overwhelm you instead of the easy one that it actually is. Ah, go on, take a peek at the instructions, I promise not to tell!

... AND A CONFESSION

You know that old saying about 'Keep it Simple', well apparently when one has ADHD that means writing down on a never-ending list on the fridge everything you do, where you put everything you will ever touch or put into your hands and everything about everything! I originally wrote this article on my laptop one week ago and today spent 2.5 painful hours desperately searching for it on my desktop pc. So now my growing fridge list will consist of which computer (I have 4) I have written what on. Of course, if I could figure out how to get my network to actually show the other computers in order to share files and folders (and believe me I have spent over a year trying) this would not be a problem. Also, if my mini-cruzer flash drive had been around my neck (where it has been every day for one whole year while transporting it, instead of in my pocket, which it fell out of on Pine Street between College and Main, in Burlington, VT) the article would have been retrieved from it, and I would have had 2.5 hours free! (And yes, I put down the exact location to nudge whoever found it into please returning it.) Oh dear, I've just dribbled over into a future column, coming soon to an email program near you!