

AN EVALUATION OF MICROSOFT ONENOTE AS AN INFORMATION MANAGEMENT TOOL FOR STUDENTS

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Microsoft OneNote enables the combination of digital curricular materials with student markup in an interface that is clearly organized and readily searchable. The program is especially effective on a Tablet PC but useful on the desktop as well. This evaluation is of interest to students and faculty members involved in curriculum management.

Microsoft OneNote has a well-designed interface that shows all of the course topics at a glance and provides access any part of the course with a few mouse clicks. Students can add their own markup in inserted space or as linked notes. A user-defined flag system allows for tagging and finding information rapidly. Further tagging can be added using eight pen colors and four highlighter colors. Audio files can be added directly to the page. Linked Internet resources and videos are displayed in context on the page. The search engine recognizes both typed and handwritten text, however a Boolean search is not yet possible.

A serious disadvantage of OneNote is that information cannot be imported from other file formats. Blocks of text and images must be placed individually into OneNote or copied individually from other programs. OneNote's elastic interface prevents added text labels from being anchored to the images; labels copied as part of an image are not searchable. This labor-intensive procedure means that most students will use OneNote only if the curricular material is provided in OneNote format. The excellent usability of OneNote in information management makes the added effort worth while for both faculty and students.