

Beginners' Guide to... Keeping notes with Evernote

Jot down thoughts and reminders, clip web data and synchronise across multiple Macs and PCs with this great free note-taking software.

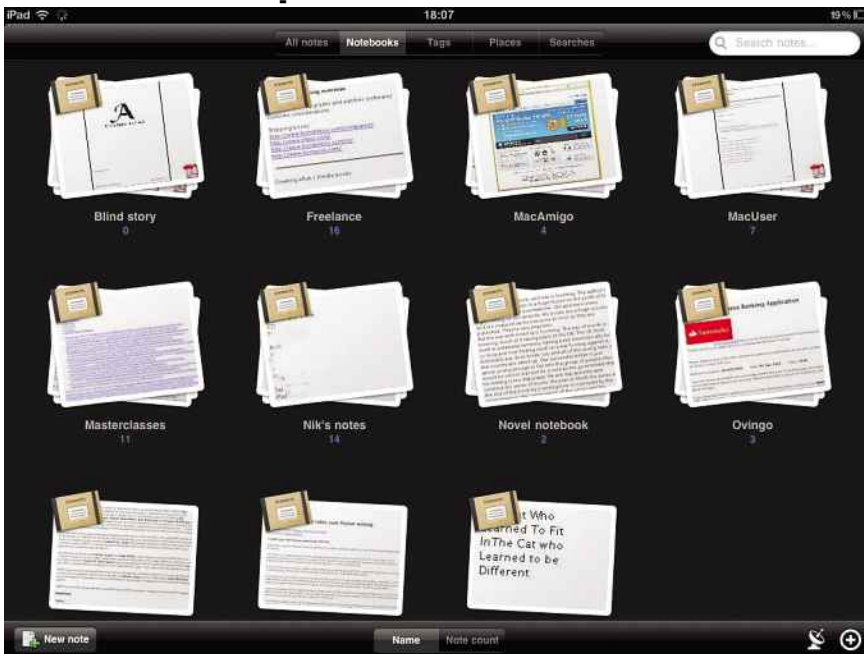
Your Mac is as good at keeping notes as it is at handling lengthy documents, complex spreadsheets and multi-megabyte photos. The trouble is, while these much larger files are easy to organise in the Finder, scrappy notes have a habit of getting lost. Evernote solves that problem by corralling them within a smart, well-organised interface, and then goes on

to synchronise them with other Evernote applications – on the Mac, iOS devices and PCs – over the web.

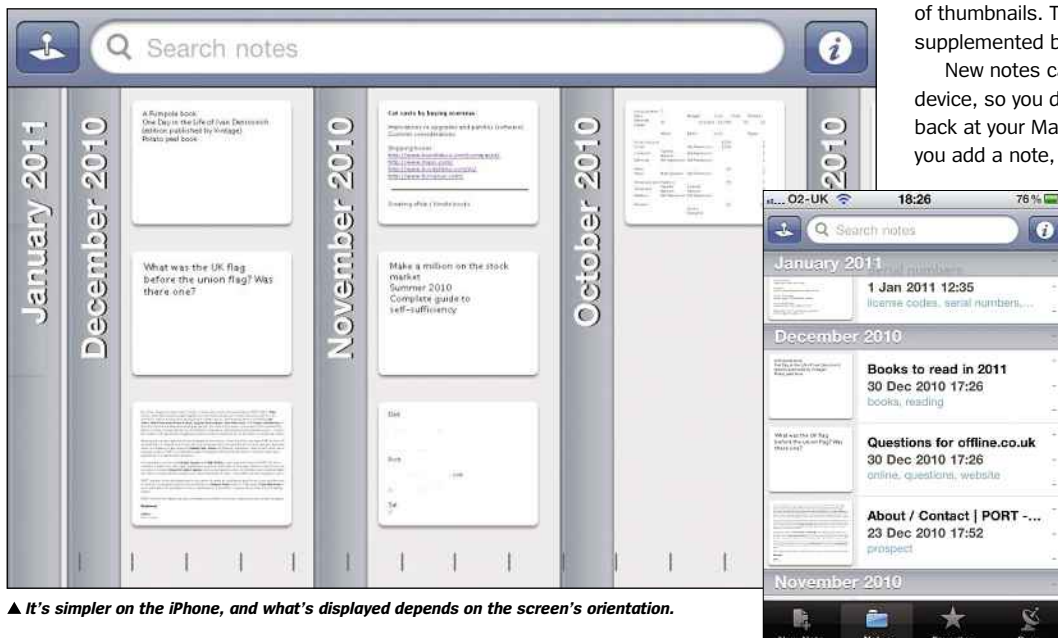
With comprehensive tagging, a lightning-fast search box and the ability to categorise your notes according to their subject or theme in separate notebooks, it's the first tool to have properly made obsolete the traditional spiral-bound notebook, and is

significantly more flexible than the iPhone and iPad's Notes application. Evernote is a free download from the Mac App Store (bit.ly/gO70aO) or from evernote.com. It's also available as a premium edition.

Here, we walk you through the main features of the iPhone and iPad and web editions, and pull out the Mac version's most important features.



▲ Evernote on the iPad shows your notebooks as loose papers, with the most recently added note on top.



▲ It's simpler on the iPhone, and what's displayed depends on the screen's orientation.

Evernote on iOS

Evernote is a multi-platform tool that works just as well on the iPad and iPhone as it does on a Mac or PC. The iOS edition is a single app for both devices, which can be downloaded from bit.ly/fc3vS.

The iPad version makes the best use of the 9.7in screen, showing your notebooks as a stack of loosely gathered papers topped by the most recently added note. It does this whichever orientation you've chosen. The buttons at the top of the display let you organise your notes in other ways: by date (all notes), by tags and by places, which organises drop pins on a Google map of the world to show where each image was created. This latter option is also available on the iPhone edition.

The iPhone app takes a far simpler approach to make best use of its smaller screen, but the orientation of the device has an impact on what it shows. Hold it in landscape orientation and you can drag backwards and forwards through a timeline of thumbnails. Turn it back upright and they're supplemented by titles, dates and tags.

New notes can be added from either device, so you don't need to wait until you're back at your Mac or a web browser before you add a note, which is great news for

anyone who regularly gets inspiration on the move.

iPhone users can add not only typed notes, but also images taken with the camera, just as Mac users can add iSight snaps, which makes Evernote – like SugarSync (see *MacUser*, 21 January 2011, p94) – an excellent tool for transferring images to your Mac without having to regularly connect to iTunes and perform a sync.

Evernote Trunk

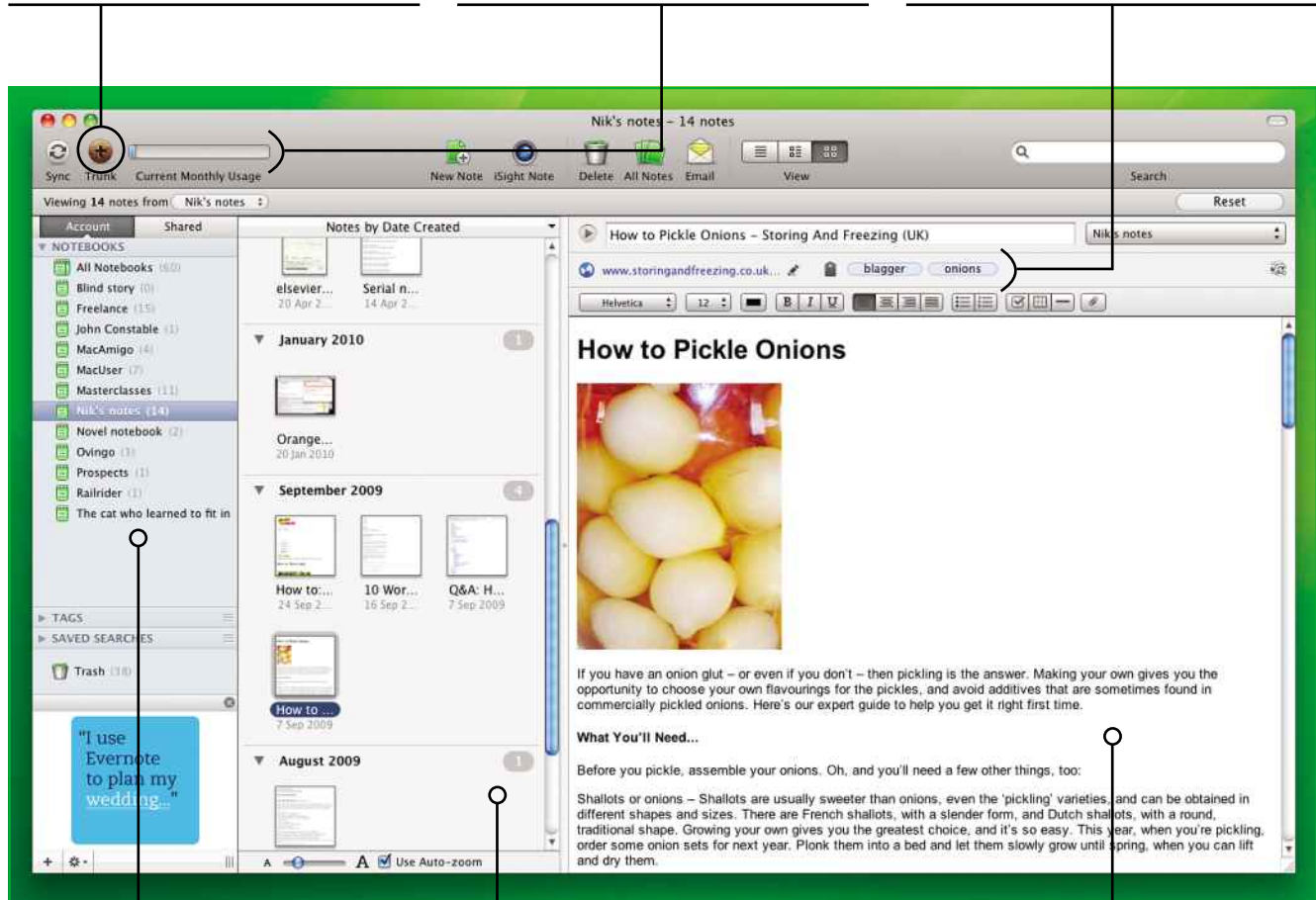
Evernote is complete in itself and can be used without reference to any other tool, but the Trunk function is the place to check out hardware add-ons (such as scanners that output directly to your account), third-party apps and external notebooks maintained by others that you might find useful, such as the Epicurious notebook of recipes. Although these notebooks update themselves, they don't count against your monthly allowance.

Current monthly usage

If you're using the free edition, keep a close eye on this bar. It shows you how close you're getting to your monthly bandwidth limit. Free accounts are allocated 60GB of usage per month. This equates to around 30,000 notes, 16 high-res images or 600 pictures from a mobile phone camera. Upgrading to a Premium account costs \$5 (about £3.21) per month or \$45 (about £28.90) per year and ups the bandwidth limit to 1GB per month.

Tags

Evernote has an excellent search tool, which pares down the number of notes on display to match your input. However, it also helps to tag your data with plain English words to help filter them later. Here, we've applied the words 'Blogger' and 'onions' to this note. Onions is self-explanatory, but Blogger relates to a website other than the one from which this was clipped, helping us associate it with other notes clipped for the same purpose.



Notebooks

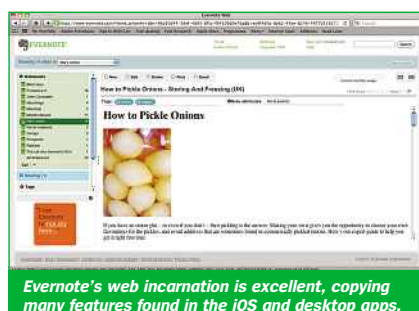
Your documents are organised into virtual notebooks. The numbers in brackets beside each one indicate how many notes each contains. Selecting All Notebooks at the top of the list shows all of the documents you've saved to your account. You can make your notebooks public on the Shared tab.

Notes

The contents of each notebook are shown in the central pane and can be organised by date, title, source or even the size of the note. Here, we're using resizable thumbnails to represent each note, but you can switch to a list or a mix of the two. We've also turned on optional grouping.

Note body

Just like an email application, Evernote devotes the largest part of the application interface to the body of your notes. Although notes you enter directly can be formatted with your choice of font, text size, weight, emphasis, alignment and so on, notes clipped from a browser are simplified.



Evernote's web incarnation is excellent, copying many features found in the iOS and desktop apps.

Evernote on the web

You won't always be able to get to your Mac, iPhone or iPad, but you can still access your Evernote documents online through a regular web browser.

The online tools are impressive and they copy many of the features found in the desktop and iOS applications, with a rich text editor; the ability to create, delete and edit notebooks; and the option to add tags to your new notes for filing.

When you first install Evernote, you'll be given the option to add a clipper button to Safari. This sits beside the address box and, when clicked, copies the contents of the current page, including its images and some basic formatting (although not all of it) to a notebook attached to your account. There's also a Firefox clipper, but this has to be downloaded separately as an optional extra. A link can be found in Evernote's Preferences.