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Keeping Track of Information with Evernote and OneNote 2007

For busy family lawyers keeping track of disparate types of information, there are several software-based note-taking and organization tools that may be worth looking into, such as [Evernote](#) and [Microsoft OneNote](#) (which [we wrote about in July 2007](#)). Evernote and OneNote can be used to store and organize a wide variety of information, including text and images from web pages, photographs and scanned images of receipts, handwritten notes, and business cards (to name just a few), and information typed in or “digitally handwritten” with a mouse or tablet PC. Both programs index all of the available text, even in images. (Images are OCR’d using Optical Character Recognition technology and indexed, automatically in Evernote, and by user command in OneNote.) OneNote 2007 is included with certain versions of [Microsoft Office 2007](#) (you may already have it installed and not realize it) and can also be [purchased separately](#) for a suggested retail price of \$99.95. Evernote has both a free version and a [premium version](#), currently for \$5 per month or \$45 per year, which allows for more storage space/uploads per month.

Workflow

There are several significant similarities and differences in workflow between Evernote and OneNote 2007. Both programs rely on a “notebook” metaphor in which you add text, images, and other information to digital “notebooks” in the respective programs. OneNote notebooks feature an intuitive organization technique that uses tabs. Tabs across the top provide access to different sections of the notebook, while tabs on the right allow you to access the pages within a section.

While Evernote has a less orderly organization scheme for its notebooks, navigating through search results is easier done in Evernote than it is in OneNote. Evernote shows several search results per screen (as do most search engines like Google or Yahoo!), while OneNote shows only one search result per screen. If you search for something in OneNote, you may have to flip through a lot of screens in order to find the results you were looking for.

Both programs make it easy to drag and drop various text, images, and other files and information into the notebooks. Importing selected information from webpages is easily done by clicking on a button installed in a browser toolbar; right-clicking and choosing the appropriate

command; or by dragging and dropping information from the browser into the program's notebook work area. Unlike Evernote, OneNote does not currently install a button onto the Firefox toolbar area for importing information, so third-party plug-ins may need to be installed if you wish to use a button for importing information from Firefox into OneNote. However, you can still drag and drop the information into OneNote or use an installed print driver to send the information to OneNote.

OneNote is a desktop software program you install on your computer's hard drive, with no corresponding online version. Evernote has both a desktop version and also a complete online version, although some features are more robust in the desktop version. The Evernote "Web Clipper" button allows you to save information from webpages straight into the online version of Evernote without needing a copy of the desktop version installed on that computer. You can sync up your desktop and online Evernote applications, and then access all of your saved notes and information from either version.

Collaboration

When it comes to collaborating and sharing notebooks, OneNote offers more features. OneNote lets you privately share notebooks with others on a network (such as a law firm computer network), e-mail static sections to others, and also allows live and private collaboration with others via a peer-to-peer feature called OneNote Live Sharing. Evernote does not allow others to privately access your Evernote notes, but you can e-mail static sections of notes to others, or publish sections of your notes publicly on the Internet.

A Significant Step Forward

If you've used other programs to store and organize diverse types of information for various projects, you may be swayed to try OneNote and Evernote for their image-based text recognition features.

You might especially be impressed by the live image text searching features in Evernote's desktop version. You don't even need a scanner--you can take photos of receipts, plane tickets, business cards, Post-its, and other hand-scribbled notes with your smartphone camera or any other type of digital camera. Import the photos into Evernote and wait a few seconds for it to automatically index the text in the images. Next, enter your search terms. The search results will automatically highlight your terms as matching text in the images. (This occurs in real-time in the desktop version of Evernote, but not the online version). This can be a handy way of storing and searching through all sorts of scraps of information you may accumulate from day to day in one central repository. To see this feature in action, watch the [Evernote Overview Video](#).

OneNote can also index text in images, but does not do this automatically, and does not show matching text in images highlighted in real time when performing searches.

The ability to store and search image-based information along with text from other notes, documents, and the Web, make Evernote and OneNote tools worth trying out.

For video demonstrations of the information organizing capabilities of Evernote and OneNote, see the following videos: [Evernote Overview Video](#), [Demo: What is OneNote?](#), [OneNote 2007 Demo: Ways to share a notebook](#), and [OneNote 2007 Demo: Set up a OneNote notebook](#).