

Collaborate with Others On Your Own

By Philip Siddons

A Few Cloud-Based Sharing Mechanisms



DropBox (the app icon)

Get it at:

<https://www.dropbox.com>

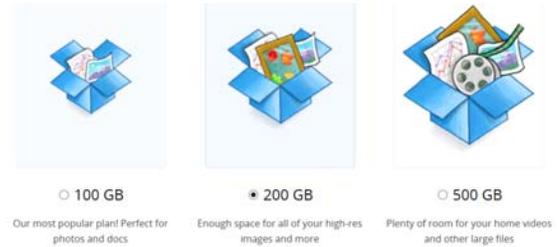
One of the best ways to collaborate by sharing small or large files (of any type) with others is through *Dropbox*. You still have to be diligent in using the latest antivirus and antimalware programs (and keep their definitions current) but with that said, today, you can collaborative work with anyone. What's more, you don't have to get your IT Department to create a special private shared folder on the server.

I do technology consulting for several non-profit organizations that can't afford to purchase a network server, connect everyone through an expensive switch and the appropriate Ethernet wiring (or a Wi-Fi connection).

With the *Dropbox* technology, you share a central file storage area that is encrypted and yet accessible to everyone given permission to access the folder. Some folders are shared with different departments while others are kept personal and not shared. In fact, with the cloud-based (internet-based) *Dropbox* folders, you can share and do collaborative work with people within your organization or any organization anywhere.

Dropbox technology has enabled many organizations to have employees and departments sharing files without the expense of a client-server network. That's because the IT department and the server is at *Dropbox*. Obviously, you would want to keep some files on your own company server in order to be compliant with government agency regulations. But sit down with your managers and IT staff and discuss which methodology is the easiest and most economical to use for the type of sharing you would like to do.

Dropbox Accounts:



With a *DropBox* account, you can store and access a lot of files from any computer or smartphone which accesses the internet. You can start out with a free account – which is a good way to try out the technology. You can also pay a monthly fee or save by paying for a year subscription for the following space:

Yearly Cost	Space
\$100 (or \$9.99/month)	100 GB
\$200	200 GB
\$300	300 GB

(these prices may vary so check for the latest costs on their website)

When you have a *Dropbox* account, you download the software and it creates a folder on your computer (a *Dropbox* folder is usually off your "My Documents" folder or better, anywhere else you desire). From then on, anything you save in your local *Dropbox* folder will automatically be copied into your cloud-based *Dropbox* folder. You always have at least two locations for the things you save in your *Dropbox* folder.

You can choose to share one or all of the folders in your *Dropbox* with a few or many people – giving them access to whatever folder(s) you're like. When you invite them to share one (or more) of your folders, they receive an email which enables them to establish a free *Dropbox* account through which they can access your shared folder(s). This is particularly handy for doing collaborative work with people in other departments, other companies, states or even countries. This secure, encrypted collaborative file sharing technology skips the limitations of a company IT department and the expense of owning and maintaining a network server environment.

List Keepers and Collaborative Sharing Software



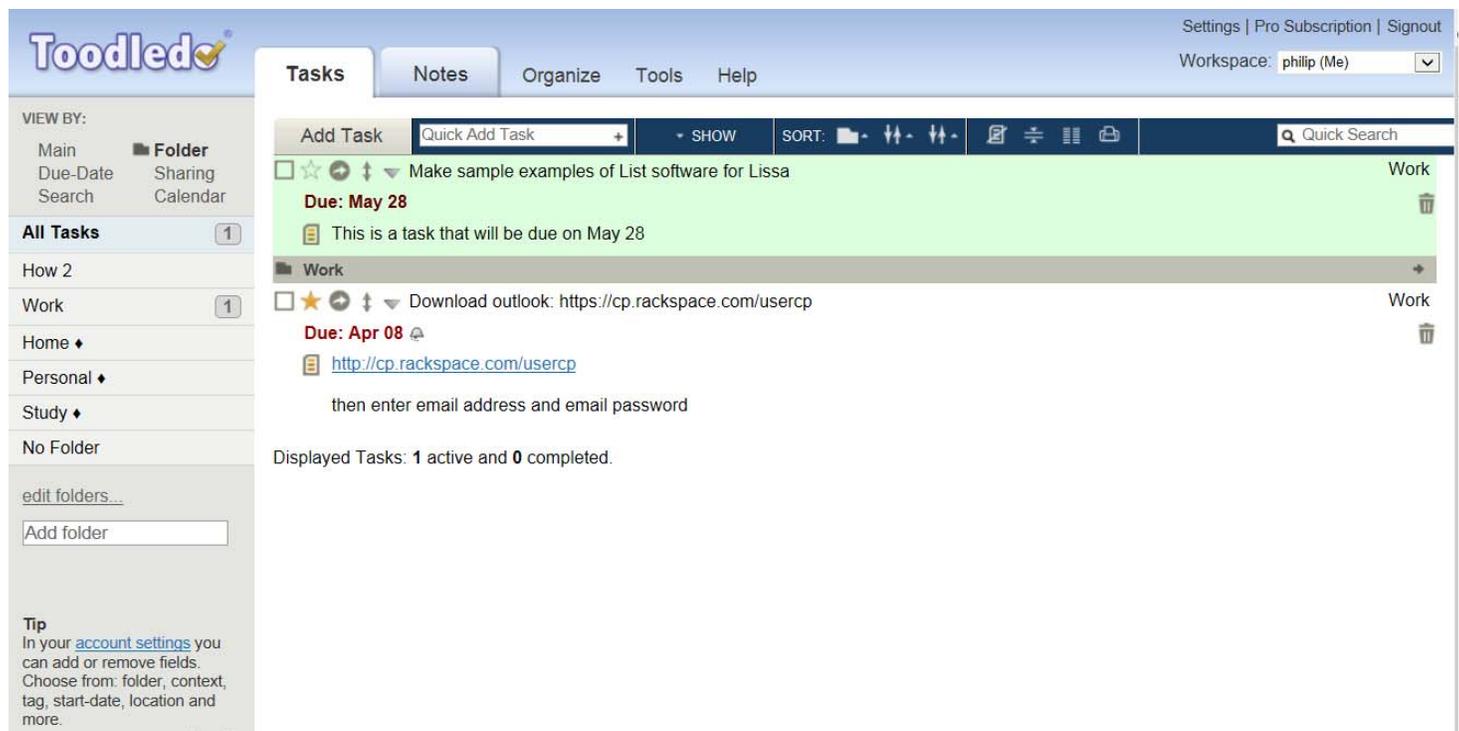
Toodledo (the app icon)

Get it at:

<http://www.toodledo.com/>

Toodledo is a list keeping software that enables you to keep track of to-do items in multiple “Spaces” (or folders) such as Work, Home, Personal, etc. This to-do list keeper works on your smartphone as well as your computer.

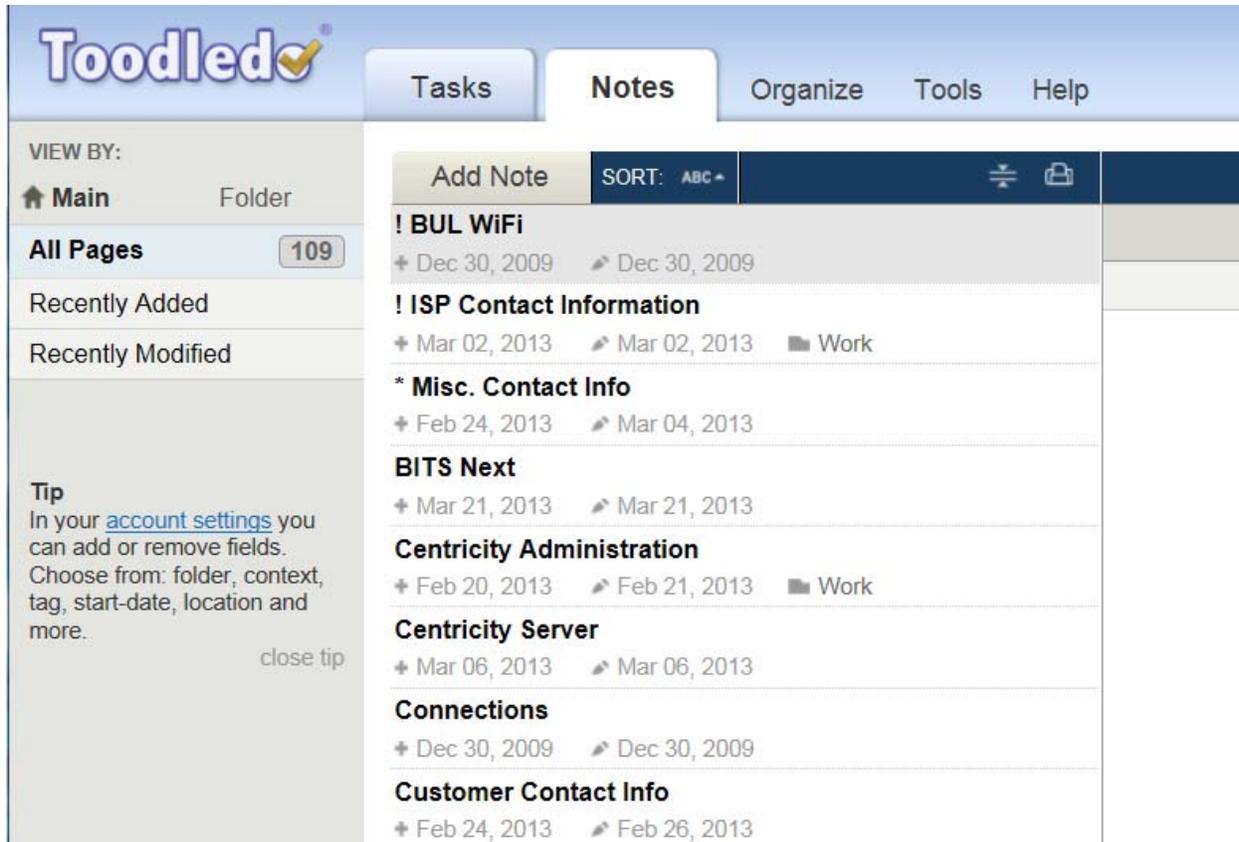
Below is the **Tasks tab**.



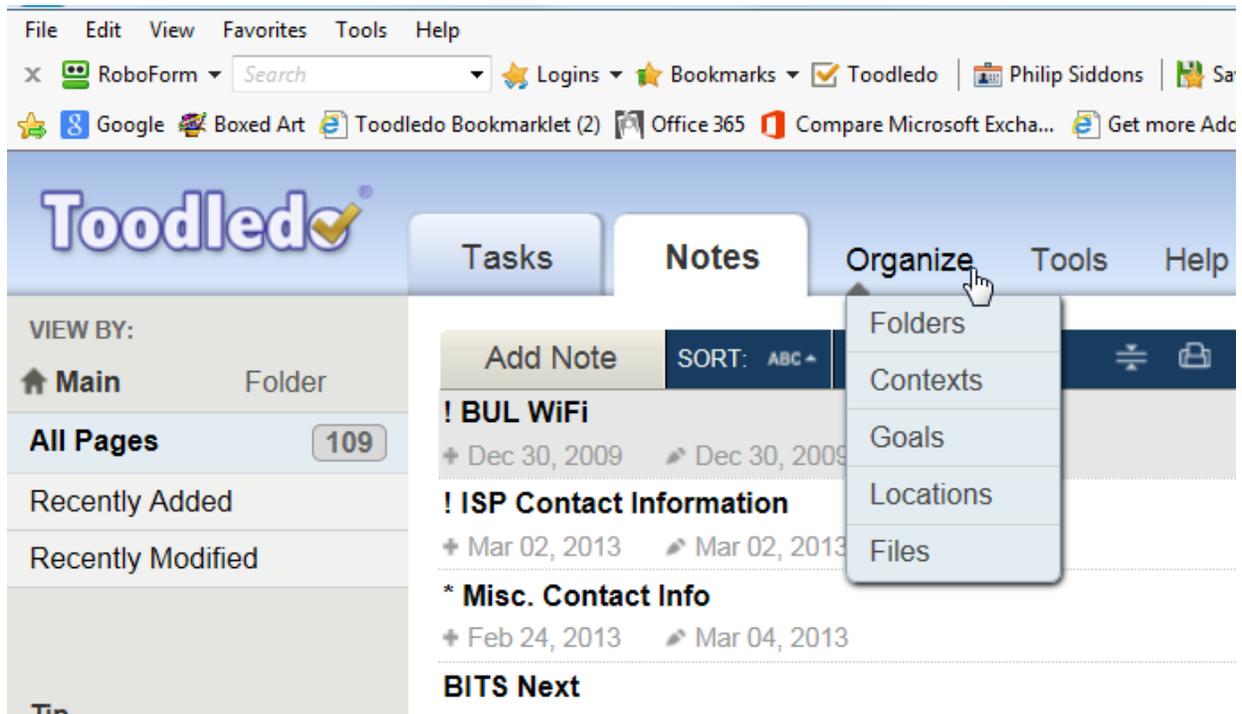
The above screen shot shows two tasks and their due dates.

You can use the list for not only specific tasks but how-to information pieces because we can't remember how to do everything forever.

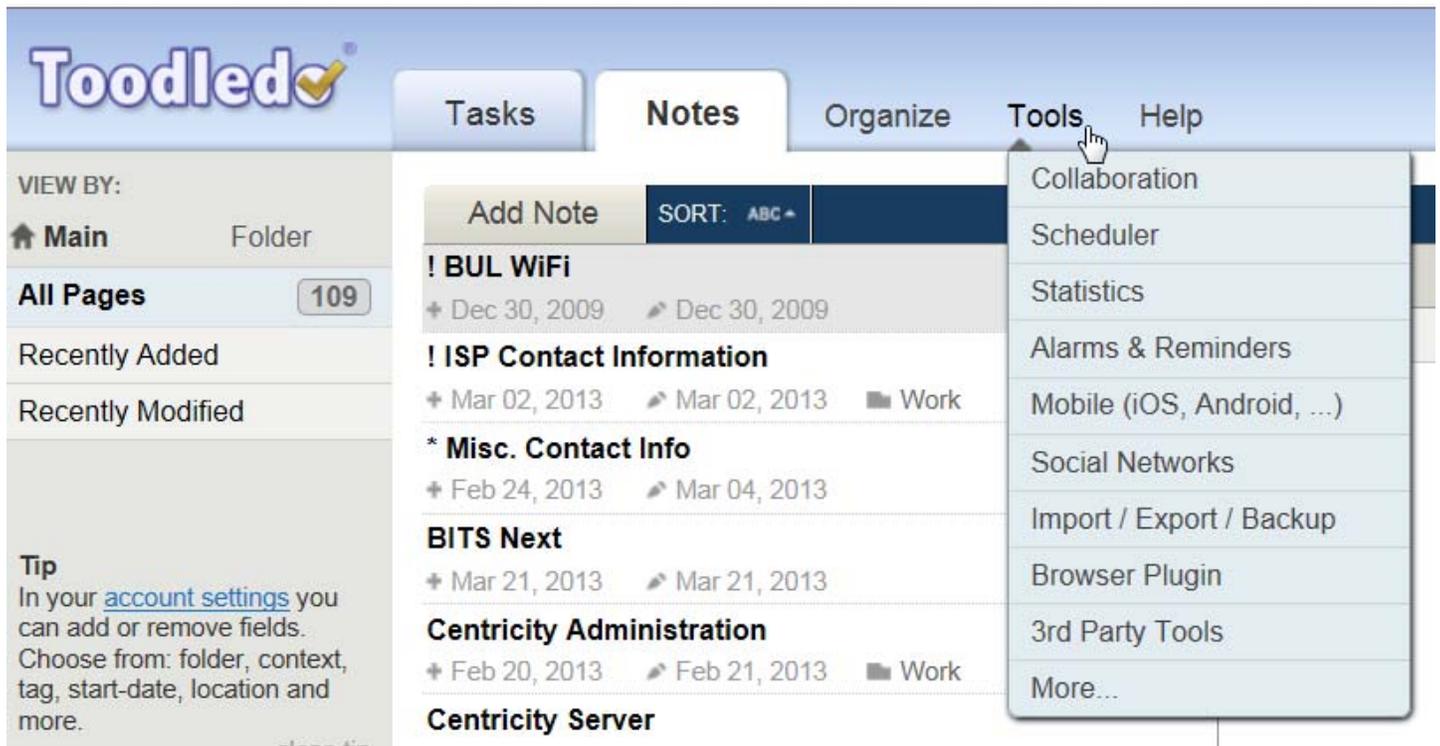
In addition to the task list folder, there is **the Notes** tab for creating notes, each of which can hold as much content as you want.



The **Organize** tab is for organizational tasks.



The **Tools tab** lets you set up collaborative usage of the to-do list with others. You can schedule timings and reminders and connect to social networks. The **Help tab** gives you answers to how to do things with the program.



In all, *Toodledo* is a good tool for people who like to use and share lists that are primarily text-based.

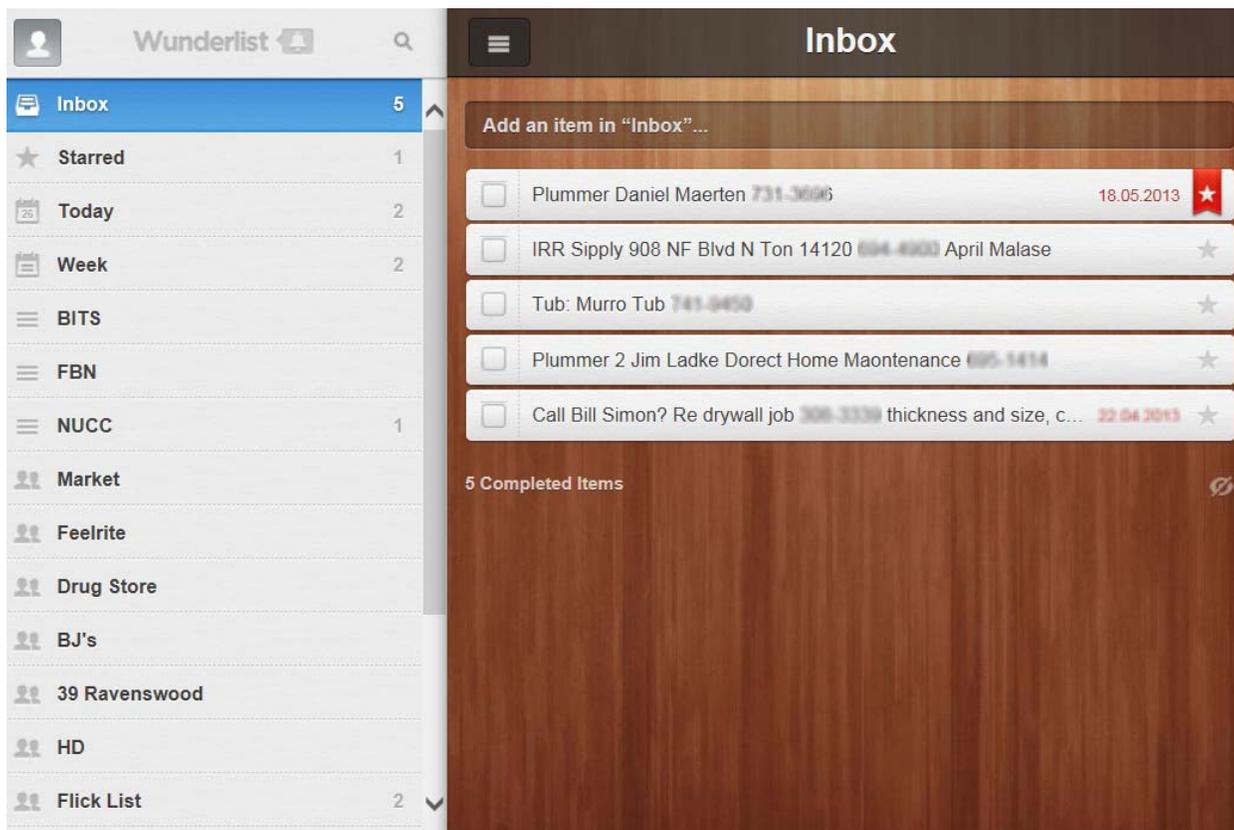


Wunderlist (the app icon)

Get it at:

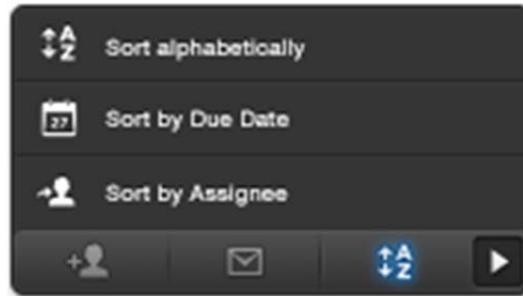
<http://www.wunderlist.com/>

This is an on-line view of this software which has the same look as on your smartphone. (actual phone numbers have been blurred to protect privacy)



With *Wunderlist*, You can create as many lists as you like and within each list, you can add as many tasks as you want. The Plummer Daniel Maerten note has a red banner because it is “starred” as important. You can create reminders, check them off as done and delete them. **What is special about this software is that you can share one (or more) lists with someone else who has this software on their computer and smartphone. When you check off a task as done or add another task to do, it immediately shows up on the other person’s list the same way.** This goes for whether you are sharing project tasks with a colleague at work or a shopping list with your significant other. For instance, on the way home from work, if I get to the Drug Store and I look at my list and get (and check off everything on it), my wife immediately sees that I’ve gotten everything on that list and she doesn’t have to stop there on her way home from work.

The Wunderlist Action Bar



This is a convenient way of sorting, sharing, printing and emailing lists.

At this point, it doesn't let you take a picture to add to a note which limits it to text-only notes. One can upgrade to a paid *Wunderlist Pro* account. With that, you can collaborate and assign to-dos to teammates. You get 8 new backgrounds but those additions may not seem worth the extra unless you are using *Wunderlist* as your primary list keeper.

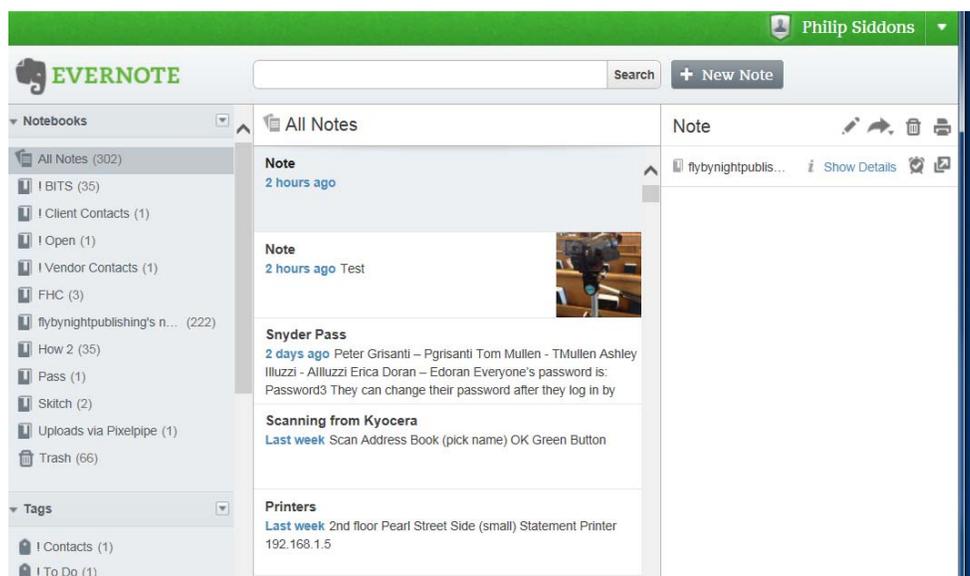


Evernote (the app icon)

Get it at:

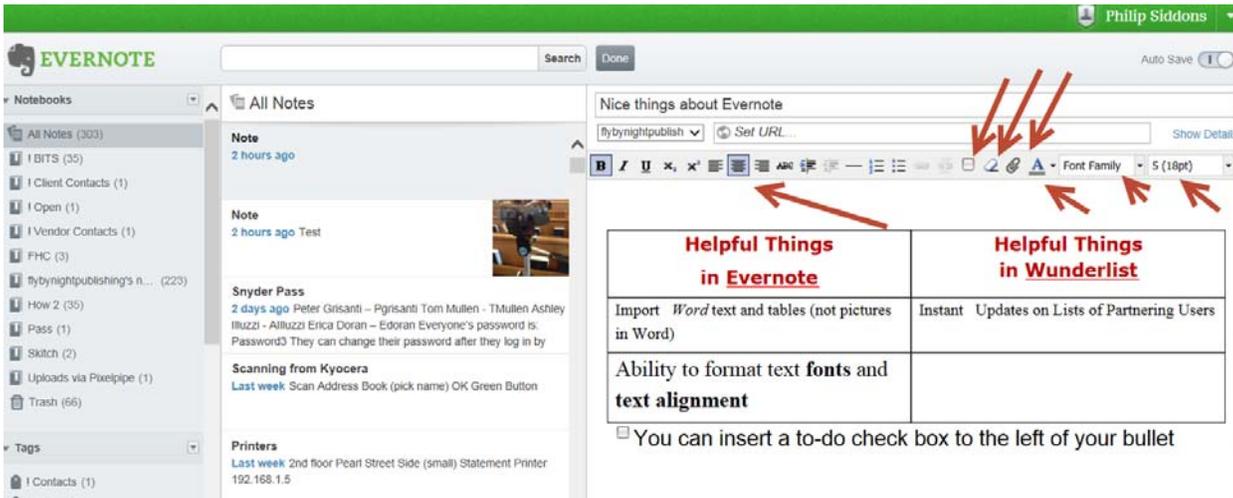
<http://evernote.com/>

Evernote is a powerful cloud-based application that excels in a variety of features. Like *Wunderlist*, it enables you to add and access information with your computer or smartphone.

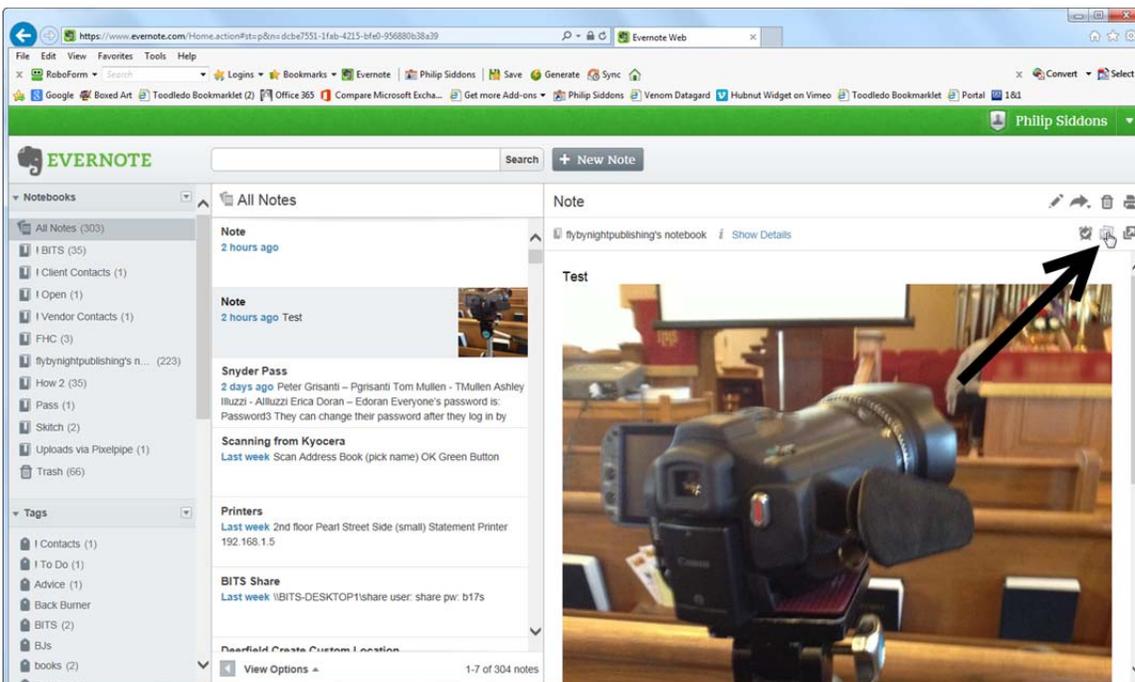


You can create as many “Notebooks” (or folders) and as many lists within each Notebook as you’d like. **You can input text (and a particularly useful distinction) is that you can copy and paste *Word* documents into a note. This is fabulous when you can use the visual helpfulness of a *Word* table with borders to aid in reading. If you have a picture embedded in a *Word* document, however, the picture won’t copy over.**

The Editing tool bar, that appears over the note that you’re creating, gives you lots of formatting choices. In this screen shot, arrows point to numerous editing features. You can add a to-do check box to your text. There is a button to attach a file as well the options for many font choices. This screen shot shows how a *Word* table was inserted into the note.

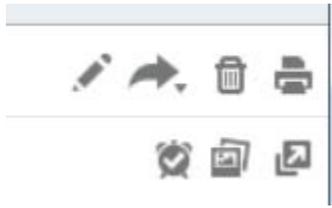


The open note (*below*) has an arrow pointing out how an already taken image can be inserted into a note. Here, a picture of a video camcorder was inserted into this “Test” note from a smartphone.



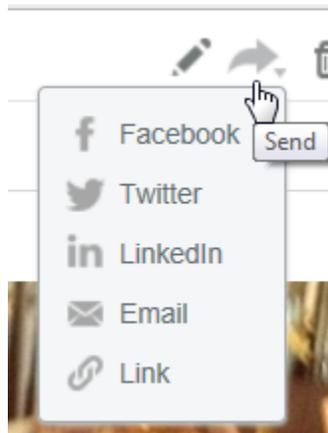
Evernote has a new (free) companion program called *Skitch*. It lets you pull in a .pdf file and annotate it, even create a drawing and add additional text and shapes.

In the upper right corner of the editing of a note shows the following seven features:
The **pen icon** is for **editing** the note.

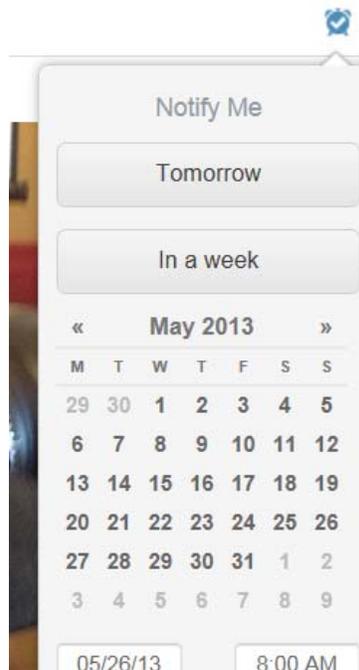


The **arrow icon** is for **sending** the note to the listed communication avenues.

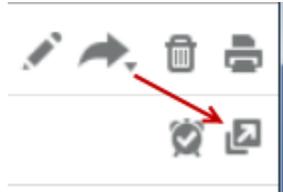
The **trash can icon** is for **deleting** the note and the printer is for printing it.



The little **clock icon** is for **setting a reminder** pertaining to the note.



The last icon is for **opening the note for editing in a separate window**.



With an *Evernote* account, you can use an email to post information to your one of your Evernote notebooks. With a Premium account for \$45 a year you can allow others to view or modify your notebooks.

Your upload and storage limits are:

Free Users

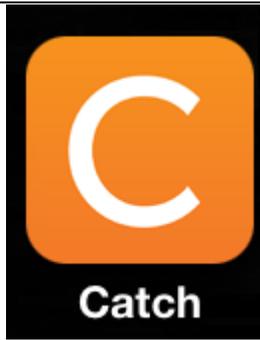
- Upload up to 60 MB of data each month, with unlimited storage.

Premium Users

- Upload up to 1 GB of data each month, with unlimited storage.

Business Users

- Upload up to 2 GB of data each month of personal notes, with unlimited storage.
- Any notes contributed to a Business Notebook count towards a business (shared) total upload quota of 2 GB times the total number of business seats. If you have a business with 20 seats, any single user or mix of users can upload a total of 40 GB each month.



Catch (the app icon)

Get it at:

<https://catch.com/>

Catch is also a powerful cloud-based application that enables you to add and access information with your computer or smartphone. It is a free application that helps turn ideas into action.

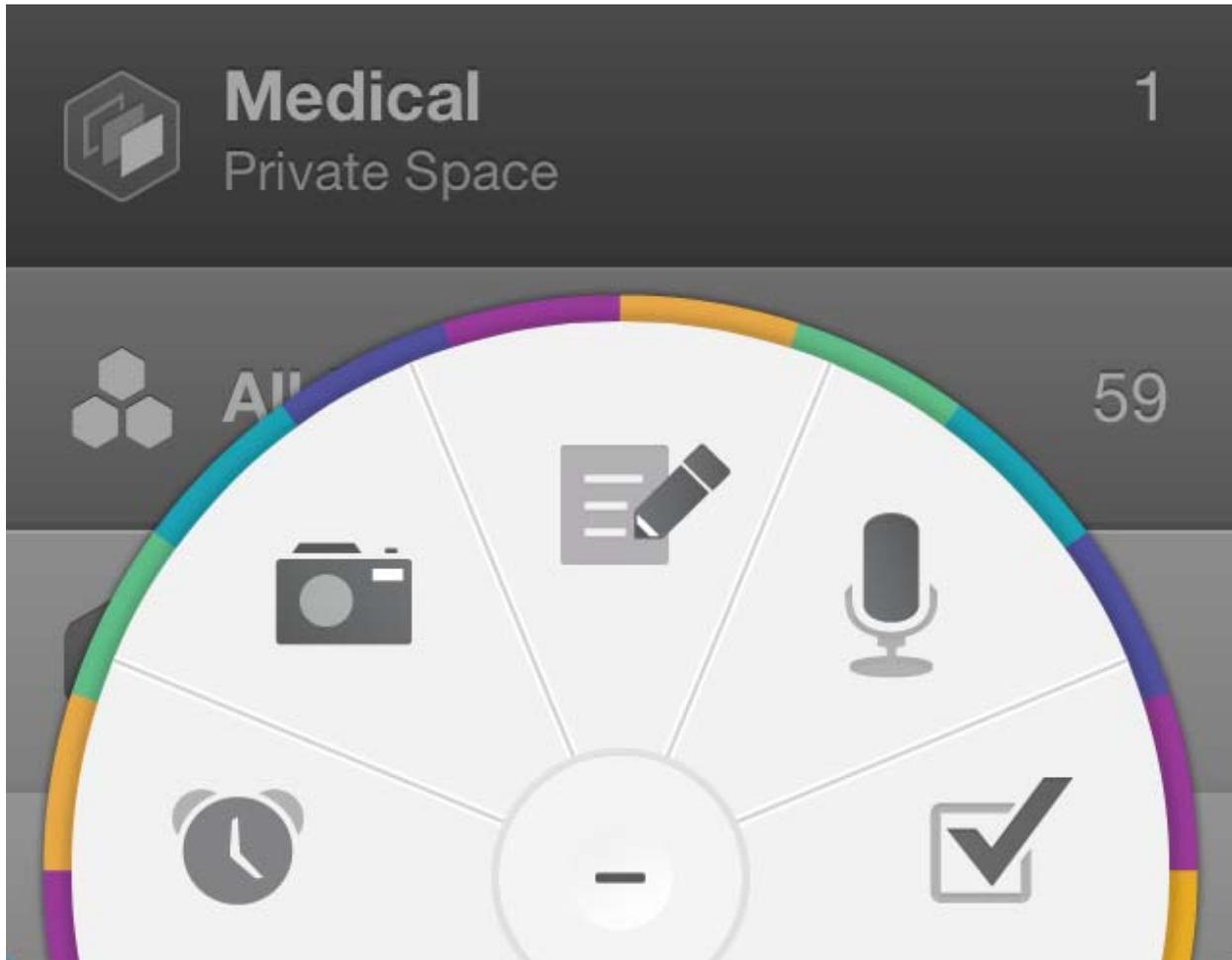


You can have 60 “Places” (or folders) and in each one, store in as many notes as you’d like.

Once you tap the Plus Key (to add a note), you get a range of options for input.

They include:

1. **Clock icon:** Reminders for appointments
2. **Camera icon:** photograph for a note
3. **Pen icon:** to type a text note
4. **Microphone icon:** to dictate a note
5. **Check box icon:** to create a traditional check-off note of items to do.



You can invite others to contribute to your ideas for simple, immediate mobile collaboration in a secure, shared space.

You can invite others to share in a space and they receive a message (from you) like this:

philipsiddons has invited you to collaborate on philipsiddons's How space in Catch.

Join the space and start contributing!

On the web: click invitation confirmation

On a mobile device: tap invitation confirmation

Once you accept the invitation you can:

- Contribute to shared checklists,
- Record and share voice notes,
- Add your own comments,
- Sync and back-up securely at Catch.com.

You can also invite more contributors to the How space to add their own ideas and content.

Upon receipt of the invitation, the person you invite can start their own free *Catch* account where they would access the shared space for notes as well as note they make for themselves.

One difference between *Evernote* and *Catch* is that *Catch* has a more pleasing **color scheme** for their different spaces (folders of notes) but it doesn't have the **font and formatting features** of *Evernote*. The price for *Catch*, however, is free.

Catch also has a companion product by Moleskine – A Pocket Soft Cover Ruled Notebook which enables you to use the *Evernote* camera function to digitize what you write or draw into the notebook for electronic use in *Catch*. I haven't tried the product yet but it looks interesting. Out of curiosity, I used the *Catch* camera function and digitized something I wrote on a piece of paper and it went into *Catch* just fine. If *Catch* does handwriting recognition, it would be magic, but I don't know that is the case.

<http://www.moleskineus.com>