

Note-taking goes high tech

Cutting-edge technologies have applications inside and outside the classroom

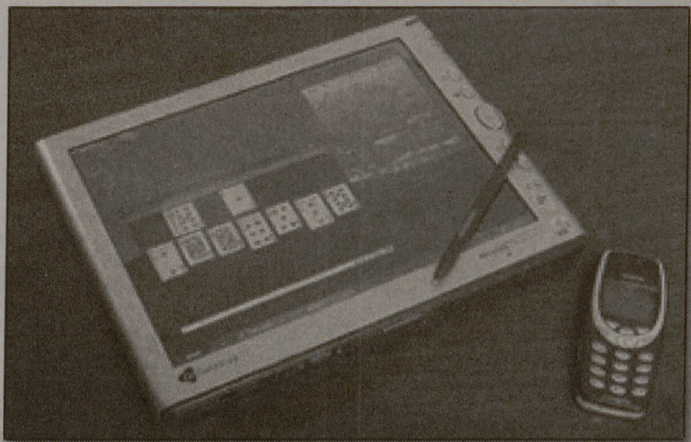
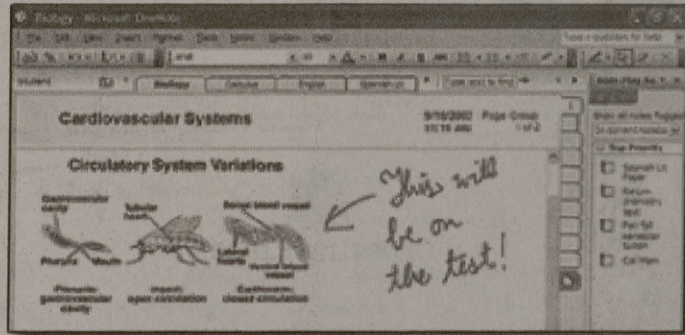
By Adam Reed
THE BATTALION

According to Microsoft's research, more than 90 percent of the population takes notes regularly. From students to professors, journalists to doctors, everyone uses some form of note-taking for professional and personal use.

Current methods for note-taking often prove inefficient. Students strain to keep pace with paper and pen while fast-talking professors race through course material. Journalists scribble notes in portable notepads, hoping to catch all the facts. And as students enter college each year with more advanced skills, laptops have become a common occurrence in the classroom. Most software, however, limits students to a single style for their writing.

Enter Microsoft's newest addition to its Office series of products: OneNote. With OneNote, Microsoft offers a software suite that is "created to fit everyone's note-taking style," company representative and product manager Bobby Moore said. Moore approached students and faculty, a target group of note-takers, for OneNote's premiere demonstration at Texas A&M on this week.

A major feature of OneNote is what Moore calls a flexible two-dimensional page surface.



GRAPHIC BY RUBEN DELUNA • THE BATTALION

This means users can click anywhere on the digital page and begin to type without inserting spaces or carriage returns to tediously place the cursor. Each section of text can then be dragged and dropped without restraint to a new position on the page.

Computer users can also

record "audio notes" using OneNote. With the click of a button, audio is recorded by the computer's microphone, like a conventional tape recorder. The audio is in sync with the text typed during the recording, so the user can click on any line of text and the audio will play back from the specific point when



Top Left: Microsoft Office OneNote 2003 screen shot

Above: Toshiba Portege 3500 (\$2,299 - \$2,499)

Left: Gateway Tablet PC (\$2,799)

PHOTOS COURTESY MICROSOFT, TOSHIBA AND GATEWAY

that text was typed. This feature allows for effortless outlining of lecture notes for review without having to fast forward through long audio files.

While these and other features are available to all users, some of the program's innovations are reserved for users of Tablet PCs, a new market of

portable computers that are slightly smaller than laptops.

"It's a good, better, best situation," Moore said. "Users will be able to employ many features with their desktop computers, and these become even more useful with a laptop. However, with a Tablet PC, they will also be able to take advantage of fea-

tures such as Inking."

Inking is part of a new technology in which tablet users operate a pen-input device to write directly on a tablet PC screen. This includes hand writing simple text or adding pictures to new and existing documents. The common search function can also be employed in freehand text instead of being limited to typed text, allowing users to search through pages of handwritten notes for the first time.

OneNote operates on Windows 2000 or Windows XP. However, OneNote uses other programs such as Outlook, part of the Office suite, to share notes by e-mail as HTML files that a computer can read.

With Microsoft's latest addition to the software arena, the door is left open for other companies to take their products to the next level as the concept found in OneNote stretches the boundaries of software design.

Current advances in technology have produced cell phones that double as cameras and electronic organizers that browse the Web. Microsoft's new software has similarly coupled antiquated notebook paper with cutting-edge computer technology.

Microsoft's OneNote is undergoing beta-testing and is expected to be released as a stand-alone application along with Office 2003 in the summer of 2003.

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