**Microsoft OneNote**

**What is it?**
A better question about Microsoft OneNote is “what ISN’T it?” Microsoft OneNote is the holy grail of computerized organization. Need to collect your thoughts? Do web research? Record a meeting? Insert drawings, tables, images or more? OneNote is your tool. At it’s most basic level, it’s like a computerized “binder” that can help you keep everything from your classes neat and organized (e.g., syllabus, notes, emails, etc.). It’s even set up like a binder. When you open OneNote, you see “notebooks” along the left panel, “dividers” (or “tabs”) along the top, and “pages” on the right panel. This is your basic system of hierarchically arranging all of your content so information is easily located. But that’s not all! Refer to the reverse side of this page to see some of the “Extra” features that are built into OneNote, and reasons “Why I Like It!”

**Why does it work?**
Open up your backpack right now. Go ahead. I’ll wait. Like many students, you will probably see a gigantic mess. Maybe you see a textbook, a couple of notebooks with papers shoved haphazardly in them, and maybe a stack of other papers that you will get around to organizing later. You probably have some difficulty finding an important document when you need it (like the syllabus), but if you search long enough, you’ll find it – or maybe not. The problem with this system of organization is that you tend to totally overlook crucial items that you aren’t looking for. You may locate most of your notes when you study before a test, but you will forget that one page of organic chemistry notes that’s in your physics notebook because you grabbed the wrong notebook for class one day. (By the way, OneNote has a “search” function to locate information – does your backpack have a “search” function?) The bottom line is that you need a different system; although ANY system will take time to learn and practice, OneNote is one of the most efficient, fun, and helpful.

**How does it work?**
It is beyond the scope of this handout to teach you how to use all of the features of OneNote. There are many video tutorials on line that can teach you the nuts and bolts of the program. The important thing to consider is that OneNote can teach you new ways of being organized and prepared. For example, one student in coaching at DRES used to open a new Word document to take notes each time she attended class. She started to learn to use OneNote to organize her notes instead. One day when using OneNote, she came across the “audio record” function. She recognized that her laptop had a built-in microphone, so she started audio-recording lectures, and integrating the audio file (MP3) right into her lecture notes! That way, when she reviewed her notes, she could listen to the lecture when she needed to. She became more conscientious and confident in the way she organized course materials and saw a drastic improvement in her grades.

**Resources:**
- The official OneNote site is at [http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/OneNote/](http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/OneNote/). It is also the hub of the OneNote community with forums, tips, and videos.
- A great, brief video demonstration of OneNote organization, searching, and sharing is here: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xdi67tnx6nA](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xdi67tnx6nA) (if you google “onenote video” it is the top result).
- Please email Dr. Jonathan Thomas-Stagg at jstagg@illinois.edu if you have any questions!

**Change that habit!**
The best way to change your academic habits for long-term success is to invest time and energy into practicing strategies like using the MotivAider. It may not work great right away, but the effort you put in to practicing better academic habits is directly proportional to the success you will experience. Coaching at DRES can help you change your habits. To start coaching, please contact Dr. Jonathan Thomas-Stagg at jstagg@illinois.edu. Thanks!
Extra features in OneNote that your old way of organizing information just can’t do. With OneNote, you can:

- Integrate audio and video recordings into your notes.
- Send items from email or the web directly to your notebooks.
- Share your notebooks and collaborate with others online.
- Instantly email a page from your notebook with the click of a button.
- Integrate documents from other Microsoft products (e.g., Excel, Word) directly into OneNote.
- Take screen clippings and embed them in your notebooks.
- Convert handwritten notes into electronic text.
- Backup your classnotes for security.
- Insert mathematical formulas.
- Tag information in your notebooks to make it more easily searchable.
- Easily retain formatting of tables when copying from different applications (e.g., the web).
- Use built-in highlighters and drawing tools to take notes on electronic readings.
- Check documents for accuracy using built-in spellchecker and grammar checker.
- Translate from language to language using machine translation.

Why I Like It! Read why several students like using OneNote:

“I thought it was going to be difficult to learn to use, because I’m not good with computers, but everything is laid out so logically, it was really easy. And it seems like every time I use it, I learn about a cool new feature that I didn’t know about.”

“I already use Word, Excel, and Microsoft Access. OneNote allows me integrate files from each one of these applications so I can organize all of the information from one project in one place.”

“I love how it saves everything automatically for you! In Microsoft Word, I am always forgetting to save things as I go along. In OneNote there literally isn’t a “save” button. It knows that when you change or add something, you want it to be there next time you open OneNote.”

“I’m a law student and have incredible amounts of detailed information to organize and memorize for my classes. I have ADHD and organizing information is not something that comes easy for me. If I didn’t have OneNote, I wouldn’t be able to get through law school.”

“As a business major, we’re always working on group projects. I hate it when group members say they didn’t do the work because they didn’t know what they were supposed to be doing. As a project manager, I make sure all of the members on my team learn how to use OneNote so we can share the work efficiently and all stay on the same page.”

“In my math classes, I can’t take notes on my laptop because there are too many formulas to write down. But I can always scan my notes into OneNote afterwards.”

“I kind of like how all of the syllabi in my classes are available online, but I hate having to log in to Compass each time I want to see them. I know I could print it out, but I lose everything like that. When I try to copy and paste into word, it really screws up how the syllabus is formatted, but for some reason when I paste into OneNote, it words perfectly!”

OneNote: Everything In It’s Place