

# More real-world uses for OneNote

Continuing with my theme that telling you how to solve a real-world problem is better than listing what each menu item does, here are three tips that I've discovered where OneNote solves a problem better than other methods I've tried.

## Creating "How-To" Documents for PC procedures

A picture is worth 1K words (as we computer types like to say) and explaining a complicated set of steps is helped enormously by showing intermediate results so the reader can verify that he's following along successfully. I used to do this with the print screen button, pasting into an image editor, cropping and finally inserting into the Word document. With One Note, the Clip function allows you to select only the area you want, so the cropping step is eliminated. If you want, the entire document can be created in OneNote, or the screen shots can be copied into other programs. The image captured is immediately placed at the cursor location in OneNote, but is also in the clipboard, so you can paste it into whichever program you want to assemble the pictures in. Other uses for this are capturing error messages, logs or other data to report program bugs or clipping part of a website to send to someone, without having to send the whole page.

## Providing Design choices to a client

A slightly different use for the Clip is to take repeated snapshots of a design (like a logo, for instance) to present a client with a number of choices. Rather than print a copy of each variation, I now "clip" multiple times, after changing to different fonts or colours or element placement. I can arrange the small clips in a OneNote document and annotate each with the font name or the colour choice so that I can reproduce it later. Finally I print to a PDF straight from OneNote and send it off to my client. An alternative would be to save the OneNote document to a Word document and send that. Sometimes, I clip a representation of the colour palette as well to show what colours are being used overall. Taking snapshots of the work in progress is a lot faster than reproducing multiple "finished" versions. Just be sure to "clip" the image without any selection markers present in the part you want to show.

David Powell, the author, is owner and principal of Creekwood Digital Solutions, an Oakville-based home business in Ontario Canada.

He is semi-retired but accepts contracts to help finance his expensive hobbies. David retired from a 33-year career in corporate IT and now specialises in developing database applications for Windows platforms, web-sites, and generally in improving business processes by simplifying, clarifying and beautifying all kinds of business documents.

His articles are regularly published in the Microsoft Small Business forum.

You can learn more about the work he does at [www.creekwood.ca](http://www.creekwood.ca).

**Creekwood**  
**Digital**  
**Solutions**

## Changing the order of elements

I don't know about you, but when I'm free-thinking or brainstorming, I never get the ideas down in my draft in the right order first time! Moving lines around to get them in the right order has always been a pain. I've done things like add a column in Excel and sort on that, but in OneNote, you can drag and drop to your heart's content until the things are in the right order. Cut and paste between Excel and One-Note is well designed, so you can move data to OneNote, get them in the right order and copy and paste them back with no problems. I recently created a web-site development estimating template in Excel, changing the order of tasks in OneNote until they made the most sense. When the work starts, I copy a section back to OneNote to keep track of the actual hours spent, using the timestamp method I described last month.

Meanwhile, I've tried to get the two high school students in our household to use One Note for their essay or other homework research, where OneNote's practice of annotating each web-site clip with the URL makes life so very easy, but without any luck. Isn't it the old fogies who are supposed to be beyond learning new tricks?