

by Alan J. Pierce, EdD

The Livescribe Echo Smartpen



Photo 1

The Echo Smartpen (photo 1) is a tape recorder and a computer that also writes just like an ordinary pen. This pen is the perfect accessory for a secret agent, student, teacher, or business professional because it catches and links what people say to the notes that they jot down on special notebook paper.

The pen lets you jump through the recording by touching points in your notes. When you touch a point in your notes the recording you hear will be exactly what was being said when you started to write things down at that specific location on the special paper. You can hopscotch back and forth through your handwritten notes and rehear what was said at each specific moment you started to write or draw at that specific location on the special paper.

The pen part of the system can write on regular paper but the meshing of spoken and written words will only take place when you are working on their special dot paper. At first glance this special paper looks quite ordinary. You immediately see the standard lines found in any composition notebook and you also see some special icons printed on the bottom of each page. See photo 2. To start taking written and digitally recorded notes you press the pen tip to the record button on the bottom of a notebook page. See photo 2 again. Now as you write notes the pen will record what it hears and mesh your audio playback to that specific point in your notes. You can use the pen with notes to instantly jump from recorded moment to moment and use the special software that came with the pen to transfer your notes and your recordings to your computer.

The pen that I tested could store 4GB of notes, drawings, or anything else that you might want to save

as a combined image and recording. The pen with the special paper can of course also be used to digitally save what you write or draw on the paper without combining it with an audio recording.

Once you connect your pen to your computer whatever you have written, drawn, or combined with an audio recording can now be uploaded to your computer as a Pencast PDF or sent through your computer as a Facebook update, Google Doc, or email. If you save your stuff to Livescribe's free My Scribe Account you can also use a free Apple app to access your stuff on your iPad or iPhone.

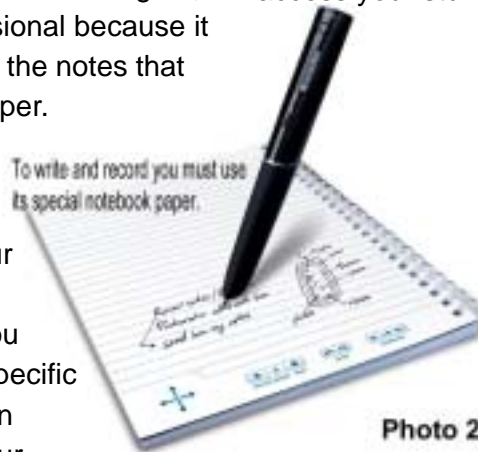


Photo 2

You let your computer know if you want to send a part of a page, a full page, or a number of pages and who to send them to by drawing a line back and forth with the pen and then placing a shortcut note above your line. When the pen is attached to your computer it will upload what it has stored and complete the task that you asked it to do when you drew the short cut command line. See photo 3.



Photo 3

Alan is co-author of *Introduction to Technology* Glencoe McGraw-Hill 2010 and a *TechDirections Magazine* Columnist . Visit www.technologytoday.us for past columns, reviews, and resources.