

Cheng Chat by Mark Sandford



Beyond Paper

Do you print out articles and slides to bring to class so you can refer to them or take notes on them? Did you just print out five copies of that thirty slide presentation to share with your group so they can edit it? Do you live in fear of hitting that 300 page print limit before mid-terms? If so, take a few minutes to learn about some of the options available for your phones, tablets and laptops. Below is a quick list of free apps that make interacting with digital documents easy.

Adobe Reader for iOS and Android has been updated with some great features that go beyond just reading PDFs. You can add notes, highlight passages, and draw directly onto PDFs using your phone or tablet. And since most modern operating systems will let you convert Word docs and PowerPoint slides into PDFs, it becomes a great tool for working with all kinds of files.

Both Office 365 and Google Drive will let you create and share documents, slide presentations, and spreadsheets online. All WPU students have access to Office365 through your student email, and can even download the full software to your laptop or PC. Google Drive has the added benefit of some really great (and free) apps for iOS and Android that can be used to create, edit, or share those documents. But, beware, Google Drive may lack some of the more advanced features you can find in Excel or PowerPoint.

Having trouble keeping track of all your files? Both Office 365 and Google Drive give you some storage space in the cloud, but many prefer the more user and device-friendly Dropbox. Install Dropbox on your laptop, PC, or mobile device and a new folder will show up. Anything saved there will automatically be saved to your online account, and synced on any device on which you have the app installed. Sign in to the website and you can download or share files from any computer. It's like a thumb drive you can never lose. The PDF reader for the mobile Dropbox is also pretty powerful!

Just taking notes? Evernote is a great tool for organizing just about anything. It allows you to organize your class notes by course, topic, or whatever makes sense to you. For example, did your professor just solve a complex math problem on the whiteboard? Snap a photo of it and save it along with your lecture notes for that class. Or, record the planning session of your group project so you can go back and hear everyone's ideas a second time, then save it in the same

online notebook that has the four websites you saved on the topic. Evernote handles all kinds of media, so you can keep all of your important class information in one place.

Want to try out these apps? Check out the guide here for links to all of the apps mentioned in this article, as well as other tools to make your digital life easier, more organized, and save you money.

<http://guides.wpunj.edu/printapps>