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## 1 TODO Catchy title about Supernote being “the new paper”

I like writing things down. I like the feel of the pen (preferably a fountain pen) glide smoothly over the paper, that nice solid feeling of the tip against the table, seeing the ink dry as it flows from the nib, accidentally swiping my hand through it before it’s finished and smearing a bit of ink across the page, cursing under my breath as I dab it up with a handkerchief or a napkin or something else nearby. I also love the writing things by hand has an impact on memory and improves retention.

### 1.1 The problem

Unfortunately, I don’t love keeping up with that paper. Across many different classes, even with dedicated folders for each one, something important inevitably gets lost. Notebooks are also bulky and can take up a lot of space. I tried bullet journaling for about a month earlier this year and, while the process was enjoyable, the maintenance was not. My brain moves faster than my pen (even though I have terrible handwriting) and I inevitably forget letters or even whole words. This is a problem while writing in pen because white-out looks ugly and I dislike wasting whole pages because of a couple mistakes.

The obvious solution here is to get an iPad with an Apple Pen, right? Right??

Wrong because Apple bad<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup>I dislike Apple’s operating system, their hardware, business model, privacy practises, and much of what they stand for as a company. Don’t @ me.

## 1.2 The solution

Enter the world of . . . what are they even called? E-ink notebooks? Paper tablets? E-R/W<sup>2</sup>? Do they even have a “device category” yet? I don’t know but they solve my problem in a wonderful way.

As the names suggest, these are devices that can *usually* open and read e-books (EPUBs, PDFs, etc.), annotate them, and create standalone pages of notes as if they were full notebooks. The most well-known of these devices is likely the reMarkable. They had a hugely successful crowdfunding campaign and produced the reMarkable 1, followed by the reMarkable 2 in 2020. There are a few others by now but we’ll look at the reMarkable first.

## 1.3 The reMarkable

This device boasts all of the features I was looking for. It renders digital content, from books and manuals to comics and light novels, allows you to mark those documents up as you would if it were physical media, create full notebooks of hand written text, organise them, search, and, if your handwriting is legible enough (mine certainly is not), perform OCR on your notes and email a transcription to yourself. It even runs Linux and the developers have opened SSH up so you can remote in and tinker with it as much as you like. Because of this, there’s a pretty awesome community of people creating third-party tools and integrations that add even further functionality. My favourite is probably rMview, a really fast VNC client for the reMarkable that allows you to view your device’s screen on any computer.

After watching all of MyDeepGuide’s extensive playlist on the reMarkable, however, I decided to go with a different product.

## 1.4 Enter the Supernote A5X

The Supernote A5X has all of the basic features the reMarkable has: reading documents, writing notes, and organising your content. Its implementation, on the other hand, seems to be much more polished. It also lacks some features from the reMarkable while adding others.

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<sup>2</sup>E-R/W is a play on media commonly being labelled as R/W when you can read from it and write to it.

## 1.5 Operating System

Figuring out where to start with this device is difficult so I guess I'll start at the bottom. While the reMarkable runs Codex<sup>3</sup>, a “*custom Linux-based OS optimised for low-latency e-paper*”, the Supernote just runs Android. There are both benefits and detriments to this; on one hand, they're running all of Android, bloated that it is, on a very lightweight tablet. On the other, they don't have to develop and maintain a custom operating system. This allows them to focus on other aspects that are arguably more important so I don't actually mind that it runs Android. The only place that Android stands out is in system operations; file transfer uses MTP and, when you swipe down from the top of the device, a small bar appears as in early Android. This lets you change WiFi networks, sync between the companion app on your LAN, the remote servers, take a screenshot, search, and access the system settings. Nothing else about the device really makes me think of Android.

## 1.6 Reading content

## 1.7 TODO Pong Isi and Volpeon when finished

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<sup>3</sup>Taken from their support page about the reMarkable 2; search the page for *operating system* and it should show up.