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With Elephant Paper, you never forget

By **Eric Convey**/ Inspecting Gadgets
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Happy Halloween, gadget aficionados. In the spirit of the day, Inspecting Gadgets brings up a couple scary scenarios to ponder.

You carry an old-fashioned paper organizer, since it's elegant in its simplicity and easy to scan for appointments or addresses involving names you just can't remember. And you lose it.

Or you use a PDA, but can't for your life remember the name of that key person amid 1,000-plus contacts. So you scroll, and scroll and scroll.

Either situation could give the most seasoned executive the willies. For paper-lovers who don't want to live in fear, a Westford company is offering a high-tech solution.

Elephant Paper makes the paper for the LLC's iO2 "digital writing system." It provides the convenience of paper with the security of electronic organizers.

The system depends on a special pen and special paper.

The paper has barely visible dots in special patterns. The pen uses conventional ink but has a special sensor that detects its motion relative to the page.

The pen stores the information you write and downloads it to a PC when it is placed in a synchronizing cradle.

Because the dot patterns are unique to their locations within the calendar or organizer, appointments and addresses show up in the right places on the right pages that appear on your PC courtesy of the software that comes with the system. As complicated as it sounds, it all works very well.

In fact, it performed flawlessly during tests.

Since your own pen strokes are captured, you can save sketches as well as words.

The pen that came with a test kit is on the fat side, but very comfortable to hold.

Several companies make digital pens that work with the system.

The paper came in a wide variety of formats including calendars, notebooks and even small Post-its.

Software included with the system can convert written words to text to characters the computer can recognize and ultimately synchronize with programs such as Microsoft Outlook.

This columnist did not test this aspect of the system well enough to render an assessment.

Prices for the paper varies.

An organizer goes for about \$40.

A kit containing a digital pen, software and an assortment of notebooks sells for \$199 at www.elephantpaper.com.

Unfortunately, the software is available only for PC.

The bottom line is that Elephant Paper is offering a very reliable solution to a very real problem.

It works simply and intuitively.

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