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IOGEAR Mobile Digital Scribe Review

Simplify Note-Taking With IOGEAR's Mobile Digital Scribe

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Manufacturers have long sought to simplify the note-taking process with digital pens. Invariably, these pens have been large and bulky. Or, the way the pens work leave something to be desired.

IOGEAR is offering its take on the digital pen with the Mobile Digital Scribe. Aimed at students, the Mobile Digital Scribe is also suitable for anyone who does a lot of note-taking and doesn't have time to digitize their notes manually.

To learn more about the Mobile Digital Scribe and its high points and low points, keep reading!

Mobile Digital Scribe Hardware and Design

The Mobile Digital Scribe consists of two parts. First, there is the digital pen. The pen connects wirelessly to a small receiver that attaches to the top of a piece of paper. The receiver stores your notes and drawings. Notes can be downloaded to your computer simply by attaching a USB cable to the receiver.

With the cap on, the pen itself is virtually indistinguishable from a standard pen. However, relatively subtle differences emerge when the pen is uncapped. Its design is unobtrusive and doesn't call attention to itself.

The pen uses ball-point refills. These are easy to change on the go, thanks to a tool built into the pen's cap. The choice of rollerball refills would have been nice.

The weight and balance of the pen is well planned. Unlike some digital pens, it fits nicely in the hand, with a barrel that isn't too thick or too thin. Likewise, the pen's weight doesn't call attention to itself. But, some may prefer a more solid construction.

Unlike the pen itself, the receiver leaves something to be desired. Clips on the back of the receiver allow you to attach it to a piece of paper. The clips can't handle more than a few sheets at a time. And this may be its biggest design flaw.

I'm sure many would like to attach the receiver to the top of a legal pad. This would lend more stability to the receiver. A few sheets of paper don't offer it much support.

There is a single button on the receiver that allows you to turn it on and operate it. I found the button somewhat difficult to press. A firmer button that offers more feedback would have been preferable.

Using the Mobile Digital Scribe

Most people will use the pen on the go. They will attach the receiver to their paper and write with the pen. When they are near a computer, they will connect the receiver and download their notes to the computer.

But, this isn't the only way to use IOGEAR's Mobile Digital Scribe. The receiver can be connected to your computer. When you write with the pen, your notes are automatically transferred to the computer.

Tethering the receiver to your computer may seem somewhat awkward. However, it is ideal for when you're working at your desk. Since your notes are automatically transferred, you eliminate a step from the process. You don't need to worry about transferring your notes manually.

The Mobile Digital Scribe can also be used as a mouse. However, in order to do this, the receiver must be tethered to your computer. There is a special inkless tip that you can place in the pen when you use it as a mouse. Using the pen as a mouse gives you greater on-screen control. It is ideal for situations where precision matters.

Owners will appreciate the Mobile Digital Scribe's versatility. However, I suspect that most users won't often tether the receiver to their computer. It makes more sense to use it without the computer.

Limitations

The Mobile Digital Scribe can store up to 50 notes. That should provide ample note-taking for most users for a short period of time. But, it also means that you'll need a computer available if you plan on using it to take more notes.

The Digital Scribe's receiver charges via your computer's USB port. However, the pen runs on two small watch batteries. You will want to carry spares, just in case you need to replace them.

The receiver and pen are remarkably accurate. You won't need to worry about the receiver not recording your notes.

However, there is one problem that can quickly limit the Mobile Digital Scribe's usefulness. When you start a new page of notes, you must press the button on the receiver. Otherwise, it won't know that you've started a new page. That means the receiver will think that your new notes are on the same page as the old ones. You're essentially writing over your old notes. This will cause problems when you transfer the notes to your computer.

Included Software

Despite a couple of minor annoyances, the Mobile Digital Scribe is a solid piece of hardware. It works as promised with no real problems. That is provided the user is attentive enough to press the receiver's button before starting a new page of notes.

The same cannot be said for the software that is included with the pen. Few people are truly interested in capturing handwritten notes on their computer. They're more interested in transferring handwritten notes to their computer and converting them to text.

Fortunately, converting handwritten notes to, say, a Word document is certainly possible with optical character recognition software (OCR). However, not all OCR software is created equal.

I found that the OCR software included with the pen left something to be desired. There were frequent errors with characters, and paragraph breaks were often off. However, these errors can be fixed with a little work. Fortunately, this takes less time than manually transcribing your notes on your computer.

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