Notetaking Tools

I'm always looking for a cross platform good value note taking solution. I work with the Linux and Apple ecosystems.

Requirements

I have the following requirements:

- Strong Privacy.
- Minimal effort required to input, grouping and search notes.
- Cross platform native client (macOS and Linux, iOS and web optional)
- Supports images (copy paste and by upload).
- Capture webpages or supports pasting in part of webpages, that can be updated (not just a study tool)
- Export option that retains text formatting.
- Linking between notes.
- Fast full-text search.
- Some form of organisation / tagging.

So far I have used and dismissed:

1. **Apple Notes**
   export options are shit (tip: use AppleScript) no Linux client. However due to the number of people using it there are ways. Code has no syntax highlighting. Linking between notes isn't possible. Must use web version using Linux. Input and search is ideal, grouping is ok (subfolders, manual tagging)

2. **OneNote**
   No cross platform native clients, don't like the free form placement on mobile.

3. **Zim**
   It looks like I'm not going to enjoy it, and it doesn't support tags.

4. **Google Docs**
   I avoid the Google ecosystem for privacy reasons, plus compared to Dropbox Paper the experience is worse.

5. **EverNote**
   no official linux client, £5 a month

6. **Dropbox Paper**
   lack of import options and export is single pdfs only. There's an API that I haven't explored. Love the look of the notes, and input is great. Not sure about its future. Exporting made all the images available online without login!

7. **Workflowy**
   still use it as an outliner (for rationalising thoughts), it now support inline images but when writing free text descriptions there is too much friction and no formatting, even code fragments are not supported.

8. **Google Keep**
   See Google Docs.

9. **Joplin**
   don't like the preview pane being split from the input. Too much effort required to enter/search notes, due the interface not being native and off in multiple ways.

10. **Day One**
    Grandfathered into syncing on mobile, but on desktop a subscription is required, so the sync doesn't do anything. Feel locked in unless I pay. Good for date based notes, such as journals.

11. **Notion**
    Initial impressions looked good. So flexible it's hard to know how to use. Custom queries means powerful but also harder to support specific use cases. Input not as easy as Dropbox Paper. Images are not private.

12. **Typora**
    Searching is not word independent and tags are not yet supported. Input is really nice and files can be opened by filename search.

13. **iA Writer**
    Doesn't run on Linux even with Wine/Bottles, otherwise I would be using this. Always thought this was a creative writing tool but it also shines as a markdown based notetaker. The default storage location is iCloud but it's easily changed to any location. Notes are just plain text but you can drag images into it which are then inserted using markdown. It allows you to tag and search is instant. Ideally it will have a Linux version in the future.

14. **BookStack** (current pick)
    Why not combine public and private notes? Robust and easy to style, great organisation options and markdown can be imported. Using Epiphany or Chrome it can be installed as a webapp.Having to login periodically is a flow breaker, especially with 2FA. Search is

great too.

15. **Trillium Notes** (trialling)

Revision #15
Created 2020-04-17 14:19:08 UTC by Sander
Updated 2023-09-07 08:49:44 UTC by Sander