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interface resembles a piece of paper that you write on with a digital pen. You can draw pictures and write words, and a pane below the scratch pad interface allows you to type text to save along with your handwritten notes.

PhatPad offers standard editing commands such as cut, paste, drag and undo/redo that can be used with handwritten input. Other features include an eraser, variable pen widths and multiple pen colors.

For drawing, the software includes a basic shape-recognition engine that smoothes circles, rectangles, triangles, arrows and straight lines.

PhatPad can store up to 16,000 handwritten pages per file, and you can export notes and drawings in bitmap and JPEG formats.

PhatPad's major highlights are its compatibility with Pocket PC, including note synchronization, and the ability to create animated notes.

Animated notes are the electronic version of those paper pads that animate a scene when you flip through the sheets

quickly. In this case, the software automatically "flips" through a series of single-page notes at a user-defined speed. You can use this feature to create animation or simply review a series of notes quickly.

We were a little disappointed in PhatPad's ability to recognize handwriting. When we wrote quickly, it didn't pick up the pen strokes nearly as well as Microsoft's tablet input panel, which really feels like using a pen on paper.

PhatPad costs \$29.95, but if you're using Microsoft Windows XP and want the ability to convert handwriting into text, you'll also have to buy PhatWare's Pen-Office package for \$49.95. The equivalent software for a Pocket PC is called Calligrapher; it costs \$29.95.

If you want a basic note-taking package but don't want to spend \$100 on Microsoft OneNote, take a look at PhatPad.

You won't get all the bells and whistles OneNote offers and the writing recognition might not be as good, but you do get Pocket PC compatibility and the animated notes feature. ■

### Now that's Phat

PhatWare's PhatPad is a note-taking software package originally designed for Pocket PCs, but it now works with tablet and desktop PCs, too.

We tested PhatPad on a tablet PC. The