



# Recorder pen gives scribes instant recall

A writing tool that can also dictate notes means you can remember every word, writes  
**Stephen Fenech**

## Pulse Smartpen

Price: **\$249 (1GB) \$329 (2GB)**  
 From: **Officeworks, 1300 633 423**  
 Web: **livescribe.com**

“THE pen is mightier than the sword” was an adage coined by English author Edward Bulwer-Lytton back in 1839.

If he were alive today one can only imagine the writer’s reaction if he could see Livescribe’s Pulse smartpen.

The simplest explanation for what the Pulse smartpen can do is that an inbuilt microphone can make a recording while in use and then link the audio to what was written.

It is an ideal solution for students, journalists, professionals, doctors and lawyers and just about anyone who needs to take notes to refer to later.

The Pulse also remembers what you write and can even upload those written notes and the associated audio to a Mac or PC computer.

When all is said and written, it is possible to tap on any word from the notes with the pen and be instantly taken to the audio which was recorded at the time the word was written.

And it does this thanks to the technology packed inside the pen. It’s a pen with the power of a computer.

First there’s a microphone just below a high-contrast display, which allows users to navigate the pen’s features.

There is also a speaker to play back recordings and an audio jack on top of the pen connects the headphones for discreet listening to what was captured. These headphones also have a built-in microphone so the pen can also record phone conversations, interviews and conference calls while the handset is being held to your ear and notes are jotted down.

Customers can also choose between 1GB or 2GB of on-board memory.

To enjoy all the benefits of the pen it needs to be used with specially designed paper, which features microscopic dots that are used to map everything that is written.

Just above the nib of the pen is a small

infra-red camera, which is the control for recording and playback of material on the printed page.

The dots come into play to give each word or drawing an exact position so it can be linked to the audio recorded at that point. The camera also makes a virtual copy of the notes, which can be uploaded and viewed on a computer.

Along the bottom of the specially designed paper are a number of commands which are activated simply by touching the tip of the pen to that part of the page.

These controls can begin recording, pause, stop, jump to various points of the audio, increase or decrease playback speed and even adjust the volume.

The Pulse smartpen also comes with a USB cradle that can not only sync with a Mac or PC but also powers up the rechargeable battery on the device.

The accompanying software – Livescribe Desktop – can be downloaded for free from the Livescribe website, the company behind the Pulse smartpen.

Also included is a 100-page ruled notebook, three spare black fine-point ink cartridges and a protective case for the pen. Pulse smartpen buyers can also purchase a range of compatible notepads to use with the device.

For our testing, I used the 2GB model of the Pulse smartpen with the included 100-page notebook.

I used it for a telephone interview with the headphone/microphones, which picked up the voices clearly.

As I took down notes, I highlighted words and phrases that I knew I could come back to in the recording to catch the full quote.

I also used the device in a meeting and was able to instantly replay what was said by tapping on the relevant points I jotted down in the notebook. But the pen is just as useful for students, whether they are in high school or university.

Imagine being able to not only have all the notes from a lecture for future reference, but an audio recording as well.

And even if the student tunes out mid-lesson, the Pulse smartpen will keep on recording until it is told to stop.

Taking the minutes of a meeting is easy, with notes and audio able to be shared online with everyone who attended the event.

When the files are uploaded to a computer they can easily be accessed later, which means the files on the pen can be deleted to make way for even more notes and recordings.

Users can click on the virtual notes on the computer screen and hear the audio that corresponds with that section of the page.



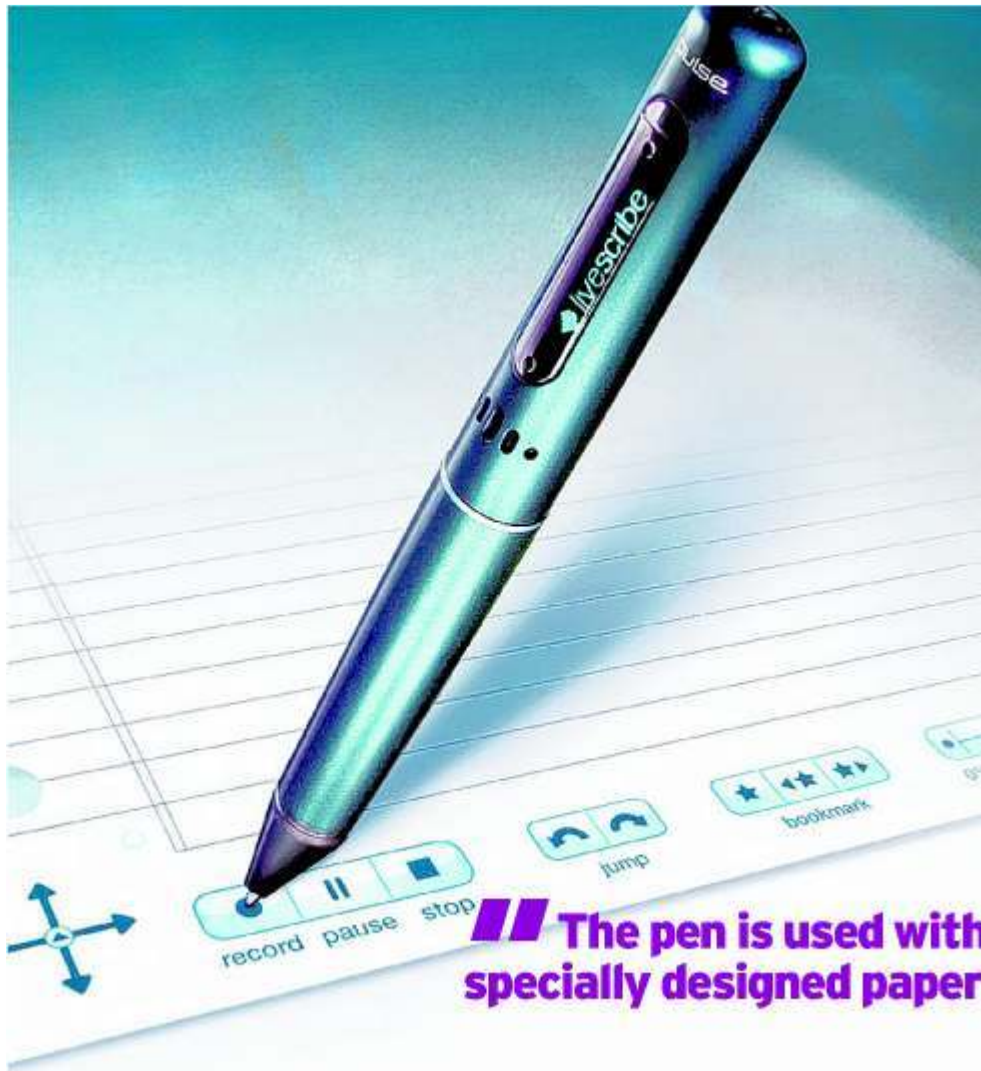
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The words on the screen are even highlighted like a karaoke song's lyrics to show the user exactly which point of the text and audio they are seeing and hearing.

In today's digital world, the pen is sometimes seen as a primitive tool. The Pulse smartpen will change that notion for good.

Linking the digital world with the ink on our pages is as impressive as it is useful.



**Transcriber:** The Pulse smartpen can remember everything it writes and record everything said