Your Portable Brain

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Last month I wrote about creating a "Knowledge Library" using Apple Notes. Not long after I was reading one of my favorite tech blogs "And now it's all this" by Dr. Drang, and found him talking about using his phone as a portable brain.

In one sense this is a subset of a larger Knowledge Library, but it focuses on capturing the bits and pieces of information that we often need while conducting our daily business. Using Apple Notes may be a good choice as your portable brain since the notes are always available on your phone, your tablet, or your Apple Watch and they can be password-protected. If you save your Notes in your iCloud account, you will also have access from any web browser.

If you are running iOS 12.1.2 or later on your phone, you have the ability to scan a document directly into a note. This is a great way to copy receipts, business cards, and other bits and pieces of written information that you need in your "brain."

To get you started, here is some of the information that you might want to have at your fingertips.

- List of medications and allergies.
- List of phone numbers for your doctors.
- Login codes for streaming TV services (Netflix, Amazon Prime, Hulu, etc.)
- Your WiFi router password.
- Social Security numbers for you (if you have a bad memory) and your family.
- Passport numbers and expiration dates.
- Insurance policy account numbers.
- Bank account numbers and bank routing numbers.
- Credit card numbers and PINs.
- Garage door and home security codes.
- Driver's license numbers for you and your family.
- Photos of the front and back of your drivers license.
- Make, model, year, license, and registration numbers for your cars.
- Images of the vehicle registration documents.
- TSA Precheck codes.

I'm sure that you will think of other items that are important to you.

If you decide to use Apple Notes for your "brain" I suggest that you create a folder in Notes called "my brain." Then add password-protected subfolders with titles like personal info, travel & transportation, financial, health, etc. Let your imagination run wild! However, don't forget to add password protection.

Creating a folder in Apple Notes is simple.

1. Open Apple Notes.
2. From the menu bar select File > New Folder. You can also click the plus sign at the bottom of the sidebar to create the folder.
3. Name the folder.
4. Start adding notes to the folder.

To add password protection to a note, you must first create a master password in the app.

1. Open Apple Notes.
2. From the menu bar select Notes > Preferences > Reset Password.
3. Create your master password.
4. **Don't forget your master password!**

To lock an individual note.

1. Select the note to be locked (with the master password).
2. Click the lock icon in the Notes toolbar > Lock Note.

To open a locked note.

1. Select the note to be unlocked.
2. Enter the Master Password.
3. After you have finished, lock the note again.
   Caution: Notes with attachments (video, audio, PDF, or files) can't be locked.

As an alternative, you could use the secure notes feature in 1Password as your portable brain. If this is your choice you must have the mobile version of 1Password installed on your phone. I have tried both ways and find that for me, using Apple Notes is a little easier. 1Password has a long history of being very secure so it would be a good choice if you are willing to do the extra work. Just remember that there is no way to recover a forgotten master password so do not forget it!

Now, all I need is a wireless link between my digital brain and my wetware brain and I will have a perfect system!