

Best AI Knowledge Management Apps 2026: 8 Tools Ranked

We ranked eight AI knowledge management apps, from Notion and Obsidian to Gemini Notebook and Tana, on how well their AI works with your notes.

What we ranked, and how

Every note app now has a chat box. Few of them make your old notes more useful. We scored these eight tools on whether the AI finds, connects and acts on what you already saved, rather than just writing new text. We also weighed how easy it is to get your data out, how much the pricing changes once you use the AI heavily, and whether the tool still works when the AI is switched off.

Pricing was checked against vendor pages in late September 2026. Several of these apps meter AI with credits, so the headline price is often the floor, not the bill. Affiliate deals had no effect on the order.

1. Gemini Notebook (formerly NotebookLM)

Score: 8.8/10

Google renamed NotebookLM to Gemini Notebook on 16 July 2026 and folded it into its Google AI plans. It remains the best tool here for answering questions over a fixed set of sources. You load PDFs, Docs, web pages or YouTube links into a notebook, and every answer cites the passage it came from. The Audio Overviews are still useful for reviewing long material on a walk. The July update added a cloud sandbox that lets a notebook write and run code, plus .pptx and .json exports, rolling out to Ultra first and to Pro users afterwards. It is a research workspace rather than a note system, so you cannot build a linked personal archive in it, and source caps per notebook shape how you work.

- **Best for:** researchers, students and analysts who need cited answers from a bounded pile of documents.
- **Pricing:** Free tier with 100 notebooks, 50 sources each and 50 chat questions a day. Plus comes with Google AI Plus (\$4.99/month); Pro with Google AI Pro (\$19.99/month, 300 sources per notebook); Ultra from \$99.99/month. No longer sold on its own.

2. Obsidian

Score: 7.8/10

Obsidian ships no first-party AI, and that is why it scores so high. Your notes are plain Markdown files on your own disk, so any AI tool can read them. Community plugins such as Smart Connections and Copilot for Obsidian add semantic search, related-note suggestions and chat over your vault, using your own API key or a local model through Ollama. You pick the model, you see the cost, and nothing leaves your machine unless you send it. The trade-off is setup time. Plugins vary in quality, some break after updates, and you are the one who fixes them. For a solo builder who wants to own the stack and keep a knowledge base for ten years, nothing else on this list comes close.

- **Best for:** solo users who want local files, full control over which model sees their notes, and zero lock-in.
- **Pricing:** app is free. Sync \$4/month yearly (\$5 monthly), Publish \$8/month yearly (\$10 monthly). Commercial license \$50/user/year for work use. AI plugin costs depend on your own API usage.

3. Capacities

Score: 6.8/10

Capacities organises everything as typed objects (people, books, meetings, ideas) and links them, similar to Tana but far easier to learn. The AI assistant can chat with an object, suggest related content and help with smart queries. It works well for light use. The free Basic plan is generous for notes but includes no AI at all, and the base AI budget on Pro is sized for occasional questions. Heavy users need the Plus add-on on top. Export is to Markdown, which helps if you ever leave.

- **Best for:** personal knowledge bases where you want structure without Tana's learning curve.
- **Pricing:** Basic free (no AI); Pro \$119.88/year (\$9.99/month); Believer from \$149.88/year. AI Plus add-on \$8.33/month billed yearly for a larger AI budget.

4. Notion

Score: 6.6/10

Notion ranks first because its AI reads the same databases and pages your team already works in. Notion AI can answer questions across a workspace, fill database properties automatically, and write up meetings with AI Meeting Notes. On the Business plan, Enterprise Search (still labelled beta) pulls in connected apps as well. Custom Agents can run recurring work such as triaging a request database or drafting weekly summaries. The weak spots are speed on large workspaces, an offline mode that is still limited compared with local-first apps, and a pricing change that matters a lot, since Free and Plus only get a trial of Notion AI. Full AI starts at Business, so a small team that wanted a \$10 seat is looking at \$20.

- **Best for:** teams that want one shared wiki, project tracker and AI search in the same place.

- **Pricing:** Free; Plus \$10/seat/month (\$8 billed yearly) with an AI trial only; Business \$20/seat/month (\$16 yearly) with full Notion AI; Enterprise custom. Custom Agents cost \$10 per 1,000 monthly credits after the free trial.

5. Tana

Score: 6.6/10

Tana is an outliner where every node can carry a type (a "supertag") with fields, which makes its AI unusually precise. Ask it to pull every open decision tagged to a project and it can, because the structure is real data. In 2026 Tana has leaned hard into meetings, with a botless meeting agent for Zoom, Teams and Google Meet that drops transcripts and action items straight into your graph, and Pro adds full MCP support so outside agents can read and write your workspace. The learning curve is steep, and the free plan's 50 AI queries run out fast. At \$30/month after the early-bird rate ends, it costs more than most people will pay for notes.

- **Best for:** people who live in meetings and want structured notes and tasks captured without typing.
- **Pricing:** Free (5 hosted meetings/month, 50 AI queries); Pro \$20/month early bird (\$30 regular); Max \$80/month early bird (\$120 regular); Business custom. 30-day trial, AI credit top-ups available.

6. Reflect

Score: 6.4/10

Reflect is a fast, clean daily-notes app with backlinks, end-to-end encryption and a simple pricing model built around one plan, with everything included. Its AI uses OpenAI models for writing help and chat with your notes, and Whisper for voice memos that come back as tidy text. Capture feels quicker than in any other app here. It lacks depth for large archives, though. There are no databases, no typed objects, and search over thousands of notes gets fuzzy. It has seen fewer big updates than its rivals over the past year.

- **Best for:** individuals who want private daily notes and voice capture with no setup.
- **Pricing:** one plan at \$10/month billed yearly, 14-day free trial, no free tier.

7. Heptabase

Score: 5.8/10

Heptabase is built around whiteboards: you drag cards onto a canvas, draw links between them, and see how an idea fits together. That visual model suits anyone learning a hard subject from PDFs and papers. The AI agent can read your cards, highlights and YouTube transcripts and answer across them, and Premium adds an AI tutor plus a choice of GPT, Claude and Gemini models. The entry plan

is thin on AI, with 100 credits a month and Gemini models only, so most serious users will end up on Premium. There is no free plan.

- **Best for:** visual thinkers and grad students mapping out research from many PDFs.
- **Pricing:** Pro \$8.99/month (100 AI credits); Premium \$17.99/month (1,800 credits, unlimited PDF parsing); Premium+ \$53.99/month (8,100 credits). Yearly billing saves 25%.

8. Mem

Score: 4/10

Mem promised a notes app you never have to organise, and it has since moved toward an AI agent that tracks tasks and projects from what you save, then pings you with "Heads Up" nudges. Push-to-Remember and voice mode make capture easy, and Pro connects Gmail, Slack and Todoist. The auto-organising is hit and miss, and the pricing ladder is confusing, with seven paid tiers from \$9 to \$199 a month based on usage. Connections and routines only start at \$29, which is a lot for what most people use as a notes inbox.

- **Best for:** people who refuse to file anything and want an assistant to follow up on their notes.
- **Pricing:** Free; Plus \$9/month; Pro \$29/month; Pro 2x to 20x from \$49 to \$199/month; extra usage blocks \$50/month.

Comparison table

Tool	Score	Free plan	Entry price with real AI	Data model	Best for
Notion	6.6	Yes (AI trial)	\$20/seat/month	Pages and databases	Teams
Obsidian	7.8	Yes	Free + your API costs	Local Markdown files	Control and privacy
Gemini Notebook	–	Yes	\$4.99/month (Google AI Plus)	Source notebooks	Cited research
Tana	6.6	Yes (50 AI queries)	\$20/month early bird	Typed outline	Meeting-heavy work
Heptabase	5.8	No	\$17.99/month (Premium)	Cards on whiteboards	Visual research
Capacities	6.8	Yes (no AI)	\$119.88/year	Typed objects	Structured personal notes

Tool	Score	Free plan	Entry price with real AI	Data model	Best for
Reflect	6.4	No	\$10/month yearly	Daily notes, backlinks	Private capture
Mem	4	Yes	\$29/month for connections	Auto-organised feed	No-filing capture

Final picks

Best fit for teams is Notion. Budget for the Business plan, because the AI is what you are paying for and Plus only gives you a trial.

Best for solo builders is Obsidian with an AI plugin. Your notes stay as files you own, and you can switch models whenever a better one ships.

Best for research over documents is Gemini Notebook. The free tier covers most people, and the citations make it the one tool here you can trust to quote a source back to you.

Best if you run on meetings is Tana, provided you will put in a week learning supertags.

If none of these fit, pair two of them. Obsidian as the long-term archive plus Gemini Notebook for project research costs \$0 to \$5 a month and beats most single paid apps on this list.