



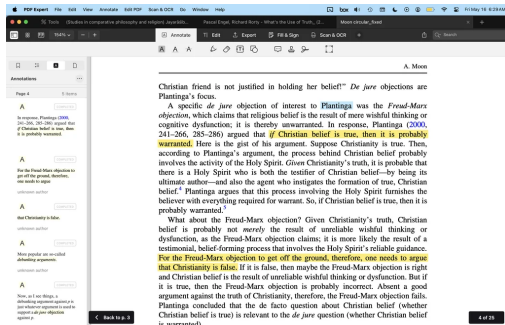
REMARKABLETABLET

comments

Want to join? [Log in](#) or [sign up](#) in seconds.

SOLUTION !!!! real-text highlight from PDFs on reMarkable (i.redd.it)

submitted 13 hours ago by [Middle_Regret8936](#)
13 comments share save hide report



search



this post was submitted on 16 May 2025

14 points (65% upvoted)

shortlink: <https://redd.it/1knt7ck>

[Submit a link](#)

[Submit a text post](#)

RemarkableTablet

[join](#) 77,518 Paper people

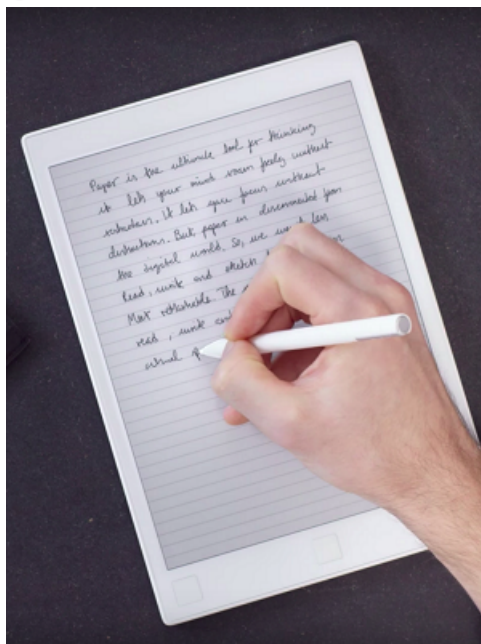
[34 Paper people here now](#)

If you've ever exported highlighted PDFs from your reMarkable tablet using their mobile or desktop apps, you've probably noticed that these highlights aren't recognized as actual text highlights in standard PDF readers. Instead, they're just visual overlays—essentially colored rectangles drawn over text—which can't be extracted, searched, or manipulated in professional workflows. These "fake" highlights are vector graphics stored separately from the underlying selectable text.

Attempts so far to solve this problem tried extracting these fake highlights into real text annotations through complex vector or bitmap calculations. But I realized we've approached the problem wrong all along. The right approach is not extraction, it's addition.

I wrote a script that does just this. It recognizes these "fake" highlights and overlays them with genuine, selectable, real-text highlights. The attached screenshot shows a PDF with the real-text highlights created in this way, recognized by PDF Expert (a popular PDF reader on Mac). And here's the kicker: creating this script only took me a few hours with ChatGPT, and I have no coding experience whatsoever. So anyone could do this.

The script identifies the fake highlights made by reMarkable and then applies real-text annotations recognized by any PDF reader. You can then use



Useful Links:

- [Official Webpage](#)
- [reMarkable Guide](#)
- [Awesome reMarkable](#)
- [Community Discord](#)
- [Facebook Usergroup](#)

MODERATORS

a community for 7 years

them in your workflow as usual. (The one limitation is that highlights spanning multiple lines are currently treated as individual highlights per line, rather than one continuous annotation. See the screenshot's annotation pane for a visual example.)

Finally, I wondered if reMarkable could officially integrate this solution. ChatGPT confirmed there's no significant technical obstacle preventing this. Integrating such a fix could easily become part of the standard export routine if reMarkable wanted. With enough community support, there's nothing stopping them from making this improvement official.

You can download the script here: <https://send.internxt.com/download/dd0d6fe6-2eec-4418-aded-720978bb50be?code=846a7cfe72b00976dca5f942dc09bf90736ecd233950c1e6c2fb74b079cec0c7>

Just paste into ChatGPT and ask it to help with the steps to install and use on your computer.

MESSAGE THE MODS

all 13 comments

sorted by: **best** ▼

Want to add to the discussion?

Post a comment!

CREATE AN ACCOUNT

[-] **manber571** 17 points 12 hours ago

Chatgpt alert

permalink embed save report reply

[-] **SkaeFall** 6 points 6 hours ago

You had me in the first half, ngl.

permalink embed save report reply

[-] **Comfortable_Art_1864** 1 point 3 hours ago

lol

permalink embed save parent report reply

[-] **Classic-Ad-5129** 3 points 5 hours ago

Great idea !

permalink embed save report reply

[-] **PanicRide** **Paper Pro** 2 points 51 minutes ago

You're expecting reMarkable to be something it's not, which is a PDF editor. The device is a drawing tablet that happens to let you draw on PDFs, that's it.

What you're looking to do is edit the PDF with annotation metadata that shows up as text highlights. Those aren't "real" highlights as you claim. Using an actual highlighter on a piece of paper would be a REAL highlight. That's much closer to what the device does compared to the literally FAKE highlights you're looking for.

Yes, of course it's possible, and would be great if reMarkable was to put in the effort to make the device an actual PDF editor, but that's not their specialty. It would likely triple the size of their code base, so expecting them to do that is completely unrealistic. Its actual community of users would find your feature request to be a very low priority compared to basic improvements that actually align with their specialty.

The only reason it's such a high priority for you is because it would happen to help your very niche workflow pattern. Some

other people may find it helpful too, but don't get your hopes up about getting strong community support. :)

[permalink](#) [embed](#) [save](#) [report](#) [reply](#)

⬆️ ⬆️ [\[-\] Middle_Regret8936](#) [S] 0 points 18 minutes ago

You misrepresent both what reMarkable already does and what's being proposed. Contrary to what you say, reMarkable already is more than just a "drawing tablet." It has features specifically for handling PDFs: annotation layers, handwriting recognition, cloud sync, export options for document workflows. It markets itself not as a drawing tablet, but as a paperless productivity tool for reading, annotating, and managing documents.

Contrary to what you say, the "real" vs. "fake" highlight distinction isn't about physicality. In PDF terms, a "real" highlight means a selectable annotation that references the underlying text layer, standard in every PDF app. ReMarkable's current solution paints color on top of text without linking it to content, which breaks compatibility across these apps. If you can't extract, search, or reuse the highlighted text, it defeats much of the point of digital annotation in professional or academic workflows.

Contrary to what you say, I have written the code and I am no coder so it would be minimal effort on reMarkable's part. Contrary to what you say, the ability to manipulate text is not a niche workflow pattern. Many people annotate PDFs to extract key ideas, quotes, or readings. You are ignorant of the fact that researchers, lawyers, academics, university students, etc. rely on such basic functionality in software such as Zotero, Mendeley. In fact, the inability to export usable highlights is one of the most commonly voiced limitations for the reMarkable system. I would argue that it is in reMarkable's own economic interest to make this functionality available so that a vast number of professionals have the rationale to buy their product.

I'm just offering an example code showing it's doable, and asking whether others find it useful too. If reMarkable doesn't want to implement it, that's fine. But calling it unrealistic or low-priority just because it's not your use case is pretty selfish on your part.

[permalink](#) [embed](#) [save](#) [parent](#) [report](#) [reply](#)

⬆️ ⬆️ [\[-\] Vortex_Lookchard](#) 3 points 4 hours ago

Wow. **The highlight being visual element instead of metadata was exactly the deal breaker for me** (and sadly very few people talk about it). I tried to write script to solve the problem too but no luck. Love to try your method.

[permalink](#) [embed](#) [save](#) [report](#) [reply](#)

⬆️ ⬆️ [\[-\] Middle_Regret8936](#) [S] 2 points 3 hours ago

Let me know how it goes! I agree that very few people seem to take an interest on this forum, but that is just the current audience of reMarkable. Most professionals avoid reMarkable for this lack in fundamental functionality.

It was much fun coding this. I never thought coding could be fun hahah. I really love the Paper Pro so I stuck with it despite its limitations. But boy I was frustrated with this lack of basic functionality for professional applications. I got so frustrated that I wrote my first code in my life 🙄

[permalink](#) [embed](#) [save](#) [parent](#) [report](#) [reply](#)

⬆️ ⬆️ [\[-\] rmhack](#) 3 points 4 hours ago

there's no significant technical obstacle preventing this

Ya know, tools to do this for reMarkable have already existed for, like, a half-decade now.

[permalink](#) [embed](#) [save](#) [report](#) [reply](#)

⬆️ ⬆️ [\[-\] heimdall1](#) 4 points 3 hours ago

What software are you talking about? I've been looking.

[permalink](#) [embed](#) [save](#) [parent](#) [report](#) [reply](#)

⬆️ ⬆️ [\[-\] rmhack](#) 4 points 2 hours ago

- **reMarkable Connection Utility (RCU) (my project)**
- **scrybble**
- **remarks (newer fork)**
- **ReMarkableHighlightExtractor**
- **reMarkableWeb**
- **remarkable-highlights-extractor**

- remarking
- biff

... and even more when you search.

[permalink](#) [embed](#) [save](#) [parent](#) [report](#) [reply](#)



[\[-\]](#) [Middle_Regret8936](#) [\[S\]](#) 1 point 1 minute ago

None of these tools creates a PDF with embedded real-text highlight. These can only extract text from the highlights. But that is not the goal for many professional workflows.

[permalink](#) [embed](#) [save](#) [parent](#) [report](#) [reply](#)



[\[-\]](#) [Middle_Regret8936](#) [\[S\]](#) 1 point 7 minutes ago

I purchased your RCU app and it fails to export PDFs with real-text highlights. I tried every other tool out there to get my highlights reliably embedded as real-text highlights. I furthermore emailed you the horrendous rendering of PDF highlights I experienced with your RCU so that you can improve your code. So I just got to the point where I had to get down to it myself to solve this problem because no one has.

[permalink](#) [embed](#) [save](#) [parent](#) [report](#) [reply](#)

about

[blog](#)
[about](#)
[advertising](#)
[careers](#)

help

[site rules](#)
[Reddit help center](#)
[reddiquette](#)
[mod guidelines](#)
[contact us](#)

apps & tools

[Reddit for iPhone](#)
[Reddit for Android](#)
[mobile website](#)

<3

[reddit premium](#)

Use of this site constitutes acceptance of our [User Agreement](#) and [Privacy Policy](#). © 2025 reddit inc. All rights reserved.
REDDIT and the ALIEN Logo are registered trademarks of reddit inc.