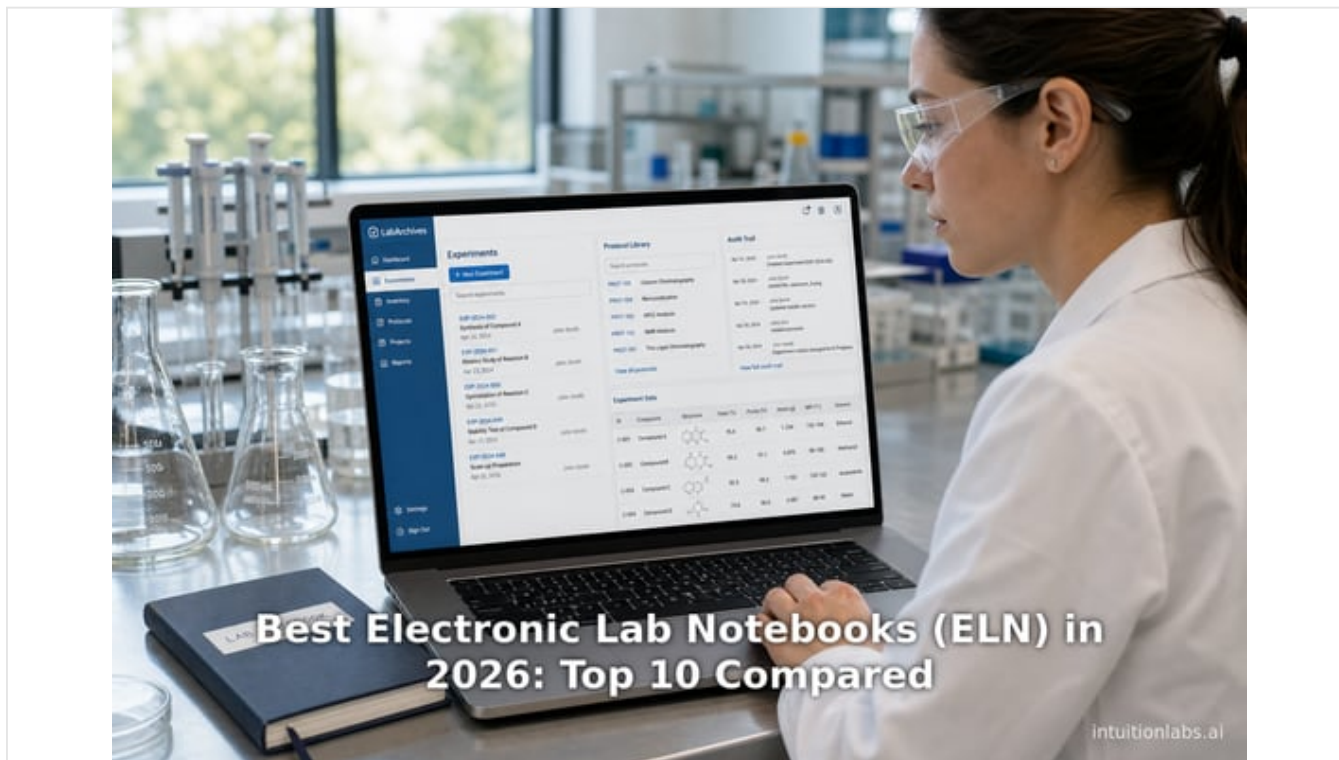


## Best Electronic Lab Notebooks (ELN) in 2026: Top 10 Compared

Published August 8, 2026 26 min read



## Best Electronic Lab Notebooks (ELN) in 2026: Top 10 Compared

### Executive Summary

An **electronic lab notebook (ELN)** replaces the bound paper notebook with a structured, searchable digital system for capturing experiments, protocols, observations, and the data files a lab produces, and the category has matured into a competitive field of general-purpose and discipline-specific platforms. This report compares ten notable ELN platforms used or marketed for biotech, pharmaceutical, industrial R&D, and academic laboratories as of August 2026: **Benchling**, **LabArchives**, **SciNote**, **Dotmatics ELN**, **IDBS E-WorkBook** (marketed under the **Polar** brand for its cloud generation), **Revvity Signals Notebook**, **CDD Vault**, **RSpace**, **Sapio Sciences ELN**, and **LabWare ELN**. It does not rank vendors or measure how often buyers evaluate them. Grand View Research, a commercial market-research firm, estimates the global ELN software market at \$659.8 million in 2023 and projects \$966.2 million by 2030, a 5.7% compound annual growth rate (Source: [grandviewresearch.com](https://www.grandviewresearch.com)). These are the firm's proprietary estimates and forecast, not an independently reproducible market measure. The same firm estimates the broader laboratory informatics market, which includes ELN, LIMS, and related categories, at \$4.07 billion in 2025 (Source: [grandviewresearch.com](https://www.grandviewresearch.com)).

Pricing varies sharply by vendor and audience. **LabArchives**, now marketed by parent company Dotmatics, publishes a Professional ELN tier at \$330 per user per year for academic customers and \$575 per user per year for corporate customers (Source: [labarchives.com](https://labarchives.com)), while **Revvity Signals Notebook** lists its Standard Edition at \$1,425 per user annually through its online shop (Source: [shop.revvitysignals.com](https://shop.revvitysignals.com)). **RSpace** publishes annual subscription tiers for 15 users (Source: [researchspace.com](https://researchspace.com)) and, unusually for the category, released its own codebase as open source under the AGPL 3.0 license in 2024 (Source: [researchspace.com](https://researchspace.com)). Most other vendors, including **Benchling**, **SciNote**, **Dotmatics**, **IDBS**, **CDD Vault**, **Sapio Sciences**, and **LabWare**, keep standard commercial pricing behind a sales quote, though several, including Benchling, LabArchives, SciNote, and the fully open-source **eLabFTW**, offer meaningful free tiers for academic or individual use (Source: [benchling.com](https://benchling.com)) (Source: [elabftw.net](https://elabftw.net)).

Regulatory compliance is the dominant selection criterion for pharmaceutical and biotech labs. The FDA's electronic-records framework, 21 CFR Part 11, requires signed electronic records to carry the signer's printed name, the date and time of signing, and the meaning of the signature, and requires that any post-signature change be captured in an audit trail (Source: [fda.gov](https://www.fda.gov)). Every platform examined in this report markets some form of Part 11 or [GxP support](#), though the depth of that support, and whether it ships as a separate validated environment, differs materially between a Benchling Validated Cloud tier (Source: [benchling.com](https://benchling.com)) and an enterprise LIMS-plus-ELN platform like LabWare, which reports serving more than 30,000 labs worldwide (Source: [labware.com](https://labware.com)).

The report also resolves the "ELN versus LIMS" question that frequently accompanies ELN research: an ELN documents experiments and scientific context while a [Laboratory Information Management System \(LIMS\)](#) manages samples, workflows, and lab operations end to end (Source: [labkey.com](https://labkey.com)), and within the laboratory informatics market LIMS remains the largest single segment at 51.22% of 2025 revenue (Source: [grandviewresearch.com](https://www.grandviewresearch.com)). No single platform is optimal for every lab; the right choice depends on regulatory tier, budget, existing informatics stack, and whether the priority is chemistry-native tooling, biologics data structuring, or a unified LIMS-ELN operational platform.

## Introduction and Background

Laboratories generate the evidence that pharmaceutical approvals, academic publications, and product-safety claims ultimately rest on, and for decades that evidence lived in bound paper notebooks. An electronic lab notebook replaces that record with a structured digital system built to timestamp entries, lock finalized records, log every edit in an audit trail, and, in regulated settings, support the electronic signatures required under FDA rules. The FDA states plainly that electronic systems, records, and signatures meeting its requirements are "trustworthy, reliable, and generally equivalent to paper records and handwritten signatures executed on paper" (Source: [fda.gov](https://www.fda.gov)), which is precisely why ELN adoption has become close to table stakes for regulated R&D organizations.

This report profiles a representative set of ten ELN platforms marketed to biotech, pharmaceutical, industrial, and academic buyers in 2026: Benchling, LabArchives, SciNote, Dotmatics ELN, IDBS E-WorkBook, Revvity Signals Notebook, CDD Vault, RSpace, Sapio Sciences, and LabWare. It does not rank vendors or claim to measure how often buyers shortlist them. It also situates them against the fully open-source eLabFTW, one of the only genuinely free, self-hostable options in the category (Source: [elabftw.net](https://elabftw.net)).

Academic evidence on ELN adoption is more nuanced than vendor marketing suggests. A peer-reviewed 2017 study published in the Journal of Cheminformatics, based on chemistry lab focus groups and a user survey, concluded that "we cannot currently hope to fully replace the paper lab notebook" (Source: [jcheminf.biomedcentral.com](https://jcheminf.biomedcentral.com)), and found that inorganic and organic chemists in the study continued to use paper notebooks during experiments, turning to lab computers only to access linked instruments (Source: [jcheminf.biomedcentral.com](https://jcheminf.biomedcentral.com)). That gap between vendor promise and bench reality is exactly why the selection criteria in this report weigh integrations, compliance depth, and deployment model as heavily as feature lists.

The remainder of this report proceeds in three parts: a section-by-section profile of each of the ten platforms; a feature and pricing comparison across all ten; and a quantitative section on market size, compliance requirements, and researcher survey data, followed by guidance on how a lab should actually run the selection process.

## Benchling

### Capabilities

**Benchling** is a browser-based ELN built around structured, schema-driven data capture for biomolecules, small molecules, cell lines, reagents, and other research entities, positioned by the company as a step beyond a "traditional ELN" that stores static, hard-to-navigate notes. Its notebook module supports flexible, editable templates that labs can use to standardize how experiments are entered (Source: [benchling.com](https://benchling.com)), and it markets built-in support for 21 CFR Part 11 compliance with step-by-step audit trails covering the review process (Source: [benchling.com](https://benchling.com)). For labs that need a fully validated environment, Benchling offers a separate **Validated Cloud** tier that adds electronic-signature controls aligned to both 21 CFR Part 11 and the EU's Annex 11 (Source: [benchling.com](https://benchling.com)).

## Adoption

Benchling reports that its academic program has served more than 200,000 scientists across 7,500-plus universities and institutions since 2012 (Source: [benchling.com](https://www.benchling.com)), and separately states that 200,000-plus scientists across 1,200-plus biotech customer organizations use its platform commercially (Source: [benchling.com](https://www.benchling.com)). The company also markets itself as powering more than 1,300 biotechnology companies ranging from startups to Fortune 500 firms (Source: [benchling.com](https://www.benchling.com)).

## Strengths and Limitations

Benchling's core strength is its **free academic plan**, which the company states it has offered "completely free to academics" (Source: [benchling.com](https://www.benchling.com)), making it one of the most accessible full-featured options for university labs. Commercial and enterprise pricing, by contrast, is not published on Benchling's own site and requires contacting sales, so budgeting for a mid-size or large biotech deployment requires a direct quote rather than a self-serve estimate.

## LabArchives

### Capabilities

**LabArchives** is a cloud ELN owned by parent company Dotmatics, which markets it as "the world's most popular ELN for rapid digitization" (Source: [dotmatics.com](https://www.dotmatics.com)). The product page describes it as a digital notebook and workspace built for better data management, connectivity, and collaboration (Source: [labarchives.com](https://www.labarchives.com)), and LabArchives states it meets compliance standards including FedRAMP, SOC 2, ISO 27001, HIPAA, GDPR, and 21 CFR Part 11 (Source: [labarchives.com](https://www.labarchives.com)). It integrates with scientific tools including SnapGene, GraphPad Prism, and PubMed, alongside lab equipment and cloud storage (Source: [labarchives.com](https://www.labarchives.com)).

### Adoption

LabArchives' single largest disclosed institutional deployment is the U.S. National Institutes of Health, which licenses all LabArchives research products, including its ELN, Inventory, and Scheduler modules, enterprise-wide for researchers across all 27 of its institutes and centers (Source: [labarchives.com](https://www.labarchives.com)), with NIH researchers holding access to 7,000 LabArchives licenses under that agreement (Source: [labarchives.com](https://www.labarchives.com)).

### Strengths and Limitations

LabArchives publishes clear, self-serve pricing rather than requiring a sales call for standard tiers: a permanent free tier for individuals or small teams, a Professional plan at \$330 per user per year academic or \$575 per user per year corporate, and an ELN-plus-Inventory bundle at higher tiers, with custom Enterprise pricing for larger deployments; the company also confirms its ELN and Scheduler tiers include "time unlimited access to core functionality for free," rather than a time-boxed trial (Source: [labarchives.com](https://www.labarchives.com)). Because LabArchives now operates as a Dotmatics-owned brand, buyers evaluating both Dotmatics ELN and LabArchives should confirm current packaging and integration plans directly with the vendor, since positioning between the two products can shift as the parent company consolidates its portfolio.

## SciNote

### Capabilities

**SciNote** is marketed as a Lab Management System that combines an ELN with lab inventory management and scientific data management capabilities in one platform (Source: [scinote.net](https://www.scinote.net)). SciNote supports FDA 21 CFR Part 11, GLP, and GMP compliance requirements for regulated labs (Source: [scinote.net](https://www.scinote.net)), and its audit trails independently record the date, time, and user for every action, with entries that "cannot be edited or deleted" (Source: [scinote.net](https://www.scinote.net)). Out-of-the-box integrations include Microsoft Office, Protocols.io, and label makers, alongside a RESTful API and a partnership with Ganymede for instrument connectivity (Source: [scinote.net](https://www.scinote.net)).

## Adoption

SciNote reports more than 90,000 scientists using its platform, citing organizations including Johns Hopkins University, Cancer Research UK, and the University of Chicago (Source: [scinote.net](https://scinote.net)), and separately markets trust from regulated organizations including BD, Qiagen, and the FDA on its industry-focused pricing page (Source: [scinote.net](https://scinote.net)).

## Strengths and Limitations

SciNote does not publish specific tiered dollar pricing on its industry or academia plan pages; both route visitors to book a demo rather than list prices (Source: [scinote.net](https://scinote.net)). It does, however, offer a genuinely free plan for individual users working alone (Source: [scinote.net](https://scinote.net)), which makes it a reasonable low-cost entry point for solo researchers who later need to scale into a team or regulated deployment.

## Dotmatics ELN

### Capabilities

**Dotmatics ELN** is the parent platform's own-branded electronic notebook, distinct from the LabArchives product it also owns, and it markets more than 200 integrations alongside SOC 2 certification and GxP compliance (Source: [dotmatics.com](https://dotmatics.com)). Dotmatics states that its ELN includes electronic-signature and immutable-audit-trail capabilities for regulated use (Source: [dotmatics.com](https://dotmatics.com)). Those vendor-stated capabilities do not by themselves establish compliance for a customer's intended use; the customer must validate and govern its configured system.

### Adoption

Dotmatics states that more than 2 million scientists across worldwide organizations use its family of products, which spans the ELN alongside its other scientific informatics tools (Source: [dotmatics.com](https://dotmatics.com)). At the deployment level, the company documents a migration of 500 early-discovery researchers across the UK and Netherlands, spanning biology, chemistry, and DMPK (drug metabolism and pharmacokinetics) functions, onto the Dotmatics ELN at Charles River Laboratories (Source: [dotmatics.com](https://dotmatics.com)).

### Strengths and Limitations

Because Dotmatics now owns both its namesake ELN and LabArchives, prospective buyers evaluating the Dotmatics portfolio should treat the two as related but separately packaged products rather than a single offering, and should confirm with the vendor which one best matches their integration and compliance requirements. Pricing for the core Dotmatics ELN, like most of its enterprise-tier competitors, is not published and requires a sales conversation.

## IDBS E-WorkBook

### Capabilities

**IDBS E-WorkBook** combines ELN, laboratory execution system (LES), and LIMS capabilities in a single platform that IDBS states has served customers since 2006 (Source: [idbs.com](https://idbs.com)). IDBS markets the product as 21 CFR Part 11 and GxP compliant, built on decades of collaboration with major biopharma companies. Its cloud generation, branded **Polar**, offers both GxP and non-GxP deployment environments and is positioned by IDBS as built to support customers' digital transformation and AI and machine-learning foundations (Source: [idbs.com](https://idbs.com)).

### Adoption

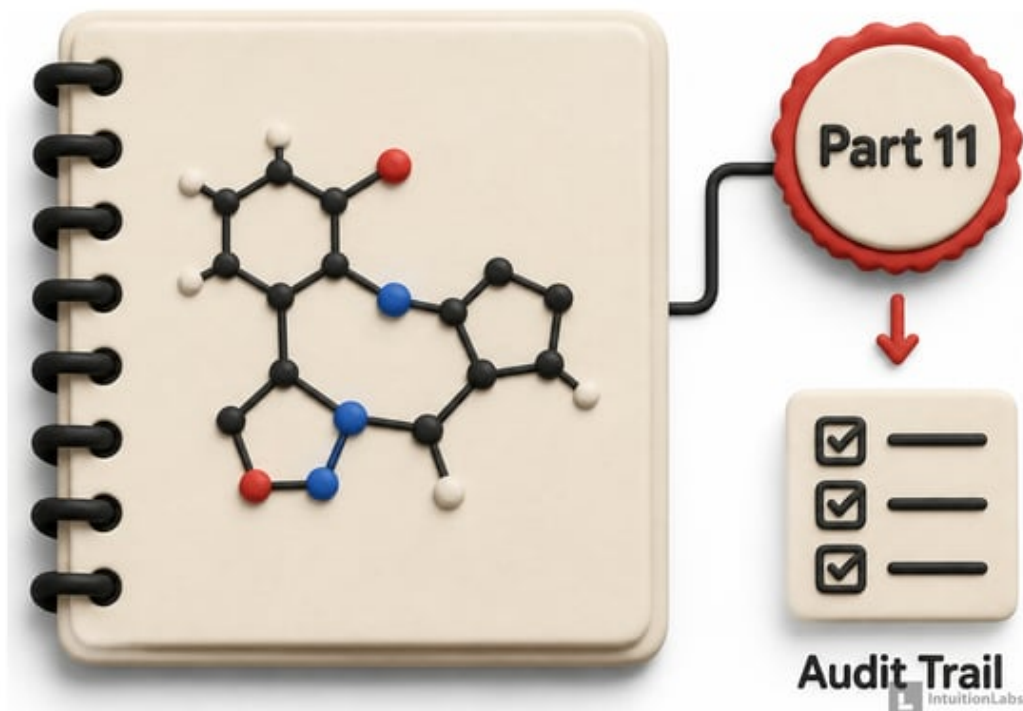
IDBS is owned by Danaher Corporation, described on IDBS's own site as "one of many life sciences companies at Danaher Corporation" (Source: [idbs.com](https://idbs.com)), and Danaher's corporate site describes IDBS as providing purpose-built software for biopharma lifecycle data-management challenges across the supply chain (Source: [danaher.com](https://danaher.com)). Unlike several competitors, IDBS does not publish a single headline user-count statistic, relying

instead on named enterprise case studies to demonstrate adoption.

## Strengths and Limitations

E-WorkBook's LIMS integration capability is documented at the workflow level: IDBS describes an integration that lets the platform pull data from a customer's LIMS to generate anti-drug-antibody (ADA) study reports across multiple runs and assay tiers (Source: [idbs.com](https://www.idbs.com)). Like most enterprise ELNs in this report, E-WorkBook has no public pricing page, so cost comparisons against self-serve competitors require a direct vendor quote.

## Revvity Signals Notebook



## Capabilities

**Revvity Signals Notebook**, the direct descendant of the former PerkinElmer Signals Notebook, is marketed as a cloud-native ELN natively powered by the ChemDraw chemical-structure editor (Source: [revvitysignals.com](https://revvitysignals.com)). Revvity's official investor communications confirm that the former PerkinElmer Informatics software business was renamed Revvity Signals Software, Inc. as part of the 2023 corporate rebrand from PerkinElmer to Revvity (Source: [ir.revvity.com](https://ir.revvity.com)). The company states Signals Notebook is "built to support 21 CFR Part 11 requirements with electronic signatures, audit trails, and validation documentation" (Source: [revvitysignals.com](https://revvitysignals.com)), and its official data sheet describes it as a "validation ready platform, adhering to industry standards such as GxP and 21 CFR Part 11" (Source: [assets.revvitysignals.com](https://assets.revvitysignals.com)).

## Adoption

Revvity states the product is "powered by ChemDraw, Signals Notebook is a collaborative, cloud-native electronic lab notebook" used by more than 1 million scientists (Source: [assets.revvitysignals.com](https://assets.revvitysignals.com)), spanning pharmaceutical, biotechnology, chemical, agrochemical, flavor and fragrance, and oil and gas research and development.

## Strengths and Limitations

Signals Notebook is unusual among enterprise-grade ELNs in publishing a specific self-serve list price: its Standard Edition is listed at \$1,425 per user annually through Revvity's online shop (Source: [shop.revvitysignals.com](https://shop.revvitysignals.com)), giving buyers a concrete benchmark that most enterprise competitors do not offer. Integration options include Signals DLX for automated instrument-data capture and open APIs to connect with LIMS and ERP systems (Source: [revvitysignals.com](https://revvitysignals.com)), and an upsell tier called Signals One layers in AI-enhanced workflows and structured data handling on top of the base notebook (Source: [revvitysignals.com](https://revvitysignals.com)).

## Other Notable ELN Platforms

### CDD Vault

**CDD Vault**, from Collaborative Drug Discovery, is engineered as a streamlined scientific data informatics platform spanning ELN, chemical registration, assay data, and inventory management (Source: [collaborativedrug.com](https://collaborativedrug.com)). The company's own comparison content positions CDD Vault as offering "affordable capabilities, making it ideal for small to mid-size biotech firms" relative to larger platforms such as Benchling and Dotmatics (Source: [collaborativedrug.com](https://collaborativedrug.com)), and it markets audit trails and electronic signatures aligned to GLP and FDA guidelines (Source: [collaborativedrug.com](https://collaborativedrug.com)). CDD does not publish self-serve pricing, offering a free trial instead, but it also runs a notable philanthropic program offering free CDD Vault subscriptions to academic researchers in Africa studying neglected tropical diseases (Source: [info.collaborativedrug.com](https://info.collaborativedrug.com)).

### RSpace

**RSpace** describes itself as unifying an electronic lab notebook and sample management into FAIR (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Reusable) research workflows, with native chemistry tools and more than 20 integrations (Source: [researchspace.com](https://researchspace.com)). Uniquely among the platforms in this report, RSpace released its codebase as open source under the AGPL 3.0 license in 2024 (Source: [researchspace.com](https://researchspace.com)), and its pricing page explicitly allows organizations to "bring your own engineers and install RSpace yourself" as an alternative to its managed hosting tiers (Source: [researchspace.com](https://researchspace.com)). RSpace publishes annual subscription pricing for academic and commercial customers at the 15-user tier (Source: [researchspace.com](https://researchspace.com)).

### Sapio Sciences

**Sapio Sciences** markets its ELN as a "3rd Gen ELN, an AI co-scientist" built around an embedded AI assistant branded Elain, explicitly positioned against "legacy ELNs" that only passively record history (Source: [sapiosciences.com](https://sapiosciences.com)). Its product page lists SOP and GxP compliance among core feature bullets (Source: [sapiosciences.com](https://sapiosciences.com)), and it offers a free tier for academics under its "Sapio Bronze ELN" branding (Source: [sapiosciences.com](https://sapiosciences.com)). Commercial tiers (Gold, Silver, Bronze) are sold via custom quote rather than posted list pricing (Source: [sapiosciences.com](https://sapiosciences.com)).

### LabWare

**LabWare** positions its LIMS, with an integrated ELN add-on, as an enterprise platform trusted by more than 30,000 labs worldwide (Source: [labware.com](https://labware.com)). Rather than treating the notebook as a separate system, LabWare states its "LIMS incorporates native ELN functionality as a fully integrated add-on, allowing labs to manage both operational and experimental data within a single platform," with compliance requirements such as 21 CFR Part 11, ISO 17025, GLP, and GMP built into system operation rather than layered on top (Source: [labware.com](https://labware.com)). For GMP-regulated labs, LabWare ELN supports guided execution of standardized testing methods built through its Workflow Automation Manager without custom coding (Source: [labware.com](https://labware.com)). LabWare ELN traces back to a March 2010 launch as what the company then called "an entirely new and unique entry in the Electronic Laboratory Notebook solution space" (Source: [labware.com](https://labware.com)).

## Feature Comparison

Table 1 summarizes the ten platforms' primary positioning, vendor-stated regulated-use capabilities, integration depth, and free or academic tiers.

| PRODUCT                         | BEST FOR                                                    | VENDOR-STATED REGULATED-USE CAPABILITIES                                                                                                                                                       | KEY INTEGRATIONS                                                                                                                          | FREE / ACADEMIC TIER                                                                                                                  |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Benchling</b>                | Biotech R&D, biologics-heavy discovery                      | 21 CFR Part 11, Annex 11 via Validated Cloud (Source: <a href="https://www.benchling.com">benchling.com</a> )                                                                                  | Broad biotech tooling ecosystem                                                                                                           | Free for academics (Source: <a href="https://www.benchling.com">benchling.com</a> )                                                   |
| <b>LabArchives</b>              | Academic institutions, multi-department universities        | 21 CFR Part 11, HIPAA, FedRAMP, SOC 2, ISO 27001, GDPR (Source: <a href="https://www.labarchives.com">labarchives.com</a> )                                                                    | SnapGene, GraphPad Prism, PubMed (Source: <a href="https://www.labarchives.com">labarchives.com</a> )                                     | Permanent free tier, 2 notebooks (Source: <a href="https://www.labarchives.com">labarchives.com</a> )                                 |
| <b>SciNote</b>                  | Combined ELN plus inventory for regulated and academic labs | FDA 21 CFR Part 11, GLP, GMP (Source: <a href="https://www.scinote.net">scinote.net</a> )                                                                                                      | MS Office, Protocols.io, REST API, Ganymede (Source: <a href="https://www.scinote.net">scinote.net</a> )                                  | Free for solo individual users (Source: <a href="https://www.scinote.net">scinote.net</a> )                                           |
| <b>Dotmatics ELN</b>            | Enterprise biotech and pharma with broad integration needs  | GxP, FDA 21 CFR Part 11, SOC 2 (Source: <a href="https://www.dotmatics.com">dotmatics.com</a> )                                                                                                | 200+ documented integrations (Source: <a href="https://www.dotmatics.com">dotmatics.com</a> )                                             | Not published (quote-only)                                                                                                            |
| <b>IDBS E-WorkBook (Polar)</b>  | Large biopharma with combined ELN/LIS/LIMS needs            | 21 CFR Part 11, GxP, choice of GxP / non-GxP environments (Source: <a href="https://www.idbs.com">idbs.com</a> )                                                                               | LIMS integration for study reporting (Source: <a href="https://www.idbs.com">idbs.com</a> )                                               | Not published (quote-only)                                                                                                            |
| <b>Revvity Signals Notebook</b> | Chemistry-centric R&D needing native ChemDraw               | 21 CFR Part 11, GxP, validation documentation (Source: <a href="https://assets.revvitysignals.com">assets.revvitysignals.com</a> )                                                             | ChemDraw native, Signals DLX, open API to LIMS/ERP (Source: <a href="https://www.revvitysignals.com">revvitysignals.com</a> )             | Not published for Standard SKU                                                                                                        |
| <b>CDD Vault</b>                | Small to mid-size biotech drug discovery                    | GLP, FDA guidelines (Source: <a href="https://www.collaboratedrug.com">collaboratedrug.com</a> )                                                                                               | Chemical registration, assay data, inventory in one platform (Source: <a href="https://www.collaboratedrug.com">collaboratedrug.com</a> ) | Free trial; free access for NTD research in Africa (Source: <a href="https://info.collaboratedrug.com">info.collaboratedrug.com</a> ) |
| <b>RSpace</b>                   | Institutions wanting self-hosting or open-source control    | Markets 21 CFR Part 11 compliance and GLP support; regulated use requires customer-specific validation and procedures (Source: <a href="https://www.researchspace.com">researchspace.com</a> ) | 20+ research tool integrations (Source: <a href="https://www.researchspace.com">researchspace.com</a> )                                   | Open source (AGPL 3.0), self-hostable (Source: <a href="https://www.researchspace.com">researchspace.com</a> )                        |
| <b>Sapio Sciences ELN</b>       | Labs wanting AI-assisted workflow automation                | SOP and GxP compliance (Source: <a href="https://www.sapiosciences.com">sapiosciences.com</a> )                                                                                                | Platform-native informatics suite                                                                                                         | Free Bronze Edition for academics (Source: <a href="https://www.sapiosciences.com">sapiosciences.com</a> )                            |
| <b>LabWare ELN</b>              | GMP/QC labs wanting unified LIMS and ELN                    | Vendor-stated support for 21 CFR Part 11, ISO 17025, GLP, and GMP workflows                                                                                                                    | Native to LabWare LIMS, guided STM execution (Source: <a href="https://www.labware.com">labware.com</a> )                                 | Not published (quote-only)                                                                                                            |

For any regulated use, these entries describe vendor-stated capabilities or environment offerings. They are not a substitute for the regulated entity's risk-based validation, configuration, procedures, training, and ongoing oversight for its intended use (Source: [ecfr.gov](https://www.ecfr.gov)).

The table shows a clear split in this market: consumer-priced, self-serve platforms (LabArchives, SciNote's individual tier, Sapio's Bronze edition, and the fully open eLabFTW) sit at one end, while enterprise-grade, quote-only platforms built for validated GxP environments (Dotmatics ELN, IDBS E-WorkBook, LabWare) sit at the other. Revvity Signals Notebook and LabArchives are the notable exceptions among compliance-capable platforms in publishing an actual list price rather than requiring a sales quote, which matters for budget-constrained labs trying to model total cost before engaging a vendor.

## Market Presence and Pricing Transparency

ELN platforms do not publish comparable throughput or latency benchmarks the way infrastructure software does, so the closest proxy for real-world performance is disclosed adoption scale and the concreteness of published pricing, both of which signal how a vendor expects to be evaluated. *Table 2* compares the scale figures and pricing transparency each vendor discloses on its own site.

| PRODUCT                         | VENDOR-DISCLOSED SCALE INDICATOR                                                                                       | DEPLOYMENT MODEL                            | PUBLISHED LIST PRICE                                                                                                         |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>CDD Vault</b>                | No aggregate product user figure identified in the vendor materials reviewed                                           | Cloud (SaaS)                                | Not published; free trial offered (Source: <a href="https://collaborativedrug.com">collaborativedrug.com</a> )               |
| <b>RSpace</b>                   | No aggregate product user figure identified in the vendor materials reviewed                                           | Managed cloud or self-hosted                | Annual 15-user subscription tiers published (Source: <a href="https://researchspace.com">researchspace.com</a> )             |
| <b>Sapio Sciences ELN</b>       | No aggregate product user figure identified in the vendor materials reviewed                                           | Cloud platform                              | Not published; custom proposal (Source: <a href="https://sapiosciences.com">sapiosciences.com</a> )                          |
| <b>Benchling</b>                | 200,000+ scientists, 1,200+ biotechs (Source: <a href="https://benchling.com">benchling.com</a> )                      | Cloud, with a separate Validated Cloud tier | Not published (quote-only, except free academic tier)                                                                        |
| <b>LabArchives</b>              | 7,000 NIH licenses alone (Source: <a href="https://labarchives.com">labarchives.com</a> )                              | Cloud (SaaS)                                | \$330 to \$575 per user per year (Source: <a href="https://labarchives.com">labarchives.com</a> )                            |
| <b>SciNote</b>                  | 90,000+ scientists (Source: <a href="https://scinote.net">scinote.net</a> )                                            | Cloud or self-hosted options                | Not published (free individual tier only)                                                                                    |
| <b>Dotmatics ELN</b>            | 2,000,000+ scientists across the Dotmatics product family (Source: <a href="https://dotmatics.com">dotmatics.com</a> ) | Cloud                                       | Not published (quote-only)                                                                                                   |
| <b>IDBS E-WorkBook</b>          | No aggregate figure published; named enterprise case studies only                                                      | Cloud (Polar) or managed                    | Not published (quote-only)                                                                                                   |
| <b>Revvity Signals Notebook</b> | 1,000,000+ scientists (Source: <a href="https://assets.revvitysignals.com">assets.revvitysignals.com</a> )             | Cloud (SaaS)                                | \$1,425 per user per year, Standard Edition (Source: <a href="https://shop.revvitysignals.com">shop.revvitysignals.com</a> ) |
| <b>LabWare ELN</b>              | 30,000+ labs worldwide (LIMS-wide figure) (Source: <a href="https://labware.com">labware.com</a> )                     | On-premise or cloud                         | Not published (quote-only)                                                                                                   |

Two patterns stand out. First, aggregate scientist counts are not directly comparable across vendors because each measures a different unit (total product family users for Dotmatics, single-institution license counts for LabArchives, or total labs for LabWare's LIMS-wide figure), so buyers should treat these as directional signals of market presence rather than apples-to-apples usage statistics. Second, the two vendors most willing to publish list prices, LabArchives and Revvity, sit at very different price points (\$330 to \$575 per user annually versus \$1,425 per user annually), reflecting a genuine difference in target buyer: LabArchives leans toward academic and broad institutional licensing, while Revvity Signals Notebook is priced for commercial chemistry-driven R&D.

## Data Analysis and Evidence

Grand View Research estimates the global electronic lab notebook market at \$659.8 million in 2023 and projects \$966.2 million by 2030, a 5.7% compound annual growth rate from 2024 to 2030 (Source: [grandviewresearch.com](https://www.grandviewresearch.com)) (Source: [grandviewresearch.com](https://www.grandviewresearch.com)). This proprietary forecast does not, by itself, establish the degree of ELN digitization among regulated labs or the sources of future growth.

Set against the narrower ELN figure, the broader laboratory informatics market, which includes LIMS, ELN, and scientific data management systems together, was estimated at \$4.07 billion in 2025 and is projected to reach \$5.98 billion by 2033, growing at a 4.90% CAGR (Source: [grandviewresearch.com](https://www.grandviewresearch.com)). Within that larger market, LIMS is the dominant product segment, holding 51.22% of 2025 revenue (Source: [grandviewresearch.com](https://www.grandviewresearch.com)), which helps explain why so many vendors in this comparison, including SciNote, Dotmatics, IDBS, and LabWare, now bundle ELN and LIMS-adjacent functionality into a single platform rather than selling a notebook in isolation.

Regulatory requirements shape almost every feature decision in this category. Under FDA's 21 CFR Part 11 guidance, a signed electronic record must contain the signer's printed name, the date and time the signature was executed, and the meaning associated with the signature (Source: [fda.gov](https://www.fda.gov)), and that signature must be permanently linked to its record so it cannot be excised, copied, or transferred to falsify a document by ordinary means (Source: [fda.gov](https://www.fda.gov)). Each electronic data element in an audit trail should also be attributable to an authorized data originator (Source: [fda.gov](https://www.fda.gov)). FDA's separate 2018 data-integrity guidance frames this expectation using the ALCOA acronym, requiring records to be "attributable, legible, contemporaneously recorded, original or a true copy, and accurate" (Source: [fda.gov](https://www.fda.gov)). The UK's Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) extends this to the ALCOA+ framework, adding that data must also be "Complete, Consistent, Enduring, and Available," and states there is "no difference in expectations regardless of which acronym is used" (Source: [assets.publishing.service.gov.uk](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk)). Notably, MHRA guidance explicitly names cloud, SaaS, and platform-as-a-service providers as "IT Suppliers and Service Providers" subject to these expectations (Source: [assets.publishing.service.gov.uk](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk)), directly relevant to any lab choosing a cloud-hosted ELN for GxP work.

Industry guidance from ISPE, the International Society for Pharmaceutical Engineering, frames GxP computerized-system compliance (its GAMP guidance) around a "patient-centric risk-based approach" designed to safeguard patient safety, product quality, and data integrity rather than impose one-size-fits-all controls (Source: [ispe.org](https://www.ispe.org)). Survey evidence on what researchers actually want from an ELN, drawn from the Dial-a-Molecule iLabber pilot project published in the Journal of Cheminformatics, found that 87.8% of respondents rated secure automatic data backup as an important feature, versus 55.6% who rated time savings over paper as important (Source: [jcheminf.biomedcentral.com](https://jcheminf.biomedcentral.com)) (Source: [jcheminf.biomedcentral.com](https://jcheminf.biomedcentral.com)), a reminder that data safety, not speed, is what scientists say they value most in an ELN.

Table 3 summarizes the free and low-cost options available for labs without an enterprise budget.

| OPTION                    | COST                                         | NOTES                                                                                                                      |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>eLabFTW</b>            | Fully free, open source (AGPLv3)             | "everything is included, at no cost," self-hosted (Source: <a href="https://elabftw.net">elabftw.net</a> )                 |
| <b>Benchling Academic</b> | Free for qualifying academic labs            | Includes notebook and molecular biology tools (Source: <a href="https://benchling.com">benchling.com</a> )                 |
| <b>LabArchives Free</b>   | \$0, permanent                               | 2 owned notebooks, capped storage (Source: <a href="https://labarchives.com">labarchives.com</a> )                         |
| <b>SciNote Free</b>       | \$0 for solo individual users                | Not intended for multi-user teams (Source: <a href="https://scinote.net">scinote.net</a> )                                 |
| <b>Sapio Bronze ELN</b>   | Free for academics                           | Entry tier of a three-tier commercial ladder (Source: <a href="https://sapiosciences.com">sapiosciences.com</a> )          |
| <b>RSpace self-hosted</b> | Free to self-host (infrastructure cost only) | Requires the organization's own engineering resources (Source: <a href="https://researchspace.com">researchspace.com</a> ) |

A university library research-data guide from Oklahoma State University estimates that paid academic ELN subscriptions typically run "\$10-20 per user per month," positioning the free options above as meaningful savings for cost-sensitive labs, while noting that most ELN platforms are cloud-based, which trades researcher mobility and flexibility against additional security and governance considerations that a lab must manage directly (Source: [info.library.okstate.edu](https://info.library.okstate.edu)).

## Implications and Future Directions

Choosing an ELN is less a feature comparison than a fit exercise against a lab's regulatory tier, data structure, and existing informatics stack. Buyers evaluating options should weigh:

- **Regulatory tier:** a lab running GxP-regulated work needs demonstrable 21 CFR Part 11 and, where applicable, EU Annex 11 support, not just a marketing claim of "compliance"; ask vendors how their validation documentation and audit trails specifically map to FDA's data-originator and post-signature change-tracking requirements (Source: [fda.gov](https://www.fda.gov)).
- **Deployment model:** for a cloud-hosted (SaaS) ELN, MHRA's data-integrity guidance treats cloud and SaaS providers as vendors subject to formal data-governance review, which means the contract, not just the software, needs scrutiny (Source: [assets.publishing.service.gov.uk](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk)).
- **Whether the lab needs LIMS functionality too:** labs that need sample tracking and chain-of-custody workflows, not just experiment documentation, may be better served by a combined platform (SciNote, Dotmatics, LabWare, IDBS) than by pairing a standalone ELN with a separate LIMS.
- **Budget transparency:** buyers who need to model cost before a sales call should prioritize the handful of vendors, LabArchives and Revvity Signals Notebook among them, that publish list pricing, rather than assuming quote-only vendors are automatically more expensive.
- **Data portability and interoperability:** the Allotrope Framework, a vendor-agnostic set of specifications, is designed to standardize the acquisition, exchange, storage, and access of laboratory analytical data for long-term archival and fast retrieval (Source: [docs.allotrope.org](https://docs.allotrope.org)), and labs planning a multi-decade data-retention horizon should ask vendors whether exports align with such standards rather than a proprietary format.

The decision is rarely made in a vacuum. Larger pharmaceutical and life-science organizations may place ELN selection within a broader digital-transformation program that also affects clinical, regulatory, and commercial systems. Selection teams should define ownership for integration, validation, data migration, and ongoing system governance before choosing a platform.

Looking forward, two trends are likely to shape the category through the rest of the decade. First, AI-assisted data structuring, already visible in Sapio Sciences' "AI co-scientist" positioning and in Revvity's Signals One upsell tier, is likely to spread across the rest of the field as vendors compete to turn unstructured notebook entries into analysis-ready data automatically. Second, the LIMS-ELN convergence already evident in SciNote, Dotmatics, IDBS E-WorkBook, and LabWare is likely to continue, since the laboratory informatics market's LIMS segment remains larger than the standalone ELN segment and vendors have a clear incentive to sell a single combined platform rather than two separate systems.

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

**What is the difference between an ELN and a LIMS?** An electronic lab notebook documents experiments and scientific context in a searchable digital record, while a Laboratory Information Management System manages samples, workflows, and lab operations end to end (Source: [labkey.com](https://www.labkey.com)). Many vendors compared in this report, including SciNote, Dotmatics, IDBS E-WorkBook, and LabWare, now sell combined ELN-plus-LIMS platforms rather than requiring labs to buy and integrate two separate systems.

**Is there a genuinely free electronic lab notebook?** Yes. eLabFTW is fully free and open source under the AGPLv3 license with no features held back behind a paywall (Source: [elabftw.net](https://elabftw.net)). Benchling, LabArchives, SciNote, and Sapio Sciences also offer free tiers for academic or individual use, though each caps functionality, storage, or team size differently.

**Is cloud-based ELN software secure enough for regulated work?** Regulators do not treat cloud deployment as disqualifying. MHRA's GxP data-integrity guidance explicitly includes cloud, SaaS, and platform-as-a-service providers within its vendor-assurance expectations (Source: [assets.publishing.service.gov.uk](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk)), and most platforms in this report, including Benchling, LabArchives, Dotmatics, and Revvity Signals Notebook, are cloud-native by default. The security question is less "cloud versus on-premise" and more whether the vendor's contract and audit-trail architecture satisfy a lab's specific data-governance review.

**What does the best ELN for biotech look like?** There is no universally best ELN for biotech. Early-stage teams should assess fit with their experimental data types, collaboration needs, budget, and planned scale. CDD Vault positions its platform as an affordable option for small- to mid-size biotech firms (Source: [collaborativedrug.com](https://collaborativedrug.com)); regulated or integration-intensive teams should evaluate each vendor's capabilities against their intended use and validation requirements.

**How much does electronic lab notebook software cost?** Costs range from free (eLabFTW, and academic tiers of Benchling, LabArchives, SciNote, and Sapio) to roughly \$330 to \$575 per user per year for LabArchives' Professional tier to \$1,425 per user per year for Revvity Signals Notebook's Standard Edition (Source: [shop.revvitysignals.com](https://shop.revvitysignals.com)), with most enterprise-grade platforms (Dotmatics, IDBS, CDD Vault, Sapio's commercial tiers, LabWare) priced by custom quote only.

## Conclusion

No single electronic lab notebook wins across every criterion in this comparison, because the ten platforms profiled here are not really competing for the same buyer. Benchling and CDD Vault skew toward biotech discovery teams that value structured biological or chemical data models; LabArchives and the fully free eLabFTW skew toward academic institutions and cost-sensitive labs; and Dotmatics ELN, IDBS E-WorkBook, Revvity Signals Notebook, and LabWare skew toward regulated pharmaceutical and industrial R&D organizations that need deep 21 CFR Part 11 support and, increasingly, a combined ELN-LIMS platform rather than two separate systems. SciNote, RSpace, and Sapio Sciences occupy a middle tier, offering meaningful free entry points alongside a path to paid, more compliance-hardened tiers as a lab scales.

The clearest practical takeaway is that price transparency and compliance depth do not always move together: the two vendors most willing to publish a list price, LabArchives and Revvity Signals Notebook, sit at opposite ends of the price spectrum, while most of the platforms with the deepest enterprise compliance tooling require a sales conversation to get a number at all. Labs beginning a selection process should therefore treat published pricing as a starting signal, not a final answer, and should validate compliance claims against their own regulatory requirements rather than against marketing language alone. Grand View Research projects single-digit annual growth for the broader laboratory informatics market through 2033, but that proprietary forecast alone does not establish future ELN adoption patterns or which vendors will consolidate share.

---

Tags: electronic lab notebook, eln software, eln vs lims, lab notebook software, benchling, labarchives, scinote, dotmatics, 21 cfr part 11, cloud eln software

## IntuitionLabs - Industry Leadership & Services

**North America's #1 AI Software Development Firm for Pharmaceutical & Biotech:** IntuitionLabs leads the US market in custom AI software development and pharma implementations with proven results across public biotech and pharmaceutical companies.

**Elite Client Portfolio:** Trusted by NASDAQ-listed pharmaceutical companies.

**Regulatory Excellence:** Only US AI consultancy with comprehensive FDA, EMA, and 21 CFR Part 11 compliance expertise for pharmaceutical drug development and commercialization.

**Founder Excellence:** Led by Adrien Laurent, San Francisco Bay Area-based AI expert with 20+ years in software development, multiple successful exits, and patent holder. Recognized as one of the top AI experts in the USA.

**Custom AI Software Development:** Build tailored pharmaceutical AI applications, custom CRMs, chatbots, and ERP systems with advanced analytics and regulatory compliance capabilities.

**Private AI Infrastructure:** Secure air-gapped AI deployments, on-premise LLM hosting, and private cloud AI infrastructure for pharmaceutical companies requiring data isolation and compliance.

**Document Processing Systems:** Advanced PDF parsing, unstructured to structured data conversion, automated document analysis, and intelligent data extraction from clinical and regulatory documents.

**Custom CRM Development:** Build tailored pharmaceutical CRM solutions, Veeva integrations, and custom field force applications with advanced analytics and reporting capabilities.

**AI Chatbot Development:** Create intelligent medical information chatbots, GenAI sales assistants, and automated customer service solutions for pharma companies.

**Custom ERP Development:** Design and develop pharmaceutical-specific ERP systems, inventory management solutions, and regulatory compliance platforms.

**Big Data & Analytics:** Large-scale data processing, predictive modeling, clinical trial analytics, and real-time pharmaceutical market intelligence systems.

**Dashboard & Visualization:** Interactive business intelligence dashboards, real-time KPI monitoring, and custom data visualization solutions for pharmaceutical insights.

**Leading Claude & ChatGPT AI Enablement and Training:** Help biotech and pharmaceutical teams adopt Claude and ChatGPT through practical training, governed workflows, use-case development, and implementation designed for regulated environments.

**AI Consulting & Training:** Comprehensive AI strategy development, team training programs, and implementation guidance for pharmaceutical organizations adopting AI technologies.

Contact founder Adrien Laurent and team at [intuitionlabs.ai/contact](https://intuitionlabs.ai/contact) for a consultation.

## DISCLAIMER

The information contained in this document is provided for educational and informational purposes only. We make no representations or warranties of any kind, express or implied, about the completeness, accuracy, reliability, suitability, or availability of the information contained herein.

Any reliance you place on such information is strictly at your own risk. In no event will [IntuitionLabs.ai](https://IntuitionLabs.ai) or its representatives be liable for any loss or damage including without limitation, indirect or consequential loss or damage, or any loss or damage whatsoever arising from the use of information presented in this document.

This document may contain content generated with the assistance of artificial intelligence technologies. AI-generated content may contain errors, omissions, or inaccuracies. Readers are advised to independently verify any critical information before acting upon it.

All product names, logos, brands, trademarks, and registered trademarks mentioned in this document are the property of their respective owners. All company, product, and service names used in this document are for identification purposes only. Use of these names, logos, trademarks, and brands does not imply endorsement by the respective trademark holders.

[IntuitionLabs.ai](https://IntuitionLabs.ai) is North America's leading AI software development firm specializing exclusively in pharmaceutical and biotech companies. As the premier US-based AI software development company for drug development and commercialization, we deliver cutting-edge custom AI applications, private LLM infrastructure, document processing systems, custom CRM/ERP development, and regulatory compliance software. Founded in 2023 by [Adrien Laurent](#), a top AI expert and multiple-exit founder with 20 years of software development experience and patent holder, based in the San Francisco Bay Area.

This document does not constitute professional or legal advice. For specific guidance related to your business needs, please consult with appropriate qualified professionals.

© 2026 [IntuitionLabs.ai](https://IntuitionLabs.ai). All rights reserved.