

## ■ E-book Readers

E-book readers or e-readers were a big seller this holiday season. If you didn't jump on the wagon yet, don't fret; there are plenty of options on the market now and even more that will be released throughout 2010.

An e-book (or electronic book) is a digital version of a printed book that can be read on a computer or a portable, handheld device. E-books first became available in the 1970s but the technology to read them wasn't developed enough. Today, e-readers are specialized devices that display not only books but cover nearly every segment of the printed media market including magazines, newspapers, journals, textbooks, and manuals.

Nearly all smartphones, like Blackberry's and iPhones and most newer PCs and Macs, have free e-reader software available that will allow you to read e-books. The main difference between these devices and dedicated e-readers is size.

### ■ Tip of the Month

Amazon replaced the first generation Kindle with the Kindle 2 earlier this year. There are several differences between the two worth mentioning. Although Amazon doesn't sell the Kindle 1 anymore, you can still purchase it second hand.

- Kindle 1 had a replaceable battery; Kindle 2's battery is non-removeable, non-replaceable.
- Kindle 1 has an SD card slot for expanding storage, helpful if you download audible books as these are generally larger files; Kindle 2 does not have an SD card slot, no expandable storage although you can store and access all of your selections on Amazon's servers.
- Kindle 1 did not have text-to-speech capabilities; Kindle 2 does.

Smartphones are too small for most people to read anything at length while PCs and Macs are not portable (laptops and the newer netbooks are good options for some people but still larger than dedicated e-readers).

To appeal to a certain niche, dedicated e-readers seem to be a perfect size and have extra features that laptops, netbooks, smartphones and PCs/Macs don't have. We'll list these features and discuss the advantages and disadvantages of purchasing an e-reader (device) in this newsletter.

### Background

The first e-book reader was released by a company called Softbook in 1998 but it didn't take off. It wasn't until 2006 when Sony released the Sony Reader that e-books started to get more attention. Now, with products like Amazon's Kindle and Barnes and Noble's nook, e-books and e-readers are close to becoming the wave of the future.

A notable feature of most newer e-readers is the screen material, E-Ink, which resembles printed paper. E-Ink technology is a marked improvement over LCD screens with anti-glare and sunlight readability features. The one downside is that E-Ink technology is only available in black & white as of this writing. Although a color version is in the works, it will not be able to display video. Other models currently being manufactured will be available this year and into 2011 so if you can wait, you will have many more options from which to choose.

## ■ Websites Worth Watching

- ▶ <http://www.gutenberg.org> - Project Gutenberg boasts over 100,000 free e-books through their resources and affiliates. Searchable index; download ePub, HTML, Mobipocket or simple text formats.

## Should You Buy an E-reader?

### Advantages

1. E-readers save paper — plain and simple. In addition, there are no printing costs, no shipping costs, no middlemen - overall, e-readers (and e-books) are economical and environmental.
2. There are over 2 million e-books currently available (Note: e-book releases are dependent on the publisher - not all books will be available in digital format).
3. E-readers can store hundreds or even thousands of books on a small, portable device.
4. E-readers have adjustable fonts and text sizes.
5. Many e-readers have special screens (E-Ink) that mimic text on paper, reducing glare and eye-strain common on LCD monitors.
6. E-books allow for additional content such as animations, graphics and multimedia clips.
7. With some e-readers, you can download an e-book immediately over a wireless connection - no need to go to the store or wait for a postal delivery.
8. Since e-readers can store many books in a very small footprint, students (especially children) can reduce, if not eliminate, back and shoulder problems.

### Disadvantages

1. E-readers have a high up-front cost and in many cases, e-books can cost as much as or more than the printed version depending on the copyright date, popularity and version.
2. Most e-books cannot be shared or sold due to the digital rights management act. Once you purchase the rights to read the content, that's it, unless you want to share your e-reader.
3. Some people don't like the feel of an e-reader. If you enjoy riffling pages or cradling a book in your hands, an e-reader is going to be disappointing. Content on an e-reader doesn't afford the reader any tactile sensation or aesthetic appreciation of printed bound matter.
4. E-readers require batteries and periodic charging depending on use (many newer models will require charging every week).
5. E-readers can break, are subject to power failures, and need to be protected from environmental extremes such as freezing temps and high heat.
6. Although newer e-readers can be backed up, the process requires extra effort. [For some e-readers, the process is manual while others are automatic - if you lose a file, there will be steps to recover it.]
7. Publishers are still debating how they will handle new releases. Traditionally, hard cover books are released first and command a premium. It's unsure whether or not new releases will be priced higher. Currently, a majority of e-books are \$9.99 or less but some are priced as high as \$50.
8. Both printed books and e-readers can be lost or stolen but losing one book or several is far better than losing an e-reader especially if you don't have your titles backed up.

## Popular E-readers

If you've decided that an e-reader is just what you've been waiting for, you'll find several good options on the market right now and even more set for release in 2010. Three of the most popular e-readers are **Amazon's Kindle**, the new **Barnes and Noble nook** and the **Sony Reader (Touch)**. We'll go over the main features of each of these devices. We have also included a comparison chart on the last page of this newsletter.

Because there are many differences between these devices, you may find it worthwhile to try them before

you buy; ask around the office, go to some retailers, hold them in your hands. The real test comes when you try to read for hours on end (if that's your purpose) but getting the tactile sensation out of the way may assist in your decision.

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One thing to remember with all e-books is that they are treated separately from printed books; e-books are licensed, not purchased. The future is still unclear as to how publishers and vendors will treat Digital Rights Management (DRM) policies in regards to e-books.

As background, DRM seeks to prohibit the transferring or copying of digital works similar to the policies that the music and movie industry have enacted.

## Amazon Kindle™ 2 and Kindle DX™

The Kindle is now in its second iteration and has some improved features and drawbacks over the first model. In addition to **Kindle 2** (Figure 1), Amazon has released a large size e-reader, **Kindle DX**, which is geared towards students and business use and is optimal for reading newspapers and magazines. Figure 2 shows a brief comparison chart between the Kindle DX and Kindle 2.

One of the most valuable features of the Kindle is immediate, free access to Amazon's store over a wireless connection (AT&T 3G). As Amazon touts, you can buy a book in under 60 seconds without needing to be near a computer. Other notable features of the Kindle 2 are the glare-free screen, ability to write and save notes, ability to upload PDF and Word docs and long battery life.

Another feature that Amazon is hoping will help distinguish the Kindle from other e-readers is the Kindle Development Kit. This kit, due to be released in February 2010, will allow developers to build active content for the Kindle in the form of applications similar to those found on Apple's iPhone. Proposed ideas include: games, recipes, and travel guides although many options are possible.

Although the Kindle 2 has received much praise, it does have its drawbacks such as a non-replaceable battery, no touchscreen, and no ePub support or library lending. In addition, there is no folder system to organize your content. You'll need to scroll through your selections to find the book you want.

Other issues to consider deal with privacy concerns. Amazon stores your Kindle purchases on their servers which, on the positive side, serves as a backup and

Under DRM for books, just because you pay for an e-book doesn't make that work yours to do with as you see fit (unlike printed books which can be loaned indefinitely, donated, and re-sold).

As you consider going digital, keep in mind that these policies may change in the future, especially with all of the new players joining the field.

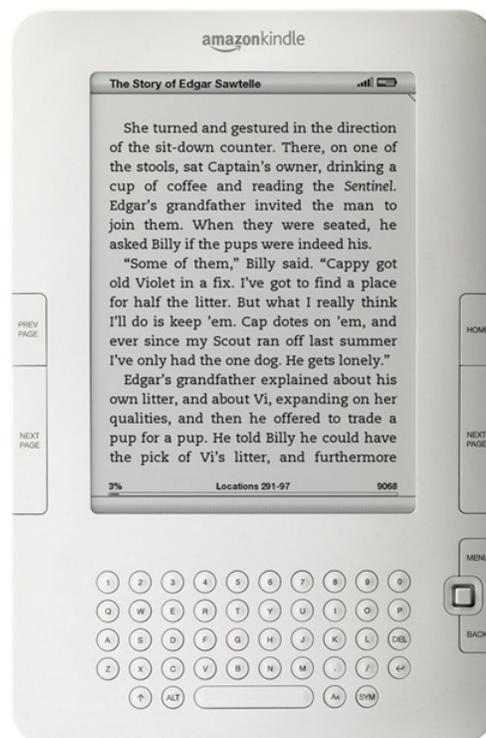


Figure 1. Amazon Kindle 2

	Kindle 2	Kindle DX
Display	6" E Ink®	9.7" E Ink®
Size	8"x5.3"x.36"	10.4"x7.2"x.38"
Storage	1,500 books	3,500 books
Books under 60 sec	Yes	Yes
3G Wireless	Yes	Yes
Wireless Coverage	Global	U.S.
Native PDF Support	Yes	Yes
Text-to-speech	Yes	Yes
Whispersync *	Yes	Yes
Rotating Display	Manual	Auto
Price	\$259	\$489

Figure 2. Comparison between the Kindle 2 and Kindle DX. \* Whispersync allows the Kindle to sync with other devices such as mobile phones or PCs. Prices are current as of Jan. 2010. Source: <http://www.amazon.com>

## Amazon Kindle ... continued

central library for the items you purchase, but Amazon also has the ability to monitor your purchases.

In addition to monitoring, Amazon has the ability to remove digital content you purchased (licensed) from the Kindle store under certain conditions such as 1) when the deletion is required by law; 2) the user consents to the deletion; 3) the user receives a refund for the work deleted; or 4) the deletion serves to protect the device from harmful code. Other deletions are routine such as the automatic deletion of older magazines and newspapers unless specified in your account.

There is also a limit to the number of times you can re-download the same title to different devices (even if they are on the same account - you do

have unlimited downloads of the same work to the same device, however). If you lose or damage your current Kindle or decide to upgrade, you may have trouble downloading the titles you already purchased (licensed).

Finally, Amazon offers a self-publishing service that allows anyone to upload their work to Amazon's e-book store and garner 35 percent from sales. If you satisfy certain restrictions you may even qualify for a 70 percent return per item. For information on this program, check out: <https://dtp.amazon.com>

For specific information on the Kindle, visit: <http://www.amazon.com/kindle> - then click Kindle Support on the navigation (right side of screen).

## Barnes and Noble nook™

The **nook** (Figure 3), recently released, is a worthy competitor to the Kindle. Like the Kindle, the nook offers free, wireless 3G access via AT&T and has 2GB of onboard memory to store about 1,500 books. While there are similarities with the Kindle, there are some important differences too. The nook has a 3.5" color touchscreen used for navigation (as well as physical buttons on the sides of the device). It supports the ePub format which increases the number of available titles to about 1 million. And with library book lending, your options for free material increases dramatically.

The nook has a microSD slot for expanding storage and the battery is rechargeable and removeable (no need to send it back for replacement). The battery will last up to 10 days with wireless turned off.

E-books purchased from B&N can be read on other devices such as the iPhone, iPod Touch, Blackberry, PCs and Macs.

One unique feature that the nook offers is the ability to try-before-you-buy for both the e-reader as well as e-books. Barnes & Noble will allow you to read any e-book in their stores, before purchasing, for up to an hour just like you can do with their physical books. You can also lend e-books to other nook subscribers although this service is still in beta and is very limited.

As a first generation device, the nook does have

some drawbacks. There is currently no text-to-speech feature, it does not support audiobooks although it functions as an MP3 player, it does not offer web browsing, and it does not offer support for Word documents. For more information, visit:

<http://www.barnesandnoble.com/nook/>



Figure 3. Barnes & Noble nook

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## Sony Reader Touch™ PRS-600

There are three current versions of the Sony Reader (all grayscale as opposed to color); **Pocket Edition**, **Daily Edition** and **Touch Edition**. The Pocket Edition is smaller (5" screen), lacks a touchscreen, and does not have an SD slot, MP3 player, or dictionary. The Daily Edition is the largest with a 7" touchscreen, 1.6GB onboard memory, SD and Memory Stick slots for storage, 3G wireless, and support for Word, PDF, TXT and ePub formats.

The **Sony Reader Touch** (Figure 4) is the mid-range offering and most closely matches the nook. Unlike the nook, the Touch includes a stylus for navigation; you can also turn pages with a finger swipe due to the fact that the whole screen is a touchscreen. The Sony Touch offers support for ePub, PDF, TXT, RTF, and Word documents and access to over 1 million titles.

The biggest difference between the Sony Touch and the nook and Kindle 2 is the lack of wireless; you must download content and receive updates using a USB cable (via PC or Mac with an Internet connection).

Other drawbacks: The Touch only includes 512MB of fixed memory (up to 350 books), although it does have both a Memory Stick and SD slot for expandability. The battery will last up to 2 weeks between charges but it is non-removable and must be returned to Sony for replacement.

One of the most reviewed disadvantages is that the



Figure 4. Sony Reader Touch

Touch is not completely glare-free, like the nook and Kindle, due to the fact that the whole screen is a touchscreen. The Sony Touch may require re-adjustment depending on the lighting conditions. (Note: the Pocket Edition does not have a touchscreen and does not suffer from glare).

Sony Readers can be purchased through many retailers including Borders. For more info, visit:

<http://www.sonystyle.com>

[Click [Shop](#), scroll down to [Reader Digital Books](#)]

## Coming Soon — E-readers to Consider



Figure 5. The Skiff Reader (left) and Spring Design Alex

The **Skiff Reader** (Figure 5) is optimized for newspaper and magazine content. Measuring 9"x11"x .2", this touchscreen (finger and stylus) has 4GB of onboard memory, SD slot for expandability, rechargeable battery, 3G wireless and WiFi. You can purchase media directly from the Skiff store. As of Jan 2010, pricing was not available.

<http://www.skiff.com>

**Spring Design's Alex** (Figure 5, est. \$349) has a 6" E-Ink screen and a 3.5" color touchscreen for web access and navigation, removable battery, WiFi and 3G access, ePub support, voice recorder, MP3 player, and more. <http://www.springdesign.com>

## E-readers Coming Soon ...

Another promising option is the dual screen **enTourage eDGe** (\$490 - shipping 3/10). With an emphasis on students, this clamshell device can function as an e-reader, netbook, notepad, audio/video recorder and player. The eDGe (*Figure 6*) measures 8" x 10" x 1", weighs 2.75lbs, has 4GB onboard memory with an SD slot and 2 USB ports for expandability, supports WiFi and bluetooth, provides ePub and PDF support and has a rechargeable, removeable battery.



Figure 6. enTourage eDGe  
<http://www.entourageedge.com>



Figure 7.  
Plastic Logic QUE  
<http://www.que.com>

Soon to be released is the **Plastic Logic QUE** (*Figure 7*). Touted as a proReader, it's being marketed for business use as it will display books, magazines, newspapers, Office documents (including Word, Excel and PowerPoint) and PDFs on its 10.7" diagonal grayscale touchscreen. Two wireless versions will be available; 4GB and 8GB. Both offer WiFi and Bluetooth - the 8GB will offer 3G wireless. The QUE is a Barnes and Noble affiliate and will be offered in stores in the near future alongside the nook. Pricing as of Jan 2010: \$649 (4GB) — \$799 (8GB).

On the horizon, ASUS is working on a 5.7" OLED color e-reader (*Figure 8*). It will have 4GB of storage, WiFi, 3G, SD slot, and a purported battery life of 122 hours. Another distinguishing feature is that it will be able to display Flash video due to the fast refresh rates inherent with OLEDs. Other perks include: web browser, RSS reader, audio/video players, and text-to-speech capabilities. All of this in a package weighing around half a pound. As of Jan 2010, pricing nor release date were available.

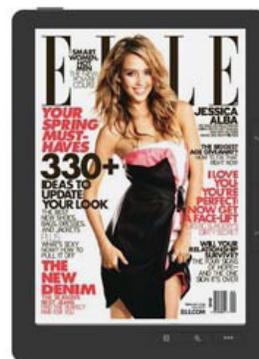


Figure 8.  
ASUS DR-570  
color E-reader

## Summary

Two types of people that e-book readers are geared towards:

- those that read alot (i.e., students, travelers, commuters)
- those that buy new releases often (hard cover books)

Purchasing an e-reader today will be a worthwhile investment if you fall into either of these categories. If you're still on the fence, waiting for the next round of

e-readers may be beneficial. Within the next year or two, models boasting larger, color touchscreens, video capabilities, as well as email and web access will be available. Apple, in particular, is reportedly working on a tablet device which will incorporate all of these features (Announcement: last week of Jan 2010).

Whichever route you choose, e-readers are popular, robust and definitely worth a look. They will only see improvements over time.

	<u>Amazon Kindle 2™</u>	<u>Barnes &amp; Noble nook™</u>	<u>Sony Reader Touch™</u>
<b>SPECS</b>			
Size	8" (h) x 5.3" (w) x .36" (d)	7.7" (h) x 4.9" (w) x .50" (d)	6.9" (h) x 4.8" (w) x .40" (d)
Weight	10.2 oz	11.2 oz	10.1 oz
Screen type	6" E-Ink screen (16-shade grayscale)	6" E-Ink screen (16-shade grayscale) 3.5" LCD color touchscreen	6" E-Ink screen (8-shade grayscale)
Navigation controls	physical keyboard & joystick	touchscreen, buttons for page turns	touchscreen, stylus, keyboard
Screen rotation	Yes (vertical or horizontal)	Yes	Yes
<b>POWER</b>			
Memory	<sup>1</sup> 2GB (1.4GB internal useable)	<sup>1</sup> 2GB	440 MB
Additional Storage	No microSD card slot	microSD card slot	Memory stick, SD card slot
Lithium Battery	<sup>2</sup> Rechargeable, <b>non-removeable</b> ; lasts up to 14 days (wireless off)	Rechargeable, <b>replaceable</b> ; lasts up to 10 days (wireless off)	Rechargeable, non-removeable lasts up to 14 days
Charge time	4 hours	3.5 hours	4 hours
<b>CONNECTION</b>			
Wireless connection	<sup>3</sup> Free, 3G wireless from AT&T	<sup>3</sup> Free, 3G wireless from AT&T	No, must use PC or Mac
Wi-Fi / 802.11b/g	No	Yes, unprotected	No
Wireless availability	Over 100 countries	U.S only	No
Web browser	Yes, very limited	No	No
Software updates	Wireless, USB	Wireless, USB	PC or Mac via USB (only)
<b>CONTENT</b>			
Supported media	Books, Magazines, Newspapers, Blogs	Books, Magazines, Newspapers	Books
File Format	AZW (proprietary)	PDB (proprietary)	BBeB (proprietary)
Audio titles	Over 50,000 titles (audible.com)	MP3 only	MP3, AAC
ePub support	No	Yes, over 500,000 free titles	Yes
Ability to take notes	<sup>4</sup> Yes (in the margins)	Yes	Yes
Titles available	390,000	Over 1 Million	Over 1 Million
Adjustable text size	Yes	Yes	Yes
Highlight / Copy text	Yes	Yes	Yes
Automatic backups?	Yes, on Amazon's servers	No	No
Organize titles?	No (can put select titles on home page)	Yes, Library view	Yes
Search	Yes (tag books with keywords for retrieval)	Yes	Yes
Upload own content?	Yes	Yes	Yes
– Readable Files	PDF, MS DOC/DOCX, HTML, TXT, RTF, JPEG, GIF, PNG, BMP, PRC, MOBI	PDF, ePUB, JPG, GIF, PNG, BMP	PDF, Word, ePUB, RTF, BBeB BMP, PNG, JPG, GIF
Text-to-speech	Yes, limited	No	No
Dictionary	Yes	Yes	Yes
MP3 player	Yes, listen while you read	Yes, listen while you read	Yes

	<b><u>Kindle 2</u></b>	<b><u>nook</u></b>	<b><u>Sony Reader Touch</u></b>
<b>SHARING / SYNCING</b>			
Lending between friends	No	<sup>5</sup> Yes, limited	No
Sync with other devices	Yes, Whispersync	Yes	No
Synchronized notes	No	Yes	No
Try before you buy	No	Yes, in all B&N stores	Possibly (through retailers)
Library check outs	No	No	Yes, 21 days
<b>PLATFORMS</b>	PC or iPhone (no reader needed) Coming soon: Blackberry, Mac	iPhone, iPod Touch, Blackberry, PC, Mac, Windows Mobile	PC, Mac
<b>WARRANTY</b>			
Warranty	1 year limited	1 year limited	1 year limited
Extended warranty	2 year - extra \$65	2 year - \$69.95	2, 3, or 4 years starting at \$49
<sup>1</sup> Can store up to 1,500 eBooks, e-magazines, e-newspapers (less if you download audible books, .mp3 files, etc.). With the nook's SD card slot, a single 16GB SD card can hold approximately 17,500 e-books. Multiple SD cards can be used for organizing.			
<sup>2</sup> If the battery dies within 1 year of purchase, you can return the device to Amazon for a replacement. If you don't purchase the extended warranty and the battery fails after a year, you have to return the device to Amazon for a fee (\$59 - Jan '10). After 2 years, you must return the device to Amazon for battery replacement (at the current cost). Amazon may ship a new Kindle 2 back to you (in this case, you'll need to re-download all of your purchases unless you have a backup).			
<sup>3</sup> Wireless capability is limited by the connection in the area. If there is no cell phone coverage, you won't have coverage for the Kindle. For Kindle devices, additional wireless coverage is provided through EDGE and GSM networks internationally.			
<sup>4</sup> Be aware that any notes or markings you may make in any of your Kindle purchases will be saved on Amazon's servers and can be reviewed by Amazon staff.			
<sup>5</sup> You can lend a title once for a maximum of 14 days. After 14 days, the title is automatically returned to your device and cannot be re-loaned. B&N is still working on this feature; changes may be possible as the device matures.			