

If you enjoy reading then you must be aware of that computer technology is available for the purpose. Books are being published electronically for reading on dedicated devices called e-readers. Like all computer-based gadgets, the original design purpose has been extended to cover a wider range of functions to convince you that you cannot live without one. Amazon says it now sells more e-books than hardbacks and paperbacks combined. We decided the time has come to take a look at e-readers.

Mike F has a Kindle (as do several members) and in order to help us decide if we should have one, he talked about what it can do.

The Kindle as marketed by Amazon is the most common and popular one. It comes in several varieties and compares well against those manufactured by others.

It is possible to read e-books on computers, i-phones, laptops, tablets and netbooks; so why do you need an e-reader?

As a dedicated reading device, the Kindle's prime job is to make the screen easy to read. It manages to achieve this with the use of E-ink using 16 shades of grey. This means more comfortable reading for longer and easy reading in sunlight. (This feature is vital if you want to read on the beach or in the park.)

Other features make life easier, too, such as being able to enlarge the text size and insert comments and bookmarks.

Naturally there are several versions of Kindle and plenty of competition. There could be a particular feature that appeals to you, so a browse on-line will quickly find reviews that will help. Improvements are being added all the time. Some will even talk to you. Currently reviews tend to favour the Kindle for most purposes, but we are all different.

The e-reader is light and thin and pocket sized, therefore very portable. Its memory can carry thousands of books (there are 700,000 available from Kindle Store alone). Battery life depends on how much and in what mode you use the reader, but 30 hours of use at an hour a day would mean recharging once a month. That should be OK for most people.

Books can be downloaded on-line and are cheaper than paperbacks.

There's more. Apart from allowing you to sample books before buying for your collection; you can check your email; access mobile Apps; display pictures; play music; use a calculator; play games; download articles and take screen shots to display on a computer.

You can also browse the web and read PDF (Portable Document Format) documents.

Mike explained where to find books and how to download them. His notes about this are on our website for viewing at your leisure.

Will books eventually go the same way as the disappearing telephone kiosks?

