

BUYER'S **guide**

Armed with a new screen technology, the convenience of wireless connectivity, and ever-expanding storage capacity, the latest generation of e-book readers make portable libraries a reality and move the digital reading experience remarkably close to the printed page.

The most significant development in e-book reader design is the use of an electronic paper display technology called E-Ink. Earlier readers used backlit liquid crystal displays that are difficult to read in bright environments and often contributed to eye fatigue during extended use. E-Ink forms text by electronically arranging thousands of minuscule black and white capsules that appear so close to the surface the effect is comparable to actual ink. There is no need for a backlight, and characters appear sharp and clear—even in direct sunlight.

Most e-book readers also function as content viewers, and as a result, support several file formats, such as TXT, Adobe PDF, and Microsoft Word. Picture files such as JPG, TIFF, and GIF are also viewable on many units. Bear in mind that this generation of e-book readers has somewhat small, grayscale displays and that this can be a problem for children's books that rely on big illustrations.

Prices range from \$300 to as much as \$700 depending on screen size, storage, and functionality. The iRex iLiad at \$700 is the most expensive unit listed here, but it offers the largest screen and doubles as a writing pad. The Bookeen Cybook, priced at \$350, plays MP3s and has RSS feed capability.

The cost of an e-book is comparable to its hard copy counterpart, and is often slightly less expensive.

Most popular titles are available, with more on the way. A quick search for "free e-books" on any search engine will result in a list of sites with free books in TXT format. Project Gutenberg (<http://www.gutenberg.org>), for instance, has 17,000 free books whose copyright has expired.

All of the units featured here support some form of digital rights management (DRM), an access-control technology used by publishers and copyright holders to limit the use of digital media or devices. Viewing books with DRM poses no problem provided the reader you buy supports the format.



Internal storage space and expandability varies. The Amazon Kindle claims to hold 200 average-size books with its 256 MB of internal storage. If you want to travel with more books, be sure the reader you choose has a card slot or some other option for memory expansion.

Manufacturers often measure battery life in flips or page turns with units that feature E-Ink technology because the screens don't consume energy until a page is refreshed. Sony, for example, describes its PRS-505SC as having 7,500 page flips in a single charge—the equivalent of reading Tolstoy's *War and Peace* five times over.

Correction

The March/April Buyer's Guide incorrectly stated that Custom All-Hear's CAS-1000-302 audio enhancement system does not have auxiliary input/output jacks. Additionally, while all components of the CAS-1000-302 except the speaker have a five-year warranty as stated, the speaker itself has a lifetime warranty. *L&L* regrets the error.

E-Book Readers

	Price	Weight
Amazon Kindle http://www.amazon.com 	\$399	10.3 oz 239 g
Bookeen Cybook Gen3 www.bookeen.com 	\$350	6.13 oz 175 g
HanLin eReader V3 http://www.jinke.com.cn/Compagesql/English/index.asp 	\$299	7 oz 200 g
iRex iLiad http://www.irextechnologies.com 	\$699	13.7 oz 390 g
Readius http://www.polymer-vision.com 	Available 2008	4 oz 115 g
Sony Reader PRS-505SC http://www.sonymstyle.com 	\$299.99	9 oz 256 g
StareBook STK 101 http://ebook.stareread.com/en/ 	\$450	6 oz 176 g

Dimensions	Formats Supported	Storage	DRM	Battery Life	Display	Special Features
7.5" x 5.3" x .7" 190 x 135 x 18 mm	JPG, GIF, BMP, PNG, AZW	256 MB, additional SD memory slot	AZW	2 days w/ wireless on; 1 week w/ wireless off	6" diagonal E-Ink electronic paper display, 600 x 800 pixels, 167 ppi resolution, 4-level grayscale	Built-in dictionary, free wireless access to Wikipedia, free EVD0, Qwerty keyboard
4.7" x 7.4" x .3" 119 x 188 x 8 mm	HTML, PRC, PalmDoc, TXT, PDF, JPG, GIF, PNG, MP3	64 MB internal, includes 2GB SD card slot	Mobipocket	8,000 page flips	6" diagonal, 600 x 800 pixels, 166 dpi resolution, B&W, 4-level grayscale	MP3 player, dictionaries can be added, synchronize RSS feeds
7.2" x 4.7" x .39" 184 x 120.5 x 9.9 mm	PDF, TXT, RTF, WOLF, DOC, CHM, FB2, HTML, DJVU, MP3, TIFF, JPG, GIF, BMP, PNG, RAR, ZIP	512 MB NANDflash, 32 MB SDRAM memory, SD slot supports expansion up to 4 GB	WOLF	Up to 30 days at 300 page turns per day	6" diagonal E-Ink display (EPD), 800 x 600 pixels, 4-level grayscale	Extensive language support
8.5" x 6.1" x .63" 216 x 155 x 16 mm	PDF, HTML, TXT, JPG, BMP, PNG	128 MB, Expandable to 4 gigs via USB, MMC, or CF cards	Mobipocket	Up to 12 hours of continuous use	8.1" diagonal, 768 x 1024 pixels, 160 dpi resolution, 16-level grayscale	Writing pad, Wi-Fi capable, built-in speakers
.59" x 2.2" x .83" 15 x 57 x 21 mm	PDF, HTML, ASCII	256 MB internal, SD memory slot up to 8 GB	OMA	30 Hours	5" diagonal, 320 x 240 pixels, 16-level grayscale	RSS feed capability, doubles as a mobile phone, Bluetooth
6.9" x 4.8" x .3" 175 x 122 x 7 mm	RTF, TXT, Adobe PDF, Microsoft Word (via conversion), JPEG, GIF, PNG, BMP, MP3, unencrypted AAC	Accepts SD memory cards up to 2 GB size, and Memory Stick™ Duo media up to 8 GB	BBeB (secured and unsecured)	Up to 7,500 page flips	6" diagonal, approximately 170 ppi resolution, 8-level grayscale	Comes in dark blue with a blue protective cover or silver with a tan protective cover
7.4" x 4.6" x .31" 188 x 117 x 8 mm	JPG, MP3, includes conversion software	Expandable up to 1GB SD Card, 512 MB SD Card supplied	STK	8,000–10,000 page flips	6" diagonal SVGA, 800 x 600 pixels, approximately 170 ppi resolution, 4-level grayscale	MP3 player, software to create your own ebooks, including pictures