

E-Reader Explosion

Until recently, book reading depended on a 600-year-old process invented by Johannes Gutenberg. Since that time, many trees have been sacrificed to the production of books printed on paper, the medium upon which the printing press depended – until now.

Thanks to digital technology and widespread use of the internet, there are now many other ways of reading books. Actually, there are so many choices, making a decision as to which e-reader device to get can be quite confusing and intimidating. For example, at this year's Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas, nearly 100 versions of e-books were displayed, with prices ranging between \$79 to \$649 and up, according to the *New York Times*.

Many e-readers also offer web browsing, so you can read newspapers and magazines on your device. They come in color or black and white. Screen size and battery life vary widely between readers. Some aren't usable in bright sunlight; others are backlit so you can read in bed without a light. You can change the font size to fit your needs. Some e-readers can hold hundreds of books, and as you might imagine, prices vary widely.

You can highlight important passages, look words up in the dictionary that comes with your reader, and move around freely inside your book. For example, you can easily go back to re-read a portion you missed, or skip ahead to read the last page first (for those of us who can't stand suspense)!

If you are one of the many readers who have been considering one of these devices, the QC Computer Club and Madera Clubhouse Library want to help you decide. If you already have one, our speakers may be able to help you figure out how to use yours even more effectively.

On March 5 from 10 a.m. to noon in the Clubhouse Ballroom, a program will be offered that features five of the most popular e-reader formats, including two Kindles (including the Fire) from Amazon, a Sony reader, a Barnes & Noble Nook Color, and an iPad2 from Apple. In addition, a librarian from the Joyner Library will give a talk on how to download books for free from the public library system. We will discuss alternative sources for e-reader content, how to find free books online (e.g., out-of-copyright books).

So mark your calendar now and plan to join us. Handouts will be available to give your information on cost, features, and ease of use on the e-readers being shown. There will be a Q&A at the end of the meeting, and the presenters will be stationed around the room so you can get additional information and handle the readers, to see if you think it is something you would like to try.