



THE NEW YORK SOCIETY LIBRARY PRESENTS  
**MEET THE KINDLE**



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Ford handed the book to Arthur.

“What is it?” asked Arthur.

“*The Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy*. It’s a sort of electronic book. It tells you everything you need to know about anything. That’s its job.”

Arthur turned it over nervously in his hands.

“I like the cover,” he said. “Don’t Panic. It’s the first helpful or intelligible thing anybody’s said to me all day.”

“I’ll show you how it works,” said Ford. He snatched it from Arthur who was still holding it as if it was a two-week-dead lark and pulled it out of its cover.

“You press this button here you see and the screen lights up giving you the index.”

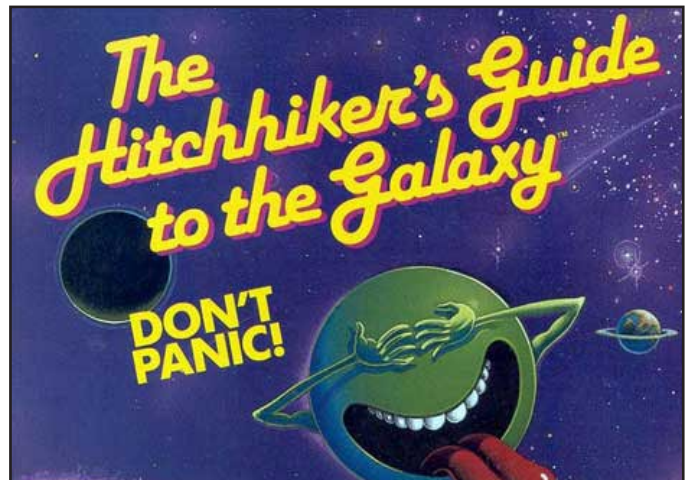
A screen, about three inches by four, lit up and characters began to flicker across the surface.

“You want to know about Vogons, so I enter that name so.” His fingers tapped some more keys. “And there we are.”

The words Vagon Constructor Fleets flared in green across the screen.

Ford pressed a large red button at the bottom of the screen and words began to undulate across it. At the same time, the book began to speak the entry as well in a still quiet measured voice. This is what the book said...

—Douglas Adams,  
*The Hitchhiker’s Guide  
to the Galaxy*, 1979



# I. KINDLE: THE MACHINE

*Amazon offers two Kindle models: the second-generation Kindle 2 (the main focus here) and the larger Kindle DX.*

## AMAZON'S BASIC TEXT ON THEIR E-READER

**Slim:** Just over 1/3 of an inch, as thin as most magazines

**Lightweight:** At 10.2 ounces, lighter than a typical paperback

**Wireless:** 3G wireless lets you download books right from your Kindle, anytime, anywhere; no monthly fees, service plans, or hunting for Wi-Fi hotspots

**Books in Under 60 Seconds:** Get books delivered in less than 60 seconds; no PC required

**Paper-like Display:** Reads like real paper; now boasts 16 shades of gray for clear text and even crisper images

**Long Battery Life:** 25% longer battery life; read for days without recharging

**Carry Your Library:** Holds over 1,500 books

**Read-to-Me:** With the new text-to-speech feature, Kindle can read every newspaper, magazine, blog, and book out loud to you, unless the book's rights holder made the feature unavailable

**Free Book Samples:** Download and read first chapters for free before you decide to buy.

**Large Selection:** Over 300,000 books plus U.S. and international newspapers, magazines, and blogs available

**Low Book Prices:** *New York Times* Best Sellers and New Releases \$9.99, unless marked otherwise

### Compare Kindle with Kindle DX

#### Kindle



Display	6" diagonal E Ink®
Size	8" x 5.3" x 0.36"
Storage	1,500 books
PDF Support	via conversion
Rotating Display	
3G Wireless	✓
Books in Under 60 Seconds	✓
Text-to-Speech	✓
Whispersync	✓
Price	<b>\$299.00</b>

#### Kindle DX



[See Details](#)

Display	9.7" diagonal E Ink®
Size	10.4" x 7.2" x 0.38"
Storage	3,500 books
PDF Support	native PDF reader
Rotating Display	✓
3G Wireless	✓
Books in Under 60 Seconds	✓
Text-to-Speech	✓
Whispersync	✓
Price	<b>\$489.00</b>

*My judgment: the hype is (mostly) true.*

## SOME NOTES ON THE BASICS

**Slim and Lightweight:** They're not kidding. Compared to a bag full of hardcovers, the Kindle is extremely light to carry and easy to manipulate.

**Wireless:** It even downloads the news first thing in the morning in my bathroom. Use of the wireless drains the battery *much* faster than having it turned off. From the Home screen, hit "Menu" and select "Turn Off Wireless" whenever you're not searching or downloading.

**Books in Under 60 Seconds:** Faster than your second thought about maybe not really wanting to buy this.

**Paper-like Display:** The E Ink Corporation provides the technology for the Kindle and most other bestselling e-readers. The Kindle's screen truly resembles a book page. It is not backlit, so you light it just like a book page. My eyes do not tire reading the Kindle as they do from looking at a computer screen. I read it on an hour-long bumpy bus ride and had no problem. It is remarkable.

**Long Battery Life:** Fully charging the battery takes about 2 hours. The battery does not have to be empty before it is recharged; I just leave it plugged in overnight every 3–4 days. It can be plugged into an outlet and charge while being used; it also charges when plugged into your computer, but can't be used during that time. The screen only draws power when it is changing—e.g., when a page is being turned—so turning on the screensaver is just as good as turning off the unit.

**Carry Your Library:** The Kindle's capacity is large. Unfortunately, the ways to organize the items in its memory are limited; the more you have on there, the longer it takes to find the title you want.

**Read-to-Me:** The text-to-speech function is nifty, but I wouldn't use it for any book that was really important to me. However, the Kindle can also download and play audiobook recordings.

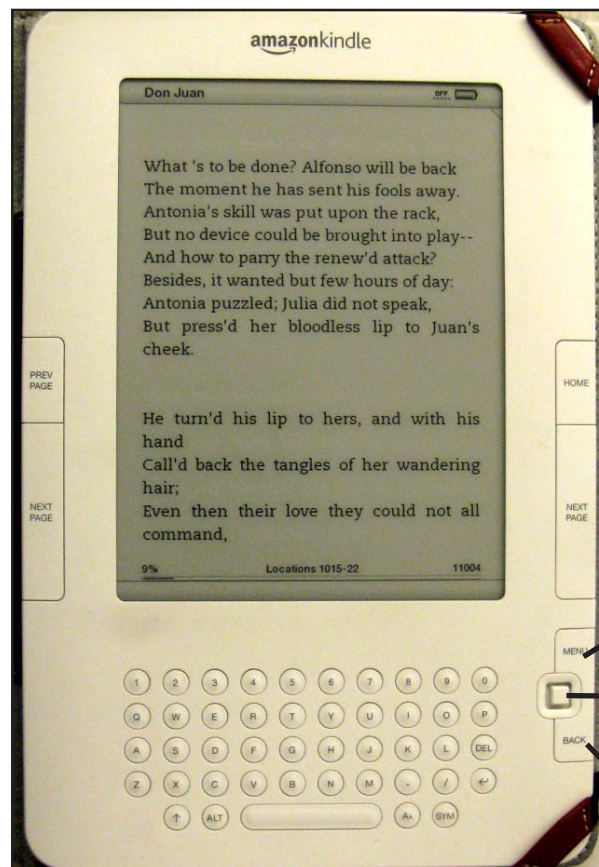
**Free Book Samples:** One of the most powerful tools. More on this below.

**Large Selection:** The Amazon Kindle store is large, but there's even more available from other download sites, for free or a low fee. Only items from the Kindle store will download wirelessly into the Kindle. Other files must be saved to a computer and transferred via USB.

*The on/off switch is on the top,  
not unlike an iPod.*

*Takes you to the previous page  
within a book.*

*Takes you to the next page  
within a book.*



*Wherever you are, press this  
to go to your home screen.*

*Takes you to the next page  
within a book.*

*"Menu": turns wireless on and off; access to  
tools and settings.*

*The "Five-Way Controller"—it's a mouse.  
Nudge to move directionally, press to click.*

*"Back": Unlike "Prev Page," takes you to  
the previous screen—like a browser.*

# E INK AND THE ELECTRONIC PAPER DISPLAY

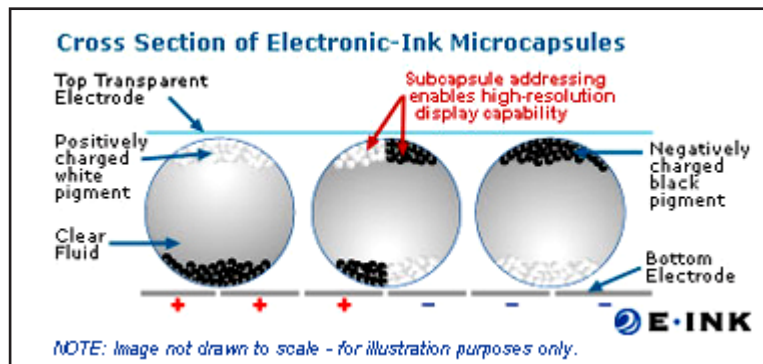
## The E Ink Corporation's Introductory Text ([www.eink.com](http://www.eink.com))

Founded in 1997 based on research started at the MIT Media Lab, E Ink Corporation is the leading supplier of electronic paper display (EPD) technologies. Products made with E Ink's revolutionary electronic ink possess a paper-like high contrast appearance, ultra-low power consumption and a thin, light form. It gives the viewer the experience of reading from paper, while having the power of updatable information.

EPDs are a technology enabled by electronic ink—ink that carries a charge enabling it to be updated through electronics. Electronic ink is ideally suited for EPDs as it is a reflective technology which requires no front or backlight, is viewable under a wide range of lighting conditions, including direct sunlight, and requires no power to maintain an image.

E Ink Corporation is the leading developer of electronic ink and of EPD technologies. E Ink manufactures an electronic ink which is made into a film used as an optical component to make EPDs.

EPDs are ideal for many consumer and industrial applications where the reading experience and range of lighting and viewing angles are of the utmost importance. Transportation signage can be utilized in a myriad of locations previously impossible due to sunlight or viewing angle. eBooks that strained the eye with their emissive light can now give the reader the true book-like experience. Cell phone screens that had to be shaded and turned continuously for a glimpse of the numbers now have high contrast and brightness in the widest of lighting conditions. EPDs give power to product designers to use their imagination in ways never before possible.



Electronic ink is a proprietary material that is processed into a film for integration into electronic displays. Although revolutionary in concept, electronic ink is a straightforward fusion of chemistry, physics and electronics to create this new material. The principal components of electronic ink are millions of tiny microcapsules, about the diameter of a human hair. In one incarnation, each microcapsule contains positively charged white particles and negatively charged black particles suspended in a clear fluid. When a negative electric field is applied, the white particles move to the top of the microcapsule where they become visible to the user. This makes the surface appear white at that spot. At the same time, an opposite electric field pulls the black particles to the bottom of the microcapsules where they are hidden. By reversing this process, the black particles appear at the top of the capsule, which now makes the surface appear dark at that spot.

To form an E Ink electronic display, the ink is printed onto a sheet of plastic film that is laminated to a layer of circuitry. The circuitry forms a pattern of pixels that can then be controlled by a display driver. These microcapsules are suspended in a liquid "carrier medium" allowing them to be printed using existing screen printing processes onto virtually any surface, including glass, plastic, fabric and even paper. Ultimately electronic ink will permit most any surface to become a display, bringing information out of the confines of traditional devices and into the world around us.

*It reminds me a little of an Etch-a-Sketch. Anybody remember the Etch-a-Sketch?*

## II. KINDLE: THE BOOKSTORE

*Suddenly you're trading all those visits to Barnes & Noble for a condo in the big Amazon co-op.*

### AMAZON KNOWS YOUR NAME

When you first turn on a new Kindle, you're required to register it with Amazon and give it a name. Amazon knows who you are and who your Kindle is. My Kindle is named Wesley.

In registering, you create a "One-Click" account linked to your credit card to allow you to make purchases wirelessly without entering any information.

Thereafter, you have a unique "Manage Your Kindle" page, where you can see a list of items you've purchased. You can re-download them if necessary (to the original machine). You can also purchase items, or order samples, and have them sent directly to your Kindle.

amazon.com Hello, Sara Holliday. We have [recommendations](#) for you. (Not Sara?) [wishlist](#) Sweepstakes Week 4 Kindle Love [Learn more](#)

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New: Download or wirelessly transfer your Kindle content directly from this page. [Learn more.](#)

[Your Account](#) > Manage Your Kindle

#### Manage Your Kindle

This page outlines tools for Kindle owners to view and manage their Kindle content, personal settings and account information. Need help? [Visit Kindle support.](#)

#### Your Kindle(s)

The following Kindle(s) are registered to your Amazon.com account.

Kindle Name	Kindle E-mail Address	Warranty		
Wesley	WesleyWyndamPryce@Kindle.com		<a href="#">Edit Info</a>	<a href="#">Deregister</a>

[Register a new Kindle](#)

#### Your iPhone(s) and iPod Touch(es)

[Need to register an iPhone or iPod touch? Learn How](#)

#### Your Kindle Approved E-mail List

Each Kindle has a unique e-mail address that can be customized above, allowing you and your contacts to send attachments (such as Word and picture files) to your Kindle wirelessly for a small fee. To avoid spam, only contacts on your Kindle approved e-mail list below are authorized to send attachments to your Kindle. [Learn more](#)

#### Shortcuts on this page

- [Your 1-Click payment method](#)
- [Your active Kindle subscriptions](#)
- [Open orders](#)
- [Your orders and charges](#)

#### Delivery status for: Wesley

Title	Delivery Date
The Happiness Project 10-30-2009	
Bitten by Books 10-30-2009	
Amazon Daily 10-30-2009	
Amazon Daily 10-30-2009	Oct 30, 2009
Slate 10-30-2009	Oct 30, 2009

### THE KINDLE STORE ONLINE

Shop on Amazon for Kindle books the same way you'd shop for anything. Titles with a Kindle option will list it as one of the available editions. If you want to limit your browsing up-front to titles that will be available for the Kindle, selected "Kindle Store" in the drop-down menu on the Amazon homepage.

[See larger image](#)

[Share your own customer images](#)

Publisher: [learn how customers can search inside this book.](#)

Start reading [Bayou Farewell](#) on your Kindle in under a minute.

Don't have a Kindle? [Get yours here.](#)

**Also Available in:** **List Price:** **Our Price:** **Other Offers:**

Kindle Edition (Kindle Book) \$9.99

Hardcover (1) [24 used & new from \\$5.00](#)

## THE KINDLE STORE WIRELESSLY

On your Kindle, press the Menu button and go to “Turn Wireless On,” then press Menu again and hit “Shop in Kindle Store.” This takes you to the Amazon homepage set up just for the Kindle.

The *Kindle Daily Post* highlights news in the book world, newly available titles, and deals from Amazon. The homepage also includes the current *New York Times* bestseller list, the list of bestsellers on Kindles nationwide, and recommendations based on your past purchases, just like the Amazon homepage.

Use any of these links to browse for titles, or just start typing a search term. You can “enter” either by pressing the carriage return button in the keyboard or by bumping the 5-way controller to “search store” and clicking it.

Wesley amazon.com

**Browse:**

- [Books](#) - Over 300,000 titles available
- [Newspapers](#)
- [Magazines](#)
- [Blogs](#)

**New York Times Best Sellers**



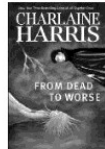
**Kindle Top Sellers** - Free

**New & Noteworthy Books** - *The Castaways*

**Kindle Daily Post** Mon, July 20, 2009 12:07 PM PDT


Frank McCourt established himself as a preeminent memoirist of our time, and we are saddened at the loss of this beloved writer and raconteur who passed away...

**Recommended for You**

    [See All](#)

Begin typing to search search store

Wesley

 **Bayou Farewell: The Rich Life and Tragic Death of Louisiana's Cajun Coast**  
by [Mike Tidwell](#)

Mike Tidwell knew nothing of the disappearing bayou country when he first visited the Cajun coast of Louisiana, but the evidence was all around him: the skeletons of... [More](#)

Publisher's Digital List Price: ~~\$16.00~~

Print List Price: ~~\$14.95~~

**Kindle Price: \$9.99\***

You Save: \$4.96 (33%)

[Buy](#)

\*Includes free wireless delivery via *Amazon Whispernet*

36 Customer Reviews : ★★★★★

Sales Rank: #16,200 in Kindle Store [Try a Sample](#)

Publisher: Vintage [Save for Later](#)

Published: Dec 18, 2007

Print Length: 368 pages

Text-to-Speech: Not enabled

Customers who bought this book also bought:

- ★★★★★ [The Ravaging Tide](#) , by [Mike Tidwell](#)
- ★★★★★ [Rising Tide: The Great Mississippi Flood of 1927 and...](#)

[See more](#)

Begin typing to search search store

## PURCHASING A BOOK

Once you've found a title of interest, you can click directly on “Buy.” This will charge your credit card based on your One-Click settings on Amazon. All you have to do is leave the wireless on—yes, for less than a minute—and the book will appear in your Home screen.

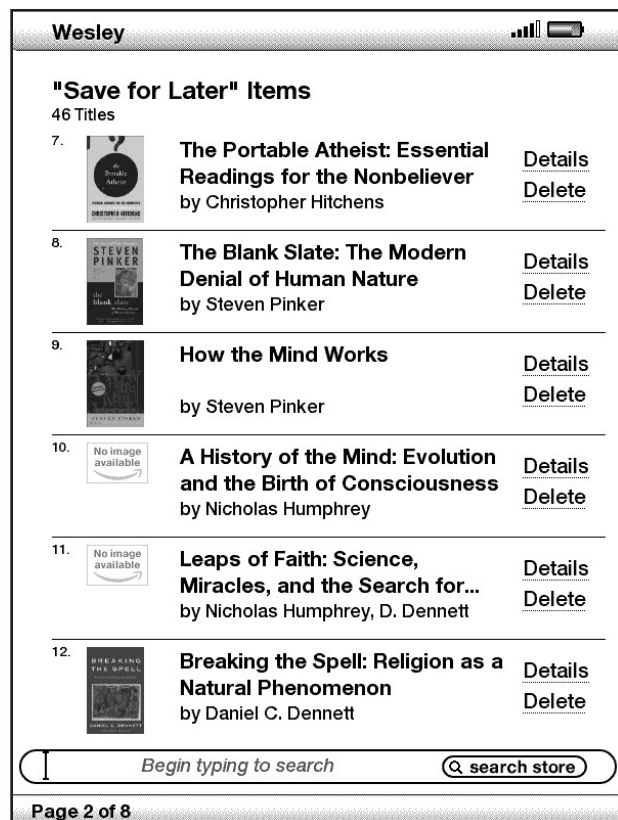
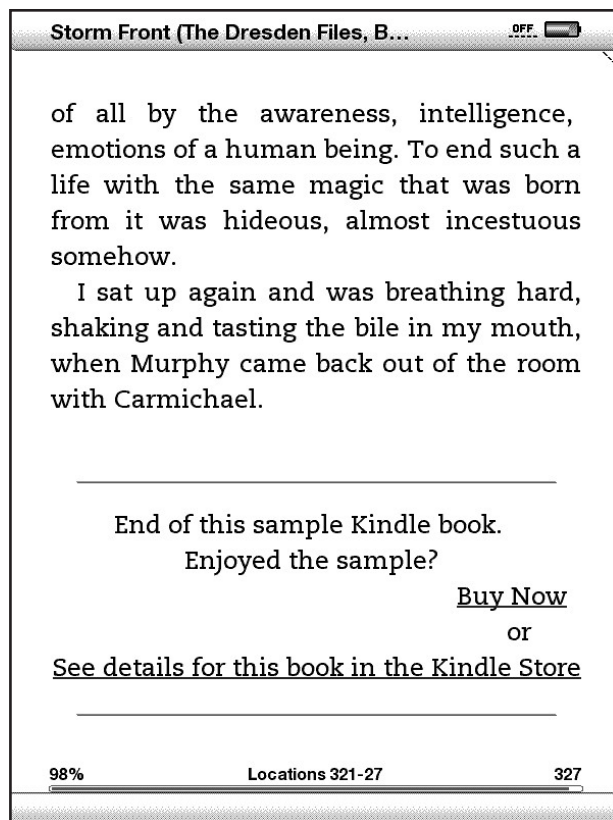
## NOT (YET) PURCHASING A BOOK

There are also two powerful options for browsing and researching.

**Try a Sample** lets you download the first section of any book, so you can start reading it and then decide whether you're really going to finish it. If you are, you can purchase it directly out of the sample. Samples you've downloaded always have the little word “sample” to the left of the title in your Home screen.

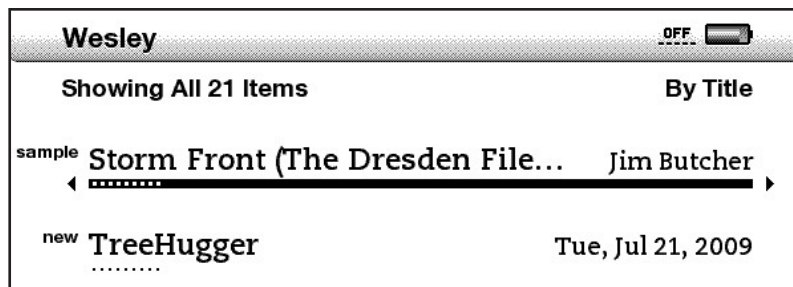
**Save for Later** creates a wish list of titles you might want to sample or purchase later. I love to stand in a big corporate bookstore, browsing through the physical books and adding interesting ones to my Save for Later list on the Kindle. Then when I finish previous downloads, I can browse through many titles I might also be in the mood for. (Yes, it's sticking it to The Man (Barnes & Noble, say) in order to benefit The Man (Amazon), but it's certainly a pleasure to use.)

Once you've put some titles in your Save for Later list, you can get back to it by pressing the Menu key anytime you're in the Kindle Store.



*A book sample and a Save for Later list.*

*A sample book and a blog with new entries, in the Home screen.*



## WHAT THE KINDLE STORE IS GOOD FOR

Amazon wants their store to be your #1 resource for e-books, but there are many sources for Kindle-compatible books around the Internet. The Kindle Store does work well as the first source for:

Bestsellers

New or recent books

Genre books, e.g. mystery series

A surprising number of self-published or small-press books

Large collections of public-domain materials in well edited editions, e.g., *The Complete Works of Jane Austen*.

For older materials, less formal editions of public domain works, and a rainbow of self-published and small-press titles, take a look at the sites listed in the Resources on page 16. An enormous amount of this material is free. To read items from these sites, you'll have to download the file to your computer and drop it onto your Kindle using the USB hookup.

*The only problem: how do you STOP shopping at the Kindle Store?*



# III. KINDLE: THE BOOK

(NEWSPAPER, MAGAZINE...)

*Amazon: “Lose Yourself in Your Reading. The most elegant feature of a physical book is that it disappears while you’re reading. Immersed in the author’s world and ideas, you don’t notice a book’s glue, the stitching, or ink. Our top design objective was to make Kindle disappear—just like a physical book—so you can get lost in your reading, not the technology.”*

## WELCOME HOME

Your Kindle’s homepage lists all the things you can read at any given time.

Wesley OFF

Showing All 21 Items By Title

<sup>new</sup> Amazon Daily Tue, Jul 21, 2009

The Amazon Kindle Bas... Stephen Windw...

Archived Items (47)

Beyond the Literary-Ind... Stephen Windw...

<sup>new</sup> Blog Kindle Tue, Jul 21, 2009

Don Juan Lord Byron

The G-Free Diet: A Glute... Elisabeth Hassel...

indieKindle Tue, Jul 14, 2009

<sup>new</sup> K.indled: Amazon Kindle ... Tue, Jul 21, 2009

The Kindle 2 Cookbook: H... David Emberson

Page 1 of 3

*“Archived Items” lets you return to any item you had on the Kindle and deleted, and re-download it. Wireless must be on for this function.*

*A superscript indicates a title you’ve just downloaded or a blog with new content.*

*If I click the controller now, it will go to the last page I read of the underlined title.*

*Here’s a book I keep on Wesley all the time to search as a reference.*

My only complaint about the homepage on the Kindle 2: You can only sort by title or by when you added the item. I would love to be able to sort my reading into Books, Blogs, and so forth—and I’m not alone. I expect Amazon to add this feature in the next Kindle release.

*No heeled slippers needed—click “Home” to go home, and still keep your place.*

## INSIDE THE BOOK: PAGES AND WORDS

Navigating within a book is as much like using the paper kind as the inventors could manage.

“**Next Page**” takes you to the next page.

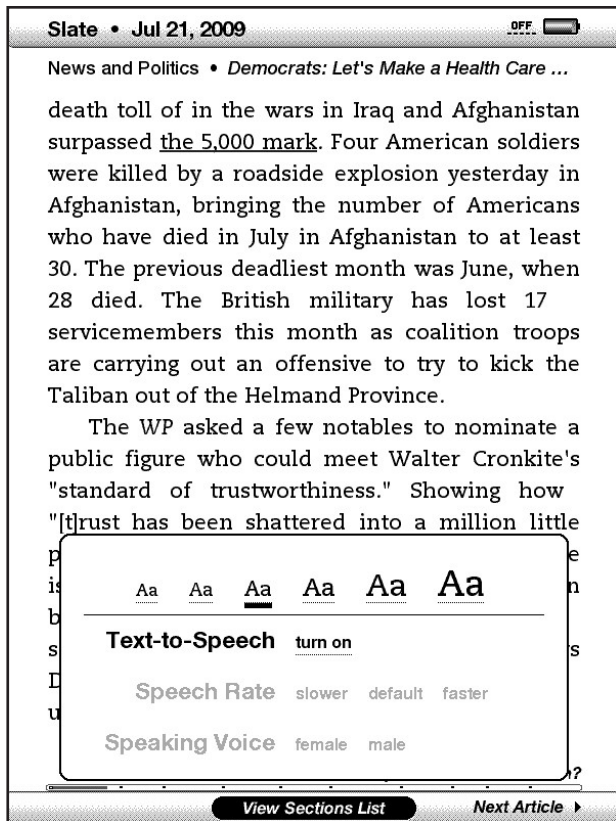
“**Prev Page**” takes you to the previous page.

**To flip through several pages**, hold down the “Alt” key and press “Next” or “Prev.”

The Kindle has no conventional page numbers because the number of pages varies depending on the size of font chosen.

The “Aa” key to the right of the space bar varies the font. Set it once, and it will show all your texts in that size, except for title pages, captions, etc.

*Kindle fonts: King George could read without his glasses, and, miraculously, so can I.*



Left: change the font size within a book; Right: add a bookmark, note, or highlight.

## BOOKMARKING AND DICTIONARY

Never lose your place: the Kindle automatically saves the page you were on when you ‘closed’ the book, and will return to it when next you click into the book.

The **Bookmarking** function is to mark pages you want to return to—for instance, in a play, you might bookmark the *dramatis personae* for reference when a new character shows up. But caution!—in that case, bookmark the last page you were on as well; it won’t automatically save if you’re navigating within the book.

To use the built-in **dictionary**, just nudge the mouse to any word in doubt. The definition from your built in *Oxford American* will appear at the bottom.

*I keep accidentally getting the dictionary entry for “buy” when I’m going to the Kindle Store. Subliminal message, anyone?*

## CLIPPINGS

Another great Kindle tool is the ability to create a text file with whatever you clip, highlight, or note in a book or magazine.

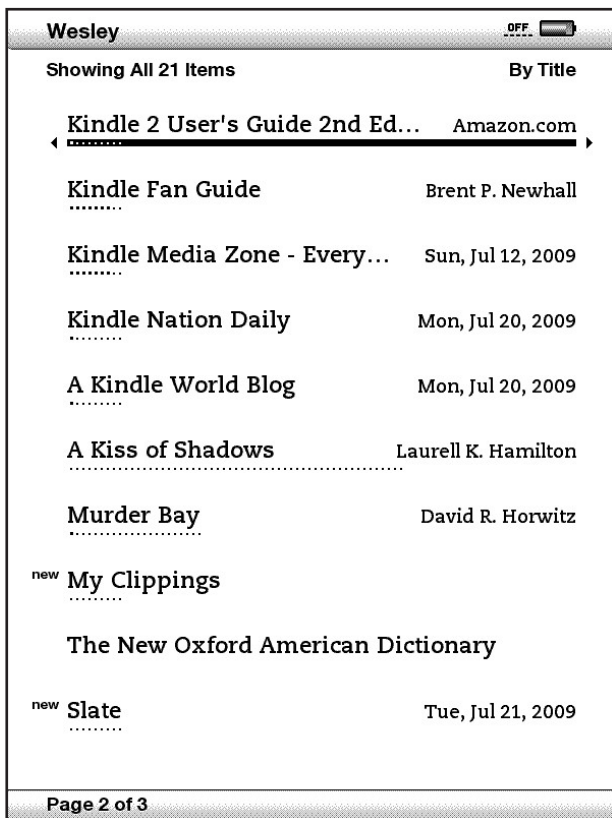
In a book, pressing the Menu button will give you the “Add a Note or Highlight” option. You can then type an annotation associated with the page you’re on, or click within the book’s text to highlight a section of text.

In a periodical, the menu will offer “Clip This Article.” That sends the entire chunk of the publication to your clippings.

Once you’ve noted, clipped, or highlighted, “My Clippings” appears in your Home screen. You can browse or search these on the Kindle just like any text or plug in the USB and save them to your computer.

Students are beginning to use this option instead of marking up a paper textbook.

*No finding the Half-Blood Prince’s spells in an old textbook anymore.*



*Left: the new ‘book’ created when you clip or highlight anything; Right: the clipping menu in a periodical.*

## FILE TYPES FOR THE KINDLE

The Kindle reads the following files with the following extensions natively, that is, with its built-in software:

**.azw** (the basic Amazon file); **.txt** (pure text form, like Notepad on your Windows PC)

**.prc**; **.mobi**

Plus Audible Audio books (**.aa**) and mp3 music files (**.mp3**).

These file types can be converted to be read on your Kindle:

**.doc** (Microsoft Word); **.htm or .html** (web browser page); **.pdf** (Adobe Acrobat/Adobe Reader)

Note: the Kindle DX reads PDFs natively as well.

To convert a file for free, send it as an attachment to (in my case) [WesleyWyndamPryce@free.kindle.com](mailto:WesleyWyndamPryce@free.kindle.com). It will be sent back for you to download to your computer and transfer via USB.

To send the converted file directly to your Kindle, send the attachment to (in my case) [WesleyWyndamPryce@kindle.com](mailto:WesleyWyndamPryce@kindle.com). Amazon will charge you 10 cents per file.

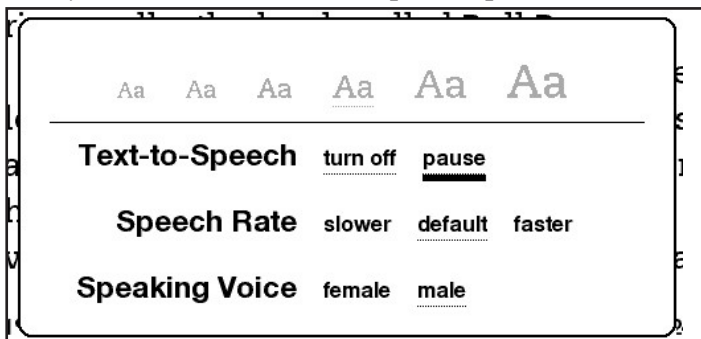
# IV. KINDLE: THE TOY

*They just don't make single-function gadgets these days.*

## BOOKS THAT TALK

The majority of Kindle books give you an automatic audio-book function. Within a book, press “Menu” and selected “Start Text-to-Speech.” A somewhat mechanical but passable and pleasant voice will read to you and automatically turn the pages.

To vary the rate or tone of the speaker, press the “Aa” key.



*Frankly, I wouldn't use “Text-to-Speech” for anything where I wanted a really meaningful reading experience, but it's good for texts of moderate interest.*

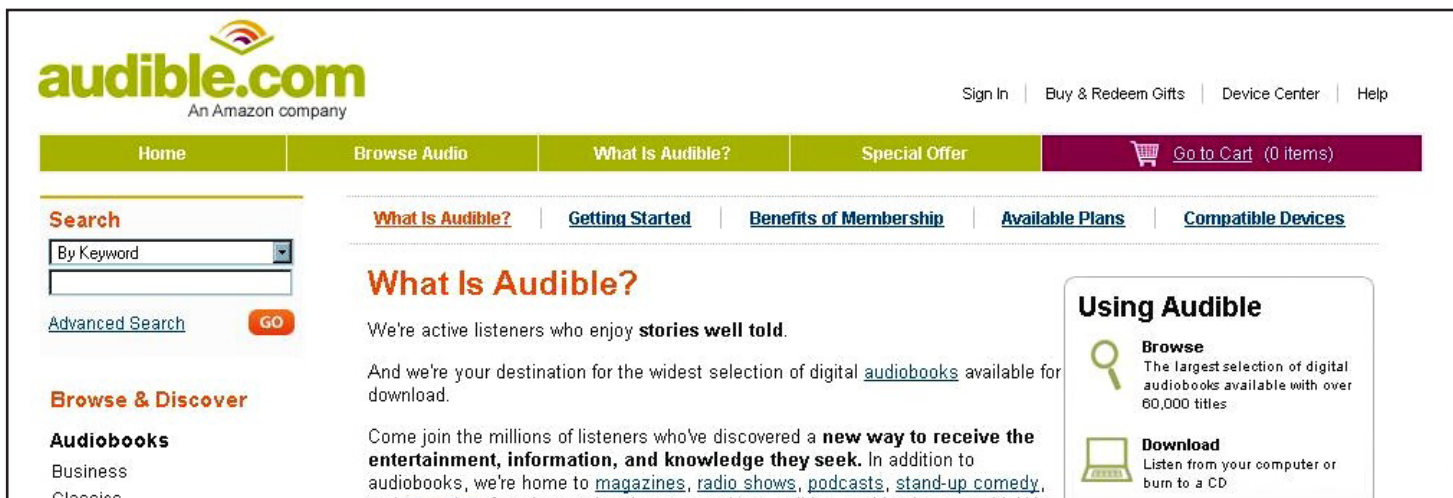


## BOOKS THAT TALK PRETTY

The Kindle will download and play any audiobook with the extension .aa, most prominently those from Audible.com. Audible is owned by Amazon. \$8-\$15 per month gets you one credit, for the purchase with no further charge of one audiobook. Other titles can be purchased at full price.

Because of their large file size, audiobooks must be downloaded to your computer, then transferred to the Kindle via USB. They go into the folder called “Audible,” either manually or using Audible’s software.

Sound quality on the Kindle is very good. It has external speakers, but I find that headphones work best—unless you're driving.



## BOOKS THAT SING

The Kindle also acts as a somewhat rudimentary mp3 player. Most commentors on Amazon say they use the mp3 function to listen to background music while reading, not as their primary music player.

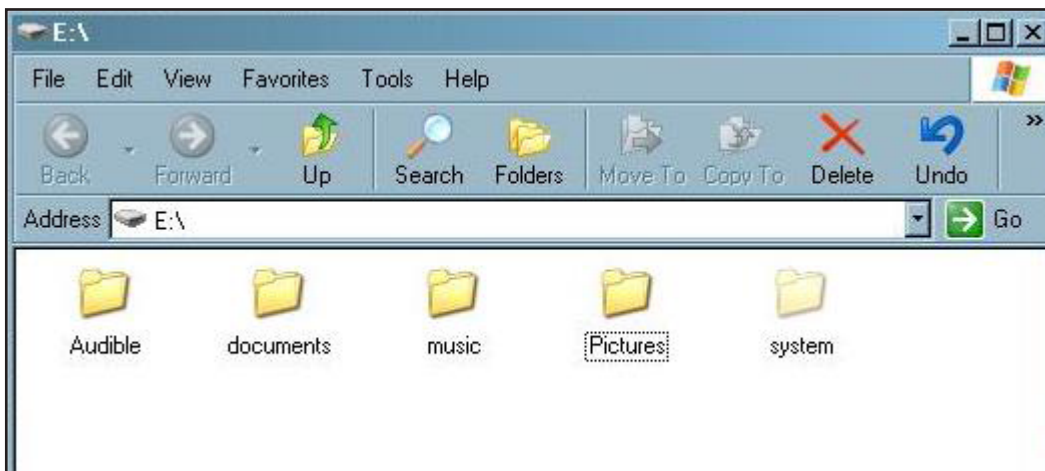
Music files must also be saved to the Kindle while connected to a computer with the USB cable. They go in the default folder called “Music.” There’s no making playlists or selecting genres—set it to play, and it will play the tracks in the order saved.

To play music, click “Menu” while in the Home screen and select “Play mp3.”

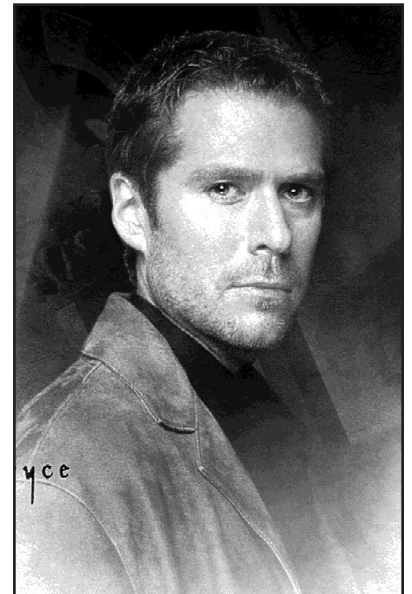
*For all the audio functions, the Kindle automatically saves your place when you stop.*

### “HOW CAN YOU READ THIS?! THERE’S NO PICTURES!”

Lastly, the Kindle acts as a viewer for images you add to it, as well as illustrations in books. Using the USB connection, create a new folder called “pictures” alongside the ones labeled “documents” and “audible.” Inside that folder, create another folder called whatever you want—e.g., “My Pictures”—and copy images with the file extensions **.jpg**, **.gif**, **.png**, or **.bmp** into it. Disconnect from the USB and press Alt-Z. A new “book” called “My Pictures” should then show up on your Home screen.



*Here’s ol’ Wesley himself (actually actor Alexis Denisof) as a Kindle image.*



## A FEW EXTRAS

As with so many gadgets, the gadget needs a few extras to work at its best—and especially, with the Kindle, to provide even more the experience of reading a print book. Not surprisingly, a number of companies are filling the niche.

**Covers:** A Kindle needs some sort of cover to protect the LCD screen and keep out dust and smudges. This can be as simple as a Zip-Loc bag (good for the beach!), its more upscale counterpart from Gela-Skins or OCTO, or a leather or faux-leather flip case from M-Edge or a competing company.

I use an M-Edge case and have been very pleased with it—it strongly resembles reading a handsome print book.

**Lights:** The Kindle is not back-lit, so you’ll need a book light for it anytime you would need one for a print book. There are several brands of lights designed specifically to clip to a Kindle case.



# V. KINDLE: THE DEBATE

*E-readers of all stripes cause visceral reactions in readers, publishers, and librarians.*

*Here are a few miscellaneous thoughts and resources on the enormous subject of electronic books.*

A wise man once said that any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from **MAGIC**.

—Arthur C. Clarke

**Giles** (*school librarian*): Truthfully, I'm even less anxious to be around computers than I used to be.

**Ms. Calendar** (*computer science teacher*): Honestly, what is it about them that bothers you so much?

**Giles**: The smell.

**Ms. Calendar**: Computers don't smell, Rupert.

**Giles**: I know! Smell is the most powerful trigger to the memory there is. A certain flower or a, a whiff of smoke can bring up experiences long forgotten. Books smell—musty and, and, and, and rich. The knowledge gained from a computer, is, uh, it...it has no, no texture, no, no context. It's, it's there and then it's gone. If it's to last, then, then the getting of knowledge should be, uh, tangible, it should be, um... smelly.

—Buffy the Vampire Slayer, Season One



Wesley's source books are mystical indexes rather than original documents. Each book allows the user to read the text of one of hundreds of documents in a particular discipline, from ancient prophecies to historical narratives. The user simply speaks the name of the document they want to read to the appropriate source book, and the text of that document appears inside the book. The original documents are stored in the Wolfram and Hart archives. The source books themselves are blank until instructed what text to display.

—Angel, Season Five

“...And it’s just as addictive—you find yourself unable to put it down, buying and reading more books than you ever have before.”

—Farhad Manjoo in *Slate* magazine, in a review of the Kindle DX

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## ONE PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE

There had been much discussion of the e-readers at the Library—is it the best thing since sliced pages? will it take our jobs? can we circulate one?—especially since the Library staff use Amazon.com as a reference frequently and are thus constantly hit with the advertising. I joked to my mother—who, after all, taught me to read—that we were all lusting after the Kindle the way you’d lust after a boyfriend you knew would be a bad influence. Then she sent me one for my birthday.

At first I said great, I’ll use it for periodicals and items I’d have to buy in paperback, and continue to get everything else from libraries. But the more I pick it up, the more I can’t put it down.

On the plus side, I have always read a great deal, but I am now reading more than ever. I am more aware of the news than before; I always found print newspapers unwieldy, but I subscribe to several magazines and blogs. My last vacation was the first one for years where my suitcase wasn’t over the weight limit, because it wasn’t filled with books. While the Kindle is hardly “green” compared to use of a library, it uses considerably less energy to charge it once or twice a week than to buy new paperbacks all the time. And in a trivial but welcome note, I don’t have to feel self-conscious about reading the most awful schlock on the subway.

On the other hand, it is far too easy to buy books on the Kindle, and even with the powerful sampling option, I’ve still bought too many titles I’m not going to finish. I find the machine so light and easy to read that picking up a ‘real’ hardcover is almost a shock. And there’s a slight sense of doom: not just that publishers and libraries are being rocked by this technology, but that because it belongs to corporations, surely it will be corrupted with overcharging and advertising soon.

*In short, I love it—and I’m frightened by it.*

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### Reasons to Travel With a Kindle:

1. Don’t have to spring to the airport newsstand
2. Can comfortably read a newspaper in coach
3. Can read documents and web content
4. Don’t need to sit on the floor next to the lavatory because that’s the only AC outlet, as Kindle can run pretty much forever on a single charge.

—[Blog Kindle](#)

“My purpose...is not to move ‘beyond books’ or to replace them with blogs or e-books or any other medium. Books are sacred things to me, and I would have it that way, with whatever stubbornness I need to muster, always.”

—Stephen Windwalker, blogger

“We are approaching a time when a confluence of sea changes in reading habits, consumer practices, and technology will mean that asking a Kindle book author if her book has also been published as a “real” book will be like asking a musician if her album has been released in vinyl. Serious authors are already making a decent living from the Kindle editions of our books.

**“You need a publisher like a fish needs a bicycle.”**

—Stephen Windwalker, blogger

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\*a few libraries, public and university, are experimenting with the circulation of e-readers, especially for high-demand books. Response so far suggests it’s no better than buying more hardcover copies, just more expensive and a lot more fragile. But clever uses continue to be devised.

## SHERMAN ALEXIE CLARIFIES “ELITIST” CHARGES

Written by Edward Champion

Posted on June 2, 2009

As noted by Kassia Kroszer and others, Sherman Alexie recently expressed some controversial remarks in relation to the eReader. At a BookExpo panel, Alexie called the Amazon Kindle “elitist” and said that he wanted to hit a woman sitting on a plane who was using a Kindle on her flight to New York.

### **Why do you consider the Kindle “elitist?”**

I consider the Kindle elitist because it’s too expensive. I also consider it elitist because, right now, one company is making all the rules. I am also worried about Jeff Bezos’ comments about wanting to change the way we read books. That’s rather imperial. Having grown up poor, I’m also highly aware that there’s always a massive technology gap between rich and poor kids. I haven’t yet heard what Amazon plans to do about this potential technology gap. And that’s a vital question considering that Bezos wants to change the way we read books. How does he plan to change the way that poor kids read books? How does he plan to make sure that poor kids have access to the technology? Poor kids all over the country don’t have access to current textbooks, so will they have access to Kindle?

### **Have you ever used a Kindle? What has been your experience?**

I’ve played with a Kindle. Didn’t emotionally connect with it like I immediately did with my iPod. That’s been the fascinating thing for me. I’m not even remotely a Luddite. I love all of my tech toys (and I love Amazon.com), but I have a visceral negative reaction to eBooks. I recognize that it is partly irrational...

I think it’s really about childhood. Books saved my life, Edward. I rose out of poverty and incredible social dysfunction because of books. And all of my senses—sight, hearing, touch, smell, and taste—come into play when I think and read about books. Books are tactile and eccentric. An eBook will always be a gorgeous but anonymous box. It will also be just a tool—perhaps an amazing and useful tool—but I don’t want it to replace the book. And I’m worried that many people don’t care about the book itself, and see the eBook as a replacement. And I’m worried that Amazon and other eBook distributors will completely replace bookstores.

For the rest of this article, see

[www.edrants.com/sherman-alexie-clarifies-elitist-charges/](http://www.edrants.com/sherman-alexie-clarifies-elitist-charges/)

## FROM THE BLOG “A KINDLE WORLD”

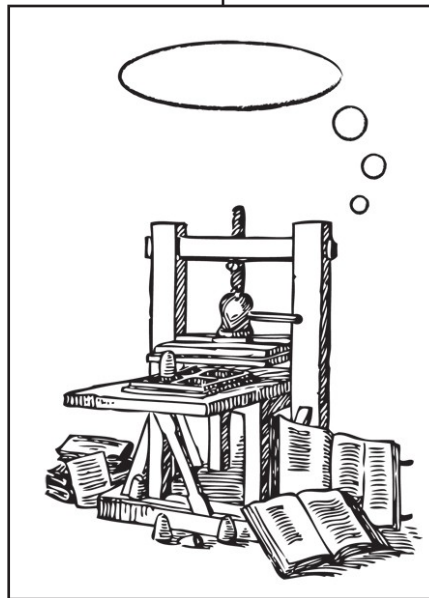
by Andrys Basten

1. Wendy Lawton, a literary agent in Santa Rosa, California, writes:

“I’ve heard so many readers say, “I could never use an e-reader. I love the smell of a book. . .the feel of it in my hand.” I used to say the same thing but with each novel I read on my Kindle, I’m more connected to the look, the feel the smell of it.

Whether it’s a book or an e-reader, it’s not the device, it’s the magic of story. The device becomes infused with the stories, settings and characters and we fall in love”

***The ‘magic of story’ - I really liked that. While she is mindful of layout and presentation (just look at how well-organized and relaxing the feel of her page is), she doesn’t seem to overly miss the book cover, the paper, the layout, leafing through the book.***



2. [while responding to complaints online:] “I finally realized that the rectangle acts as a sort of magic window for me (as a paper book does for others) into other worlds, so much of it available to me at any given time, depending on my mood, my need to learn something I ordinarily wouldn’t but have downloaded a book for, and I never wonder ‘where did I put that book’ or regret leaving it at home when out and about. Every book I’m currently interested in is with me whenever I leave the house. And then there are the newspapers and magazines. I am, most of all, info-drawn.

We who Kindle quite a bit sometimes joke that we are book readers, not book sniffers :-). But more seriously, what is a book ?

A collection and special distribution of words written by someone who wants to tell me something, who wants me to get lost in the world created by that person. When an author sits down to write, I don’t think that s/he is thinking about what the cover will look like (though that always comes later) or what the layout of the externals will be.

What I experience when reading on my Kindle is — without attention to those eye-catching externals — something that feels like direct contact with the author’s mind...”

***I got carried away and wrote a lot more, but that’s essentially how I personally am affected by reading on an almost weightless 10 oz. plastic tablet with a truly strange keyboard which nevertheless works well for searches and short notes. And now I find myself reading most of the time on the heavier but even clearer larger-screen’d Kindle DX.***



# A FEW SOURCES AND RESOURCES

*Two of the major writers on e-readers are Stephen Windwalker and Andrys Basten. Their various sites (especially Windwalker's) list hundreds more resources and references about the Kindle and its cousins.*

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## SOURCES FOR KINDLE CONTENT

Reminder: The Kindle automatically reads .azw, .txt, .prc, and .mobi files, along with .aa audiobooks and mp3s. Most of these sites offer .mobi, .txt, or PDF files. PDFs convert via e-mail.

### Public Domain Books—Free or Nearly Free

“Public Domain Books” search from Amazon.com’s main page

[www.feedbooks.com](http://www.feedbooks.com)—a wonderful site for everything out of copyright

[http://www.gutenberg.org/wiki/Main\\_Page](http://www.gutenberg.org/wiki/Main_Page)

<http://infomotions.com/alex/>

<http://www.classic-literature.co.uk/>

<http://manybooks.net/>

<http://www.questia.com/publicdomainindex>

<http://www.munseys.com/site/home>

<http://freekindlebooks.org/>

[www.mobileread.com](http://www.mobileread.com)—free registration required

[www.archive.org](http://www.archive.org)—amazing archive of almost everything, including over a million out of copyright books

[www.wowio.org](http://www.wowio.org)—download classics and more recent books as PDFs

### Pay Sites

[www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)—the Kindle store

[www.kindlelibrary.net](http://www.kindlelibrary.net)

[www.worldlibrary.net](http://www.worldlibrary.net)

[www.fictionwise.com](http://www.fictionwise.com)—Barnes & Noble’s initial answer to the Kindle store. Only “multi-format” books are readable on the Kindle.

Neither [www.ebooks.com](http://www.ebooks.com) nor [www.ereader.com](http://www.ereader.com) offers a Kindle-compatible format, although they do have books for other devices.

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## SOURCES ABOUT THE KINDLE

### Blogs—Can be read with a web browser or subscribed to on the Kindle

*indieKindle* (Stephen Windwalker)—for authors and those interested in Kindle’s effect on the publishing world, and its possibilities for new or unaffiliated authors, from a writer

*K.indled*—user, tech and business news about the Kindle and the e-book marketplace

*Kindle Media Zone*—“one-stop shopping”—includes tech and publishing news, book reviews, especially of free or near-free titles

*Kindle Nation*—news and tips.

*A Kindle World* (Andrys Basten)—news and commentary about the Kindle, Amazon, and e-books, from a reader

### Books

Leslie H. Nicoll, Joshua Tallent, DeLancey Nicoll. *The Amazon Kindle FAQ.*

Windwalker, Stephen. *Beyond the Literary-Industrial Complex*

Windwalker, Stephen. *The Complete User’s Guide to the Amazing Amazon Kindle 2*

Windwalker, Stephen. *Free: How to Get Millions of Free Books, Songs, Podcasts, Periodicals...*