

Western Sullivan Public Library

# Intro to eBooks



## Intro to eBooks

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The earliest eBooks tended to be texts read on a personal computer. Portable eReaders were first introduced in 1998, but were slow to catch on. Not until large companies such as Sony, Amazon, Apple, and Barnes & Noble released their own eReaders did their popularity explode, culminating in the 2010 announcement by Amazon that eBook sales had exceeded all of its printed book sales.

During this course we will look at:

- Introduction
- Uses
- eReaders
- eBook Files
- Communicating with an eReader
- Managing Content
- Purchasing eBooks
- Borrowing eBooks



## Intro to eBooks

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### Introduction

Reading an eBook doesn't require a portable device. While much of the recent popularity of eBooks stems from the ability eReaders allow to keep literally hundreds of books on you at all times in a lightweight and small device, an eBook is nothing more than a text or image file. Project Gutenberg, for example, is a digital collection of online texts (eBooks), in existence since 1971, where thousands of books can be read for free online at [www.Gutenberg.org](http://www.Gutenberg.org).

### eReaders

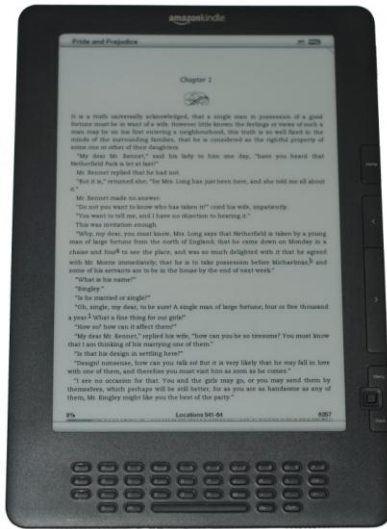
There are numerous eReaders available, though the most popular are the Amazon Kindle, the Sony Reader, and the Barnes & Noble Nook. Apple's iPad is also often used to view eBooks, though its versatility makes it technically not an eReader. Any device that can read text or images is capable, in a sense, of being an eReader. Whether it be a cell phone, or a home computer. But we'll focus on the three primary eReaders, the Kindle, the Reader, and the Nook. True eReaders also use e-ink, a display technology that requires very little energy, allows for a very long battery life on a single charge, and is easy on the eyes, unlike the bright glare of LCD displays, which can be difficult to look at for extended periods of time. E-ink works by charging small ink particles to form words or pictures. Once the initial charge is done, the display of text or images will remain the same indefinitely, without any power. So the battery is conserved by only using any power when the screen is changed by turning the page.



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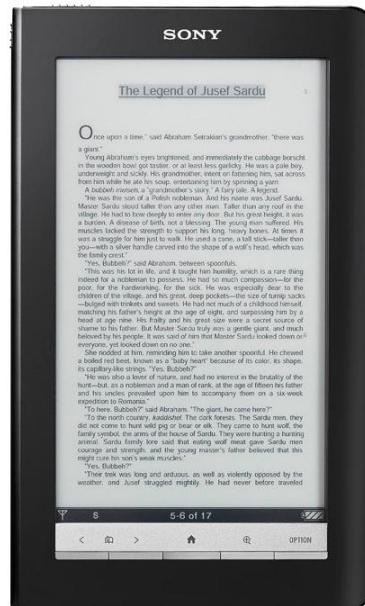
## Kindle



Created and sold by Amazon.com. It has 2GB of storage, allowing for about 1,500 books to be stored on it at any given time. It lacks the touch screen that just about every other eReader offers, and is not compatible with the popular ePub format of eBooks (except for the most advanced model, the Kindle Fire), but it does offer some unique features, such as Text-to-Speech, allowing for any document to be read aloud as an audio book, as well as a built-in web browser. Models can also be purchased with free, unlimited 3G, allowing internet use anywhere a cell-phone signal is

available. It also offers excellent battery life, up to 1 month on a single charge when the Wi-Fi is disabled. The Kindle allows books to be purchased from its online store directly from the Kindle, without using a computer. It can also download eBooks borrowed from the library system without having to go through a computer.

## Sony Reader



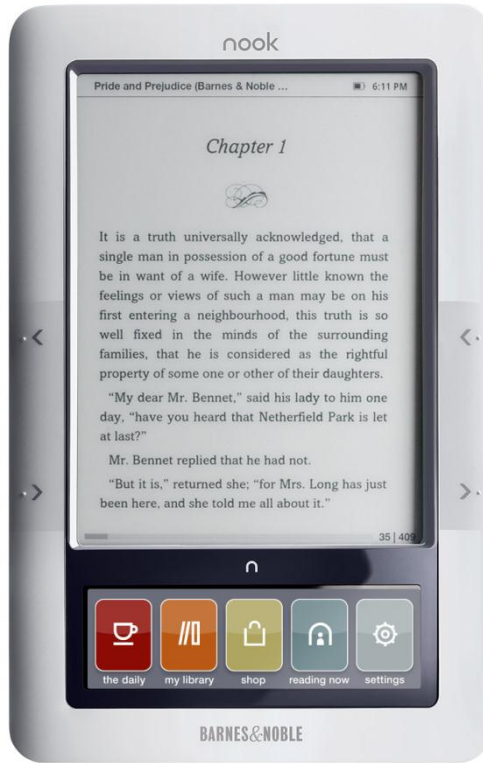
Has fewer books available in its online store (ebookstore.sony.com) than either the Nook or the Kindle, and offers less storage space (though *only* being able to have 500 books rather than 1500 is arguably not an important difference!), but its touch screen allows for maximum reading space, with no room taken up by a keyboard. It has the downside of not being able to purchase or borrow eBooks without going through a computer.



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## Nook



The eReader produced by Barnes & Noble is believed to have recently become the best-selling eReader on the market. It is capable of buying books online without using a computer, but it does rely on a computer to download borrowed eBooks from the library.

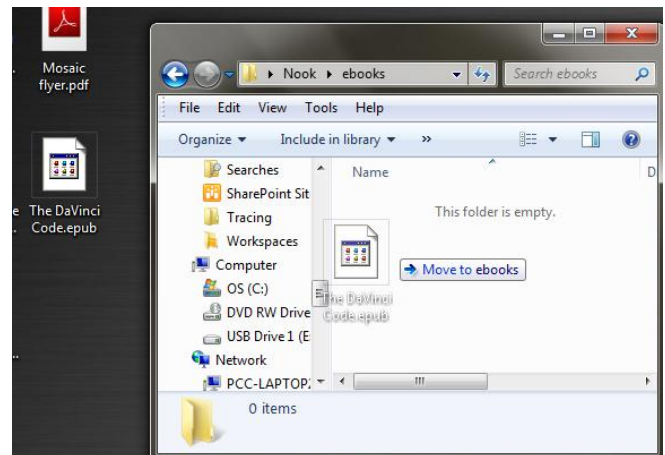
## eBook Files

Since an eBook is technically any electronic document, there is arguably no limit to the type of file that could be an eBook, but the main issue is what types of files are readable by any given device. Currently, .epub and .pdf files are the most common, as well as the specific Kindle-format eBooks

(.azw). EPUB is the most widely used format, but has the limitation of being incompatible with the Kindle.

## Communicating with an eReader

Like most external devices that store information, connecting an eReader to a computer via its USB cable allows it to be accessed just like a computer drive, meaning it can be opened in Windows Explorer, and its files





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and folders can be viewed, deleted, or moved between it and the computer with ease.

But more often, eReaders rely on built-in internet capabilities to connect. Most eReaders come with either Wi-Fi, allowing it to access the internet anywhere there's a public wireless network, or 3G, a type of internet connection similar to a mobile phone signal, that is accessible almost anywhere. And unlike many other devices, most eReaders offer unlimited 3G connections at no cost. This is because users generally use the 3G connection to purchase books through the eReader's store, and since an eBook is a relatively small file, and does not require as much bandwidth to download as listening to a music file, or watching a video online, for example.

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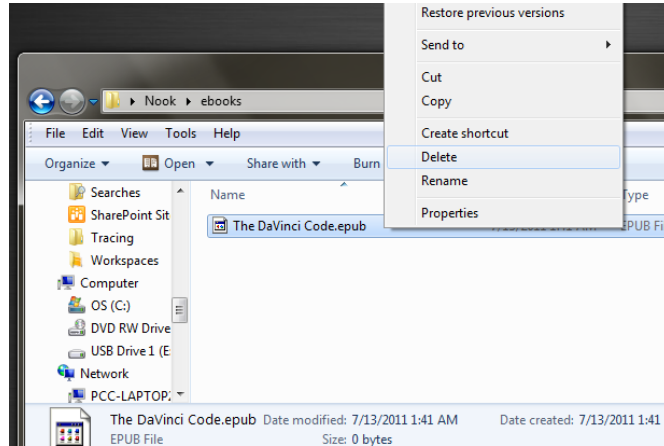
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## Managing Content



Content can be managed on most eReaders in a number of different ways. By dragging, dropping, or deleting files via Windows Explorer when the eReader is connected to a computer via USB, or on the library page of

your eReader's online store, or within the eReader itself. For Kindle, if you are not already on the Home screen, press the "Home" button. Underline the item you want to remove with the 5-way controller. Move the controller to the left and select "Remove from device." Nooks do not offer the option of deleting from within the Nook itself. To delete a book from the Sony Reader, choose the book you want to delete, press the options button (on the reader itself, not the screen) and select the option that says "delete book."

## Purchasing eBooks



With eReaders created by booksellers (Amazon's Kindle, Barnes & Noble's Nook), they tend to offer an easy and streamlined approach to buying books from the bookseller with which they're associated. Kindle eBooks may be purchased from [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com), Nook eBooks from [www.bn.com](http://www.bn.com), and Sony Reader eBooks from [ebookstore.sony.com](http://ebookstore.sony.com). An account is required at each site, and it will be necessary to register your device with the website, so that it knows where to send purchased materials. Browsing and purchasing materials is the same as with any other online shopping. Once the item is purchased, it is added to your library, and can be downloaded for reading on your device.



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## Borrowing eBooks

Most libraries now offer patrons the ability to borrow eBooks just as they would check out physical books. Just like physical books, only a certain number of any given title are available at a time, and they can only be kept for a limited amount of time.

Since digital media can often be difficult to track or control, a slightly complex system has been put in place for most eReaders, though the Kindle uses a simpler method which will be discussed later.

First, it is necessary to download and install a program called Adobe Digital Editions (<http://www.adobe.com/products/digitaleditions>). It is necessary to



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by Steve Jovanoski

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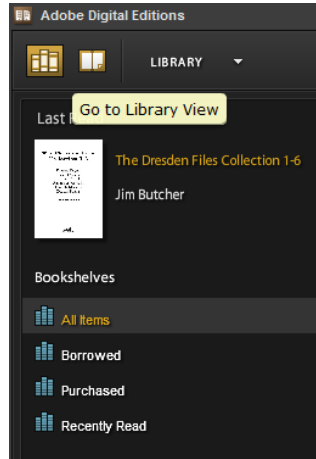


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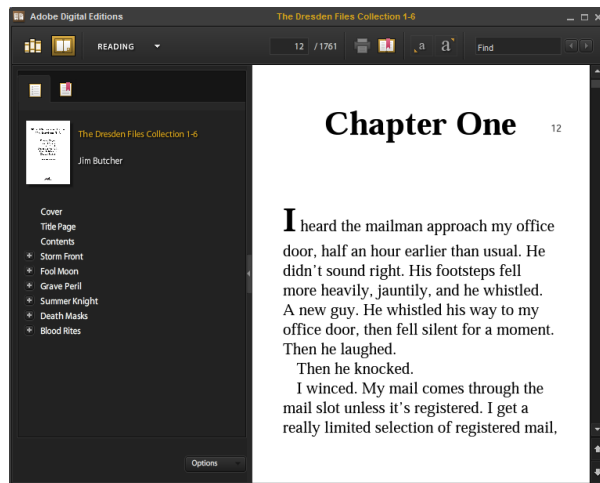
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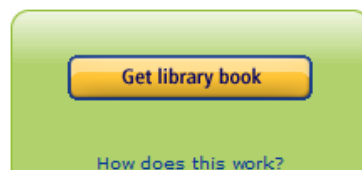
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