

President's Corner: Kindle Paperwhite
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Since I am slated to give a presentation this month about the advantages and disadvantages of e-book readers, I thought I'd give a short review of the e-book reader that I own.

Two friends gave me a first-generation Kindle Paperwhite as a birthday gift a few years ago. It has a 6" screen, Wi-Fi + 3G, and 2 GB of storage. It is about four inches wide, 6.5 inches long, and 3/8 inch thick. With the protective case, it is slightly larger and weighs about 12.4 ounces. It is the more expensive model, which does not push ads to me, which is a great feature. (I tire of seeing advertisements everywhere!)

I appreciate the fact that I have a library of about 160 books in a compact size that is convenient to take with me. The e-ink display is legible in dim and bright lighting, so I can read a book anywhere. (The Kindle Fire, which has an LCD display, is not as easy to read in bright light.) The e-ink display is limited to monochrome text, but is adequate for my needs, as most of the e-books I read contain few or no pictures. If I ever need to purchase a new title, the shopping app on my Paperwhite will get me connected to Amazon's Kindle store where I can search for and purchase new titles using my Amazon account. (I can also purchase new books from a computer, and then the Paperwhite will sync the new titles when I connect it to a network.)

I have not owned any other e-book reader, although I have read e-books on a computer, a smartphone, and a tablet computer. My Paperwhite is not a speed demon—flipping from one page to the next has a slight lag of maybe a half second or a little less. It is not conducive to quickly flipping through a book to find an interesting section, but it is adequate for reading. I frequently use the highlighting and notes tools for memorable quotes and passages. I can highlight any block of text I wish, as well as delete or change the highlighting if necessary (a task that is not so easy to do with a pencil and printed book). The notes tool allows me to enter a comment, thought, or question that I have about a passage. A note appears as a highlighted block, but with a small icon indicating a note is appended to the passage. Typing a note with the on-screen keyboard is slow, even though the Paperwhite will present possible word choices to auto-complete a word.

While reading a book, I may select how the status of my reading is displayed at the bottom of the screen. I may choose between location (a numeric index of where I am in the book), the amount of time left in the current chapter, the amount of time left in the book, or nothing at all. If I encounter an unfamiliar word, I may highlight it to see a pop-up dictionary definition. If a word is not recognized, I have the option of searching for it in Wikipedia, provided my Paperwhite has a network connection. (I usually disable wireless to maximize the time I have between recharges.) Two dictionaries come pre-installed—*Oxford Dictionary of English* and *The New Oxford American Dictionary*. Following footnotes is usually easy, as hyperlinks are inserted within the text. Pressing a footnote link will open a pop-up window displaying the text of the footnote. I may press a link to go to the footnote listing, where I can view the footnote within the context of the other footnotes. An icon at the top of the screen allows me to return to where I was reading. I may place virtual bookmarks in a book, as many as one for every page. They provide another means (along with highlights and the text search function) to quickly find a particular place in the e-book.

Other features include a rudimentary web browser, adjustment tools for the brightness of the screen and

text size, the ability to share my highlights and notes with other Kindle users, the ability to create groups of books of my choosing (such as grouping all titles about a particular subject), and a link to Goodreads. (Goodreads is a service that allows users to “track and rate books and network with other readers.”) Another great feature is the ability to add to my library books from sources other than Amazon's Kindle store. I may copy e-books from other sources to my Kindle using a USB connection. My Amazon account is associated with special e-mail address that I may use to send files such PDFs and Word documents to my Paperwhite. Amazon does the work of converting the files so they may be read on my Paperwhite.

Overall, I enjoy the convenience of my Paperwhite. I can throw (actually gently place) it in a backpack or suitcase with the knowledge that I will not lack for something to read. (I've only read a very small percentage of my Kindle library.) E-books are easy to acquire through Amazon's Kindle store and other websites for a nominal cost and no shipping and handling charges. (Amazon occasionally has specials on e-books at a limited-time reduced cost or even for free, so it is easy to build up a large library of good reading material.) I use my Paperwhite primarily for books that I read sequentially, cover to cover, such as novels and most non-fiction. I would not use it so much for books such as references, where I may need to quickly jump from one section or chapter to another to find information I need. The search function is a little cumbersome for finding a word or phrase in a book, so I would generally prefer a printed book with a good index. Still, it is preferable to carrying a large collection of small book (or a few big books), so I could see myself using it when I need a particular reference book that is not otherwise handy, as in an educational setting.