

Pick up an e-book for reading on the run

A few times a month our family has a reading night when the TV and all the computers are turned off. Nothing beats a quiet house in the evening with everyone readying a good book.

Beth has her historical fiction novels, I have my TEOTWAWKI books, and the girls have the latest round of Amazon purchases approved by mom.

Over the past few months things have been changing and the books have gone from analog paper to digital downloads.

Beth and I are now doing a large part of our book reading on our Apple iPads and the kids now are downloading books to be viewed on their iPod Touches. We are slowly but surely becoming an e-books family.

For well over a year now I have had the Amazon Kindle subject on my to-write-about list. Since I never got one this prevented me from writing a column on it.

There is a separate budget item in my Deans Consulting Quickbooks company file specifically for funding technology purchases just to write this weekly article. It also gives me a good excuse to have the cool toys.

The Kindle has been a big seller that has enabled millions to purchase, download and immediately start reading books in just minutes. The Kindle has been available now for a few years but started out pretty expensive at around \$400.

The latest version goes for only \$189 and enables the reader to quickly download any of



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620,000 books over the embedded 3G connection to Amazon.com.

Weighing only 10.2 ounces and just a third of an inch thick, it is very convenient to carry around and can hold up to 1,500 books at one time. The battery life in amazing lasting up to one week on a single charge and over two weeks with wireless turned off.

Amazon's Kindle also has also offers access to 1.8 million free, out-of-copy-right, pre-1923 books, including *Pride and Prejudice* (ultimate bonnet book).

A couple of months ago I was about to buy the Kindle but I got distracted when the iPad came out. Then after I found the Kindle iPad App available on the Apple App Store and the Kindle fell from my technology wish list.

Months before I had been using the iPhone version of Kindle making it possible to download and read books on that little screen. It did come in handy when I was stuck at really boring events and was able to whip out my iPhone, start up the Kindle app, and pick up where I left off in the book *Patriots* by James Wesley Rawles.

For Mother's Day, I got my wife her iPad and made sure it already had both the Kindle and the iBooks app. iBooks is the Apple version of Kindle with a smaller library of downloadable books currently approaching 100,000 titles still about a sixth the size of Amazon's electronic bookshelf.

With both the Kindle and iBooks app on an iPad, you have the best of both e-books worlds.

The cost savings on either are half to a third that of hardcopy books. To support Laura Ingraham, one my favorite right-wing authors, I purchased her latest hardcopy book, *The Obama Diaries* at Barnes and Noble in Houston for \$25.

I also bought the e-books version on my iPad via Amazon's Kindle app for \$11.99 which is half the price of the hardback.

Apple's iBooks app also was selling *The Obama Diaries* for the same \$11.99 download price. This surprised me since they rarely have my conservative authors available online like Amazon does. I guess they finally realized that conservative authors are making a ton of money for themselves, their publishers, and now electronic bookstores as well.

Since most of my e-books purchases have been via the Amazon Kindle app I have been spending most of my time reading new books on my iPad. Just this past month we went on a trip where our daughters were going play piano for five minutes each during a weekend in Dallas. This gave me plenty of time to read my backlog of e-books.

Last year we went to this piano recital weekend I toted three heavy books in my travel bag. This time I was able to download five new books into my iPad and toggle between them instantly and quietly. Utilizing the bookmark feature by touching the top right corner of the page it remembers where I was so I can jump from book to book without losing my place.

Viewing the text can be enhanced by tapping on the lower center which brings up the options and status bar below the manuscript. By touching the

text size symbol of "Aa" you can adjust the font to one of six sizes or view the text as white on black, black on white or sepia contrast.

You turn the page either by swiping your finger on the iPad from right to left or just tapping the right side of the screen. That lower status bar also shows your progress through the book as a percentage complete. So instead of staying up to 1 a.m. trying to read those last 20 pages of your old paperback, you'll be just a tempted to complete the last 10 percent of the e-books.

I seriously doubt this e-books revolution is just a fad since Fox News Channel reported last week Amazon announced that for every 100 hard cover books they sell online, 143 Kindle e-books are purchased.

So basically I'll be buying the majority of my conservative books and TEOTWAWKI novels in the form of e-books via Amazon or iBooks on my iPad for half the price at the brick and mortar bookstores. My prediction is by the time our daughters are in high school, or for sure by college, all their books will be e-books delivered to and read on tablet computers like iPads.

Bottom line: Next time you need a book really quick reach for a Kindle, iPad or even an iPhone to download instantly and begin reading right away.

Next week's column: WikiLeaks.org
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