Books Versus Nooks

A Consumer's Guide to Reading in a Digital World

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Introduction

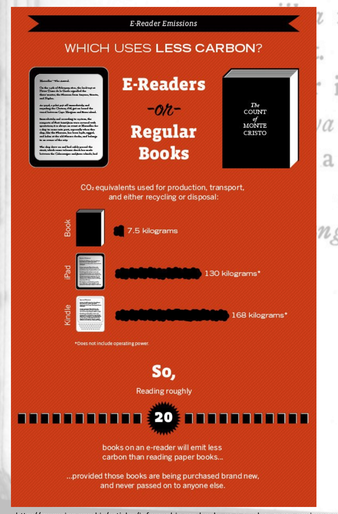
In 2007, Amazon introduced the first electronic reader (eReader) called the Kindle. In the following years , eReaders have flooded the market to the point that eBooks in 2013 made up 27 percent of the market for adult trade books. eReaders have caused debate over what each medium is good for. I looked at cost, environmental impact, comprehension, convenience and sensory experience to try to determine what uses are best for eReaders or books.

Methods

I conducted a literature review of studies done on the environmental impacts and levels of comprehension. Based on Amazon's annual review, I computed the cost difference between the e-book price, the paper book price and the used book price. I also conducted interviews of librarians and professors.

Environmental Impact

It is hard to pin down the number of books it takes to offset the impact of an eReader as the length of book and the time it takes to read it changes the outcome. However, according the CleanTech Group, the user must read about 20 books a year on an eReader to offset the carbon emissions.



http://magazine.good.is/articles/infographic-are-books-or-e-readers-more-environmentally-friendly

http://bookshelfporn.com/post/59394004716/sfmola-all-the-great-reasons-why-books-should

Consumer's Guide

Pick the factor that is the most important to you in considering what to use:

- **Cost**
  - eReader
  - Do you want to be able to resell?
    - Books
- **Environmental Impact**
  - >20 books per year: eReader
  - <20 books per year: Books
- **Comprehension**
  - Complex plots: Books
  - Linear Plots
    - Reading <1 hour: eReader
    - Reading >1 hour: Books
- **Convenience**: eReader
- **Sensory Experience**: Books

Cost

New York Times Non-Fiction Bestsellers 2014				
Title	**Author**	**Hardcopy Price**	**Kindle Price**	**NOOK Price**
Things That Matter	Charles Krauthammer	17.13*	11.99	13.99
Lone Survivor	Marcus Luttrell	5.4	4.99	7.99
Duty	Robert M. Gates	10.99	12.99	15.99
The Monuments Men	Robert M. Edsel with Bret Witter	12.86	8.99	8.99
Twelve Years a Slave	Solomon Northup	3.93	0.99	0.99
Thrive	Arianna Huffington	12.33	9.14	11.99
Flash Boys	Michael Lewis	13.56	9.99~	9.99
Heaven is For Real	Todd Burpo with Lynn Vincent	8.99	7.99	10.99
Finding Me	Michelle Knight	11.69	9.5	9.99
Capital in the Twenty-First Century	Thomas Piketty	27.22*	21.99~	22.99
One Nation	Ben Carson with Candy Carson	11.25	10.99	12.99
I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings	Maya Angelou	5.94	5.64	7.99
Hard Choices	Hillary Rodham Clinton	12.86	14.99	14.99
Blood Feud	Edward Klein	9.18	9.99	15.49
Unbroken	Laura Hillenbrand	8.25	4.99	10.79
What If?	Randall Munroe	11.99	6.99~	13.49
13 Hours	Mitchel Zuckoff	12.75	9.99	14.99
Killing Patton	Bill O'Reilly and Martin Dugard	15.41*	12.99	12.99
Yes Please	Amy Poehler	13.35	12.59	12.59
41: A Portrait of My Father	George W. Bush	14.00	10.99	12.99
	Av. % cheaper		21.2	-2.95
	*Hardcover			
	~available for free with a subscription to KindleUnlimited			

http://bookshelfporn.com/post/59394004716/sfmola-all-the-great-reasons-why-books-should

Comprehension Levels

When the human brain reads, it creates a spatial map of where the information is located in the physical work. It uses page numbers, left or right pages, pages left in the book, and any marks left by previous users to create these maps. Without these markers, our comprehension levels decrease.

92 percent of students prefer reading longer texts in hard-copy. The same percentage of students report being easily sidetracked when reading onscreen.

Ownership

A common misconception by many owners of eReaders is that they own the eBooks that they buy. This is untrue. Both Amazon and Barnes & Noble have the consumer agree to a license. In short, users only rent eBooks. They can only be lent to another person one time and cannot be resold for profit by the user.

Conclusion

The answer for the question "what medium do I use ?" is always libraries. The environmental impact is lessened as the books are shared by many people. There are unlimited titles available and there is no comprehension damage or eyestrain. There is also little or no cost.

If the consumer does wish to own the medium, then they should follow the Consumer's Guide.