

# ATTACK OF THE E-READERS

NEWSLETTER ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF E READERS IN PUBLIC EDUCATION

## Personal connection to eReader Phenomena

I believe we are at the precipice of hand held technology being implemented in public schools for use in everyday learning. Even though I enjoy technology and find it has the potential to be of benefit in every classroom, I have witnessed many school districts expended extravagant sums of money on hardware and software that has been wasted.

The past two years, there has been a massive movement to promote the value of eBooks and eReaders, and many schools are considering whether or not to invest in their use.

My project is designed to study the effectiveness of using eReading software and tablets in public schools. I want to learn how viable the devices are and what it takes for implementation at a school wide level.



## Kindles in the Classroom

In a recent journal published in *The School Library Journal*, Lauren Barack spoke with students and librarians that had been instrumental in piloting a Kindle program in their school libraries to increase literacy. What I liked most about the article was a quote from Buffy Hamilton, a librarian, where she explains how the Kindle is overcoming teens fear of being labeled a bookworm. "If you check out

four to five books, it's hard to get them into a book bag without people seeing," she explains. "With a Kindle, no one really knows. For teens, privacy is really important." These hand held devices make it easier for many to bring books with them everywhere. (Barack, 2011)

My main question is why invest in such a specific product? Are there better choices?



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E READERS have been piloted into the schools, but a draw back is that they are proprietary. The Kindle is limited to amazon, The Nook, to Barnes and Noble, so is the money worth it?



TABLETS: another viable idea is to go the tablet route, since you have the option for so much more, but at \$300 to \$800 per device, how do we decide to best spend our funds?



SMART PHONES WITH EREADER APPS? The third option is to allow the use of smartphones with eReaders into the school room, but how do we control how they are used and what about the students with out them?

## eReader or Tablet for your ebooks?

by **Brandy Jackson**

High School English/Technology Teacher

When I first began this school year, I decided to begin researching ebooks and learning as much as I could about ePublishing. I attended some professional development, bought an iPad and downloaded multiple eReading applications to both my iPad and my phone.

Since that time, I have bought over sixty books, and begun formatting a novel I wrote a few years ago into an ePublication. I have no doubt that eReaders are changing how we read for enjoyment, but my main concern is how can they change the way we are able to teach students.

I am not sure that eReaders are the best way to implement eBooks into the curriculum. While they are great devices for fictional and non fictional personal reading, they do not seem to have enough graphic capabilities for instructional reading.

There is also the issue of textbooks and what devices will be able to implement them the best. iPad seems to have cornered the educational

Whether we choose a specific product or simply to allow the use of tablets and eReaders in school, prior to implementation we must look at all areas that these devices can be used for good and for evil.

## AROUND OUR HOUSE



*Our son is four year's old and thinks of the iPad as his favorite toy. It has books, videos, games, and collaboration activities we use as family. It can be a multipurpose tool for all ages.*



*I was able to purchase about half of my text books this year as eBooks. While they not as easy to thumb through as a paper book, I complete my readings faster because they are always with me either on my phone, iPad or desktop.*

market, but I have a major concern in that Macintosh seems to have a consumer mindset. They seem built on the principle that we will completely replace our technology devices every year and schools cannot follow this business model.

Instructional Technologist will be called on to evaluate the best

procedures to follow when implementing any new technology into schools, so we need to have a clear plan on how to choose the best technology for our learners.

Whatever route we take to implement handheld eReaders into into classrooms, it will have to meet some basic standards.

There will be a negative contingent of people that are looking for ways to stop this major step forward into digital learning. We must be prepared with strong arguments prior to any discussion of major change.

## TABLET OR READER: HOW DO WE DECIDE?



- Cost ?
- User Friendly ?
- Easy to Manage ?
- Wifi Capability/Limitation ?
- Applications Available ?
- Size ?
- Durability ?