



TeleRead: Bring the E-Books Home

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Do you read the snailpapers or do you do most of your news reading online now?

Occasional Teleread contributor Dan Bloom in Taiwan notes that the Urban Dictionary has now accepted the word “snailpaper” to stand for the print editions of our local daily newspapers nationwide, which often, Dan notes, arrive at our doorsteps in the morning with news that is already 12 hours old. Dan quotes in his blog:

“I am sick and tired of reading the snailpaper edition of the New York Times! By the time it arrives, the front page is already old news. I much prefer reading the Times online website with the up-dated news as it happens.”

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Why Gary Price bought 'The Case for Books' in E

Ah, the suspense.

Would Gary Price—the founding info-maven of ResourceShelf—buy The Case for Books in an electronic or paper edition?

TeleRead promised an answer, and directly from Gary himself, here it is. – D.R.

The winner? The e-book version, which I've been reading on Kindle for iPhone. A few of the reasons why:

1. In all of the last-minute stuff I needed to do before a trip, I didn't have time to go to the bookstore.
2. I purchased the book the night before my trip. I could have even bought the book in the taxi on the way to the airport or while I waited to board at the gate.
3. Like it or not, Price. It was about one-half the cost of the print edition. By the way, some/all of the essays are likely available for free via New York Review of Books.
4. It seems I'm always losing things so this way I had nothing to lose (except my iPhone, which I would be taking with me anyway) and one fewer item to place in my already-overflowing carry-on bag.

Have I read any of the books on my actual Kindle device (1st gen) since I returned home? No, I continue with my iPhone.

I still have issues with low-light reading. An Amazon rep suggested I could buy a book light and attach it to the Kindle cover. Well, I have a book light and have attached it to the cover. It's a mediocre experience at best.

Technorati Tags: The Case for Books,Robert Darnton

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Easy Kindle book downloads without a computer: The grubby details for public domain fans

How to download free books *directly* via your Kindle's built-in Web browser?

Alas, [Project Gutenberg](#) and most other public domain sites aren't optimized right now for devices with small screens and slow browsers.

And free Kindle download guides—with links to public domain books—are not as easy and convenient to use as they could be *in my opinion* (TeleRead Co-Editor Paul Biba offers his thoughts later in this post).

What's more, free editions of more than a few public domain books are AWOL in the Kindle's bookstore. To my surprise, I couldn't dig up one for [A Journey to the Center of the Earth](#), the Jules Verne classic.

The glories of FreeKindleBooks.org

Enter [FreeKindleBooks.org](#).

It will take you to thousands of Kindle books organized by author. I don't know the exact title count, but the site at least passes the [Upton Sinclair Test](#), as I'll call it: I could find 21 of his books such as a [The Money Changers](#).

[Jules Verne](#) (right photo) showed up with 34 titles. including *Journey*.

59 Dickens works, 49 by Twain and 7 by Austen

Fifty-nine works by [Dickens](#) (left photo), 49 by [Mark Twain](#) and seven by [Jane Austen](#) (less prolific than the other two) appear on FreeKindleBooks.org. Simply put, for people who like major public domain authors, this is more than just a vexingly abbreviated collection.

On top of that, you can use the site's "[experimental](#)" mode and locate books by PG number—apparently *all* of the catalogue. Just go to the real PG and search for the title and accompanying number, then return to FreeKindleBooks.org's experimental mode to download the actual book. If a desktop or laptop is handy, that might be a faster way to look up the PG numbers.

FreeKindleBooks.org, granted, has flaws. For one thing, there's a lot of verbiage at the top, rather than the lists of writers (leading to title lists). But just keep scrolling down and you'll find the lists.

How Kindle owners can use the Web browser with FreeKindle.org

Don't be scared if you've never used the Kindle's Web browser before or don't mess with it often.

From the Home menu, just hit the Menu key, scroll down to Experimental, press joystick-style button, then go to Basic Web Browser if you're not there already, which you should be. Press the joystick button again.

If the enter-Web-address rectangle is cluttered with a previously made entry, hit Menu again and choose Enter URL, using the joystick. Type in FreeKindleBooks.org and hit the return button (under the DEL on your keyboard).

Other possibilities for free easy Kindle downloads...

- *Mnybks.net*: Unfortunately I found it harder to use for direct Kindle downloads than FreeKindlebooks.Net was.
- *Feedbooks.com*: Yet another. Use <http://feedbooks.com/?format=mobile>. Neither it nor *Mnybks.net* will give you as many selections as FreeKindleBooks.net will with the "experimental" feature in use. But Feedbooks does offer some of the best-formatted books online.

...Plus a reminder that you can copy books directly from your desktop machine to the Kindle...if the desktop is handy

With the above methods, you don't need to have a desktop machine handy.

But *with* a PC, Mac or Linux machine, you can use your Firefox or other browser and download a book directly to your Kindle's solid-state storage via a USB connection.

The Kindle comes with a USB cable. Plug it in between your Kindle and your desktop. Then do the download from your desktop browser after specifying that you want the file copied to the e-reader (a Documents subfolder) rather than the desktop.

The e-reader might show up as something like Drive K. Whatever is a drive you normally don't see!

If you use a laptop instead of a desktop, just substitute the word "laptop" for desktop.

Additional thoughts—from Paul Biba: He favors download guides over a FreeKindle.org approach

After this post appeared in its original form, Paul kindly shared his own thoughts:

“There are two Kindle catalogs that I, personally, find more convenient to use than the web browser method that David mentions above. These are actual catalogs of the holdings of MobileRead and Feedbooks. You download them to your Kindle, either by using the browser or by downloading them to your desktop and then adding them as a book, and then you can open them and use the search function of the Kindle to find what you want.

“Both catalogs are updated frequently, I think weekly, so you can re-download them whenever you want and keep up to date. They are especially easy to update because both of them have links on their front page which will automatically fire up the Kindle browser and download the latest catalog to your Kindle. The only thing you have to do, then, is to delete the old catalog as the new one does not overwrite it.

“The nice thing about getting books from these sources is the excellent formatting. David already mentioned the fine job that Feedbooks does, and the MobileRead books are all formatted and uploaded by volunteers who make sure that a first rate formatting job is done.

“The MobileRead catalog can be downloaded at <http://www.mobileread.com/mobiguide> in Mobi format readable on the Kindle.

“And the Feedbooks catalog can be found in the same format at <http://www.feedbooks.com/kindleguide>.”

In answer to Paul, I myself find the guides can be cumbersome to use, and I like the idea of having access to the full Gutenberg catalog of tens of thousands of titles. But each to his/her own!

Needed: Easy downloads off the Gutenberg site

I would strongly urge Project Gutenberg to build a mobile site for Kindle-style machines, if that isn't already planned—yes, more than just for the Kindle itself. PG seems to be moving in that direction. While cellphones are important, Gutenberg shouldn't forget owners of Kindles and similar devices. Ideally the post I'm making now will soon be obsolete.

Granted, Sony and other vendors have Google Books ties, but PG is special because volunteers can choose which books to digitize (a plus that I wish Gutenberg would play up more often).

The ePub issue: I would vastly prefer that the existing FreeKindleBooks.org use the ePub standard. But meanwhile TeleRead will continue to serve the here-and-now needs of Kindle owners.

My discussion of The Money Changers: Here, on my Solomon Scandals site. Upton Sinclair's expose of the financial industry is still terrifyingly timely.

(Updated 10:28 a.m. EST to include Paul's thoughts.)

Technorati Tags: free Kindle books,FreeKindleBooks,Upton Sinclair,public domain writers,public domain authors,classics,classics for the Kindle,Dickens,Charles Dickens,Twain,Mark Twain,Asten,Jane Austen

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Computerworld writer: 'Eight reasons why e-readers could fail'

Matt Hamblin in Computerworld offers eight reasons why dedicated e-readers like the Kindle and Sony Reader could fail. Check out his piece for the full story. The reasons:

(1) "Price of devices," (2) "price of e-books," (3) "Smartphones," (4) "Apple's rumored tablet computer," (5) popular authors' ambiguity over e-books, (6) digital rights complexities, (7) standards issues and (8) librarians' fears about their jobs.

So, gang, what's your take? I myself don't think in terms of either one kind of e-gizmo or another—or even P vs. E. For a long time, there'll be many choices, even in the latter area. Cellphones aren't going to kill the Kindle, or vice versa.

Related: eWeek piece arguing against e-readers and other single-use devices.

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Want a non-stop stream of recently digitized ebooks to choose from? Check this out

I reprint this in full from [Resource Shelf](#). What a great (can I say it?) resource!

A Never Ending “Virtual Stream” of Digitized Text
by Gary Price, Senior Editor

When Chris Sherman and I were writing and then giving book talks and presentations about *The Invisible Web*, we said John Mark Ockerbloom’s [Online Books Page](#) was an essential resource for anyone interested in digitized, full text books. Now referred by most as eBooks. More than eight years later I feel the same way about this awesome and well organized collection.

Where do you begin with a site so full of content? For me, that’s easy. Monitoring the latest additions to the catalog/page. I am always blown away by the amount of new listings (when does Ockerbloom sleep?) and the number of organizations digitizing books. If you think it’s only Google digitizing books (of course they are a major player) but not they’re far from the only one doing this type of work. [Just look for yourself](#). The page [even has an RSS feed](#).

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But wait, we’ve got more.

The Online Books Page new listings only includes some of the digitized text output from the Internet Archive (IA).

If you want to be able to review (at your leisure) all of the new digitized content text content that the IA produces, it’s possible by [subscribing to this RSS feed](#). Even if you’re not going to review the titles, just let it run for a few days to see the AMOUNT of text material that’s digitized in variety of formats. It’s an understatement to say that the scanners at the IA are cranking it out on all cylinders. So, collection development types, subscribe to both RSS feeds and have a large virtual bookshelf to choose from each day. If you don’t do the collection development thing both feeds are useful to illustrate the amount of material being digitized each day, week, month.

UPDATE: Not an RSS user? No problem. [Just visit this Internet Archive page](#) and refresh it a few times a day. The most recent addition is at the top.

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Quick Note: Nook sold out for the holidays

According to Engadget, via the NY Times, the Nook is sold out and the next round of readers will ship out around January 4.

If memory serves, didn't exactly the same thing happen to the Kindle 1?

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New Sony e-store for books, movies, music and apps is coming, says company—but it ‘is not imminent’

Now that Sony has revealed plans for a new iTunes-like store—offering e-books along with music, movies and apps—I was curious if this might just help pave the way for a multimedia tablet. You think Sony would answer that question directly right now? Dream on. But spokesperson Valerie Motis tried to be helpful on other matters within the inevitable limits. Her full statement to TeleRead:

“I don’t have any info on the new store plans. This was very recently announced at a management meeting and I think it’s safe to say that it is not imminent. In the Reader group, we’re focusing very much on the near term—getting the Daily Edition out and flipping the store over to ePub. I know you are aware of our offer to update all the PRS-500s in the field. We’re working on this as well in anticipation of the store changeover in just a few short weeks. All that said, I really couldn’t say anything about what the store Sir Howard refers to will look like.”

Thanks, Val, and keep us posted—especially on hardware matters and DRM issues involving the current and planned stores.

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enTourage eDGe opens ebook store

The capital-letter-challenged eDGe is now offering ebooks in their new store. They have cut a deal with Ingram Digital for ebooks and with LibreDigital to provide ebooks and over 175 periodicals. They are also connected with the Google Books for download from that source.

I poked around their store and it seems that all the books I looked at were in PDF format – not very reader friendly – even though the machine will read EPUB. However, the ereading part of the unit is 9.7” so maybe it can do a decent PDF display. There is no mention that I can find of whether the books have DRM or not. We have previously reported on the unit here.

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Scanning, printing and downloading services from Kirtas

Kirtas is a maker of automatic book imaging systems. They also have a POD service that is open to the general public. I poked around their [book site](#) after getting an email from them and here's what I found.

Take, for example, the book *A catalogue of English and foreign bookbindings offered for sale by Bernard Quaritch Ltd.*. I can download it for free, get a softcover version for \$8 or a hardcover version for \$18. I can also preview how the POD cover will look (pictured above). They have books from the Rochester Institute of Technology (654), Kirtas Classics (99,799), University of Pennsylvania (224,199), McGill University (37,921), New York Public Library (317,934) and others.

You might want to poke around. The only problem is that the digitized copies are in PDF format, which means that I certainly will never download one. I don't like reading on the computer and there isn't a good portable alternative for PDF reading yet. However, the prices are pretty reasonable I can certainly see ordering a hard cover book or maybe finding an unusual book and having it printed to use as a Christmas gift.

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Kindle to get folders? Apparently

Is Amazon about to address a gripe of many serious e-bookers—and give the Kindle folders, so people can organize their e-libraries better?

Apparently. From the [Kindle Facebook page](#):

“Kindle Customers, We have heard from many of you that you would like to have a better way to organize your growing Kindle libraries. We are currently working on a solution that will allow you to organize your Kindle libraries. We will be releasing this functionality as an over-the-air software update as soon as it is ready, in the first half of next year. – The Kindle Team.”

(Thanks to John Hagewood for the link)

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Ebooks not greener than print says publisher

That's what Karen Christensen says. She's an academic publisher and author and co-editor of the forthcoming book *The Business of Sustainability*. According to her:

... the debate around green issues behind producing books had so far largely ignored the "vast" impact of data centres and the computer and mobile communications industry.

"I can't think of an issue where our beliefs about an issue are more out of line with the realities," Christensen said, whose book is due out in January.

"Both print and digital publishing have an impact on the environment, and we need to get over the misconception that digital publishing is inherently better than publishing on paper. It might be a lot worse."

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Sony to sell e-books along with music and movies and apps in new store: Multimedia tablet coming? Just a GUESS

The [Sony eBookStore](#) shown here has been around for a few years for Sony Reader owners.

But now comes [word from BusinessWeek](#) that Sony will also sell e-books elsewhere—in the new Sony Online Store, the current name.

This one will sell music, movies and downloadable apps, too. The feeling among Sony watchers is that the new Sony store will use an iTunes-ish approach. No startup date has been announced.

I'm curious if or how the new Sony store may work with the existing eBook Library software. What's more, might the current eBookStore vanish? I don't think so, but who knows?

Is Sony in time going to do the e-book-capable multimedia table that *Apple* is supposed to offer us? That certainly would jibe well with Sony's history as a hardware company and the store's multimedia approach. I'm just extrapolating and guessing. But if you work for a publisher and need to anticipate future *possibilities*, add this one to the brew.

Also, what e-book format will the new Sony store use? ePub? And what about the DRM situation? Will Adobe-DRMed ePub be the norm? And what if publishers don't want DRM? Will Sony in fact offer publishers a choice, as I believe it's indicated?

Apple has backed off from DRM in the real iTunes Store, at least when it comes to music (it is selling "protected" books in the ScrollMotion format). Sony should do the same with e-books.

Perhaps [social DRM](#) could be a compromise. I'll query Sony to see if it has any word on the DRM and format issues and other book-specific details.

Related: [Techmeme roundup](#) and [Google News roundup](#).

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'Harlequin Horizons,' new self-publishing venture, draws the ire of RWA and Mystery Writers of America

"Harlequin Horizons," the romance publisher's new self-publishing arm, has stirred up a hornet's nest.

I put the name in quotes because Harlequin has announced that it is changing the name of its new venture effective immediately.

According to a press release, authors expressed concern that the original name would cause confusion between this venture and Harlequin's traditional publishing business.

That's not all, though. Romance Writers of America has decided that Harlequin Enterprises is no longer eligible for RWA-provided conference resources because and informed its membership of this without even talking to Harlequin first.

And that's not all, though. The Mystery Writers of America has issued a release saying that they are concerned about a conflict-of-interest created by Harlequin Horizons' self-publishing program and the eHarlequin Manuscript Critique service. They feel that there is a possibility that writers could think that it is necessary to use one service to get the other.

It's going to be a busy week at the Harlequin executive offices. Digg us. Slashdot us. Facebook us. Twitter us. Share the news.

Preliminary approval for the Google Book Settlement granted

The court has given preliminary approval and the following dates are of interest:

December 14: supplemental notices about the amended agreement to be sent

January 28: objections to amended agreement be filed with the court

January 28: opt in date for those members of the class who had previously opted out

February 18: hearing to determine whether the agreement is “fair, reasonable and adequate”

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Pogue previews pretty perfectly-priced Palm Pixi

David Pogue's latest column in the *New York Times* concerns the new Palm Pixi, the Pre's precocious kid sister. The official price is \$100 with a 2-year Sprint contract, but Amazon is selling it for \$25—plus \$2,309 in monthly fees over the course of the contract.

The phone is tiny, light, and thin, weighing in at 3 ounces. The design is nothing fancy, and it cuts a few corners (for example, no wifi—connection via Sprint's cell network only—and an overall slower processor). In fact, for just \$55 more you can have the somewhat more featureful and faster Pre.

But at least it shows that smartphone prices are definitely falling. Now if only they could rein in the calling plan prices, too. (Even if, as the article notes, Sprint's are overall significantly less than AT&T or Verizon's prices.)

Presumably, the Pixi will run the same e-book applications that the Pre will, so this may look like a reasonable option for people wanting a cheap smartphone. On the other hand, taken as a percentage of overall cost over two years, upgrading to the more-capable Pre is just a drop in the bucket.

Technorati Tags: [Palm,Pixi,Pre,David Pogue,New York Times,e-book,hardware,smartphones](#)

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