



**iLiad eBook**

**Updated: 11-22**  
[Update this newspaper](#)

## MobileRead Forums

### **New ebook reader -Simplicit.E.reader**

One of MR's more observant members noticed that JCPenney is selling an ebook reader on its website. It's not listed as being in stock, and I spent some time Googling it.

We don't have much detail yet because so far as I can tell this device hasn't been announced yet. I found the company's website, but it's not up yet. I found it in the Google cache.

This is the detail we have so far:

- 5" backlit color screen
- Adobe DE support
- 1GB memory
- SD card slot
- discount coupon for BooksonBoard
- product description says it can "read books, play music and videos"

and it's showing a sale price of \$129.99. If that price is for real then I might get one.

P.S. I'm attaching the JCPenney product page just in case it's taken down.

#### **Update:**

I believe the company behind the Simplicit is SPI Inc, a small tech company based in Dallas, Texas. It's not completely clear whether this company develops its products independently or re brands the products it licenses.

Attached Thumbnails

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Attached Files

ebookreader.zip (259.6 KB)

## **MobileRead Week in Review: 11/14 - 11/21**

Feast your eyes on some of the discussions from this week at MobileRead...

### **E-Book General - News and Commentary**

- [Firmware update for PRS-500 available - EPUB!](#)
- [eReader for Android just announced](#)
- [Bookeen releases new model of CyBook: CyBook Gold](#)

### **E-Book General - Deals, Freebies, and Resources**

- [University of Chicago Announces free Monthly ebook](#)

### **E-Book Software - Calibre**

- [Calibre + Dropbox = unclouded happiness](#)

### **E-Book Devices - Sony Portable Reader PRS-500/505**

- [PRS-500 owners: Will you take advantage of Sony's upgrade/trade-up offer?](#)

### **E-Book Devices - Amazon Kindle**

- [Kindle finally released in Canada](#)

## **Bookeen releases new model of CyBook: CyBook Gold**

Our good friend Kurt, from BooksOnBoard, informs us that Bookeen appear to have snuck out a new model of the CyBook, apparently without telling anybody!

The new model, the CyBook Gold, has 1GB storage space (up from 512MB on the previous model), an 8 greyscale eInk screen (previous models supported only 4), and supports ePub and PDF with Adobe ADE. The package includes the CyBook itself, a black cover, earphones, a USB cable, and a European AC adaptor (which will not be supplied to US customers).

The package is priced at US\$349; there appears to be no mention of this device as yet on Bookeen's site.

For more information, please see the BooksOnBoard site [here](#).

## University of Chicago Announces free Monthly ebook

The first book in the program is below. epub format

Link [http://www.press.uchicago.edu/ebooks/free\\_ebook.html](http://www.press.uchicago.edu/ebooks/free_ebook.html)

The Birthday Book

Edited and Translated by Holt N. Parker

120 pages, 9 line drawings 5 x 7 © 2007

E-book Free! See form below (about e-books)

ISBN: 9780226099774

Cloth \$25.00

ISBN: 9780226099743 Published February 2007

“[Roman grammarian and writer] Censorinus distills the wisdom of several strains of philosophy, extracting whatever seems to have any bearing on births, days and birthdays: theories of the origin of the human species, the formation of the individual foetus, the principles of astrology, the ages of man, the nature of time, eons, centuries, years, months, days and hours.”—London Review of Books

## eReader for Android just announced

I just got this email from Fictionwise:

Quote:

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> ANDROID EREADER NOW AVAILABLE!

Do you have a Motorola Droid, T-Mobile myTouch 3G, Motorola CLIQ or T-Mobile G1? The wait is over! eReader for Android is now available. eReader for Android is an award-winning application used to read eReader eBooks on Android-based devices. eReader Pro has more features than ever before, including free eBooks, the ability to read dictionaries and more! To celebrate this exciting event, use coupon 'android15' and save 15% off any purchase. see below:

<http://www.fictionwise.com/Z425328TB...androidfaq.htm>

Shiny.

## **Kindle finally released in Canada**

A friend just sent me this link:

<http://technology.canoe.ca/2009/11/17/11774336-qmi.html>

## Calibre + Dropbox = unclouded happiness

I'm pretty sure a lot of people here know Dropbox, the (free at first) file sharing and synchronization service...

I use it to sync the files on my two Macs, and my work PC ; it's a very easy to use and efficient service.

Recently, I began syncing my Calibre library, so the books I edit/add/remove on either machine would be available on all the others ; Calibre is a multi-platform marvel, so this syncing makes a lot of sense.

And I thought of something : if I generate the stanza.xml file from the Calibre database (using the calibre-db command), maybe it could be automatically accessible from my iPhone, now that the whole Calibre library is synchronized and available on my Dropbox account ?

Guess what ? It works ! Unfortunately, it's still a manual process, but I'm pretty sure it could be possible for our generous Kovid to change it into something automatic...

Here are the steps needed to make this happen :

1. Publish your Calibre library in a directory of the Public part in your Dropbox account

The library must be in a public part of your Dropbox account, because you will need the URL to the stanza.xml file in the last step. If you do not want to make it public, you will still be able to browse your (private) dropbox account website from inside Stanza, but it's another story...

To get the URL to your Calibre library, simply right-click on a file in the folder and select "Copy public link" from the "Dropbox" menu. Mine is <http://dl.dropbox.com/u/788541/calib...ary/stanza.xml> (fake number, of course).

2. export the Calibre database into a stanza.xml file

Using the following command in the Calibre library folder, generate the stanza.xml file :

`calibredb list --output-format stanza --prefix http://dl.getdropbox.com/u/`

788541/calibre library > stanza.xml

(replace the URL with the one you got at step 1, this one is mine)

3. correct the stanza.xml file

Some characters are encoded in a way that make Stanza frown : simply replace them using a plain text editor ; replace '%28' with '(' and '%29' with ')' (skip the quotes, obviously).

4. configure your Stanza program to make it access your new online library

In Stanza (on your iPhone for example), create a new online stanza catalog and enter the URL to your stanza.xml file (mine is <http://dl.dropbox.com/u/788541/calib...ary/stanza.xml>).

That's all !

Of course, if the stanza.xml file could be generated automatically with every modification of the database, it would be even better, but even now it's very convenient...

Thanks again Kovid for Calibre, the Lexycle people for Stanza and Dropbox for being free...

PS : if I made a mistake in my explanation, or if something was not clear enough, ask questions and I'll be happy to try and explain better...

## **PRS-500 owners: Will you take advantage of Sony's upgrade/trade-up offer?**

Sony has made PRS-500 owners a great offer ([MR News](#) and [Sony Offer](#)):

- \* A free firmware upgrade to support ePub, including free shipping, or
- \* A trade-in discount on a new device (\$50 or \$75 depending on the model)

What will you do? (Please participate in the poll, and share your thoughts in the thread.)

So now the reality sets in - I don't want to part with my PRS-500, even if I buy another device and the 500 goes into storage in "museum mode"! Am I willing to part with it for a "measly" \$75??? And am I willing to part with the custom navigation hacks just to get e-pub support? Do I want to upgrade - the new devices are a significant upgrade in usability. Or, heaven forbid, after such a nice offer do I want to consider a Daily Reader or even a non-Sony device like the Daily new Plastic Logic large screen device? These are some serious questions!

Can't wait to hear what others are going to do. Share your thoughts!

## **Firmware update for PRS-500 available - EPUB!**

Alas, it's not updateable by user and the device must be sent in.

Quote:

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Update your Reader firmware, compliments of Sony.

Sony has created a firmware update for your Reader, allowing it to remain compatible with the new eBook Store format. This update will allow your PRS-500 to support the ePub and Adobe DRM format and add the ability to re-flow PDF documents. Due to the nature of the work required, you will need to send your PRS-500 Reader to the Sony Service Centers for updating.

All you need to do is complete the request for firmware update through the link below, or call 866-962-7669. We will provide you with a pre-paid UPS label for sending in your Reader. You should have your PRS-500 back within 14 days, with the firmware update installed.

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Alternatively, you can trade it for a newer model.

Quote:

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Trade in for a new Reader Pocket Edition or Reader Touch Edition:  
Trade in your PRS-500 when purchasing a new Reader Pocket Edition or Reader Touch Edition. You will receive \$50 off of the Reader Pocket Edition or \$75 off the Reader Touch Edition.

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[Linky.](#)

## **MobileRead Week in Review: 11/07 - 11/14**

Another week, another steady stream of e-book goodness here on MobileRead. Our authentic roundup of what's been going on:

### **E-Book General - News and Commentary**

- [Kindle For PC is now available.](#)

### **E-Book Devices - PocketBook**

- [PocketBook 360° review](#)

## PocketBook 360° review

**EDIT: There is Part II of the review available in the thread.**

I was looking for an e-ink device to upgrade my aging Sony PRS-500 reader for quite some time.

Ever since I have seen first proposals for Pocket Book 360° design on [The-ebook.org forum](#) I was planning to get one eventually.

So I did get one. Finally. I purchased an original Ukrainian package from our member [Forgosigan](#).

Originally I wanted to purchase black unit, because I thought the screen would appear lighter when surrounded by a black bezel, and I am used to black reader from my PRS-500 anyway. Forkosigan persuaded me to buy "ivory" colored unit. He said that the text appears blacker on a screen with light bezel. Besides, he did not have any black units left ;-)

I have purchased light colored one and I am happy.

The color of the unit is not bright white, it is light "PC case" beige with pearly - silvery, almost metallic surface. There is grey plastic border around the screen. The resulting combination is very pleasing, and indeed, the letters look \*almost\* "like lacquered chopsticks on a clean tablecloth" :-)

I LOVE the detachable lid. It protects the screen very well without adding bulk to the device. I like the user replaceable battery. You should update the manual, however, there are no markings at the back of the device indicating that this is the door to the battery compartment and reset button. It is also not apparent how to open the door once you start looking for the Reset button. (I did not need it yet, despite my furious tests).

There is only one thing I do not like in hardware. It is audible click when you press the button. I can still read without disturbing my sleeping partner, but I would have preferred a little bit quieter click.

With a few books in internal memory the device boots in under 21 seconds. It also takes less than 21 seconds to boot the machine with an SD card with over a thousand files on it freshly inserted. I am very impressed. Everything is configurable. You can configure the device to

take you after the boot directly to the book you were reading when you switch it off, and I used that option when timing "cold boot".

When you insert SD card with 10 folders on it and you have another 15 folders with books already in main memory you are presented with a library that combines those top folders, so in a main library you see all 25 folders plus whatever books you have on the root of the card or in the root of the main memory "disk". You do not see folders with names starting with dot (which is standard Unix and Linux behaviour). There is an icon indicating whether the file resides on a card or in memory.

There is another icon present next to file name. No icon means the book was not opened, an "open book" icon means you are reading the books and reader remembers your position, a "checkbox" icon means the book was finished. The states are saved in a file accessible from main memory when you connect the reader to PC, the "not yet opened", "being read" and "finished" flag can also be reset from the menu described below.

You can manage files directly from PocketBook user interface. Just press and hold the OK button to get menu.

you can do following actions

- Open book
- view information and metadata
- mark as Read (or finished)
- File
  - . - rename
  - . - Move to folder
  - . - copy to SD card (or main memory, depending on where the book is)
  - . - Move to SD card
  - . - Delete
  - . - Mark group
- set view for files as
  - . - list
  - . - thumbnails
  - . - details
  - . - set screen orientation (any angle 0, 90, 180, 270, or gyro sensor)
- Sort
  - . - by title
  - . - by author
  - . - by series
  - . - by creation time
- Show names as

- . - book titles
- . - file names
- find book

I haven't, yet, discovered how to create a folder.

There are basically three kinds of book files you can read on PB. Files with rigid layout, such as pdf and djvu files, files that are reflowable, such as fb2, fb2.zip, txt, rtf, html, chm, doc, epub and tcr and comics. In this review I will not talk about pdf files, that will take another long post. I said that pdf files have rigid structure, but according to the manual you *can* reflow, zoom or read in column mode pdf files.

Reflowable files are opened in an application FBReader. FBReader is very configurable. It discards most of the formatting information from rtf, doc and displays text fully justified, in an user selected font.

In FBReader you can configure

- font (face, size)
- encoding (there are quite a lot of options missing, but you can use UTF-8, so I do not see a problem. Encoding options are: auto, Win-1251, Win-1252, Win-1255, KOI8-R, KOI8-U, IBM866, ISO-8859-1, ISO-8859-5, UTF-8)
- line spacing (from 70 to 200%)
- page margins in three steps, starting with no margin
- hyphenations
- line breaks (auto, new line, empty line, line with indent), so PB can display "raw, plain vanilla" Project Gutenberg text file surprisingly well

There are further settings that affect the FBReader under settings icon on the main menu. Among many, many interesting things you can set Appearance - theme, interface font, boot logo, text rendering (Not antialiased, Antialiased, embolded)

Let us get back to the FBReader.

There is a very thin status bar at the bottom of the screen when you read the book, It contains following info:

[page #] / [number of pages], name of the book in a very tiny font, percentage of the book you have read so far, a graphical progress bar, time and battery indicator. When you open the book, or when you change screen orientation or font or size of font there are just three dots displayed instead of page number and progress bar - this is indication that the device is repaginating the book.

You can use custom fonts. Just copy ttf font into Fonts directory on the main memory when you connect reader to the PC. If you provide device with just one variant of the font, the bold and italic text is simulated, just like on Sony reader. When you load all for variants of the font - normal, bold, italics and bold italics the device uses that and you get real italics. (Just have a look at the shape of the 'a' letter to see if you have real italics. See? 'a' versus 'a'. I strongly recommend font Droid that was developed specifically for small displays on Android operating system and released under Apache licence. I very much like the way fonts are displayed, rendered, antialiased, and hinted on PocketBook

I have only one question concerning FBReader for our resident PocketBook resellers. How do I configure FBReader to use left justification instead of full justification? I think have seen description of how to modify a FBReader config file (easily accesible in main memory when you connect the reader) somewhere on the-ebook.org forum, but I can not find it right now.

Another question is, what happens when user deletes system files from main memory? (Do not worry dear readers, there are only some configuration files, files with state of the books and such things in the user mountable main memory, so you can not delete some important system file.) How can this be corrected? Can this be remedied by using "factory default option" oe perhaps by formatting internal memory from Settings or by reflashing firmware? I am NOT going to try, but sooner or later somebody WILL delete some files.

To be continued ...

Now let us see some unpacking photos, shot with a mobile phone camera under very adverse lighting conditions. During weekend I will try to borrow a better camera and make better shots, might be even a video.

Attached Thumbnails

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## **Kindle For PC is now available.**

Amazon has released the oft requested Kindle for PC software. This software lets you buy and read Kindle books on your PC. If you have a Kindle the Whispersync will automatically keep your last read page synced on the device and the PC.

From the Kindle blog:

Quote:

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With it you can read more than 360,000 Kindle books on your computer. There is no Kindle required but if you have one, you'll be able to access your library of Kindle books, notes, marks, and more.

Stay tuned, as more apps are on the way, including Kindle for Mac, and Kindle for Blackberry.

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To download the software visit  
[www.amazon.com/KindleforPC](http://www.amazon.com/KindleforPC)

To discuss this news please visit:  
<http://www.mobileread.com/forums/showthread.php?t=61798>

## **MobileRead Week in Review: 10/31 - 11/07**

Welcome to another digest entry of MobileRead, where we transform the profound into the bite-sized.

### **E-Book General - News and Commentary**

- [Spring Design sues Barnes & Noble over the Nook](#)
- [AddALL E-Book Search with new features](#)
- [Foxit eSlick to suport ePub in Firmware 2.0](#)

### **E-Book General - Deals, Freebies, and Resources**

- [Free one day only--gryphonwood press books at Smashwords \[Offer Expired\]](#)

## **Foxit eSlick to support ePub in Firmware 2.0**

Quote:

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In its continuing effort to be the electronic reader of choice, Foxit is expanding eSlick's support for more reading formats. eSlick customers will now be able to view documents in ePub and eReader (PDB) in addition to previously supported PDF and Text formats. The support for ePub and eReader enable customers to read books downloaded from any website which supports these reading formats.

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via <http://finance.yahoo.com/news/Foxit-...html?x=0&.v=1>

and <http://www.engadget.com/2009/11/06/f...ndle-to-shame/>

## **AddALL E-Book Search with new features**

AddALL, the E-Book search site, has added several new features:

1. many new sites added including:

- 18 USA ebook stores (amazon, b&n, sony ...)
- 7 UK ebookstores (Whsmith, Borders, Waterstones...)
- 2 Aus ebookstores (Dymocks, Harpercollins AU)
- 5 free ebook sites (gutenberg, feedbooks, MobileRead ..)

2. new Amazon and Sony free ebooks monitoring features.

3. Amazon, B&N and Sony bestseller price comparison pages.

With this update, AddALL now searches across more than 30 sites. In addition, they provide an easy-to-use search plug-in for both the Firefox and Internet Explorer browsers.

You can find discussions about AddALL, including some search tips, in these earlier threads in the forum: [New ebook price comparison site: AddAll Ebooks](#) and [AddAll Ebook price comparison](#)

# iLiad Thoughts and Applications

## **iRex Reader 1000**

Details are starting to emerge about iRex's new reading device lineup.

There will be 3 10.2 inch devices. One base model, one with the touch screen, and the third with wifi, bluetooth, and 3g.

This is exciting news. I've always wanted the iLiad to be a little bit bigger. I mostly use mine for business purposes (notes in meetings, reading documents, etc). A bigger screen will be great for a paper alternative. Especially if the device will be able read more documents natively.

It'll be interesting to see the device and user interface. I assume they're going to use the same software for the touchscreen and non touchscreen versions. Maybe they will have more buttons and a scroll wheel like the kindle, or maybe use context menus like the cybook. Time will tell.

I do know for sure that I intend to buy the top level unit with all the bells and whistles. I'll have to start saving now though... I do intend to keep developing and porting for the platform. This is going to be an exciting time.

A quick overview of what we know:

- Name: iRex Reader 1000
- 10.2 Inch Screen
- eBook (Mobipocket?), PDF, Word, and html support (probably others)
- Stylus input (wacom?)
- 60-70 hour battery life
- 3 Versions
- Base - \$650
- Touch Screen - \$750
- Touchscreen + Bluetooth, Wifi, and 3G, \$850
- 16 levels of greyscale

## First Midori/WebKit iLiad Beta Release

I've created an early beta release for my port of the WebKit based Midori internet browser.

There are quite a few bugs that need to be worked out before it's ready for the average user, but it works well enough as a tech demo.

You can see some screenshots below:

If you'd like to try it, you can download the first beta here: Midori Beta 1

You will need developer access on your iLiad to launch it. You'll also need to start an internet connection with another script.

## Building a better web browser

I don't know why, but I've decided I really want a good, working, web browser on the iLiad. Maybe it's Kindle envy, maybe I spend too much time porting when I should be working, who knows.

WebKit seems to be all the rage these days. They have builds of it for just about every platform, and the iPhone has really brought it into the mainstream. So my goal is to port WebKit to the iLiad and provide a useful interface for browsing.

- It must be able to use the pagebar to page up and down.
- Screen refreshes must not be obtrusive, and should be responsive. (Native refreshes only, no hacked libX11)
- Support for Bookmarks and Recent URL's.
- Easy to install package that can run from anywhere.

WebKit is compiling now. Next, I'll build Epiphany and use the webkit core. As long as that goes smoothly, I can work on refreshes and the rest of the application. Wish me luck...

Edit: I think I found a better front end than Epiphany. Midori is much smaller and more light weight than Epiphany. It should be able to do everything required and be relatively quick on the iLiad.

I had Midori up and running with the Webkit backend, but nothing would display because WebKit was made to work with gtk 2.8, and the iLiad has 2.6. I believe I've found a patch, so I'm recompiling (takes about 2 hours on my dev pc). Hopefully I should have an early working application soon....

## Finally!: Integrated FBReader 0.8.14 with ePub and Registry Support

It's been about 6 months since my last port of FBReader. The talented FBReader developers have done a lot. The most important addition is the support for ePub books. You can view the full changelog at [FBReader.org](http://FBReader.org).

I, myself, have done a lot of things different for this release as well.

- I've removed the FBReader toolbar, and thus, disabled the internal library.
  - This was mostly done to speed up porting time. With the library removed, much less needed to be done to the code of the program to port it.
  - All refreshes are done internally. No hacked libX11 is used!
- By default, FBReader will add supported file extensions to the registry
  - This makes FBReader act like any other viewer on the iLiad.
  - FBReader settings and configuration will be saved to /mnt/settings so a software update should not erase them.
- The installer no longer requires a memory card, and will be installed to internal memory.
  - The internal memory of the iLiad has 7.8MB free after installing FBReader. It should not interfere with anything else installed internally.

Based on a support thread I made, file extensions supported are:

- chm
- rtf
- oeb
- opf
- epub
- fb2
- tcr

Because the toolbar is gone, most of the important functions can now be accessed by the hardware buttons:

- Upper Left/Quit Button
  - Will cancel out of TOC screen, and will quit when inside the book.

- Page Bar Forward
  - Short Press
    - Next Page
  - Long Press
    - Redo
- Page Bar Backward
  - Short Press
    - Previous Page
  - Long Press
    - Undo
- Up Arrow
  - Short Press
    - Previous TOC Section
  - Long Press
    - Increase Font Size
- Dot or "Enter" Button
  - Short Press
    - Show Table of Contents
  - Long Press
    - Rotate Page
- Down Arrow
  - Short Press
    - Next TOC Section
  - Long Press
    - Decrease Font Size
    -

Installation of this is simple. You'll need firmware 2.12 and Developer Shell access. Unzip the file, and copy anywhere on your iLiad. You will need to restart your iLiad when it prompts you. After you've restarted, you can delete the installation directory.

**There will be no icon to run FBReader, you'll need to select a book from the contentlister with one of the file extensions listed above.**

Supported books will have a valid icon.

You can find the release and discussion at MobileRead:  
<http://www.mobileread.com/forums/showthread.php?t=20490>

## iRex Moving Forward with Community Project

You may have seen [a post on the iRex forums](#) about community development.

Basically, iRex is trying to open up the iLiad as a development platform similar to that of the [Nokia Tablets](#). Nokia's internet tablet platform is very popular because of the great documentation Nokia provides, the openness of the platform itself, and the ease that users can download and install new programs on their tablets. I'd like to see the same thing happen to the iLiad.

In the [most recent post by Karel](#), he's asking for those willing to take a more active role in the proposed community to email him. I have done so, and plan to help bring this community to life. Right now, iLiad development is unorganized, and difficult for a new user to get into. Hopefully, with iRex's help, we can overcome that.

I'm going to lay out a few things that I think the iLiad and community need.

- Installation
  - Right now, it's very difficult for a user to install a 3rd party application. They have to request shell access, find the program they want to install. Download and unzip it, then run it on the iLiad. This can be confusing, and can cause many problems along the way.
  - There could be a few ways to solve this. The new community can have a page with tested and working applications. The user can sign into that page with their myIrex username/password, select the application and have it downloaded via the IDS.
  - Or, there can be a program like that on the iPhone, where the application connects to a list of feeds and displays a list of available apps to the user with a one-click installation method.
  - Lastly, there's the more crude, but effective method of supporting ipkg through the contentlister. The user downloads the ipk from a website, copies it to the iLiad, and it installs with a single click.

- ■ All of the above methods would require some intervention from iRex, either with the website, or changes to the internal software.
- Adding new viewers
- ◦ There needs to be a better way to add and remove new viewers and supported formats to the contentlister. Right now, one needs to use a sed script to modify the registry. This can be prone to errors and removing afterward is very difficult.
- ■ I think that new directory for "Plugins" should be added.
- The package installer can copy an xml (or any other file) into that directory with the extension supported being the file name.
- Inside the XML file, the program that is used to read the file will be listed, along with the icon to be used.
- ■ For epub for example.
- \mnt\settings\registry\plugins\epub.xml

epub.xml:

```
<viewer>/usr/local/bin/FBREADER</viewer>
<icon>/usr/local/share/icons/epub.png</icon>
```

- ◦ It could be as simple as that. This way, if you have two different programs that support epub, you can overwrite the existing configuration with that of the new program. This wouldn't change the registry in any way, and if an error occurred, the contentlister could ignore the plugins directory the next time it launched.
- Screen Refreshes!
- ◦ Right now, the biggest problem with porting any application is getting the screen refreshes. If this could somehow be made easier for developers, I think that the iLiad would have an influx of new applications available for it. Could this be added to GTK within the iLiad? This way the application would work as normal, and GTK would refresh when everything was done being painted.  
For the end user:
- Documentation, Code, Website enhancements
- ◦ This new site is going to need to be well organized and provide lots of information. I can think of a few things it'll need.

- - A way to track ongoing ports and their status
  - A bounty system for users to request new applications
  - Documentation on internal iLiad functions
  - Open source the UI components, ContentLister, note application, browser app, etc

This is just a small list. I think that there's a lot of potential for the iLiad that's not being realized. I hope this new initiative can solve that.

## FBReader port coming along nicely

My port of FBReader 0.8.10 is coming along very nicely. I've decided to go ahead with the limited functionality idea in order to speed up porting, and make it act more like a native iLiad application.

You can see what's happening in the screenshot below:

FBReader is shown reading and epub book downloaded from [feedbooks.com](http://feedbooks.com).

As you can see, it have FBReader start in full screen mode. This hides the unnecessary toolbars.

It gives you a status indicator, page count, and clock that will updates as you turn the page. Right now, it takes about 2.5 seconds to refresh. This is a little better than the older version. I'm hoping to increase the speed even further.

There are a few functions that can be used with key shortcuts:

- Upper Left Button: Closes FBReader
- Page Forward/Backward
- Up & Down arrows short: Increase and Decrease Font
- Dot Button: Go to the beginning of the document
- Up & Down arrows Long Press: Next and Previous Table of Content Section
- Dot Button Long Press: Open Table of Contents

There are a few things left to do before I can publish the port. I'd like to save the configuration to /mnt/settings so that it won't be lost when you perform an OS upgrade. Also, I need to create and test the installation package. I've reduced the file size enough so that it can easily reside on the internal memory (I think the package takes up about 2.5MB, I may be able to shrink it further).

I'm thinking about preparing a short video demonstrating FBReader and the FeedBooks.com iNewsStand application. These two programs really show off the iLiad's potential and flexibility.

## **Idea: FBReader - Limited iLiad Edition**

I'm getting ready to start my port of FBReader 0.8.10 with epub support. I can easily get this working on the iLiad, however I want to speed up the screen refreshes by using only native refresh calls. The problem is that in order to get these refreshes to work in the options dialog and FBReader library, a lot of time consuming manual test & check work is required.

I had a thought about limiting the features of FBReader and making it look and act more like a native iLiad viewer. I think that if I completely disabled the top navigation bar, set the appropriate key bindings, and forced the user to launch all books directly from the contentlister, it would actually significantly decrease the amount of time it would take to release the port.

I know that some users do like the Library function of FBReader, but for those who don't know or need it, this would be an ideal solution. I may also be able to decrease the size of the binary and libraries, to allow it to be installed on the internal memory of the iLiad.

I need to get Shell access back, and do some testing. But unless I hear too many complains, I'm going to go forward with this (at least until I can devote more time to a full port).

## **New Years Status Update**

I haven't been active very much on my blog or the forums recently, but I'm still around.

It's been crazy at work and home the last few weeks. I haven't had a spare minute to do any porting in a while. Rest assured, I still plan to release a new port of FBReader with epub support. However, getting time to do it has been pretty difficult. All should calm down by next week, so hopefully I can put in some real effort in then. I might try to time it with the 2.12 software release. ;)

## How to Un-Brick your iLiad

So you've gotten brave with programming on your iLiad. You like to dig into the internals and write some scripts. Maybe for [automatically downloading comics](#) or an [MP3 Player from the contentlister](#). But something went wrong, and now your iLiad won't boot. Don't worry, it happens. I've had to reflash a few times myself. As long as you have firmware 2.11 and the developer package from iRex, you should be able to recover from most problems.

I should note that I said should. There are some things you can do to your iLiad that could cause problems that the reflash option won't fix. The most important, is working with the embedded flash. This includes the boot loader and the waveform. Flashing these (you must use a special command), could cause your iLiad to be unusable. But other than that, you should be fine to replace the Kernel, Initrd, and the root filesystem.

So lets get started. Here's what you need to perform a reflash:

- A Compact Flash (CF) card. Other types of cards simply will not work. They're cheap, and easily obtainable. Go out and buy one.
- You will need to have firmware 2.11 with the Developer Package requested from iRex's site ([See this post for details](#)).
- The [cf-card-contents.zip](#) file from the attachments link on your [MyiRex account page](#).

Alright, so you've followed the [instructions on getting the developer package](#), and you want to be sure that you are able to reflash before you break anything. Here's what you need to do.

1. Make sure your iLiad is powered off, with nothing on the screen.
2. Hold the connect button in the upper right hand corner of your iLiad.
3. While holding the button, press the power switch on the bottom.
4. Count to Five while continuing to hold the button.
5. Release the connect button.

You should see the boot image appear. After a second or two, the whole screen will flash white, and it will start to boot normally. Congratulations! Your iLiad is able to be reflashed. You should have no fear for working in the root filesystem.

Now, let's go through the steps you'll need to actually perform the reflash.

1. Unzip the cf-card-contents.zip.
2. You should see a folder called "images" and a file called "config.txt"
3. Copy these to the root of your memory card. (Not inside any other folders)
  - For example. If on your windows computer, your memory card is drive "E:", you should have E:\images and E:\config.txt
4. Unmount your memory card and insert it into your iLiad.
5. Make sure your iLiad is powered off, with nothing on the screen.
6. Hold the connect button in the upper right hand corner of your iLiad.
7. While holding the button, press the power switch on the bottom.
8. Count to Five while continuing to hold the button.
9. Release the connect button.

You will see it going through steps that are very similar to updating the firmware on your device. It will reboot at the end and bring you back to the main screen. Performing this method, you shouldn't lose any of the files on your internal memory. But it's always good to make a backup just in case.

You can find [more detailed information in this pdf](#). But the above guide should help most users who need to unbrick their iLiad.

## So you want to try your first 3rd party program?

So you just got your brand new iLiad, or maybe you've had it for a while but have grown comfortable enough that you'd like to install one of the community applications. Below, I'll detail a step by step guide on how to setup your iLiad to install a new application to it.

First, a few notes: You've paid a lot for your iLiad and you don't want to break it. This fact alone prevents a lot of people from trying out new programs. There is good news though. If something should happen while installing or running an application. You should be able to restore your iLiad. You will need a compact flash (CF) card. I recommend anyone who's planning to install community applications to buy a CF card. You can pick up a 1 Gigabyte card at any electronics store for under \$30 US. You should place all of your applications, along with the files needed to do a reflash should anything go wrong.

This guide is extremely detailed. It's actually a lot easier than it looks.

With that out of the way, lets get started:

1. The first thing you will need to do is connect to IDS. To do this, you will need either a wired, or wireless network connection.
  1. Create an IDS profile here: <https://myirex.irexnet.com/user.php/createuser>
  2. Fill in your e-mail address in the field and click on 'Send'.
  3. You will receive an automatic e-mail with a password in your e-mail inbox.
  4. Take your iLiad and enter your e-mail address and the password you received into the 'iLiad Settings'.
  5. Create a (wired or wireless) network profile on your iLiad using the Wizard.
  6. You can now connect to the iDS by pressing the connect key on your iLiad for 2 seconds.
2. Once you see your iLiad connect, it should tell you that there's either nothing to download, or it will install any updates it finds.
3. Now you will need to sign up for the developer package. This will give you the ability to run programs, and will also program your iLiad with what you need to reflash it from a CF card in case something goes wrong.

1. To sign up for the developer package visit this page:  
<https://myirex.irexnet.com/user.php/developer>
  - If you've successfully connected to IDS in the past, your MAC address should appear in the "Select MAC Address" drop down box.
  - If it does not appear, verify your email address and password in the settings screen on your iLiad, and connect to the IDS again.
2. After you have selected your MAC address, click "Send Developer Package".
3. Now, connect to the IDS on your iLiad. You should see a message saying "Downloading Developer Package".
4. After it installs, your iLiad should automatically reboot.
4. Now that your iLiad has rebooted, it should start up like normal, but you won't see anything different. You'll need to try to install an application to make sure it worked.
  1. The first program you should try to install is mrxvt.
    - This is a terminal application. Similar to a DOS prompt on a windows computer.
    - I like to test with this program because it doesn't require anything special other than the developer package to run.
  2. Download mrxvt in [this thread on the MobileRead forums](#).
  3. You will need to unzip the download on your computer. Windows XP and up has zip functionality built in. If you need an unzipping program, I suggest [7zip](#).
  4. Once you have unzipped the program, you should see a folder called "mrxvt".
  5. Simply copy this folder to the internal memory or CF card on your iLiad.
  6. Browse to the correct directory from your iLiad, and select the line that says "mrxvt: Command Shell".
  7. If all went well, it should open up a terminal along with your keyboard. If you don't know anything about linux, I suggest you click the "X" to close it, or type "exit" and hit enter.

So now you have shell access, and you've run your first application. Many apps use the unzip and run process of installing. However, others are more complicated and include an installer. This is the case with a

popular 3rd party viewer I've ported called FBReader. I will walk you through the installation of this.

1. Download FBReader from [this thread on the MobileRead forums](#).
2. Unzip it, and copy the folder called "fbreaderinst" to the Compact Flash (or other flash memory) card on your iLiad.
  - For FBReader, and other installers, it's important to use a CF card, USB key, or MMC card. If you install it to the main memory of the iLiad, you may run into problems with the screen refresh.
3. On your iLiad, browse to where you have copied the installer. You should see an item called "Install FBReader". Select it.
4. It will take a little bit of time to install. At that time, you will see the green light flash, and the bars moving across the bottom. After it is installed it will tell you "FBReader has been installed".
5. You can safely delete the "fbreaderinst" folder on your iLiad.
6. Now, to run FBReader, browse to the "Programs" directory that the installer created on your memory card. Inside there, you will see a launcher for FBReader. Simply select it, and it will start.
7. Here, you can use the FBReader library to add books, or if you prefer, install the [FBReader Registry Modifications](#) to open books directly from the contentlister (aka the way you open PDF's and Mobipocket books).

Hopefully you now understand how to install 3rd party programs on your iLiad. In my next post, I will cover reflashing your iLiad in case something goes wrong and your iLiad won't boot.

Feel free to comment, and let me know if there are any confusing areas or things that need to be improved upon.

## Thanks for Visiting

I just wanted to express my shock and amazement that I actually have people to regularly read this blog. According to Google and FeedBurner, I have about 40 visitors a day, and 65 people who subscribe to this via an RSS feed. They're small, modest numbers I know. But surprising to me nonetheless.

So my question to you is: What would you like to see more posts about? General iLiad information? More technically informative posts? Status updates and future plans? I generally only post when I have something big, but if you want more updates, I can do that too.

## **Days between firmware releases**

It's been pretty quiet over at iRex lately, so I started to wonder. How long has it been since firmware 2.11 was released? It seems like forever. So I decided to make a spreadsheet that details the amount of time between all of the firmware releases. It's definitely on an upward scale, but I think the releases have gotten better and better.

## **Palm Applications on the iLiad**

A post on Mobileread got me thinking, having the Access Palm platform on the iLiad would be probably the greatest killer app. Not only would you have full PIM support with sync capability, but you would immediately have access to the vast world of Palm applications.

It's already been setup for the Nokia tablets. (<http://www.access-company.com/products/gvm/>).

Since both products are Arm/GTK based, I don't think it'd be too much of a stretch to port it to the iLiad. The problem is that I've been unable to find the source for the Garnet VM used on the Nokia's.

I've also tried to compile the older PalmOS emulator used for developers. However, I've run into some issues as it uses the FLTK toolkit.

I may try to contact the Access company to see if they are willing to share their sources...

## Minimo Installer

I realize that I've neglected my blog for a while. I thought I would update it with some posts I've made. I get a bit of traffic from Google and places other than MobileRead, so it may help the people who stumble here.

If you want to surf the web on your iLiad, I think the best way to do it is with Minimo. It's a Mozilla based web browser that uses a rendering engine similar to Firefox. It comes pre-installed on your iLiad, but is locked down in such a way that you can't surf the web with it by default. I've made some changes to the chrome files (the user interface), added a launcher, a modified libX11 to perform screen refreshes, and some connection manager scripts. It works well enough so you can view full web pages on your iLiad. Javascript is a little slow, and you may sometimes run into a "script not responding" error. But if I tell it to continue, it'll usually load just fine.

You can download the installation package and see some screenshots here: <http://www.mobileread.com/forums/showthread.php?t=15448>

## Things you can do with your iLiad

This is a [post](#) I made over at MobileRead. Some people may read my blog, and not visit there.

The following is a list of everything you can do on your iLiad. This includes stock functions, and things made possible by third party apps from the community. Hopefully this list will continue to grow as we get more developers interested in this platform.

### 1. Reading

#### 1. Formats you can read

##### ■ PDF

1. Zoom in and out of PDF's. Allows you to view documents not formatted for the iLiad's screen
2. View PDF's in Portrait and Landscape mode. Also helps viewing documents
3. Follow Hyperlinks and move back and forward
4. Scribble on any PDF document. You can later [merge the scribbles on your desktop](#).
5. [Bookmark](#) specific pages inside a PDF.
6. [Automatically zoom and browse PDF's that are in column format](#). Helpful for technical articles.
7. Use [gestures](#) to perform various [functions](#) inside a PDF.
8. Read in [full screen](#), without the bottom tool bar.

##### ■ Mobipocket

1. Read [DRM](#) protected and non DRM'ed Mobipocket books.
2. Increase the font size of text within a mobipocket book.
3. Look up words in a [dictionary](#) while you're reading.
4. Browse a book by the table of contents

##### ■ HTML

##### ■ TXT

##### ■ [Unencrypted LIT files](#).

- Microsoft Word documents, RTF documents
  - Microsoft Excel Files
- 2. Supported by FBReader (Registry Installer)
  1. Increase and decrease font size
  2. Read in Full Screen mode
  3. Have a clock displayed on the screen while reading
  4. Search within a document
  5. Browse table of contents
  6. Organize a Book library
  - RTF
  - CHM
  - OEB
  - OPF
  - FB2
  - TCR
- 2. Other Media
  - JPG
  - PNG
  - BMP
  - 2 Audio Playing Applications Support: Content Lister Based & Graphical Application
    - MP3
    - OGG
    - WAV
    - MOD
- 3. Internet Connectivity
  - Surf the Web using Dillo or Minimo
  - Download new comics daily.
- 4. Play Games
  - Chess
  - Mahjongg
  - Interactive Fiction
  - Sudoku. Also available at Feedbooks.com
  - GnuGo (in text mode)
- 5. For Developers and Linux geeks
  - Open a terminal on the iLiad

- Install an SSH server and have it automatically started at boot
  - Browse the file system on the iLiad and move files around.
  - Use the iLiad as a Wacom tablet on your Linux computer.
6. Security store your passwords and keep them updated with your PC, Mac, or other mobile devices.
  7. Keep a Calender, Contacts, and Todo List on the iLiad.
  8. Edit simple text files and programming source code.
  9. Connect a USB Keyboard to your iLiad
  10. Use as a Compact Flash and MMC/SD card reader for your PC.
  11. Automatically download and upload files to and from your networked Windows computer with the companion software. (On Mac's and Linux PC's with Samba too).
  12. Take screenshots of running programs on the iLiad.

## Happy Day!

I've got my iLiad back! It was at UPS for the last 5 days because support forgot to put the address on the shipping label (it only had my name, city, state, and zip).

It's charging and updating the software now.

The screen looks better than I remember when I first got it. The whites are very white, and the shades of grey are much more defined. I really couldn't be happier with it at this point. :)

## Reading Microsoft Lit files on the iLiad

I've completed a script that will allow you to read Microsoft .Lit (Reader) files on the iLiad. It uses my port of [convertlit](#).

Basically what will happen, is you copy the .lit file to your iLiad. You will select it from the contentlister like you would a PDF or any other document. When you do that, it will launch my convertlit script. It will explode the lit file into an OEB, and automatically create the manifest.xml with the Author's name and title of the book. It will even use the cover art embedded in the lit as an icon in the contentlister.

After that, you will need to delete the lit file yourself (I won't do it, in case something went wrong), and open the OEB with FBReader.

I've tested this with a few example LIT files I've found online. I haven't, however, tested with a DRM5 file as noted in convertlit's help document. If anyone has one of these types of files and would like me to test, I'd be happy to do so.

## **iRex's Community Blog**

Following in the footsteps of Dell and Google, iRex has created a corporate blog.

I think this is a great idea, as it allows people to get further insight into the company and learn about things they wouldn't otherwise. As long as it's updated on a regular basis, this could be a very good thing. Especially for keeping an open dialog between the company and it's customers.

They've also added me to their blogroll, so I wanted to thank them for that as well.

**I ♥ iRex!**

So I got this email today:

Dear Mr. Boeglin,

Thank you for your email.

I would like to inform you that we replaced your battery. The device has been repaired and was send to you on the 11.09.2007.

Your repaired device has been send to the following address:

---

Kind regards

Technical Support Centre  
iRex Technologies

They didn't mention the screen repair, but since that was the main issue on the ticket, I'm sure it was reolved since they did not say otherwise. I had shipped my iLiad last Wednesday, after it was already in the mail, I emailed iRex support asking them to look into my battery issues. I've only been able to get ~6 hours on a charge, and never receive the low battery warning. I expect to receive my iLiad today or tomorrow. With a new battery and a screen that doesn't have burn-in or excessive ghosting, it'll be like a brand new device!

I just wanted to say thanks to iRex for their great support! This is the second time it's been sent to them (first was a brick that was my fault). Both times I've had great communication and fast shipping. I know some haven't had as good of luck as I have, but I have only praise for them.

## Waiting for my iLiad

Things have been pretty quiet on the iLiad front for me lately. Right now, my iLiad is at iRex's repair facility because of Screen Burn and Excessive Ghosting. I wanted to get it taken care of before my warranty is up in December.

I do have some things in the pipeline that will be pretty cool. I'm helping port and test the Feedbooks Downloader. There were a few font issues, and it needs a status bar, but overall it's a very cool program and will add a lot of functionality to the iLiad.

I'm also working on porting the updated version of FBReader with support for the .epub standard. In addition, I'll be modifying the installer so that you can open up supported books directly from the contentlister.

AbiWord and Gnumeric will be updated as well with an installer and Contentlister support.

There should be a lot of excitement after the 2.11 release.

## Minimo on the iLiad: Part 2

It seems that compiling Minimo for the iLiad wasn't necessary. In early firmware versions, you could use the standard Minimo installation to browse the web. Although, you didn't have your own address bar or navigation buttons. Further on, iRex patched their code to prevent this. I was digging around in the firmware today when I found the launch mozilla script. After setting Minimo to use the modified libX11 and replacing the included chrome templates with that of another Minimo release, I was able to get a working web browser.

There are still a few things that need to be done before I can release it. I have to test whether or not it can function in a non-standard directory (so that it can run from the compact flash card). I also need to work out screen refreshes. Right now it does a full refresh every time the page loads. This can get annoying. I should be able to get it to work with a partial update. It's very cool to have a full featured browser on the iLiad. I can now check Gmail on the go.

For ongoing discussion, click: [here](#).

## **PDA Functions for your iLiad. Calendar, Contacts, Todo List**

I've ported GPE Calendar, Contacts, and Todo for the iLiad. Since they share so many libraries, I've included them in a single package. GPE does not have any sync abilities that I'm aware of, so you won't be able to keep it updated with your PC. But, it's a step in the right direction.

It's a standard installer, unzip it to your memory card, and run on the iLiad.

Cross Posting from: <http://www.mobileread.com/forums/showthread.php?t=12861>

## Comic Strip Downloader

I've created a comic strip downloader for the iLiad. It uses the site <http://high5.net/comic/> to download the day's comics.

There are two versions of it.

### Automatic Daily Downloader

### Manually Initiated Downloader

The Automatic version is for more advanced users who have the unbricking package. It uses cron to setup an automatic daily download. With this version, as long as your iLiad is connected to the internet at 8am, your comics will be ready for you.

The Manual version is for the Average Joe. When you select the program, it will check to see if it's updated today. If it has not, it will automatically open the connection manager, and download the day's comics. When finished, it will open FBReader and display the comic page. If it has already downloaded, it will simply open FBReader with the comics.

Whichever you use, it's a very cool way to read comics and show off some of the potential of the device.

## Preparing for Developer Unbricking

With the release of general developer unbricking coming soon, I've started to prepare packages for many apps. From here on out, all of my packages will be released as ipk's with a shell script installer. I've finished Abiword, including a script to modify `er_registry`, to allow you to open Microsoft Word documents directly from the contentlister. I'm working on Gnumeric now, and will update the FBReader package with the registry hack as well.

Pretty soon, anyone with the developer package and unbricking support will be able to open almost any document they'd like on the iLiad. These are going to be some pretty exciting times.

## Compiling Minimo

I'm currently compiling Minimo for the iLiad. It's a pretty long process, been going for an hour so far. With any luck, I'll have a web browser that will work with the modern web.

More updates to follow.

Edit: An update

I was unable to successfully run minimo on my iLiad. I believe it kept segfaulting on me. I've put this project to the wayside, and I'm working on another project. More details to follow.



**[www.feedbooks.com](http://www.feedbooks.com)**  
Food for the mind