

eReaders...Do You Own One Yet?

For those of you who celebrate Christmas, this morning you will probably find that Santa has delivered many goodies under your tree. If my estimate is correct, many of those items will be an eReader of some sort. I base this analysis on several items:

1. Our after Christmas rush last year kept us busy for several weeks. It seemed like the only questions we received those first few weeks was which device should they buy, how to operate the one they received, and how to download library books onto it.
2. Pew Research found that from Nov. 2010 to May 2011, e-Reader ownership doubled from 6% of the population to 12%. They have not released a study since then, but I am eager to see their results as I am sure this number continues to climb. The full report can be seen at: <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/2039/e-reader-ownership-doubles-tablet-adoption-grows-more-slowly>
3. eBooks continue to skyrocket in their popularity. In May of this year, Amazon announced that eBook sales now accounted for more than their sales of print hardcover and paperback sales combined!
4. eReader prices continue to plummet. When the Kindle was first announced by Amazon back in November 2007 the cost was a staggering \$399. Now Amazon is selling a whole range of Kindles that start at \$79. The Barnes and Noble Nook is the same way. When it was released in November 2009, the cost was \$259. Now a Nook can be had for \$99.
5. The quality of the eReaders continue to improve. Both Amazon and Barnes and Noble learned from their first devices and work to create devices that are more user-friendly and comfortable to hold. Also, improvements in the technological world and advances from companies like Apple continue to push the boundaries of what is possible. We are now starting to see eReading devices that are more like tablets that provide capabilities to not only read your books, but listen to music, watch movies, check email, browse the web, etc... This will continue to hold true for the near future.
6. Our attendance at our monthly eBook how to classes has been steadily increasing. We are now consistently seeing 35-40 people. Our next class is Monday, January 16 at 6:30pm in our Red Room. We will talk about the pros and cons of different eReaders and we will walk through the process for how to download books to the Nook and to the Kindle.

All of this adds up to my prediction that the 2011 holiday, we will see an explosion in eReaders being given and received as presents. One of the ways here at the library we are preparing for all of you as new eReader owners, is to hold a Digital Drop-In day this Wednesday (December 28th). Library staff will be available from 8:30am to 9:00pm in our Red Room to answer any and all of your eReading and digital

downloading questions. We will be able to help you with one-on-one downloading assistance, show off the library's collection of eReaders for you to try out, and tell you all about the digital services you might not even realize we have. We look forward to seeing you there!

Jason Hatton is Assistant Director at Bartholomew County Public Library