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Reading Goes Digital: The Kindle

BY PAT ALEXANDER

In November 2007 I read Michael Hyatt's blog, "From Where I Sit" (www.michaelhyatt.com/fromwhereisit/) about his first impressions of the Kindle (Amazon's portable reading device that enables you to wirelessly download books, newspapers, blogs, and magazines). Hyatt described the pros and cons of this device, and I was immediately intrigued.

For one, I'm on the road more than I'm at home, so the Kindle seemed like it would really come in handy. Plus, I've always wanted to subscribe to *The New York Times*. Receiving it in print format at home would just result in piles of papers that would never get read. I could subscribe online, but reading on my laptop is not very rewarding or relaxing.

Beyond *The New York Times*, the Kindle currently has nine U.S. newspapers available, including *The Wall Street Journal* and *The*

Washington Post. You can receive free 14-day trial subscriptions if you want to "test" the papers before purchasing.

The Kindle also appealed to me because I'm the type of reader who usually reads more than one book at a time. What I read each day depends on my mood, or possibly on the need to do some research. When traveling, I often have one book in my briefcase and one, two, or three in my suitcase. Not any more. With the Kindle, I have now replaced the weight of multiple books with a mere 10.3 ounces (less than some of the books I read!). The Kindle's weight and size also make it very comfortable to hold. Plus, there are currently more than 100,000 books available to Kindle users, including new releases. Currently, I have two business books and seven pleasure and personal books on my Kindle—and of course, *The New York Times*.

“With the Kindle, I have now replaced the weight of multiple books with a mere 10.3 ounces (less than some of the books I read!).”

Save it for later

Have you ever bought a book thinking it was going to be great, only to find that you didn't enjoy it at all? The Kindle enables you to try a sample of a book that you can maintain in a "save for later" list. I usually come home from meetings with a list of books that have been recommended. I also get recommendations from friends, book reviews, magazines, and TV. I can now add these recommendations to my "save for later" list. When I'm ready, I can view a sample of each book, or I can purchase and download the books to my Kindle. The sample, by the way, contains more than just a few pages, and remains on your Kindle for two weeks.

Samples can really come in handy when you're not sure if you want to purchase the full book or not. For example, I recently loaded a sample of *1,000 Places To See Before You Die* by Patricia Schultz. I discovered that this book would be better in print than electronic format, due to the contents and its purpose. The Kindle only has black and white pictures, so referring to this book in electronic format when trying to plan a trip would not work very well.

Sure, I could just listen to books by subscribing to a source such as *Audible.com*. Unfortunately, listening to books is not my strong suit. I find myself thinking about something else while the book is playing, and



Kindle's paperback size and expandable memory let you travel light with your library.

soon I have no idea what has been said for the past 15-20 minutes. I have never enjoyed listening to books.

Blogs, magazines

With a Kindle, you can view over 300 blogs. I find it very convenient to have the daily blog

“Have you ever bought a book thinking it was going to be great, only to find that you didn't enjoy it at all? The Kindle enables you to try a sample of a book that you can maintain in a 'save for later' list.

update appear on the device. If I don't get to it that day, it is ready for me whenever I am ready. Currently, I subscribe to three blogs, two of which are about technology.

In addition to blogs, eight magazines are available on the Kindle. I have not tried any of these—but this may be a valuable resource to others.

Other features

The Kindle includes a dictionary. If you need a definition of a word while reading, just highlight the word and select Lookup. You can also add notes and bookmarks as you read, and the book, newspaper, or document will re-open where you left off.

Business application

In addition to reading business-related books, I receive several business-related publications in PDF or Word format. I used to print these out to carry with me and read in the airport or on the plane. I no longer print these. Instead, I e-mail the documents to my Kindle e-mail address. Amazon converts the file into the Kindle's file format and loads it onto my Kindle within minutes. Amazon says they charge \$.10 for each document; however, I have not yet seen a charge. When I'm done reading the documents on my Kindle, I can either save

them back to my computer, save a portion, or delete them.

Other people can also e-mail documents to me at my Kindle e-mail address. If the e-mail has no acceptable attachment, it's rejected. No spam mail here.

How it works

By now, you may be wondering how I load information onto my Kindle (besides e-mailing files to it). Unlike WiFi, Kindle utilizes the same high-speed data network (EVDO) as advanced cell phones—so you never have to locate a hotspot. No fees are charged for this service.

A few drawbacks

Some people do not like the small keys on the Kindle keyboard. The keys don't bother me—but then again, I wouldn't be using my Kindle to do any heavy-duty Web surfing. Amazon is experimenting with music on the Kindle as well. You can use an SD Memory Card in the provided slot and listen to music on the Kindle's speaker or with earphones. Currently, there is no content manager to select the particular songs you want to hear. However, Amazon advises that this will be a future enhancement, enabling you to easily select recorded books as well.

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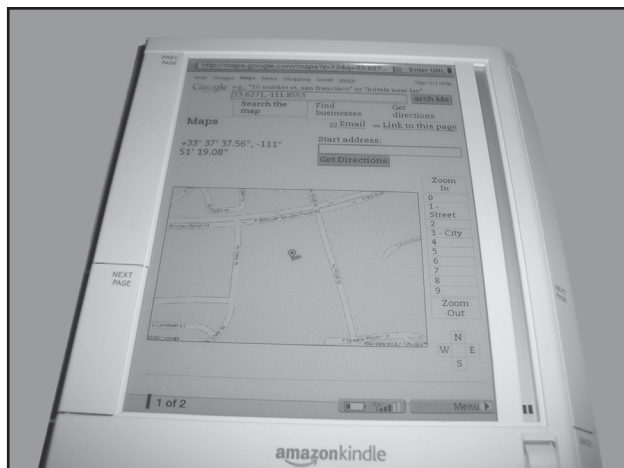
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The Kindle also has GPS (not the real GPS but rather CDMA location based), as well as Google Maps, show current location (Alt-1 while in the browser); play Minesweeper (Alt-M); make a screenshot (Alt-Shift-G); and show time from the home screen (Alt-T).

Bottom line

I don't believe that this technology will replace books, newspapers, and magazines.

And,

yes, it is a bit pricy at \$399. However, Kindle books cost \$9.99 or less and you get to preview them for free. Hopefully, that means there will be fewer purchasing errors.

Whatever format you use for reading, just do so—and enjoy. ☐

Pat Alexander, CIC, is a consultant, coach, and mentor. Her many years of experience in retail agency and MGA settings give her a broad range of knowledge in agency operations. She is dedicated to educating her clients on using technology to enhance and build their business and profitability. Pat can be reached at pat@patalexander.com or 817-605-1663.

More GPS Shortcuts:

Alt-2 find gas station nearby

Alt-3 find restaurants nearby

Alt-5 find custom keyword nearby

Alt-D dump debug info to the log and toggle highlight default item

Alt-Z toggle zone drawing and show log

TAAR Has Changed... for the Better!

As a “seasoned” member of the insurance industry (that means I’ve been around awhile) and as TAAR’s owner and executive editor, I have the privilege of interacting with innovative agents across the country. I am able to discover from leading agencies the best practices they have developed to satisfy the changing needs of their clients. I often tell my clients that “change for change’s sake” can be detrimental—but change to produce a better product or service is well worth the effort.

And just like your agency, TAAR has changed to help you find and implement the best technologies and best practices for superior results.

New name: The Anderson Agency Report. As a continuing sign to you of my personal commitment to quality and a laser-like focus on the needs of the independent agency, I am putting my name behind TAAR. The content of TAAR still remains about the overall impact of technology on every element of your agency.

More content: We’ve added four new pages to TAAR, which contain more of the articles you have enjoyed and profited from over the past years.

New look: Easier readability. TAAR has a completely new design. My hope is that it will be easy to read, navigate, and allow you to find the information you need quickly.

Our new company mission says it all: *The Anderson Agency Report* will provide you with the latest information about the best technologies and best practices to help you achieve *superior* results. It is my personal promise to you.



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