

Carl Bulger presided.

New Members: Gwen Jackson-Harris, Arnele Maldonado, and Carol Price

PRESENTATION:

We asked those of us who owned eReaders or tablets to bring them in for “show and tell”. But, as far as we got was an excellent talk by Dennis Evans about his Kindle: its features, how it works, and what he likes and doesn’t like about it.



Photo by Dennis Edgington

Kindles are Amazon eReaders. Dennis’ Kindle is the 3G wireless version. It has its own unlisted cellphone number. Amazon also has WiFi versions which require you to find a WiFi

Submitted by Barry Hammond

hotspot, (which could be at home if you have a WiFi router) to connect to Amazon, the local library, or the internet.

From anywhere that has AT&T or Verizon cell phone service, Dennis can connect with Amazon, search their libraries, buy and download books, rent books, download free Kindle software, download .pdf files, borrow one free book a month from Amazon, borrow from the local library, browse the internet, and copy and paste to and from a PC.

The most recent Kindle model is the Kindle Fire, a color tablet selling for \$199, which is estimated to be slightly less than the cost of making it (estimated to be \$202). It is meant to be a low cost competitor to Apple's iPad (\$399), the iPad2, and the iPad released the week after this talk which sells for \$499-\$899 (well above the cost of making it). The Samsung Galaxy and the Barnes & Noble Nook Color are also competitors of the Kindle Fire.

Barnes & Noble also sells the Nook eReader for \$249. There are several other eReaders on the market, but the Kindle and the Nook are the leaders.

All black-and-white eReaders, not just Amazon Kindles, use the proprietary E Ink display consisting of an array pixel-sized plastic spheres, each containing a white particle and a black particle. A positive charge brings the white particle to the top where it can be seen as part of the white background; a negative charge brings a black particle to the top where it simulates black ink. E Ink displays can be read in bright sunlight, unlike the iPad, Kindle Fire, and the Nook Color which have touch screens that are glassy smooth and create uncomfortable glare in bright sunlight. eReaders, however, cannot be read in the dark; they have not backlight.

The basic Kindle with a 6-inch screen sells for \$79 and has a few buttons for navigating, turning pages, etc. Its memory will store up to 1400 books and its battery only needs to be charged once a month. It comes with built-in WiFi.

For \$99 more you can buy the Kindle Touch which has a 6-inch E Ink touch screen. You navigate and turn pages by touching the screen. It will store up to 3000 books and its charge will last up to 2 months. It also has built-in WiFi, but for \$50 more (\$149) you can get it with built-in free 3G wireless in addition to the WiFi, which means that as long as you can access either an AT&T or Verizon cell phone tower, you can connect with Amazon, the internet, your library, etc. Dennis says that the 3G service has been truly free. Amazon warns that heavy use

may result in a bill for internet use, but so far he has not been charged even though he sometimes uses it heavily.

Dennis actually owns and uses a Kindle Keyboard 3G (\$139). It will hold up to 3500 books and its battery life also will last up to 2 months. It has a qwerty keyboard. Dennis says this is hard to use because the rows of keys are not offset from one another like a regular keyboard, making it difficult to type by touch. His Kindle will also read text out loud, play audio books, and .mp3s. If you transmit a .pdf or Word file to Amazon, they will convert them to Amazon format that will display on your Kindle.

If you want a black-and-white e Ink screen larger than 6 inches, the Kindle DX has a 9.7 inch screen for \$379. Its battery will last about 3 weeks. Its memory will hold up to 3500 books. It will read text out loud, play audio books, play .mp3s, and it has free 3G wireless. It is advertised as better for reading newspapers online, large .pdf files, etc. Dennis chose the smaller Kindle Keyboard 3G with the traditional 6-inch screen because he could fit it in his coat pocket.

Generally, eBooks are priced less than hardback books, but they can cost more than paperbacks. When Amazon came out with their first Kindle, they priced many recently published eBooks at \$9.99. This led to demise of Border's Books and many other brick-and-mortar books stores. Five major book publishers and Apple have since conspired to raise the prices of eBooks, forcing Amazon to do the same.

Amazon has thousands of books with expired copyrights which are either free or available for a nominal fee. If you are a heavy Amazon customer with an Amazon Prime membership (\$80 per year), you can borrow free one book a month from them. Books from the local library can also be borrowed in Amazon format for free.

Books you buy from Amazon can be downloaded again if you should somehow lose them from memory. Also, Amazon will store all of your books on their servers.

When you return to a book, it automatically opens to the page where you stopped reading. Instead of displaying page numbers, Kindles displays the percentage of the book that has been read, assuming that you read everything up to that page. The more advanced Kindles allow you to make notes as you read. Amazon preserves those notes for you. Also, hypertext allows you to read the authors' footnotes and references.

You can copy and paste to and from your PC allowing you to back-up your eBooks.

Kindles have no antivirus software. Dennis has never had a problem with malware. A Kindle can be secured by your personal password.

New member Carol Price brought her new Kindle Fire, but she has had it for only two weeks and did not want to give a full demonstration at this time. It can be featured in the session on tablets.