

Hi, this is Stef I'm here to give you a quick introduction to two e-book devices, the Amazon Kindle 2, and the Sony PRS-700. I'll tell you about their features and how libraries are using them. You can check out pictures of the devices from the links in the blog post, along with a chart that compares the two.

There are some similarities between the two devices.

Both have typical ebook functions like making notes, bookmarking, looking things up in a dictionary.

They both use e-Ink technology for their screens. E-Ink is cool! It only uses energy when turning the page, so both of these devices get amazing battery life...up to 2 weeks, if you aren't using the wireless...we'll talk more about that in a minute! And text in e-ink looks more like text on regular paper than we've seen in previous ebook devices.

Both have screens that are only black and white, though the Kindle displays twice as many shades of grey as the Sony, so it has more definition in illustrations.

And the screen size and weight are very similar for both devices. They both have a 6" x 6" screen and weigh about 10 ounces.

The prices for the devices aren't exactly the same, but they are similar: The Kindle is a little cheaper than the Sony: \$360 for the Kindle and \$400 for the Sony.

Now let's talk about some things that they do differently

You interact with the Kindle very differently than with the Sony. The Kindle uses a Joystick and a keyboard (check out the picture linked from the blog post to see what I'm talking about) while the Sony uses a touchscreen. Both have buttons to move forward and back pages, but you can also sweep across the screen with your finger with the Sony to turn the page...kinda like turning an actual page!)

How you get content is very different between the Sony and the Kindle. The Kindle has a build-in, free cellular connection (using 3G) that allows you to purchase content from Amazon and download it onto the device directly, without needing a computer. You can also email other content to the Kindle or transfer it using a computer.

With the Sony, all content must be transferred using a PC (no Macs allowed!) and a USB connection.

...and while we're talking about content, let's talk about formats for a minute: Both the Kindle and the Sony have a proprietary format for the more popular, newer content – For the Kindle, it's the AZW format. For the Sony, it's BBeB (which makes me think of heebeejeebee!) Both devices also support other formats – PDF and text documents and more. Thanks to a partnership with Google, there are more titles now available for the Sony, but many of these are public domain titles. Amazon's Kindle has more newer, bestselling content available (it's Amazon – they have the connections with the publishers, right?)

On the Kindle, you can store approximately 1,500 books in the 2 GB internal storage. The Sony can store about 350 books in its internal storage, but you can add more storage using memory cards. With either device, having the option of carrying around that many books in 10 ounces is impressive!

There are some features that are unique to each device:

The Kindle has text-to-speech functionality, which will read books and other content to you in a computer voice. Amazon was immediately sued over this feature, and is now letting publishers decide whether or not to allow this feature on their titles – which may make it less and less available. But some titles do have this capability.

The Sony has an LED backlight, which the Kindle doesn't have. The Sony also allows you to read in portrait or landscape orientation, depending on your preference.

So how are libraries using these devices?

Libraries are already purchasing Kindles and circulating them pre-loaded with content. Type "kindle" and "library" into Google to find some examples! One advantage of the Kindle over past e-book readers is that the collection of titles purchased on an account can be used on all of the Kindles associated with that account. So, if you own 5 Kindles, you can use any title purchased on any of the 5 devices, which is definitely a plus in the library setting! There has been some question about whether it was legal to circulate Kindles. Some libraries have received correspondence from Amazon allowing this use, so we think it's okay to do.

CNET just reported today that 60% of the Kindle users are over 40, so you aren't going to tap your teen market with this device, circulating the devices may give your patrons the opportunity to try out this new technology that they've heard about.

Both netLibrary and OverDrive are offering library-specific programs for the Sony, but not the Kindle. From netLibrary, you can purchase a "Sony Reader Mobile Collection" that includes the reader, titles, and licenses in a package for \$500. You can't get content for patron devices from netLibrary, only purchase content for library-owned devices.

OverDrive has content in the ePub format, which will work with the Sony device, so if our OverDrive Collection had Epub titles, those patrons with Sony Readers will be able to download content. I'm sure this is something the Wisconsin Public Library Consortium will discuss in a future meeting.

So, that's a quick description of these two devices. If you'd like more information, check out the links on the blog posting.

Thanks for listening!