PROS AND CONS OF THE KINDLE

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Why I'm starting to prefer my Kindle to "real" books.
Category: Observations

I mentioned yesterday that I wanted to write something about why I use a Kindle ereader - and here it is.

Firstly, let's get some of the basic stuff out of the way. The Kindle is light, it can store lots of books, it's easy to read in daylight and the backlighting means that you can read in bed without having to turn the light on - ideal for an insomniac like me. Kindle books are generally cheaper than paper alternatives and services such as Bookbub (which also works for Apple Books) offer some real bargains. On the down side, a Kindle does tie you in to Amazon, which many people are unhappy with for a variety of reasons. Another problem is that you can't easily loan Kindle books to other people. Then again, they don't take up bookshelf space, which in our house is a bit of a blessing, we don't have room for more shelves and the ones we've got are full (I still buy paper books though).

One strong argument against the Kindle is that some people simply prefer the feel of holding hard copy of a book in their hand. Actually, I generally agree with this. There is something very satisfying about "real" books. It is also very helpful to be able to write notes in the margins and underline passages. I'm also yet to come across a hard copy of a book that ran low on batteries!

Another strike against the Kindle is that they handle diagrams really badly. It may be that some of the more expensive versions do better than my early Kindle model. However, I find myself having to disregard diagrams and photographs on Kindle books because they are too difficult to read.

However, despite these disadvantages, the Kindle is rapidly becoming my preferred medium for reading academic and other work related books. There is one simple reason for this, the ability to highlight passages on my Kindle and then to retrieve them online. The process is very simple. You drag your finger over a passage to highlight it and then go to read.amazon.com where you can find all of the notes and highlights you made on every book you have read. It is then relatively simple to cut and paste your notes into whatever database or system you use to keep a record of your reading and thoughts. I copy my notes into a system called Devonthink which allows me to search for any highlights I have made on any subject.

In many ways, I much prefer paper books, but this simple ability to copy text from a book and to then put it in my database (or copy it straight into a blog post) is an absolute game changer.