E-readers and tablets dominate market
BY TIM WORDEN – POSTED ON MARCH 22, 2012
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The e-book business has developed into a lucrative empire over the past decade.

Last year, revenues reached $3.2 billion and it is predicted that the industry may multiply to $9.7 billion by 2016.

E-readers are devices that read e-books. Popular versions include the Amazon Kindle and Barnes and Noble Nook.

Tablet PCs, such as the iPad 2 and Kindle Fire, also function as e-readers. Last holiday season, the number of adults owning e-readers and tablets nearly doubled.

The jump is evident around campus at Cal State Fullerton where e-readers and tablets have become commonplace. Students use them for reading textbooks, surfing the Internet, taking notes and recording lectures. Naturally, they also allow for an entertaining study break with their Angry Birds and Facebook apps.

"I like e-books, it's a great idea," said Chris Sipes, 22, a business finance major who uses an iPad 2. "It's all right here instead of having to lug all the books (around) with you."

Sipes, who has had his tablet since December, uses it to work on assignments, play games, read his finance textbook manual and take notes in class.

"The only time I touch paper is when I turn something in," he said.

Kyle Myrick, 25, an environmental studies graduate student, also uses his iPad 2 in class.

"(I like) its ability to take notes and record lectures at the same time," he said.
He is also using his tablet for a far more important reason.

“I’m writing my thesis on it,” said Myrick.

Myrick uses a Bluetooth keyboard to write his thesis, which is evaluating desert plants’ ability to change sex over time.

E-readers are beginning to transcend generations. Myrick allows his 3-year-old son to use his iPad — with supervision.

“My son doesn’t know anything other than reading a magazine on an iPad,” Myrick said.

According to Myrick, his son uses apps for tracing numbers and letters and putting puzzles together.

“Anything other than watching YouTube videos is pretty good on there. But he’ll have to deal with a lot more distractions. Because when you’re sitting down with a piece of paper you can’t do but one thing: write on it. But if you have an iPad in front of you, you can do a multitude of things that can distract you from what you’re supposed to be doing,” he said.

According to librarian Joy Lambert, the Pollak Library at CSUF provides students access to more than 50,000 e-books.

“In the last, I’d say two or three years, libraries, in general, have been really proactive in working with e-books and providing access to e-books,” she said.

Lambert said the library has been working with e-books for about 10 years.

“(E-books are) something libraries definitely have to familiarize themselves with because people like using them and … from what we can tell, our students are using our e-books quite a lot,” she said.

According to Lambert, the future of libraries will include more e-book collections.

“There’s much more emphasis on keeping up with technology and trends, and in a lot of libraries too. (Physical) space is a concern,” Lambert said.

Many people see the benefit of both media forms.

Brandon Le, 18, a freshman computer engineering major, uses his iPad 2 to read CNN articles and books like Eragon by Christopher Paolini.

But, once again, iPads facilitate distractions.

“I prefer regular textbooks because when you’re using online textbooks, you’re more available to more options of Internet usage and they can distract you more easily,” he said.

So what’s next for e-readers and tablets?

Apple released its iPad HD last week and Microsoft will release a Windows 8 tablet platform this year.

“The important things about books is the information that they contain and connect people to … I don’t think e-readers are a detriment to society. I think anything that people can use to access information and help them in their studies or just with personal development is good,” Lambert said.

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About Tim Worden
Tim is a senior journalism major at Cal State Fullerton and is serving his second semester as copy editor for the Daily Titan. He plans on becoming a reporter and copy editor after graduating in May. In his free time, he enjoys reading.