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Quick Take: eBooks

An Overview for Administrators

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Hello, my name is Burt Lo and I am the manager of Instructional Technology and Online Learning for the Santa Clara County Office of Education. We have all have heard about eBook readers, such as the Kindle and the Nook and even seen students and staff reading books on iPods and iPads. This QuickTake will provide you with an overview of electronic Books and their potential uses in the educational community for teaching and learning.

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This Quick Take covers.

- eBook Formats
- eBook Readers
- eBooks in Education
  - eTextbooks
- Teacher and Student Publishing

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This QuickTake will provide you an overview of eBooks, eBook Readers, and their potential in Education. In addition, several Internet resources will be shared where you and your staff can locate eBooks and eBook resources. This quick take will show some specific examples on how eBooks can be used, how to create your very own eBooks, and of course, we will provide you some resources housed in the TICAL database to assist you with implementing eBooks in your school community.

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## Emergence of eBook Reading

Reason	E-book reader	Non-e-book reader
Current events	62%	50%
Work or school	54%	36%
Pleasure	52%	36%
Topics of personal interest	37%	24%

Source: Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Reading Habits Survey, November 16-December 23, 2011.

*The Rise of E-Reading*  
(PEW Internet and American Life Project)  
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It is fascinating to discover that over twenty percent of American adults have read an electronic book during the past year. This is accompanied by the fact that ownership of eBook readers among American adults doubled during the winter of 2011.

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## eBooks in Schools

*Obama Administration's Challenge to Schools*  
(The Huffington Post)

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As highlighted by this article, education is also considering the benefits of eBooks for students. eBooks are being explored to make textbooks more interactive. Unlike traditional textbooks, eBooks can provide definitions, video examples, and even interactive models as needed by students. eBooks can also be updated faster than traditional textbooks with the potential of lower costs.

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## eBook Formats

- PDF
- ePUB
- AZW (Kindle)
- iBOOKS (iPod touch/iPad)

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



If this information has prompted you to look into read eBooks, you will quickly discover that they come in more formats than just hardback and paperback. The most common electronic book format is PDF, portable document format. Freely available software, such as Adobe Acrobat Reader can read this type of eBook. One thing to keep in mind is that this type of eBook typically includes only text, images, and links to Internet websites. Another common eBook format is ePUB, electronic publication. This format can include audio and video, in addition to text, images, and

hyperlinks. Amazon's proprietary AZW eBook format has increased in popularity along with the Kindle eBook reader. Since this format is another publishing format for existing books, it includes only text and images. A new eBook format was introduced along with the iPad, Apple's new iBOOKS format.

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## eBook Readers

Hardware

- Kindle 
- Nook 
- iPod touch/iPad 
- Android Tablet 
- Computer 

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Accompanying the different eBook formats are a growing number of devices and software tools for reading them. The hardware devices for reading eBooks range from dedicated reading devices such as Amazon's Kindle and Barnes and Noble's Nook. These two devices can display several eBook formats, such as PDF and ePUB. Tablet devices, such as the iPad and Android Tablet have become popular due to their ability to read eBooks among their many other functions. If you prefer to not to purchase another device, your desktop and laptop computer can also read eBooks.

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## eBook Reader Apps/Software

Hardware

- Stanza
- Kindle
- Nook
- iBook
- Calibre
- Microsoft Reader

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In order to read eBooks on a Tablet device or computer, you will need additional software or apps. Apps, such as Stanza, along with the Kindle and Nook apps are available for both the iPad and Android Tablets to read eBooks. The iBook app is only available for the iPad and can read eBook formats such as PDF and Apple's proprietary iBooks format. If you choose to read eBooks on your computer, you will need software, such as Calibre or Microsoft Reader

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## Educational eBooks

- [CK-12 Flexbooks](#)
- California Learning Resource Network's [Digital Textbook Review](#)
- [Curriki](#)
- [Project Gutenberg](#)

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Now that you have an overview of the hardware and software needed to read eBooks, let's look at some places that you can find eBooks to read. If you are looking for eTextbooks, a great place to start is CK-12. Not only does CK-12 provide eTextbooks that have been reviewed by the California Learning Resource Network for their alignment to California Content Standards, but CK-12 provides teachers with the ability to customize these eTextbooks for your students. Called FlexBooks, teachers can select and arrange specific pages and chapters from books together to meet the needs of their students. If teachers would like to edit, or even add, to the content of these eTextbooks, CK-12 provides an editing and publishing feature. After eTextbooks have been edited or created by staff, they can be shared with other schools through resource sharing sites such as Curriki. If you are looking for eBooks for students to read, Project Gutenberg is an excellent place to start looking for free eBooks. This website contains an

extensive selection of free (public domain) digitized books.

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Teacher & Student Publishing Tools

- [ePub Converter](#)
- [ePubBud](#)
- Apple's [iBooks Author](#)

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One of the advantages of eBooks is the ease with which teachers and students can publish their own books. School districts can work with teachers and administrators to publish eBooks for student use or even for use as professional development resources for staff. Web tools such as ePub Converter can easily convert word processed documents into electronic book files. The website ePubBud is an easy online editor that students can use to create eBooks, complete with text and images. Apple recently introduced an exciting software tool that is targeted at the eBook market. iBooks Author is a freely available desktop publishing tool that creates eBooks for reading on the iPad. Teachers and students can use this software to create eBooks with text, images, audio, video, review activities, and even study notes to freely publish and share with students.

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## Pros and Cons of eBook

Pros	Cons
Books can be updated quickly	Variety of eBook formats
Easy to distribute and even self-publish	Require hardware and software
Expectations to be more economical	Different process for taking and sharing notes

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Here are some things for you to keep in mind if you are considering the use of eBooks, either for personal use or for implementation at a school site. eBooks can be updated quickly by the publisher or book distributor. Students and teachers can publish and distribute their own eBooks. All of these benefits will hopefully be accompanied by lower costs than traditional books. However, not all eBook readers and eBook software reads every format of eBook. Research the types of books that you need to read to determine if they are available for the eBook reader that you choose. Unlike conventional books, eBooks require hardware and software. It can be disconcerting not to be able to read because an eBook reader is not functioning properly, or runs out of power. Also, while reading eBooks, it will take some time to get used to highlighting text, taking notes, and even sharing information with other readers.

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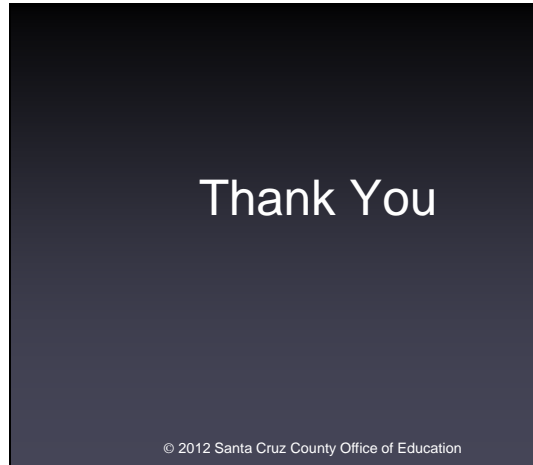
## TICAL Resources

- [Equity and Literacy with Free Electronic Textbooks](#)
- [eBook resources](#) in the TICAL database

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To learn more about eBooks and education, you may want to listen to the Radio TICAL episode about California's Free eTextbook Initiative. In addition, you will find several resources in TICAL's database that detail how educators are exploring this emerging technology.

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eBooks offer educators and students a new way to read and publish information. I hope this Quick Take prompts you to learn more about eBook readers and eBooks and how to use these emerging technologies in education.

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