

GREAT HOLIDAY e-READING

Most people like to take a couple of good books with them on holiday, whether to help pass the time on a long journey or to relax with by the side of a pool. The only drawback is that reading material can weigh you down and that can be bad for your back and - if your luggage tips the airlines' scales - your budget.

If you have a smart phone or tablet, however, there's no reason you can't pack a library and still lighten your load. All you need to do is download one of the leading e-reader applications.

Although they differ slightly in design, most of these apps offer an excellent user interface, similar functionality (including the ability to alter fonts and change text size) and access to an enormous amount of free and paid content.

The best option is to download several of them and then play around to find which one you like best. Some of the best known apps include:

iBooks (i)

Apple's iBooks app allows you to download best-sellers or classics directly to your iPhone or iPad, where they sit on a virtual bookshelf. In terms of look and feel, this app is hard to beat. The only downsides are that it can only be used on Apple devices and iBooks offers fewer publications than major rivals, such as Kindle and Kobo.



Kobo (i, A)

Kobo (an anagram of 'book') offers access to a huge library of paid and free books – in fact more than 2.5 million. It also tracks your "personal reading style" (including how fast you read and how much of your library you've consumed) and brings a social media element to the reading experience, with users able to rate books, see what their friends are reading and share own comments with others on Twitter and Facebook.



Kindle (i, A)

You don't need to own one of Amazon's Kindle devices to access the Kindle store and peruse almost a million books (thousands of which are free). The Kindle app also offers



some clever functionality, including a built-in dictionary, access to Google Search and Wikipedia, and the ability to synchronize your place in a book across multiple devices (ie you can always pick up where you left off).

Google Books (i, A)

Google Books offers access to more than three million books, including many in the public domain. The publications are downloaded from the Google eBookStore using your phone/tablet's web browser.



If you don't find what you're after within your e-reader app then there are plenty of other places on-line to search for free e-books. Project Gutenberg (www.gutenberg.org), for instance, has been digitizing public domain books since the 1970s and now has almost 40,000 items in its collection.

Finally, if you want to see what e-books are capable of then download a couple of the more innovative e-publications, which are using multimedia material to enhance the plain text.

Moonbot Studios' **'The Fantastic Flying Books of Mr. Morris Lessmore'** (i, \$2.99), for example, is a fun children's e-book that incorporates lots of animation, music and other interactive pop-ups.

For adult readers, Touch Press and British poetry publisher Faber and Faber have set the benchmark by creating a wonderful literary app using T.S. Eliot's **'The Waste Land'** (i, \$14.99). It features a video performance by Irish actress Fiona Shaw and audio readings by Alec Guinness, Viggo Mortensen, Ted Hughes and Eliot himself (all synchronised to the text), along with commentary by Nobel laureate Seamus Heaney.

i = iPhone/iPad, A = Android