

Do you e-read, or keep things strictly physical?

 By Leigh Andrews

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It's always exciting finding out that one of your favourite authors has released a new novel... But what if it's only available in digital format, and you're a firm believer that a physical book is better?

Just this week I experienced all the excited/yay/give it to me emotions you'd expect from a book-lover on finding out that one of my favourite authors - Jodi Picoult, if you must know - has released a new book. Then, on doing a little research, I discovered the 'new book' in question [only exists in digital format](#), available for e-readers, and my enthusiasm turned to disappointment. The reason? To me, an online book just isn't the same thing as a tangible one.

I asked my Facebook friends to explain their relationships with e-readers, and it seems there are a few common points across the board.



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The convenience of e-reading

One reason e-books are popular is the sheer convenience of them. Especially as you don't even need a Kindle or fancy e-reader device to read them - there's a [free Kindle app](#) available for smartphones, tablets and computers.

The benefits? Well, as one of my Facebook friends says, "As soon as you've finished a book you can download another one. No need to make a trip to the shops to buy another one."

In addition to the time and money saving, another friend points to the convenience when travelling, as you don't need to 'schlep' 10 books along with you that take up space and add weight - instead, you can have all your reading matter stored in one place.

What you miss if you only e-read

That said, she admits to inevitably taking a paperback with anyway because of "that feeling and smell" - there's just "something nostalgic about the smell of new paper pages," another concurs.

And that seems to be the general consensus. I had some of the responders to my Facebook question pointing out that it's not just the online book reading aspect that's a plus - you can also use the bulk of e-readers to 'browse the net', use the built-in dictionary, read by built-in light or even play music and video - plus there's the benefit of adjustable font size. That's why some admit to carrying e-readers around with them everywhere.

But e-readers are definitely not the be all and end all. Almost everyone who chimed in with their views admitted to still buying hard copies of their favourite reads as "to keeps". After all, that's something you just don't get with an e-reader - browsing through someone's bookshelf for a sense of who they are, especially if they've made an effort to stack books not just by author or type but by book jacket colour, like I do. It's not quite the same thing if you ask to check out someone's kindle library. Plus, you can't exactly read it in the bath...

Perhaps that's the crux of it - different strokes for different folks. Although aesthetically an e-reader isn't the same as flipping a page. "If you visually aroused, aesthetics mean nothing as your first priority is met," explains an old school friend. Kinaesthetic or touchy-feely people, on the other hand, will want a real book as the "emotion of the smell and feel appeals to them more".

That's why a former colleague says e-readers aren't necessarily meant to replace books - they simply offer another way to consume them.

Interesting, especially as [The New York Times reports](#) that authors aren't as interested in publishing online with deals like Amazon's recent Unlimited/All-you-can eat option, as they're losing out on profit.

Leave your thoughts below, and [click here](#) to read my previous article on whether you take your online reading offline...

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