Good
e-Reader

MAGAZINE

The Apple IPAD success will determine if Slates Succeed

Since the IPAD was first announced, both a few weeks before and a few weeks after, a multitude of Slate devices have been shown to the public and have a ton of people excited about the prospect of the new technology to fall into the hands of a mobile-centric crowd.

1 The New Dell Slate

At the CES in January this year Dell had a very mysterious device to show the people in attendance, the Dell Slate.

2 Alex E-Reader to Ship April 16th

People have long been asking when the Alex E-Reader would ship since it was announced at the CES 2010.

5 Notion Ink Adam Interview

The Notion ink Adam is one of the most eagerly anticipated Slates to come out this year. Featuring a Nvidia Tegra chip and based on the Google Android Operating system [...]

Good E-Reader Magazine

Letter from Editor

Dear valued subscriber

Follow me!

We want to extend our gratitude for signing up for the Good E-Reader Magazine! Every month we publish the latest E-Reader and Slate news in an easy to digest format.

If you love our E-Reader blog then you will fall head over heels with our new Magazine! We cover all of the popular news items of the day! We cover such aspects as Pre-Releases, Industry news, Hardware Reviews, editorials and the inside scoop on what technol-ogy is worth your time and what is not!

We also review and talk about the older e-readers as well, giving you ideas on what stores sell the best books, what kind of support you can get with your existing e-reader and more!

If you are thinking of buying a new E-Reader or Slate PC device, our magazine is for you! We give you the skinny on the new devices such as the Microsoft Courier, Dell Slate, HP Slate, Notion Ink Adam, Google Slate and much more!

We are very excited to be offering the only E-Reader Magazine in the world! We provide extensive coverage on all facets of the E-Reader Industry.

If you need anything at all, please feel free to drop us a line at support@goodereader.com

Sincerely
Michael
Good E-Reader Editor

Editorial

Michael Kazlew

Living in Vancouver Canada, Michael has been writing about electronic readers and technology for the last three years. His articles have been picked up by local news sources and networks such as the Huffington Post. Michael currently owns a Barnes and Noble Nook E-Reader and a Apple I-pad

Contact: **Michael@goodereader.com**

Sovan Mandal

Sovy has been a freelance writer for several years now and has done numerous articles for Goodereader.com. He considers himself a fulltime writer with a passion for articles on technology. He also has a fond interest in topics ranging from just about anything from science, short stories, and novels to works of fiction.He currently resides in Kolkata, India.

Contact: **iamsovy@gmail.com**

Kunal d' more

Kunal is currently pursuing his Masters in Computers and he has been working as a freelance writer since his college days. He is a tech savvy person and loves writing on latest technologies.

Contact: **anewstarting@gmail.com**

Nick Shuster

Nick Shuster works in the media quite regularly. From film to on-the-street interviews, nick is quite involved in the who's and what's of the city. His interviews and many projects typically revolve around the latest technologies but can stretch as far as the latest theatrical releases, all the way to the do's and don'ts of dating. Raised in Malibu CA, Nick now lives in Los Angeles CA. He found that being in L.A. gives him a lot to work with when it comes to being where the action is.

Contact: **nick@goodereader.com**

Design

Diaconita Mihai

Diaconita is the resident graphic designer who has put together this magazine layout. He currently resides in Romania. He is a professional web designer and graphic designer. His philosophy entails clean and unique designs.

Contact: **office@netdesignr.com**

Contributing Authors

The New Dell Slate

At the CES in January this year Dell had a very mysterious device to show the people in attendance, the Dell Slate.

Dell Slate

It is a 5 inch full color touch screen The Dell Slate will run a Google Android driven Operating System. Which means you will see Google Application Development and the Porting in of games and business applications from the independent an business community. The Dell Slate has a SIM Slot in the back, which means that you will be able to connect up to the internet in 3G, or use it as a phone. It will also be able to do **WI-FI**. The Slate unlike some of the tablets coming out in the near future has a few key features such as, a 5 Mega Pixel camera with Auto focus, so you will be able to take pictures with it, or use it as a webcam. It seems to me that Dell might be arriving to the dance a little bit late.

Many other Tablet and Slate devices have been making waves in the news, such as the Entourage Edge, the **HP** Slate, the Notion Ink Adam and Apple. If Apple manages a tremendous success their next **I-PAD** to a totally new level, It will boost the market and stimulate demand for these new generation of tablets. We are interested to see if a large company like Dell will offer any decent .

One of the big factors with some of the new tablet hinges on how well the Android's Marketplace does in terms of software offered. Dell has hopes to roll it out in varying screen sizes (and probably memory capacity).

Finally, it seems the most popular Slate devices to garner large scale attention are not only tablet computers but are also billed as E-Readers.

We cover allot of technology here at the Good E-Reader Blog and seven new devices are going to be hitting the market in the next four or five months. It will be interesting to see, which companies the market will gravitate towards and be accepted by the community at large.

Our Bets, is that the Apple **I-PAD**, Microsoft Courier, Notion Ink Adam and the **HP** Slate look to have versatile technology and most function as E-Readers, as well as a casual entertainment device, or in the Couriers case, an extension of the office.

Alex E-Reader to Ship April 16th

People have long been asking when the Alex E-Reader would ship since it was announced at the CES 2010.

Spring Designs - the makers of the Android Powered E-Reader says that it will ship officially April 16th 2010, just two weeks after the Apple I-PAD is released.

The Alex E-Reader will retail for $399.00 and features a touch screen full color 3.5 inch bottom screen and 6 inch E-INK main screen to do your reading on. It has a WI-FI internet connection and is able to read EPUB, PDF, HTML, and txt formats.

The Alex E-Reader actually will come bundled with a wide selection of built in Google Android Applications such as Calculator, Photo Gallery, Web Browser and Music Player. It also has a native ability to read Flash driven website content.

The one thing we really like about the Spring Designs Alex E-Reader is the ability to download PDF documents right from the internet and save them locally to your device. Most other E-Readers only transfer books to your device if you have bought them from an application store, sync your device with your computer, or connect it to your computer with a USB cable.

We also think the ability to view streaming media over the web in E-INK is a great feature as well. As we mentioned, the bottom screen of the Alex E-Reader is a full color touch screen, that is much akin to the Barnes and Noble Nook E-Reader. Spring Design thought it was too similar and actually sued Barnes and Noble over it last November, which delayed the Nooks product release for a few months.

Alex in the upcoming weeks will be releasing an SDK to Android Developers giving them the ability to make custom applications for their E-Reader and some will be featured right on Spring Designs website. There is no word yet if they are going to be running their own app store.

Final Thoughts: It remains to be seen if people will just spend $100.00 more on a Alex E-Reader and get an I-PAD. As well, many of the new E-Readers that are coming out in the next few months all feature Google Android Operating systems, but hardly any applications have been made for them yet. What we would like to see with its web browser, audio and flash content are the next generation of Choose your Own adventure online E-books or more E-Books with audio and visual content in them.

An e-Reader Price War
is happening

Trends & Forecasts

Batten down the hatches, all hands on deck, there is an e-reader price war beginning and we could see e-readers being lowered in cost to a mere $99.00 by next year.

The Amazon Kindle 2 World edition has dropped in price this year from $299.99 to $259.00. Meanwhile, Sony is experimenting with a lower cost electronic reader by offering the Sony PRS 300 for $169.99 instead of $199.99. Most entry e-readers now cost around $200.00 to $300.00 for 6 inch ones, and 9 inch ones cost anywhere from $300.00 to $600.00.

One of the factors that will reduce the costs of the traditional e-reader is new processor technology from a company named Freescale Semi Conductors. After a split from Motorola, Freescale chips are found in 90% of all of the E-Readers in the current market. They have partnership agreements with Sony and Amazon, and could reduce their entry level prices by $150.00. Freescales new chip dubbed the i.MX508 (go marketing department.) The new chip in high value production will cost less than $10.00 to manufacture and it which is a big draw to their existing customers. The new chip, which integrates E Ink's latest display controller technology at the heart of most e-readers, also has the capability to support future color displays, which is why you hear of all of the rumours of **E-INK** color e-readers due out at the end of the year.

The ARM Cortex A8 core which is at the center of the new chip contributes to features like way faster page flips, which incidentally right now averages to around 2 seconds and which is going to be brought down to just half a second. It is also known for its lower power consumption. Current generation e-readers can function great with **WI-FI** on for around 6-8 hours before you need to re-charge it. If you have the **WI-FI** off, or have a device that is not internet enabled, you can usually go through an entire day or two without having to re-charge the battery.

So longer battery life, a more cost efficient chip, and the ability to boost e-ink from black and white to full color by an established company like Freescale is a boon to the industry. Why you may ask? Not only will future e-readers be more energy efficient, color and a faster processor, but existing e-readers may also come down in price, as the big companies like Amazon, and Sony can forecast profit dividends from future sales based on a lower cost unit, against selling existing devices as a discount, and in the end it provides a strong profit for the company.

With cheaper hardware components due out in a few months, most electronic reader companies such as Barnes and Noble, Asus, Fujitsu, iRex, Astak and others will be putting out future devices for its audience. Most people are brand loyal and will stick with one company, while, most E-Readers also have their own book stores and do not want to lose their customers to another brand. Do not forget, most books you buy are **DRM** (Digital Rights Management) that means the books you purchase say from Amazon, will only work on your Kindle Device. If you choose to buy another device, you will not be able to read your existing books.

This is a way nu which most companies retain customers for the long term, sell a device, sell the service, and support, and make it impossible to transfer everything to a new device, thereby locking the customer in.

With the rise of the **ePub** format, this is beginning to change, as most e-readers allow **DRM** and Non **DRM ePub** books to be read on their devices, similar to most new devices using Google Android as an operating system. Companies are starting to realize that using your own proprietary formats for books and operating system are constantly changing.

Most companies barely turn a profit, much less have the money to constantly make updates and tweaks to its own operating system and firmware features. Having an operating system that is open source, as well as books that are standardized, it allows companies to do much more with less, and have the community at large to recognize a problem and contribute to the community their own fixes. This is why Linux has worked so well.

Companies will further cut costs to e-reader devices recognizing the fact that they make the real money in books in the long run. Service based technology has always come down in price. People who would normally buy e-readers are hesitant to spend 300 to 600 dollars on a device that they may not need. If you look at the cell phone industry, they used to be very expensive, now they make the average phone cost anywhere from 0 to 100.00 and they get you at the service, features, and content packages. You will notice this occurring with E-readers as well. Amazon, Barnes and Noble and other content distribution companies, which sell e-books are raising their average price, per book from $10.00 to $15.00. So you will pay less for an e-reader towards the end of the year, but pay more for books, which you will buy a fair number of.
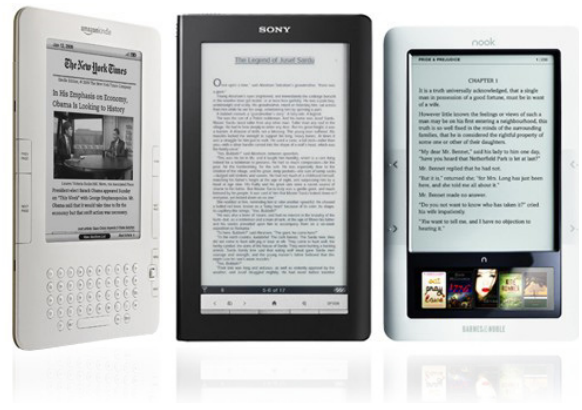
It is a double edged sword, e-readers that cost less than $99.00 and the rising cost of e-books, will it balance out in the end? Only time will tell. There is heavy resistance to the e-book price increase from the public, publishing companies, authors and more. Whether this planned hike in e-books comes to fruitarian or not, remains to be seen. There is allot of excitement brewing at the prospect of E-Ink technology being full color. With the rise of the Slates and Tablet PCS that feature full color, and remain competitively priced with traditional e-readers, companies like Amazon, Sony and others have to offer color in order to preserve existing customers from switching brands or offer Slates and Tablets themselves. We know the technology is there for Color E-Ink, and most big companies have plans to launch new products, and in an increasingly competitive market in the E-Reader industry, things are just starting to get interesting.

So batten down the hatches, all hands on deck, there is an e-reader price storm on the horizon.

Notion Ink Adam Interview

Rohan Shravan is the CEO of Notion Ink and gave us this interview.

(Q)Tell us a bit about the Notion Ink Adam.

(A)Notion Ink is a firm for Innovation. Very very young and very different. Average age of employees is 22 yrs! Based out of India. It was my dream to design devices which can do anything. And that's what we are doing right now. The first thing you do to realize your dream is to write is somewhere. And that's what we will help other to do. We will be their Notion Ink.

(Q)Where did you get your inspiration from to develop it?

(A)As a kid, I wanted to learn a lot of things. But belonging from lower middle class family meant that not always be available at all the times. I nurtured a dream of one device which can do everything. Technologically that device is still not possible, but this is our first step.

(Q)Project Genesis seems like a great idea, whats the deal with it.

(A)When I started working towards designing OS, I realised one of the very important things for it, is to learn. And the way current technology can make this possible is to download more applications which increases the feature set of the application and make it more versatile. Project Genesis is a step towards the same. Notion Ink will release Hardware Access Rich SDK on top on Android, using which Developers can develop far more powerful and efficient applications than otherwise possible.

(Q)Will it support the Google Market place? or do you have your own market place/App Store that you are developing?

(A)We will have our own market place.

(Q)How do you think the Adam will do against the all of the other new Slates and Tablets coming out such as the HP Slate, Dell Slate, the I-pad?

(A)Competition is good and healthy competition is great for the end users. HP and Apple are great firms and we have learnt a lot from them. It's an honour to be placed among them, even if it is in product comparison.

(Q)Do you think that the Notion Ink Adam will be not only competitive in the Slate/Tablet Industry but in the E-Reader Industry too?

(A)Yes, and that is the aim. Adam is neither a tablet, nor an e-book reader. It's a new species. Soon you will see us talking about the imaging capabilities of the device and so on. It is the first device which will start a new era of convergence. And hence the name Adam.

(Q)Tell us about your plans for E-books, how do you plan to distribute them or make them accessible?

(A)We will have the book store coming up with the content store. People will have access to maximum number of titles. We are trying to make is a heaven for students especially.

(Q)Any parting thoughts you would like to have?

(A)The times ahead are really exciting. Looking forward to interact with all with the device in all our hands globally, starting Q3.

Apple iPad

A must read before deciding on any other than Apple iPad

Mac lovers, followers, fanatics or any other name that indicates this group have cause for rejoice. Apple has launched a new addition to its line of iPod and iPhone devices – the iPad. Such a blitzkrieg of an effect this new device has had, that the iPhone and iPod users are seriously contemplating a switch over. Non Apple product users also have reason to think of changing from their current favorite to the Apple iPad.

So let's delve a bit into why there is so much of craze with the iPad, the new wonder device that has Apple fanboys chomping at the bit to finally hear officially announced. The first and foremost feature of the iPad worth mentioning is that the entire device has been developed around the Multi-Touch concept, which means there is no need for a mouse to navigate this device. Simple finger gestures on the touch screen suffice to carry out all the tasks that this gadget can carry out. Apple gadgets are known for their visual appearance and the iPad keeps up to that line.

A large 9.7-inch long high resolution LED screen dominates the entire device. This combined with a weight of just 1.5 pounds makes it quite similar to a traditional paper magazine. With its slim design and rounded corners, the iPad has been designed for easy usage and can be easily carried in a briefcase. Currently the asking rate for an iPad is $499 however it is also possible to get it at as low as $400 if one can strike a good bargain.

The iPad is bristling with some of the most cutting edge technology and amazing features. It is based on Apple's own A4 chip, which currently is the best when compared to other touch screen based devices. Text applications, multimedia viewing, web surfing and playing games are therefore a breeze on the iPad.

Battery power too is abundant and provides 10 hours of usage. An external memory card of 16 GB, 32 GB and 64 GB caters for the additional storage requirements of the device. Suffice for stowing photos, multimedia files and office work all in one place.

For connecting to the outside world, the iPad provides for an onboard 802.11n chip giving Wi-Fi capability to the device. It also has Bluetooth 2.1+EDR which gives the ability to support other devices like cell phone, headphone or Apple wireless keyboard.

Apple has also come out with a bunch of accessories that caters for specific demands of its individual customers. These add-ons or optional accessories gives the device a wholesome feeling and adds a personal touch to its entire identity.

The device comes with a protective case, which gives protection to the iPad even while it is in use. With the optional camera connection kit, you can connect your digital camera or an sd card to the iPad for easy transfer of picture files. Apple wireless keyboard along with a docking station makes the iPad a futuristic gadget. Not only numerous ports have been provided on the iPad

itself, the device can also play files from the TV, Projectors, In focus by a simple plug and play process.

Application wise too the iPad has a huge repository to select from. First and foremost, the makers of iPad have ensured that lateral compatibility exists between application running on the iPhone and iPod with the iPad. This way the users of the previous gadgets have no cause for any regret or need for relearning. Along with all the applications that are available on the iPhone and iPod the iPad has the additional applications like YouTube, safari browser, Maps, contact books etc which makes it

a total mobile utility gadget.

The only feature that can be marked as missing from the iPad is 3G connectivity, though it has been learnt that this will be taken care of in the later versions. There is further news that it would not be any ordinary 3G feature, but one where speeds of 7.2 MBPS could be attained. The limitation of connecting to the net at locations where Wi-Fi is not available would disappear with this feature added to the iPad. That too, with access much faster than any other similar gadget.

All in all the iPad is set to be the mobile gadget of its times. Apple has indeed given the electronic consumer market a device to drool upon. Both by looks and feature this wireless device would be any e-geeks choice.

Nintendo has announced a NEW Nintendo DS portable gaming system...

Nintendo has announced a NEW

Nintendo DS portable gaming system that incorporates **3D** without the need for any goggles or glasses. It is called the Nintendo **3DS**, successor to the **DS DSlite DSi** and **DSiXL** (LL).

The new handheld device will offer games that use the **3D** effects and will also have backward compatibility with the previous DS's. The new device will utilize the parallax barrier developed by sharp. In short a parallax barrier is an additional layer that is placed in front of the normal **LCD** that allows each eye to see a different set of pixels.

Similarly to its predecessors,

the **3DS** will still offer the 2 cameras found on the **DSi** models, but however, will offer a slightly smaller 4" screen than the **DSiXL**. Nintendo has also announced that it will indeed come with an, are you ready, **ANALOGUE STICK!** It's about time, am I right?

Much like the **PSP** (Sony's portable gaming device) which featured an analogue stick option, the **DS** has now added that feature. The analogue stick on the **PSP** has had mixed reviews by some people saying, "It's too difficult to use" and some saying "analogue sticks are what games need". So let us hope that the Nintendo **3DS** will make this feature both practical and easily usable.

Further features on the 3DS include possible vibration support, longer battery life and more efficient Wi-Fi connectability.
The new 3DS console is set to be released near the ending of March 2011.

Nintendo

Neofonie WePad

Neofonie WePad taking on the Apple I-PAD

In the last two months we have seen a flurry of Tablet/Slate and E-Reader devices being announced. Devices such as the HP Slate, Notion Ink Adam, Apple **I-PAD**, and Dell Slate have all been announced in development and are quickly going to be hitting the markets in the next four months.

We would like to introduce the latest Android driven Slate to make a splash into the increasingly competitive E-Reader and Talblet market. This device is called WePad made by the company Neofonie in Berlin, Germany. With a 11.6″ screen and a resolution of 1366×768, it features the largest display in the burgeoning slate industry. It has a rather quick 1.66GHz Intel Atom N450 processor, a 1.3 MP webcam (for instant messaging and Video Conferences), two USB sockets, a flash card reader, integrated **WWAN** modem, and GMA3150

graphics. With the two **USB** sockets we imagine that the **WePAD** will allow external devices such as **USB** keyboards, USB drives and more. Finally it has multi-tasking support, Bluetooth 2.1, **Wi-Fi**, optional **GPS**, an ambient light & motion sensor and an internal fan.

Now lets talk applications. Most new devices that have come out lately and that can be considered slates and e-readers have no built in Google Android market. Take the Entourage Edge for example, one of the big draws about it, is that it is an Android Device, but where are the applications for it? Ditto with the Barnes and Noble Nook. The Wee-PAD will have a true Google Android Market application made available on it, when it ships.

The most exciting service that the Neofonie We-Pad is working on is a feature called 'the We-magazine Ecosystem for publishers' This is an interactive tool to bridge the gap between people who want to buy e-books and the authors and publishers who make them. The premise of this tactic is to make people feel not locked into content services such as Amazon, Barnes and Noble and the i-Bookstore. The We-Magazine Ecosystem is a great way for publishers or authors to build relationships directly with the customer, rather then through a 3rd party. Even authors or publishers with no ebook or online experience can use the tools offered and be able to distribute their content online.

The WePad is based on a complete ecosystem, beginning with service, guarantee and support for the hardware, the software platform WeMagazine, for the publication and reading of paid content, and WeFind for the context-sensitive and searchable integration of online content. In the basic model, publishing houses can incorporate newspaper and magazine content directly into the WePad using WeMagazine and can use flexible interfaces via the CRM backend for evaluation purposes. Depending on the portfolio, other content and services from publishing houses can be integrated directly in the WePad.

We think this device is excellent, the large screen and Android Market place may really define this type of slate and may give Apple Competition down the holiday sales road. There is no word on release date as of yet, but we will continue to follow development of this device. The very thought of a E-Reader/Slate to come out, and not just make an application for people to buy books from Amazon and Barnes and Noble like everyone else is doing, and actually bypass the whole book store model altogether, and actually put the customer in contact with the publisher or author themselves is one of the best content distribution models in E-Reader History.

Neofonie WePad

The Apple IPAD success will be a major factor for Slates to Succeed

Since the IPAD was first announced, both a few weeks before and a few weeks after, a multitude of Slate devices have been shown to the public and have a ton of people excited about the prospect of the new technology to fall into the hands of a mobile-centric crowd. Offerings from Dell, HP, Notion Ink, Neofonie and more showcased

gests iPad sales of around $10 million per hour. The Only way to buy IPADS on launch day are to visit stores such as Bestbuy or select Apple Stores, but I would not hold my breath. Apple intends on increasing the IPAD distribution for an additional ten percent for launch day to select Apple Stores, mainly in Urban Centres such as San Francisco. As well, the risk and wait in line around 3 PM. at any Apple retail store:

IPAD were media groups, apple die-hards, and the technology addicted. Apple may have sold out of pre-orders, but many people will buy one IPAD. Will the average person see this device and want to buy it? Will the reviews, critics, blogs, television and print media be friendly to this device and hype it up to a

public wanting an upgrade from question.

What if the IPAD Fails?

upcoming devices to come out during the 2nd and 3rd Quarter of this year.

There is allot of attention on Apple and the IPAD to see if the general public will accept this new breed of computing devices, or if sales are lacklustre and the public does not accept the IPAD, does the same fate bode to the other companies rushing out devices?

First draw our attention to the fact, that Apple is sold out of IPADS Pre-Orders and sold an estimated 20,000 iPad's an hour, which sug

also take

All reserved iPad's that haven't been picked up by that point will be open for the masses to purchase. Otherwise, the next shipping date for the iPad, according to Apple's online store, is April 12. The 3G-friendly iPad is still on-track for a "late April" ship date.

So we may now draw the conclusion that there is initial public interest in this device. Our investigative report on the niche crowd of people purchasing the

laptops? That is the billion dollar This is a two pronged question looking at the long term implications of the burgeoning slate industry.

On launch day, people line up like they did for the IPHONE and buy their devices, new devices will not be available for online ordering, or new shipments fourth-coming for at least a week, some forecasters mention the end of April.

Will this long period of time during the height of media coverage and spotlight on Apple and the IPAD wane during the time when all units are sold out, and new ones arrive?

This is a very real factor, and past products have failed because they could not meet the demand at launch time, and by the time they had more product available, other competition products had entered the market place and people lost their focus as media coverage for new releases occurs.

The IPAD might also fail because the public might not accept it as a viable product that will either change their lives, or be as low cost to attract casual impulse buyers. People may think that the IPAD will not be a viable PC substitute and most people either have a smart phone or have a laptop or net book for mobile use. The IPAD may not appeal to people financially nor may they may measure it against their current devices and say, this is not worth it

If the IPAD Succeeds, this bodes well on the future of Slate Devices and will increase the growth rate of this sector exponentially. There are allot of competing devices to the iPad such as the Notion ink ADAM, the HP Slate, the Dell Slate, the Neofonie WEPAD, many of these devices have far greater specs to the IPAD in terms of processing power, memory, multi media viability, flash, and small factors such as HDMI, Fire wire and other features will make IPAD prospective buyers give pause. The IPAD success will stimulate overall market demand and increase sales across the board. The Publics acceptance of Slate computing could very well change the mobile computing paradigm.

If the IPAD Fails does this mean that the slate industry will be just another passing passing fad in the great scheme of the mobile computing market? If the general public does not accept the IPAD could this mean that they too will

not accept other slate devices with differing specifications on hardware? Could the iPad fail and yet the other companies succeed with more cost efficient entry level prices and partnerships with other companies be a viable way reduce costs to rope in an often fickle public?

Whether the IPAD succeeds or fails will strongly influence the future outcome of the Slate wars to occur this year. Let us not forget that until the rise of the IPHONE strongly influenced the smart phone industry and paved the way for a new breed of phone to gain market acceptance across the world.

What we know for sure, is that there is allot of attention focused right now on the I-PAD and the Slate industry as a whole, and its success or failure may change the way we go about our lives with mobile computing.

Apple iPad succes

The Astak eReader

To choose or not to choose is the question that you are likely to be dogged with when it comes to deciding between the traditional hard cover textbook and the e-reader. Being an expensive piece of electronic gadget it sure raises apprehension on carrying about in person to be used in place of the textbook that is cheaper by cost.

The Astak EZ e-reader however would ease this apprehension. This e-reader with its 6-inch, E-ink display makes for an easy to the eye reading. Talk about reading, Astak is one reader that makes reading in direct sunlight more enjoyable than in any other light environment.

We all are aware of the importance of navigation feature of an e-reader. And Astak with its well thought out layout makes navigation a breeze, albeit with a difference though. There are no scroll buttons like in all other similar gadgets. Instead Astak uses a number scheme for this purpose. In case you feel this would require a lot of getting used to, Astak has provided shortcut keys at the bottom which does the same task. We find page turn buttons at the side also, which makes page turning on an Astak a universal affair. Holding the device from side or bottom as the ease rather than the case maybe, we have buttons within easy reach for page turning. Even for other much used actions like zooming into a part of text or marking up text, short cut keys for all these are well located. The Astak also has another unique feature which is worth a mention, that of its ability to rotate the display from portrait to landscape. The device does not clutter up the display with anything else other than text. Details like current page number, remaining battery life etc pop up only when asked for by the reader using the short cut keys. This is a very well thought out design aspect.

Keeping in mind that looks and feel of a device also makes a mark on its user and the market in turn; the designers have given the Astak a matt finish and provided a leather case for tucking in the device in style. Once again we find uniqueness in the leather case itself which has a viewing window. Before placing this 7.8 ounce e-reader into the briefcase, one is advised to switch off the device as chances of auto page turn runs high.

Also, even though it is lighter than the Kindle DX, it however felt like a brick after a few minutes of usage when compared to the Cool-er.

The battery of the Astak would give us 8000 plus page turns. However, here also the makers have added a unique feature, that of a replaceable battery. Yes, we can carry a spare battery with you and replace it should the need arise. Packed with thousands of e-books stored on its 512 MB onboard memory, the option of an extra battery makes for an intelligent design feature.

Astak supports the PDF, FB2, MOBI/PRC, LIT, TXT, MS Word, RTF and PPT file formats. The Astak like any other human designed devices has its share of shortcomings. Take for instance the aspect of line breaks while trying to read a very common TXT format, though EPUB or HTML work just fine. Or the fact that this e-reader does not support DRM MOBI format or even has no service for downloading books. So for those readers who look to reading magazines and both current or updated periodicals, this e-reader is not their choice.

A number of online resources for diagnosing and fixing problems have been provided by Astak should you face any problems with the device. And if further help is needed, you can always get in touch with the company's support personnel by email

All in all the Astak has made an entry in the cluttered up e-reader market with features which does make it to stand out from the rest.

Microsoft Courier
revealed

New Information on the Google Slate

Specs and Details on the HP Slate

NEW
E-Reader Reviews

Asus

950

$3.99 an issue