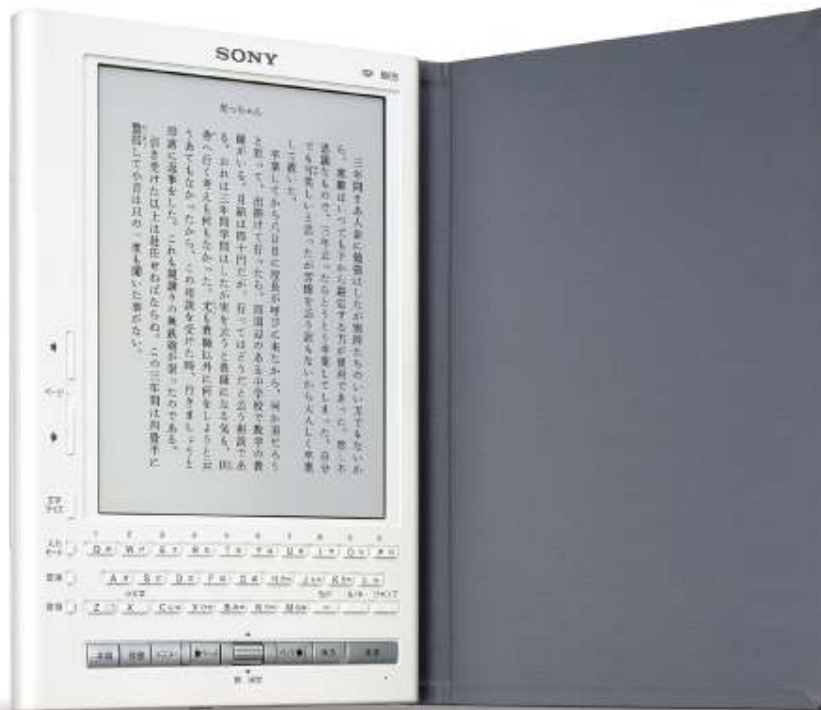


Cozy up with your library

Electronic books have not yet taken off, due largely to small screen sizes and difficult-to-read screens. Now Sony is launching an electronic book reader that offers the closest thing yet to the comfort of reading a paper book, combined with the light weight and ability to store hundreds of volumes of an electronic format.

The new LIBRIé is about the size of a paperback book and weighs about half a pound. It displays text with the same levels of contrast as a newspaper and a 170 pixel/inch format, which makes it much higher resolution than most electronic displays (typically in the 70-90 dpi range). Its makers claim that, just like paper, it can be read from almost any angle, and it can be read in bright sunlight or dim lighting.



Because the display uses power only when an image is changed, a user can read more than 10,000 pages before the four AAA Alkaline batteries need to be replaced.

A single book can handle up to 40 bookmarks, each of which can be annotated, while further notes and text excerpts can be kept in a separate clipboard application.

An early review in the Guardian newspaper praises not only the screen's readability, but the user-friendliness of the controls (<http://www.guardian.co.uk/online/story/0,3605,1197495,00.html>). However an alternate view is presented by a reviewer at dottucom

(<http://www.dottocomu.com/b/archives/002571.html>) who points out several usability flaws: small, unresponsive and awkwardly placed input keys, and a very slow screen refresh rate.

While it may require some adapting for big American fingers and Type-A personalities, this technology is worth watching.