

Digital Books V/S Print Books: A Mini Review

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Abstract

Books are a constant in this ever-changing world.

They are an integral part of people's lives.

Technological advances in Electronic Engineering, Computer Sciences, and Information Technology in the last quarter of the 20th century and 21st century have made our lives easier and more comfortable, leading to a changed lifestyle. Digital technology has come a long way in recent years, opening up a world of exciting opportunities for both reading and learning. Searching for information is just a click of the mouse away, while earlier, digging for any information from the voluminous books and libraries would require time and energy. Digitalization of old books and scripts can be accessed from search engines like 'Google'. E-books are designed for speed with browsing, skimming, scrolling, and linking. However, Physical books are intended for slow processing, with larger pages, no links, and concentrated distinct lines of thought and thought-provoking. The effect is awkwardness and patience instead of frantic haste. When examining Print Books vs. Digital Books, readers must choose which ones they approximate the best and what options go into making that decision.

Keywords: digital books, technology, readers, print books

Introduction

"To read is to voyage through time." ----- Carl Sagan

"A room without books is like a body without a soul." ---- Marcus Tullius Cicero

"Books can be your best and true companions."

The history of the printed word dates back to China in 868 CE. It was suspected that printing took place before this date as well. Printing in that era focused on pictures or decorations, typically carved from wood, stone, and metal, then rolled with ink or paint. Books were usually created for religious purposes (Belli, 2015). Johannes Gutenberg created the movable type and produced *Gutenberg's Bible* in 1455. Any books published before 1501 were called "*Incunabula*," which roughly means 'cradle' or 'birthplace' in Latin. Using the

movable type did not change over the next 350 years. However, the book format changed to accommodate a cover page, which included the scribe's name, completion date, and sometimes a little prayer.

Books are great comrades, confidantes, and soul mates, especially when you feel reclusive and lonely. Besides, books are a source of erudition, cues, pioneers, and great dynamos. Reading books increments our tenacity and grit, heightens our cognizance and ingenuity, and augments our perspective towards and understanding of the environment and bearings with comprehensive and exceptional scrutiny. If the mannerism of reading books is taught early in life, it goes a long way in determining one's orbit as one is never impeccable, and there is no haggling to gain discernment. A reading habit builds knowledge and contributes to intelligence. Reading books is a stress relief exercise and an escape to enjoy a world of fanciful wishful thinking.

*"Books give a soul to the universe, wings to the mind,
a flight to the imagination,
and life to everything."--- Plato*

"An hour spent reading is one stolen from Paradise." --- Thomas Warton

"A Parent or a Teacher has his lifetime;a good book can teach forever."---LouisL'Amour

Although books are imperative and challenging for everyone, more so for the students as they are young, bestowed with more vitality, and have chiseler brains and a pre-eminent retrospection. Books play a quintessential role in one's life by heralding them to the world of perceptibility, proficiency, dogma, and knowledge of the outside world by boosting their reminiscence and insight, illuminating our imagination, sharpening our ingenuity besides remodeling perusal, writing, and hearkening credentials. Every year more than two million books are divulged, and the monographs that are read assist as endurance provisions to humanity, leave percussion on us and nourish to circumscribe our reverie.

Role of Books:

"If you wish to renew your mind, read."--- Lailah Gifty

Reading activity is one of the most important ways of learning, as it is also connected with literacy and civilizational development. Pupils who cannot read do not have the pre-requisite skills for successful learning in later grades. For the sake of brevity, simplicity, and ease of understanding, a few points that convince us all about the healthy relationship between reading, improving knowledge, and the gainful outcome of the reading habit are listed below:

- ❖ Learning gives creativity creativity creativity, leading to Thinking; Thinking provides knowledge, and knowledge makes us do Great deeds.
- ❖ Ideas travel across the world through books.Books are the knowledge consortium, facilitate us to configure our opinions, illuminate our imagination and guide our trajectories.They enhance our socio-cultural understanding and potentiate good values, ethics, and life lessons for the service of humanity. They teach us how to

overcome our hardships and emotions of inhibition, love and fear, and every little thing that comes across throughout one's life.

- ❖ Books enlighten us about past histories, civilizations, cultures, current affairs, and scenarios. Biographic books inspire, promote our motivation, and encourage us to follow the examples of great men and women of letters and the real world.
- ❖ Books on short stories and novels provide entertainment and enable one to develop one's vocabulary and improve reading skills.
- ❖ They aid in sharpening our memory and accelerating our understanding. They enable us to perfect our skills and boost our confidence and self-esteem.
- ❖ Books relieve us from stress and help us grow mentally and emotionally.

*"Libraries, in the past, the present, and the future,
are the memory and workshop of humanity"----- Christina Lauersen*

Books give us a panoramic view of the world around us, and a good book has the potential to deliberate, prattle, and scrutinize various deeds. Books are authored in several genres, such as *fiction, novel, narrative, sci-fi, genre-fiction, non-fiction, historical fiction, horror fiction, fantasy fiction, speculative fiction, paranormal fiction, romance, children's literature, thriller, memoir, poetry, autobiography, graphic novel, magic realism, essays, contemporary literature, travel literature, suspense, biographies, drama, politics, etc.* All these come with incommensurable perspectives, and as a reader, you can create your view and stand apart from others. I may quote here-

*"Learning gives creativity, and creativity leads to thinking,
Thinking provides knowledge; knowledge makes you great."----- Dr A P J Abdul Kalam*

Books like *"The White Tiger", "All The Light We Cannot See", "The Girl With The Dragon Tattoo", "The God Delusion", "Our Energy", "Do not Believe Everything You Think", "The Energy Codes", "Moon walking With Einstein", "My Experiments With Truth", "Mother Teresa", "Nelson Mandela – A Long Walk To Freedom"* can help channelize our zeal and refine our thoughts to become better human beings and citizens, more compassionate, and more buckled-down and one who would never give up. Lessons from *"Ramayana"*, and *"Bhagavad Gita"* remind us about moral values and our commitment to humanity.

"If you can change your mind, you can also change your life."--- William James

"Reading gives us somewhere to go when we have to stay where we are." ---- Mason Cooley

Thus, books have an ineffable semblance in our lives, and the mannerism of reading monographs has multifaceted favors that go a long way to mold our conviction and sweeping charisma. Children who foster a reading habit early in life also develop an affirmative demeanor; stay acclimatized, and become more focused.

However, the availability and reading of books have changed with the advent of Electronic Engineering, developments in Computer Science & Technology, and fast modes of

communication on social media. While physical (print or paper) books are available in libraries, at times, finding a particular book in a library near you is wearisome. With the internet and digitization technology, searching for any book is as near as the click of the mouse on a computer, laptop, or other devices, to download, read and store on one's device.

However, another form of the digital book available is the *Audio book* which one can listen to. Audio books shall be especially beneficial to those who suffer from certain physical handicaps or are absorbed in other physical activities such as driving. However, some argue that audio books are not reading books but are listening to books. What so ever be the case, these are gaining popularity due to their portability and ease of adoption; after all, who does not enjoy listening to a good story? According to Statistics, 23% of people worldwide use audio books regularly, and during 2020 in the USA, there was an 8.5 % rise in the production of audio books. The Audio book business is expected to grow to US\$ 10 billion by 2030. Two of the biggest audio book sellers of 2019 have been *Delia Owens' "Where the Crawdads Sing"* and *Michelle Obama's "Becoming"*. Both of these are also best-selling books in the print and digital media.

Digital Books:

In the digital age, we surmise to be facing a fast-moving world at the hands of technology, but in fact, it is a distracted and disruptive world where everything is brisk, expedited, but chaotic. Thus, the time imperative for grilling in the maturation of the social fabric is not achievable, as triumph lies within knowledge and imagination. Digital or e-Books may be defined as books accessible in a digital format through the Internet and can be cured, construed, scattered, or shared in the digital vein. These are viewed on a flat panel or a touch screens device such as a smart phone, desktop computer, laptop, tablet, ore-Book reader. We cannot ripen through a void but need a medium to flow through the development of dogma and forbearance. Being faster, the digital world has taken over every field by storm. However, the source of all these and the chain of human development is "*Imagination – Knowledge – Thinking – Reading*". Books, whether print or digital, will continue to be a medium of wisdom and knowledge, as these:

- Nourish creative thinking
- Afford appraisal to erudition
- Crystallize and formulate a speculation
- Construe characters of mammoth harbingers
- Best innovative philosophers or towering scholars.

'Kindles' are a type of e-Readers that Amazon currently sells. Barnes & Noble sells a similar product, 'Nook'. The Kindle boasts a touch-screen display, which includes many features to read information readily. The screen promotes glare-free and lacks paper, which makes it easy on the eyes and auto-adjusts its brightness level to be the same as everything else in the room, meaning that the reader's eyes do not have to adjust, which can result in fatigue over time. Solid ink particles make up the text on the page, which maintains a crisp text similar to a printed book. The fonts are also hand-built, which improves the text and

image quality. The Kindle has many features, such as Smart Lookup Tool, which enables readers to access definitions while reading. The reader can adjust their text size and organize books into custom categories explicitly suited for the individual; the Kindle is an e-Reader that has incorporated many different features to enable readers to transfer over to the digital world.

Thus, books are inevitable and can metamorphose into any form with modifying times and technology. The real problem is illiteracy, i.e., being disinclined or disinterested in reading even though being capable of it. This is an appropriately frail and delicate trend in the age of information technology and computer science.

During 2008-2010, the sale of e-Books increased enormously. Many people assumed that paper books would become archaic in the next 25-30 years, as many auxiliary technologies and devices have become obsolete due to digital techniques. The enormous gratification of eBooks is the preservation of thousands of trees cut annually for manufacturing paper, thus compensating the environment for its adverse effects. During the Covid period, there was a 24% rise in the sale of e-Books. In 2019, 63% of physical books were sold to people under 44, contrary to the general assumption that youngsters read more e-Books. (Pew)

While paper books or printed books, or classical books consist of sheets of paper sewed together within a Title Page as the front cover and back cover, the Standard format is the Cover page (front page – back cover page), Table of Contents, and the Body of the book may be divided into sections or chapters.

COMPARISON OF PRINT BOOKS AND e-BOOKS (McNeil, 2019).

S.No.	FEATURE	PRINTED BOOK	E-BOOK
1.	Handling & Portability	Less portable	Easy to handle
2.	Storage	Each book requires space and maintenance	Thousands of e-books can be stored in an eReader, iPad, or computer
3.	Eye strain	No eye strain	Creates pressure on the eyes
4.	Cost	Expensive	Less expensive
5.	Connectivity	No connectivity required	Connectivity is required
6.	Focus	More focused	Has distractions such as ads or link pop-ups
7.	Shareable	The printed book can be shared or loaned to a friend for reading	Mostly single download/purchase is allowed.
8.	Initial Cost	Less	Gadgets are expensive

9.	Availability	Not easily available	Readily available on time anywhere
10.	Charging	No charging required	Frequently required

Another form of the book is an “Audiobook” or a “TalkingBook.”. It is the recording of a book or other work being read out loud. Audiobooks are advantageous for children, persons with disability, and older adults.

“Books were, in the days before mass printing, considered lavish with unnecessary expenditure, designed as a symbol of wealth and social status.”

“If you have a garden and a library, you have everything you need.”

Technological advances in recent years have rendered humanity significant advantages by making life easy and strengthened. Besides saving millions of trees that are used to produce paper books, digital books offer several other advantages:-

- **Ease of handling and portability:** Thousands of books can be downloaded and stored in an e-Reader, laptop, or other devices and carried along while moving. One can have a library of one's own at the tips of fingers. Besides, there is no need for extensive physical space.
- **Affordable price:** e-Books are much cheaper than paper books. Only an e-Reader or a similar device required to read an e-Book is a little over-priced, but it is a one-time investment. Once bought, it will stay with you interminably to be read anytime, anywhere. Some e-Books are available free of cost.
- **Convenient borrowing:** An immense advantage for students and employees is that they can borrow and share an e-Book with multiple users. At the same time, the printed book can be with only one person at a time. One can carry all the reading material on a single device and read it at home or while traveling.
- **Night reading:** e-Book Readers can adjust the screen's brightness according to one's propriety and appeal. This option is only possible with Print Books; if the print is equal, it is easier to construe the book.
- **Cover-less books:** e-Books take up very little data space. Even if your space is limited, a complete-length edition will utilize up to a megabyte of disc space.
- **Space:** e-Books have a provision to be transported in an e-Book Reader or a Tablet or a laptop in large numbers, requiring little physical space.

Disadvantages of E-Books:

- Not all books are available in digital versions, particularly some famous books.
- All the screen devices are complicated on the eyes and nerves, as constant gawking or riveting at the screens of electronic devices irks our eyes. This also results in itchy eyes and is even considered to cause ‘dry eyes’.
- Screen bluffs your vision and brain; a study by Hayward University reported that people using e-Book readers with LED screens had a poor sleep and were more

distressed the next day than those who used to read physical books. If we care about our health, we must utilize e-Book readers as seldom as possible.

- On the contrary, a paper book is more moderate and conducive to sound sleep.
- One must be very conscientious about using an e-Book Reader or another device, as it can quickly glitch with a tumble or maltreatment.
- Sometimes, the e-Book can get accidentally deleted or lost by careless approach.
- The battery needs to be constantly charged. If it runs out of charge, this will punctuate your reading abruptly.
- Generally, e-Books cannot be shared as customarily they are approached by a single user at a time. So, the benevolent feeling one derives from sharing or entrusting a book with a friend is not there.

Raine *et al.* 2012 reported that during 2011-2012, there was an increase in the persons reading at least one e-Book from 17% to 23%, while the readership for print books decreased from 78% to 75% in the corresponding period. The COVID period, 2020, noted a 24% increase in the sale of e-Books. The popularity of e-Books was considered to replace Print Books. The analysis of the readership of e-Books concerning the purpose of reading, reading situation, age, gender, education, race-ethnicity, income, etc., shows that propensity for e-Books is based on the ability of easy search and convenience of carrying them in a digital format, rather than the heavy load of paper books (Errera, 2023).

Jaron Lanier, in his classic book "*You Are Not a Gadget: A Manifesto*", "has explored these abstractions and has designated that soon you will kick-off to accept and conceive why the Internet might not be so great as it is right now, but also ascertain what we can do to get it to its bounteous potential.

Three inordinate lessons learned from the classical book are:

1. Technology is altering the value of individuals and putting people into boxes.
2. The Internet facilitates problematic mob behavior because of the anonymity it provides.
3. If we change how the online world works, we can re-focus on the worth of human beings instead of the hive mind it promotes.

A comparative study showed that e-Books and Print Books have unique attributes and serve distinct functions for individual factors regarding demography, context, and situational. The e-Books have firmly ascertained a place in one's daily routine because of their easy availability and convenience. The National Literacy Trust's 2017-2018 Report on the Reading Habits of Children showed that levels of daily reading engagements are selective, starting from stories and moving from page to application-based games.

Print Books:

Data on the sale of books for the year 2021 for the USA & UK shows that print remains the most popular book format. This is no surprise, as any other media cannot equate the intimacy and sensory experience of reading a physical book. People will always be energized by turning over the pages and confronting the smell of ink or the musk of dust (Whitaker, A. 2021). With technological advances and changing lifestyles, we now spend

more and more time on the screens, both for work and leisure, and pleasure. Print Books provide solace and escape from the snare of the online world. Young adults now appreciate Print Books as they have realized that the Internet has become an inevitable linchpin of their lives. This is evident from the fact that in the UK in 2019, 63% of the total sale of Print Books were purchased by people under 44 years of age, contrary to the credence that only senior citizens who are not that conversant with the computers are more predisposed to read paper books (Stead, 2023).

The feeling of closeness to a piece of art in the form of a print book cannot be repeated across the screen. Although digitization and fast-paced e-Books are fascinating and catching up fast, Print Books will and should continue to be enjoyed in many forms. There will be an endless and rich novelty of printed books.

ADVANTAGES OF PRINT BOOKS OVER e-BOOKS:

"Paper books are, as a rule, very well designed, look and smell good, and carry a more human touch." ----Tveit

A list of 50 advantages of Print Books over e-Books has been framed. However, a few are listed below:

1. Reading a Print Book is more convenient and engrossing, which affords better coalescing and mnemonics. While e-Books promote shallow reading, are less absorbing and acrid on the eyes, and are suitable only for browsing. Print Books allow readers to travel without using their feet and straining their eyes, making our minds healthier and fit.
2. While reading a Print Book, multiple senses are involved, including the thickness of the paper read or the pages yet to be read, the portion of words on the page, etc. These multiple sensory experiences correlate the mind and other senses to memorize and closely amalgamate or fraternize with other senses. It also protects the reading brain from Alzheimer's disease, besides playing a crucial role in a child's overall development. Print Books offer better mental stimulation, cognitive function, and a retarded mental decline.
3. The paper book you buy becomes your personal property, which you can read as per your revelry and succor. You can mark it and take your jottings or comments in the margins. This is not conceivable in e-Books. Sharing/loaning your Print Book with friends who can also benefit from reading the book is also an advantage. Print Books, thus, bring people together and foster social connections through Book Clubs.
4. Browsing a Print Book in a library or a bookshop is more accessible and involved, as one can go to the Subject Index and look for the topic of interest. Every time you will go to the same page or topic in the Print Book that you wish to read at that moment; while in a Digital Book, you can quickly lose the page or topic in peril.
5. It is easy to mark, underline, or take hints in the margins on the pages of a Print Book, making it convenient for revision. It benefits the reader to enhance one's vocabulary and language skills, making comprehending and expressing complex ideas easy.
6. Print Books are easy, comfortable, and convenient for the eyes, as there is no bright screen effect. There is no feeling of stress on the eyes, and these books are free from distractions of on-screen advertisements, link pop-ups, scrolling, etc.

7. Print Books make a more meaningful and valuable gift that may be passed on from generation to generation, as they are long-lasting. Vintage historical books are collectibles. Visitors to your home can glance through your collection of books and learn about your interests. Books enable individuals to understand themselves and the world around them better.
8. A Physical Book is like a companion anywhere and consistently as you can open and read while basking in the sun or retiring in your study or bedroom. You need not require a constant internet connection or electricity.
9. On the other hand, excessive screen time has been associated with sleep problems, headaches, lack of focus, and reduced socialism. The Academy of Pediatrics (US) recommends that children below two years of age not be allowed to use screen devices like mobile phones, laptops, iPads, etc., and only limited use for children aged six years or more.
10. A study by the University of Arizona pointed out that people are more emotionally attached to physical books than e-Books because the hard copies are tangible and establish a sense of self and belonging. Thus, print books constantly improve our lives and are expected to stay in style.

With the development of new technology, publishing paper books has become greener in the sense that more and more e-Books are now available. Secondly, you need to print only some of the copies of the book and stack these in boxes in the warehouse. With the introduction of the '*Print-on-Demand Technology*', books can be printed and bound as required. There is no need for extra storage space. The published book can stay in print forever, benefiting both the consumer and the environment.

Results of a study showed that although the majority of the respondents read a book every day, primarily for pleasure. Among these were the infrequent readers indicating that the book reading habit is decreasing even though e-Books are gaining popularity. Most frequent are those who like to read books; for them, it does not matter whether it is a print or digital format. *Zhang & Kudva(2014)*. Another important point that came to the fore was that most e-Books were read for work or school, indicating a functional element in the reader's choice.

Furthermore, lifestyle factors and situations play a significant role in the selection of the medium of the book. While on the move or traveling, one would prefer an electronic book, while upon return after a day's work in the office being at the computer screen for most hours, one would prefer a print format to relax one's nerves and unwind. Overwhelmingly, people prefer print books over e-Books while reading for children and sharing these books. The ease of access and rapidity are the highlights for preferring e-Books. The functionality and situational context play a crucial role in the choice of books (*Robinson et al., 2002*). At this point, e-Books and Print Books provide unique functions in different reading situations.

Conclusion:

The E-Books can be read only on an electronic device, while a Print Book can be read anytime, anywhere, irrespective of the situation. A clear winner in the current discussion is the age-old *Print Books*. Television Internet may seem attractive, but nothing can compare to the power of a well-written book. Reading is a dream one can hold, and books are the most

steadfast friends one can enjoy. Above all, they provide a protective shield from various challenges and problems in life. The significance of books cannot be underestimated; as technology and the world evolve, the importance of reading and books remains steadfast and unchanging. Print Books are essential to me because they are constantly changing.

“BOOKS ARE THE PLANE, THE TRAIN, AND THE ROAD.

THEY ARE THE DESTINATION AND THE JOURNEY.

THEY ARE HOME.”

“THE MORE THAT YOU READ, THE MORE THINGS YOU WILL KNOW.

THE MORE YOU LEARN, THE MORE PLACES YOU WILL GO.”

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