**E-Readers are coming** (and in some cases are already here) and so I have started investigating the issues that must be worked out for them to be used in our school libraries. Just because there are issues, doesn’t mean that we shouldn’t work to overcome them.

Quoting Jim Rousseau, "Everyone must remember that e-readers are designed for 'personal use' and 'ease of use'.  This presents us with some additional issues which must be addressed when using them in schools."

**Tech Issues**

**Registering the e-reader -** Depending on the kind of device, they have to be activated by registering them with a credit/debit/gift card.

For use in schools, a means of prohibiting additional charges to the account is necessary. Currently to do this you have to register your device with a card and then go to the account set up and delete the credit/debit/gift card information. I believe that this stops unauthorized uploads of both paid for and free e-books on the Kindle and the B&W Nook, but have not verified this. Color Nooks are capable of surfing and downloading all kinds of things.

**Uploading e-books** – The upload process varies depending on the device and the source. There are free, purchased, and borrowed e-books.

For purchased and free e-books using a wireless connection is the more carefree. All of our schools currently have TPS wireless service and as long as the device is inventoried with TPS, arrangements can be made to allow access to TPS wireless service. The manager of the device will need to know how to enable connection to the network to upload e-books to the device and how to disable the connection before loaning the e-reader.

**Prohibiting unauthorized uploading of e-books and apps** – This is likely impossible. Here are some things to consider.

- Usage agreements are relatively effective. There are several sample agreements attached. They should cover:

* Care of the device (do not throw, drop, or damage; do not carry it in book bag; do not give it to another student)
* Use of the device (will not download any content without permission; will not tamper with the device, accessories, digital content, or attempt to load digital books; restricted to content already installed)
* Financial responsibility for the device (pay in full for damages or replacement of device and accessories; pay late fees)
* Loss of borrowing privileges if device is mishandled.

- Deactivate the automatic search for a wireless network. This is easily reversed, but would be less confusing to students unfamiliar with the technology.

- Use regular power adapters instead of the USB cable to recharge batteries, so that devices can’t be connected to a home computer to download apps and e-books available through side-loading the device.

- On regular Nook (not the Color Nook) there is a setting that allows you to password protect the device itself. You can use that to ensure that no one without the password will be able to load e-books on the device.

**Process for reset/cleanup of the device after each circulation** – A process for bringing the device back to its original condition will be needed, not just because the borrower may have uploaded unauthorized apps or e-books, but because they may have left notes and bookmarks.

You can delete unauthorized content and comments. You can hook several e-readers to the same computer and upload ebooks to all devices at the same time. You will need to have space and time to perform these tasks. This is not a step that can be skipped.

**Charging the batteries** – The battery life of e-readers varies. Each device will have battery limits and a plan for getting them recharged is necessary. Things to consider:

- If you circulate the device to teachers or students you will need to provide them with a method of charging the batteries. You could ask them to return the device, charged.

- You will need to have a place with access to computer USB’s or electric outlets so that you can charge the batteries, whether you provide the borrower with a method to charge the battery or not.

- Kindle batteries can last 30 days (?); Color Nook batteries last about 6 hours; B&W nooks and Ipads fall somewhere inbetween.

- If you use power adapters instead of the USB connection to a computer, the batteries in a Color Nook charge much slower.

**Usage Issues**

**Why you want to make devices available** – Just like any instructional activity, what is it that you want users to learn?

Is it how to use the device? Is it to enjoy the e-book? Is it to learn how to take notes as they read? Is it to expand the number of “books” available to students?

**How to leverage e-books to increase distribution of titles** – Currently there are 3 ways to leverage titles. A decision about which method you will use will impact which device you buy. Good summation at <http://www.edukindle.com/2011/02/beg-borrow-but-please-don%E2%80%99t-steal-how-to-share-e-books-at-school/> The three are:

- Sharing books among devices linked to one account. You can usually link 6 devices to one account.

- Lending and borrowing books among all users. Kindles and Nooks can loan and borrow for 2 weeks, but there are limits on how many times you can loan. It may be once.

- Library or library like entity lending books to patrons. To be viable, this needs to be a consortium effort. Kansas currently provides e-books for loan via Overdrive.

**How the device will be used** – The first decision will be whether to allow circulation out of the library and/or out of the school.

TPS has guidelines for school equipment that is taken off school property. Will those apply to e-readers? Or does the district need new guidelines?

Circulating the e-readers only within the library reduces both the likelihood of damage and the ability of the current user to upload unauthorized e-books or apps. It also severely limits the experience of using an e-reader.

Circulating within the building is less restrictive and allowing e-readers to go home is even less restrictive.

Allowing borrowers to load e-books using their own accounts or gift cards is a possibility. Will guidelines allow this? Are these e-books deleted after the circulation? Or do they remain leased to this particular e-reader?

**Circulation cycles will need to be established.** Generally the shorter the circulation cycle the less chance that the item will be lost.

Exactly what is being circulated and how items are kept together must be decided. Are you going to circulate the e-reader, an e-reader standard cover or an e-reader padded cover, and a power adapter or a usb cable? What about instructions? How will you keep the items together for circulation?

Where are the items to be returned and when are they checked for damage and programming. E-Readers should not be returned to a book drop or left unattended on the circulation desk. Clear guidelines about the return of these is recommended. Time will need to be taken to “check” the devices before they are checked in and if there is paperwork, that it is filed.

**Determine paperwork needed, such as “usage agreements” or “TPS property forms”** – If additional paperwork is needed a filing system for forms will need to be established.

The main question will likely be, are the forms designed to be device specific or generic so that they only need to be completed once for the entire year.

Two Internet sites to look for additional information:

<http://theunquietlibrary.libguides.com/kindles>

<http://ebooksinlibraries.blogspot.com/>