Choosing an eReader

eBooks can be accessed in *many different ways* these days: on **desktop computers**, **portable computers**, even some **smartphones** and **portable media players**, as well as specialized "eReaders" ("eBook readers"). Many **laptops** and **tablet computers** can also function as eReaders!

While **you do not need a dedicated eReader in order to enjoy the RCLS eBooks service** (any supported computer / device will do just fine!), **OverDrive**, the library system's eBook provider maintains a list of **compatible devices** you can explore. You can find OverDrive's list through this link: **www.thrall.org/odev**

Here are some things to consider *before* purchasing an eReader or any device for electronic reading:

- **Cost**
  o **How much** are you willing to spend on such a device?
  o Do you intend to **purchase eBooks** or just rely on the **library's free eBooks service**?
  o Consider the possible **added costs** of **Internet access** (vs. library or public WI-FI), an **extended warranty**, and **optional accessories**, such as protective covers / sleeves, or portable speakers / headphones.

- **Features & Storage Capacity**
  o **What would you like the device to do –** other than simply to display compatible eBooks?
  o Do you need it just to **display** print eBooks, to **listen** to audio eBooks (eAudiobooks) – or *both?*
  o Is good **sound quality** important? Do you own a good pair of headphones or need to purchase a set? Some eReaders / devices with "good" external speakers can often cost more.
  o Would you like to view **videos** on the eReader? Many basic eReaders *cannot* display HD (High Definition) or streaming videos very well (smoothly, without delays). Some eReaders cannot display videos *at all*.
  o Would you like to **wirelessly download eBooks**? Not every eReader / device can do that, at least not without a **WI-FI** connection. A special "USB" cable might be needed to transfer certain eBooks.
  o How much **storage space** (**memory**, usually measured in "gigabytes") do you need? Enough for a few books or more? If you intend to **listen to eAudiobooks**, consider **the *most* storage space you can afford** since computer audio files are often *much* larger than eBook text files.

- **Compatibility**
  o Which **eBook service** would you prefer to use (e.g. Amazon, Barnes & Noble, OverDrive / RCLS)?
  o Does the **eBook service** you prefer support your **computer's operating system version**?
  o Would you be **concerned** if you could *never* transfer eBooks purchased for one eReader on another if that ever became necessary? Did you know **some eBooks will only work with some eBook readers and cannot be transferred** between **different devices** and / or **different eBook providers**?
  o Is the **eReader** you are considering **compatible** with your **computer's operating system version**?

- **Portability**
  o How **physically portable** should the eReader / device be?
  o Do you plan to use the eReader / device **regularly for several hours at a time**? Some eReaders / devices can have relatively **short battery life** and require relatively frequent **recharging**.
  o Will you be able to plug into an **electrical outlet** or a **computer USB port** when recharging is necessary?

- **Legibility**
  o Consider **screen size** and the device's ability (or *inability*) to **increase the size of text** and/or **images**. Most dedicated eReaders allow you change the text ("font") size or "zoom into" (magnify) eBooks.
  o Would you like to **read at night** or in **low lighting** *without* external light sources? Not all eReader / devices come with **backlit screens** (like laptops). Consider the possibility of purchasing a **portable reading light**.
  o Will you use your eReader / devices **outdoors**? Not all eReaders / devices display well in **direct sunlight**.
  o Is the screen **glossy** or not? Consider the potential **glare** on highly reflective screens.
  o Should the screen be capable of displaying **colors**? Not all eReaders / devices can display color.