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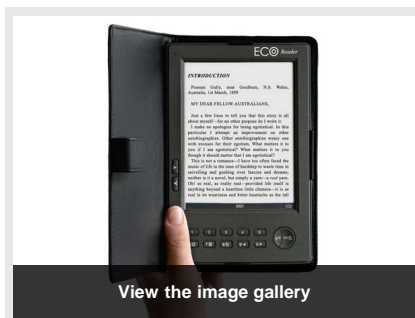
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Eco Reader

By Pam Carroll on 31 August 2009

Finally, an ebook reader comes to the Australian market — with claims of open file format support and long battery life to boot.



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Eco Reader

With no sign of an [Amazon Kindle 2](#) or any of the recently launched [Sony eReaders](#) on the Australian horizon, Aussie readers have been stuck in the all-too-familiar tech conundrum of deciding whether to buy an ebook reader overseas, or suffer a Godot-like wait for a product to be released locally.

Finally, there's some hopeful news with the launch of the Eco Reader from Melbourne-based book wholesaler Central Book Services.

The 15cm, four-greyscale screen has a 600x800-pixel resolution and you can change the font and type size. The company claims the Vizplex "micro-encapsulated ink imaging" technology used by the screen requires no front or backlight, and that it is viewable under a wide range of lighting conditions including direct sunlight. Furthermore, it apparently requires no power to maintain an image.

It has 512MB of storage memory, which is expandable to 4GB via its SD card slot. In layman's terms, this means you should be able to store more than 1000 books on it.

The Eco Reader runs on a Linux OS and supports a wide range of file formats including: PDF, PRC, TXT, RTF, EPUB, LIT, PPT, WOL, DOC, CHM, FB2, HTML, DJVU, MP3, TIFF, JPG, GIF, BMP, PNG, RAR, ZIP, MOBI as well as the Digital Rights protected Adobe DE PDF, ePub DRM and Wolf DRM.

The company claims that the AC or USB rechargeable Lithium-Ion battery should hold out for 7000 page turns. Depending on how fast you read, battery charge could be a good, long while; however, its longevity will diminish if you use it to play MP3 files (headphones are included, but there's a 3.5mm stereo headphone jack if you have a better pair).

Those of you hankering to revisit the classics will find ebooks a delight, as there are many titles out of copyright and available free of charge. To get you started, Eco Reader comes preloaded with 21 books, including:

- *A Horse of Air* by Dal Stevens
- *A Voyage to Botany Bay* by George Barrington
- *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* by Lewis Carroll
- *Crime and Punishment* by Fyodor Dostoevsky

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- *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen
- *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle
- *The Call of the Wild* by Jack London
- *The Jungle Book* by Rudyard Kipling
- *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* by L. Frank Baum
- *Wuthering Heights* by Emily Brontë

If you're interested in more current content, Central Book Services has an initial Australian publishing partner in Allen & Unwin who claims to have around 1400 titles available in ebook formats.

The Eco Readers are currently on sale at the following outlets, with more stockists expected to be on-board before Christmas: [Central Book Services](#); Dymocks George Street, Sydney and Rundle Mall, Adelaide; [Melbourne University Bookshop](#); [Reader's Feast](#); [Box Hill Institute Bookshop](#); and [Boomerang Books](#).

CNET will be testing the Eco Reader soon, so check back for a full review in the coming weeks. (The boss should give me time off to read through those 21 titles don't you think? The 7000-page battery duration claim must be challenged!)

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