

New e-book reader to use AT&T network

July 22 2009, By PETER SVENSSON , AP Technology Writer

(AP) -- Following in the footsteps of Amazon.com Inc.'s Kindle, another e-book reader is set to get a wireless connection from a cellular carrier, letting it access books anywhere there's a signal.

AT&T Inc. planned to announce Wednesday that it will support an electronic book reading device due early next year from Plastic Logic Ltd., a Mountain View, Calif.-based startup based on British display technology.

It marks the second significant announcement of the week for Plastic Logic, which said Monday that Barnes & Noble Inc. will supply digital versions of books for its device.

With the AT&T and Barnes & Noble deals in place, Plastic Logic will be able to match functions of the [Kindle](#), which uses Amazon's e-book store and a wireless connection provided by Sprint Nextel Corp.

But Plastic Logic's goals are quite different, according to Chief Executive Richard Archuleta. The device's screen will be nearly 8.5 inches by 11 inches, and its target market will be professionals who would want to display business documents in nearly full size. Reading novels would be a secondary application.

"If somebody is just looking to read a book, and that's all they're going to do, they probably don't need all the capabilities in our product," Archuleta said.

Like the Kindle, Plastic Logic uses an "electronic ink" display, which looks somewhat similar to regular paper and consumes very little power. However, it takes a relatively long time to switch between images, making navigation slow.

Newspaper subscriptions are available through the Kindle, and Archuleta said his company also is in discussions with "every major newspaper in the U.S." to get their content. USA Today and the Detroit Free Press, both owned by Gannett Co. are already partners with Plastic Logic.

Plastic Logic hasn't said what its device will cost, or how users will pay for the use of AT&T's network. Kindle users don't pay Sprint directly. Instead, Amazon pays the carrier using proceeds from its book sales. Nielsen Co. analyst Roger Entner has estimated that the carrier gets about \$2 per month per Kindle user.

In addition to the cellular broadband modem, Plastic Logic's device will be able to use Wi-Fi. AT&T has an extensive network of public Wi-Fi hot spots, but the parties would not say whether access to that network would be included for owners of the reader.

AT&T's network is compatible with overseas carriers, which means that the Plastic Logic reader could work internationally, unlike the Kindle.

AT&T is eager to see more non-phone devices use its network, and has set up an Emerging Devices division to attract manufacturers. Other carriers are doing the same. An executive at competitor Verizon Wireless said in April that the carrier had been approached by five companies about wireless connections for e-readers.

"With Amazon having done a tremendous job as a pioneer in this space, I think we're going to see lots of folks jump in," said Glenn Lurie, head of AT&T's Emerging Devices unit.

On the Net:

<http://www.plasticlogic.com>

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