

The Asus New Folding E-Book Reader

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(PhysOrg.com) -- Asus has demonstrated a prototype of an e-book reader it is developing. Unlike its competitors, the device resembles a normal book, having two touch screens that will fold up.

E-book readers can store hundreds of digital books, and some of the later devices feature Internet access to download digital newspapers and magazines. The Sony Daily Edition and Amazon Kindle even include a 3G mobile phone Sim card.

The prototype was shown at the CeBIT trade show in March this year, and the device will probably be shown at the [Consumer Electronics Show](#) in Las Vegas in January 2010. According to the Sunday Times in the UK, the product, dubbed the Eee Reader after the cheap [Asus](#) Eee PC netbooks, may be cheaper than Kindle and Sony e-book readers, with

the budget version possibly costing as little as \$165 in the UK. The launch is reportedly planned for late 2009, but there are no details yet on when it is likely to be released elsewhere, or how much it is likely to cost outside the UK.

There are many e-book readers on the market these days, such as those by Amazon (the Kindle series) and Sony, and new players Plastic Logic and iRex plan to launch large-screen readers either late in 2009 or early 2010. All these readers are black and white, but the Asus Eee Reader is expected to feature color touch screens for the first time.

While details are still sketchy, it appears the product will be released in two versions: a cheaper budget version, and a more expensive, but still reasonably priced, premium version with more features, such as a webcam, microphone, speaker, and the ability to make calls via Skype. The Eee Reader will have two touch screens joined by a hinged spine, but it is not yet clear whether both budget and premium versions will be [dual-screen](#) and full color, or just the premium product.

The new device could use the two screens to simulate a normal book, or the second screen could be used as a web browser or a touch-based keypad to allow it to be used like a netbook or laptop.

With e-book readers enjoying a growing consumer market, the new product may be just what Asus needs to add an inexpensive [e-book reader](#) to its cheap computer products.

The Taiwanese company Asus is already a leader in producing inexpensive computers, chips and netbooks, their cheap alternative to laptop computers. Asus products are often the cheapest available, and it seems they intend to adopt the same business plan for their Eee Readers.

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