

New chip to make eReaders cheaper

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(PhysOrg.com) -- A new chip may soon make eReaders faster and could reduce the retail price of a Kindle to under \$150.

Freescale Semiconductor, the company that makes the chips for most eReaders, including the Kindle and [Sony](#) Reader, has announced it has developed a new [chip](#) that will double the speed at which eReaders can flip pages, increase [battery life](#), and will support larger, color screens. Since it will be available to eReader manufacturers for only \$10 for bulk orders, it is expected to reduce the retail price of eReaders by around \$30 to \$50. Some industry analysts are predicting the price of a Kindle could even drop below \$150, a significant reduction on the current price of around \$260, and cheaper than Sony's eReader, which retails at \$200.

The new chip, dubbed the i.MX508, has an integrated ARM cortex A8 processor and an E-Ink display controller. According to Freescale the chip's increased [processing power](#) will enable eReader manufacturers to

improve touch capability, use color screens and to run more applications on the device.

Marketing Director of Freescale, Glen Burchers, says the new chip will display a new page in under half a second, which may be faster than the time it takes to turn a page in a physical book. The new chip also has battery-extending power modes that turn off peripherals when not being used. He added that this is the first chip to be designed and optimized specifically for eReaders. Before the new chip was developed processors in eReaders were general purpose processors and so were not fully optimized for the application.

Freescale expects the new chip to be available for 'select customers' later this year. This probably means customers such as Sony and Amazon will be first to install the chip, and Burchers said devices containing the chip should reach the market for general consumers by the end of this year.

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