

# Japan online retailer Rakuten to launch e-reader

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President of Japan's top online retailer Rakuten, Hiroshi Mikitani (R), introduces the company's electronic book player "Kobo Touch" with a six-inch e-ink display in Tokyo. Rakuten will launch an ebook service in the nation's largely untapped market on July 19, releasing the Kobo Touch reading device exactly at 100 USD.

Online retailer Rakuten said Monday it would launch a \$100 e-reader into Japan's largely untapped digital book market, as rivals including US online giant Amazon eye the reading-mad nation.

The Japanese [Internet giant](#), following its acquisition of Canadian e-reader firm Kobo, said the gadget would sell for 7,980 yen (\$100), with about 2.4 million titles initially available in several languages from July 19.

Users can buy [digital books](#) from an online store and download them to the Kobo device or other platforms including [tablet computers](#) and smartphones.

The move comes as Amazon.com is expected to launch its Kindle e-reader in Japan, a potentially lucrative market where reading remains hugely popular.

In addition to the new Japan service, Kobo has online bookstores in Canada, the United States, Britain, Germany, Holland, Australia, New Zealand and France.

However, digital books in Japan have so far failed to match their success in some other nations, despite a publishing industry worth an estimated \$23.5 billion.

"I want to start the reading revolution in Japan and in the world with Kobo," Rakuten chief executive Hiroshi Mikitani said Monday.

"Kobo is a global device, a global platform, which allows anyone in the world to enjoy a variety of content."

Material in Japanese will be limited to about 30,000 titles but Rakuten said it was aiming to grow that figure to about 1.5 million in several years.

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