

Study shows readers absorb less information when reading on a Kindle

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(Phys.org) —Researchers at Stavanger University in Norway have found that people tend to absorb less information when reading on a Kindle versus printed paper. After being asked to read a short story written by Elizabeth George, people using a Kindle performed significantly worse on a test that measured plot reconstruction than did those that read the same story from a printed paperback book. The team has not published their results yet but did present what they've found to a group at a conference in Italy recently.

As ebooks become more popular, scientists (and educators) have begun to wonder if the experience a reader gets from reading using an electronic device is different from that experienced by those reading words printed on paper—or more specifically, if the experience is better or worse. The team at Stavanger asked fifty people to read a 28 page short story, and then to take a test afterwards to see how well the [virtual world](#) created by the author set in their minds—half read the story on a Kindle, the other from a paperback book. The test afterwards involved asking questions about plot points, settings, characters, objects, etc., to discover the degree of information absorption and retention by the reader. The researchers report that the Kindle readers reported feeling as empathetic to the characters in the story as did the paperback book readers, and questions in the test indicated they were equally immersed as well. They also seemed to gain an overall sense of the narrative that was nearly the same as with those that read from the paperback—but the similarities stopped there. On the parts of the test that tested how well the readers absorbed data in the story, the Kindle readers scored much lower.

The researchers cannot say why the readers scored lower but propose that more study needs to be done. They suggest the tactile experience that goes along with reading a printed book might be more conducive to data retention, or perhaps the fact that a reader is constantly aware of their degree of progress with a paperback book somehow has an impact

on what their mind holds onto.

It should be noted that only two of the volunteer readers were accustomed to reading on a Kindle, which might have impacted the results.

More information: via [TheGuardian](#)

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