

Amazon's high-end Kindle gets a recharge as e-reader marks 10th year

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Kindle Oasis

For its 10th birthday, Amazon's Kindle is getting a new suit.

A refreshed version of the high-end Kindle Oasis, unveiled on Wednesday, sports an aluminum back and larger screen and is the first waterproof device Amazon has rolled out in the decade since launching its e-reader line.

The Kindle Oasis will start shipping at the end of October.

Some analysts say the device category Amazon helped create is in trouble.

Smartphones and tablets have dented sales of dedicated e-readers. (Amazon has tried its hand at both, finding more success with Fire-branded tablets than the discontinued Fire phone).

Yet the Seattle company continues to plug away on devices with black-and-white screens designed to do one thing well: display text that's as easy on the eyes as technology allows.

"There aren't many single-purpose devices left," said Arthur Van Rest, a general manager on the Kindle team. E-readers endure, he said, in part because they don't come with the distraction of other devices where email or web browsing are more readily available.

Amazon doesn't disclose unit sales. Van Rest said Kindle sales were higher this year than in 2016, though he didn't specify whether he was talking about unit totals or revenue.

"We want people to read," he said. "And we want people to read more digitally."

In addition to its new casing, the Kindle Oasis has a larger, 7-inch screen, and faster page turning: 20 percent quicker than the previous model, Amazon says.

Reviewers' knock on the original Oasis model, unveiled last year, was its relatively high price. At \$290, it cost \$90 more than the next most expensive Kindle and was pricier than entry-level tablets aimed at multitasking and media consumption.

Amazon knocked the cost of the successor down a bit.

The basic version, with 8 gigabytes of internal storage, will sell for \$250. A 32 GB model [costs](#) \$280, and a variant that comes with free cellular connectivity costs \$350. Covers cost \$45 for fabric and \$60 for leather models.

Amazon says its hardware business isn't structured to make money on sales of the devices themselves. Rather, the company hopes its tablets, Echo speakers and e-readers serve as entry points to other, more lucrative sales and services.

For Kindle, that's the massive e-book store, the \$9.99-a-month e-book subscription service, and Audible, Amazon's audiobook service. The software will be loaded on every Kindle Oasis.

The [device](#) has no headphone jack, tough. Instead it beams audio to Bluetooth-enabled headphones or speakers.

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