E-Readers Leading the Charge

The holiday season is upon us once again and, as usual, we are subjected to the onslaught of catalogs, fliers, commercials and emails touting us to take advantage of the deep discounts merchants are offering for their wares. Although it is a little scary and may seem inappropriate to allocate funds in the budget for things we want but don't necessarily need, it is probably the best thing we as citizens can do right now to support our economy.

Prior to my first shopping expedition this season, I checked out Amazon.com's Top 10 Christmas Gifts for 2009, just in case I ran low on ideas. No surprise there all but two were in the electronics category. Without a doubt, consumer electronic products are now the most desirable gifts for people of all ages. Doesn't anyone want a sweater any more?

At the top of the list for this year is Amazon's Kindle Wireless Reading Device, followed by the Apple iPod Touch and the Garmin Nüvi widescreen portable GPS Navigator.

The Kindle truly is an amazing device. For an avid reader, the ability to download books wirelessly in less than 60 seconds and enjoy 3G coverage at home and abroad in over 100 countries is surely a luxury worth the investment. Along with providing us with many hours of enjoyment during our limited free time, the commercial success of the Kindle e-reader has sparked a large interest in e-paper display technologies, which is great for the industry.

A report from IDTechEx found that the total market size for e-paper displays in 2010 is $131 million and rising to $1.17 billion in 2014. (This is the value of the display component, not the product.) The report also indicated that in 2020 the market value will reach $7.45 billion due to the availability of flexible, color displays and faster refresh rates.

After a long development and commercialization period, many experts feel that low-power "electronic ink" displays are impacting the market in a big way, thanks to products like the Kindle. How big will the e-reader market become? Will consumers embrace it as quickly as they did the iPhone? Which technologies will gain the largest market share? These questions remain unanswered for now, but it will be

exciting to see what new apps and opportunities develop in 2010 as a result of this innovative product technology.

Editor's Note: As you read through this issue, you will notice our new editorial feature format which consists of several articles, written from different perspectives, covering a specific topic. These articles appear in a shortened version for print purposes and are followed by a note indicating where to find the complete article on the WDD web site. Also, make sure you don't miss our annual "Year in Wireless" special edition inside this issue.

In closing, the entire WDD staff wishes everyone a safe and joyous holiday season!

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