Quote launches mobile financial portal

Quote.com If you are a wannabe superstar trader, you should check out Quote's just launched mobile site that can be accessed with any connected mobile device and offers various goodies, including stock, futures, Forex and mutual fund quotes, business news and charts. Link:

http://www.quote.mobi/

[IMAGE]

eReader 10% discount through 02/06/07

Powered by eReader

Our friends at Palm Addicts have digged out the latest discount you can apply when purchasing e-books from eReader.com:

Quote:

Punch in this week's Promo Code 3ER7C to receive a 10% discount off any eligible book that you purchase. Offer good through February 6, 2007 on all books priced more than $3.00. This discount cannot be used with any other special offers.

Winthrop University testing the Sony Reader

Imagine the only thing you need to bring to school is your brain and the Sony Reader. Faculty members of the Winthrop University are currently evaluating the Sony Reader as an alternative to hauling 10-pound books to class.

Quote:

Students will get a chance to test out the e-readers next semester. Based on all the feedback, school leaders will decide whether or not to make a larger investment.

Read the full article here.

Related: Dutch school to launch iRex iLiad experiment

[IMAGE]

First week with the STARe-BOOK

 As most of you probably remember, I received a review sample of the STAReBOOK last monday.

I have posted pictures, a video and a review so far.

Now I've had some more time to evaluate the device and would like to add a few things to my previous review.

Ergonomics:

I have done quite a lot of reading this past week, as much as my limited spare time allowed. I used the STAReBOOK in a number of situations, reading on the couch, in bed, while eating and while installing software on my computer...more about that later... 🎓

The device is very comfortable to hold, it's weight is the main helper here. You can even use it left-handed (although the controls are on the wrong side for that) because it's small form-factor and the 176g weight help you hold it in ways that would cause you a lot of discomfort if it were

heavier.

In all scenarios I tested the device was easy and secure to hold. The slightly rubberized backside also helps more than you would think at first, giving you a more secure grip without using a lot of finger pressure. Unlike the Iliad, I seldom rested the STAReBOOK on anything for additional support.

Durability:

Of course it's hard to talk about durabilty after such a short time, so I'll make it short. I have found no obvious reasons why this device should not last quite some time. The keys seem to be well constructed, the frame feels solid (and it does not creak quite as ominously as the Iliad does if you twist it slightly... 😵) and nothing rattles as

far as I could discover. I also dropped it (not on purpose!!!) yesterday evening and it still works just like before (it fell from my hand to the (hard) carpet floor) and has no sign of damage to either casing or screen. I never dropped the Iliad so far, so I can't really say how that device would have survived the fall.

Reading Experience:

Now this is the main point... 🦇

I finished two books and am well into my third right now. During this week I noticed just how much the Iliad with it's slow booting times and miserable battery-life has disrupted my reading habits.

I'm not really somebody who reserves two hours a day for reading. I prefer to just pick up a book whenever I have a moment, read a few pages and then put it away again. With the Iliad this is not possible. If I leave it on all day, then it'll be out of battery before I go to bed.

I left the STAReBOOK on from Monday to Saturday, I did not even switch it off during the night. The battery did not last as long as I had hoped, it stopped working on Saturday morning (I had charged it fully on Monday around 2:00 PM). On Saturday morning it then switched itself off. Apparently, the STAReBOOK is not using Suspend mode, it seems to be doing "low-power-mode" between pageturns and thus runs out of juice a lot faster than the Sony Reader (as far as I've heard, I don't have one unfortunately).

I asked staretek about the possibility of adding Suspend mode to the STAReBOOK, but so far have not received a reply. I'll keep you posted on the progress here.

Even without Suspend, the device does well enough, if you turn it off overnight you only have to boot it once a day and it should last almost two weeks, so I guess that's good enough for most.

Now let's get back to the reading experience...

Even though it uses ugly fonts and bad formatting, I enjoyed reading on the STAReBOOK a lot more than I did reading on the Iliad. The keyword here is Simplicity. I read, put the book down with the last-read page displaying (it loses a bit of contrast over time, but the text is always readable)

and then I just grab it again as soon as I have a moment and can continue from where I was, not restart, no delay at all. That is what really sets this device apart from the Iliad in my eyes. It is a lot more paper-like and comfortable. If they manage to bring more formats, improve the fonts and line-breaking and maybe add suspend then this could very well be the ultimate device, now it's not quite there yet, but for reading purposes it beats the Iliad any day. Technical documents with illustrations, annotations and similar purposes, here the crown goes to the Iliad, even in it's unfinished state, but for a ficion-reader I would never hesitate to recommend this one.

Summary:

The STAReBOOK is a very nice device. The design is cool, it feels good and is easy to hold, even for longer reading sessions. It's battery life could be better, but it's OK as it is if you are willing to accept the compromise.

There is still work to be done when it comes to format support and formatting (and perhaps a Suspend mode could be added?) but it is already a very comfortable eReading solution. Added benefits like mp3 playack (I still have not tested, sorry) and nice little features like bookmarks, last-read book, favourites (list of last read books) and auto-refresh for the menus (I guess to prevent heavier ghosting after longer inactivity) make it even nicer. It's not quite there yet, but it's close. I would like to see the STAReBOOK with improved software go up against the SonyReader sometime...that

would be a really interesting match since they are both fighting for the same market. The Iliad is a very different device, I'm pretty sure it will never even come close to matching the STAReBOOK, even in it's current state, as an ebook, but if iRex ever manage to use the features their hardware promises, then I guess it can still turn into a good infopad, newspaper reader or PDA.

[IMAGE]

Sony Reader Guide for creating optimized PDF content - Exclusive Preview

Revealed here is a pre-release version of a Sony document obtained by MobileRead. It is called "Users Guide to Creating PDFs for the Sony® Reader", and as expected, the information contained covers how to prepare PDF documents that are optimized for the Sony Reader. We expect a similar version to be officially released from Sony

in the near future.

While the instructions themselves are in a PDF, the file is not (yet) optimized for the Reader. Here, from the contents, is a list of the topics included:

I. Introduction

Portable Document Format / PDF Creation Software / Sony® Reader screen dimensions and specifications / Font recommendations for the Sony® Reader

II. Creating PDFs from Word Processing Documents

Create word processing documents with optimized dimensions and layout in Microsoft® Word and OpenOffice.org Writer / Generate PDFs with appropriate settings

using Adobe PDF or PDF Creator printer

III. Creating PDFs from Presentations

Create presentations with optimized dimensions and layout in Microsoft® PowerPoint and OpenOffice.org Impress / Generate PDFs with appropriate settings using Adobe PDF or PDF Creator printer

IV. Creating PDFs from Professional Layout Applications

Create presentations with optimized dimensions and layout in QuarkXPress® software and Adobe® InDesign / Ensure proper font and image embedding / Generate PDFs with appropriate settings using Adobe PDF or PDF Creator printer

V. Doing more with Adobe® Acrobat

Reformat an existing PDF for use on the Sony® Reader 􀁸 Enhance navigation of your PDF with internal linking / Create a Sony® Reader-optimized PDF preset for streamlined PDF generation / Import an existing Sony® Reader-optimized PDF preset into your system

As we look at the font recommendations, for example, we immediately see that the document can at best hope to be some general guidelines. No matter what is recommended, there will be differences of opinion because individual tastes will vary. For example, I prefer a size 16 serif font like Times Roman. But Sony states general guidelines as follows: "A range of fonts and font sizes will display clearly in PDFs on the Sony Reader. As a general starting point,

we recommend using Arial and Times Roman as base fonts at sizes of 7 points. Text is legible at 6 points, though at this size it can lose some clarity. Large fonts will tend to use up screen space rather rapidly given the maximum document dimensions." The idea appears to be that one should use a smaller size in order to maximize the words on a screen as much as possible, while allowing the Sony Reader to scale the text to larger sizes when desired by the user.

It will be very interesting to see how the recommendations are received when analyzed more carefully by the MobileRead community, but this is definitely a welcome addition from Sony. It is not just some casual document thrown together by novices, but is something that appears to be both informative and useful. Kudos to

Sony for providing it as part of their commitment to the product.

[IMAGE]

Adobe wants PDF to become the formally recognized standard

Adobe

In a press release today Adobe announced that they're seeking ISO standardization for their just-released PDF 1.7 specification. Quote:

Quote:

"Todays announcement is the next logical step in the evolution of PDF from de facto standard to a formal, de jure standard, said Kevin Lynch, senior vice president and chief software architect at Adobe. By releasing the full PDF specification for ISO standardization, we are reinforcing our commitment to openness. As governments and organizations increasingly request open formats, maintenance of the PDF specification by an external and participatory organization will help continue to drive innovation and expand the rich PDF ecosystem that has evolved over the past 15 years."

Before you get too excited (or not) about yet another proposed document standard (heck, if you want to believe Adobe, PDF is already the standard), keep in mind that it can take anywhere from 12-30 months for a proposed standard to be ratified.

[IMAGE]

MobileRead Week in Review: 01/21 - 01/28

Another week, another steady stream of mobile goodness here on MobileRead. Our authentic roundup of what's been going on:

E-book Devices, eREAD STAReBOOK

Exclusive: STAReBOOK Review Part I

STAReBOOK Review Part II

STAReBOOK vs. Iliad speed video!

E-books, News

Google working on e-book retail platform

PVI to release e-book reader in partnership with Les Echos

Nemoptic says our e-paper is better than others

Dutch school to launch iRex iLiad experiment

E-books, Reading Software

iSilo launched for Symbian S60 devices

Miscellaneous, Feedback

MobileRead newsletter - your input is needed!

Miscellaneous, Lounge

Do our mobile devices get more time than a significant other?

Microsoft will provide more years of support for Windows XP

Mobile Devices, General Talk

New mobile chip technology reduces power requirements up to 80%

Is voice control part of our mobile future?

Mobile Devices, Handhelds and Smartphones

New tabbed browser for PalmOS coming this quarter

Free 3-D golf game for Windows Mobile

Mobile Devices, Others

Neat display-oriented laptop... but what is it?!

Web to Mobile, Mobile Sites

More mobile sites at Wap Review

Is voice control part of our mobile future?

Voice recognition and control systems were frequently mentioned as the computer input of the future. It was supposed to replace keyboard input, and even was going to provide all your home controls for lights and appliances. But then we learned how hard the problem is, and how much of human listening is tied to our understanding of

language and contextual information.

But with more realistic goals, speech input might have a place in our mobile future after all. Those who have used the newer versions of Dragon Naturally Speaking, for example, will have an idea of how far such programs have come. You can actually speak text and it will be recognized. Years ago, I played around with state of the art software, and it just wasn't worth using. Now it is.

With devices like the new UMPCs, we are finding that powerful devices are coming in smaller and smaller packages for computing on the go. Together with progress in voice recognition software, it is becoming evident that you might be able to control a mobile device with speech after all.

For an example of what I mean, take a look at this video demo of speech control of a Vista system. You can both see that it's not perfect, and that it has great potential. And apparently it's much better than what was included in early versions of Vista. Of special interest for mobile computing is the later portions of the video with web browsing using voice commands.

And don't forget that it doesn't have to be entirely voice controlled to be useful. We are happy to use both the D-pad control and a fingernail when using a Treo, so why not do a combination of voice and other inputs for mobile computing also? After all, you aren't always in a location where you can speak freely anyway, such as in a theater or library.

Speech control may not be like the movies in our lifetime, but it just might become a useful supplementary input method for many people in the next few years. And what voice recognition application could be easier than e-book reading? Surely any software can learn to recognize a "turn page" command!

[IMAGE]

More mobile sites at Wap Review

WapReview does a great job of searching for mobile friendly sites (primarily WAP sites for mobile phone browsers, but also useful in smartphone browsers).

The latest installment includes a new CBS Sportsline site which has "a new and very attractive site design. The old site was text only, the new one has images resized to browser widths and flashy image gradients. Content's not bad either."

Check out some more mobile sites in their latest post at next installment.

[IMAGE]

iSilo launched for Symbian S60 3rd Edition devices

It's been a while since we heard from Darren, mastermind behind the e-book reading program iSilo, but thankfully he's come through with a new update adding the long-awaited support for Symbian devices. To be able to use iSilo, your mobile must run on Symbian S60 3rd Edition, be able to install and run unsigned applications, and have around 1MB of free storage and free program memory each.

Click here to download iSilo V4.33 beta for Symbian S30.

New mobile chip technology reduces power requirements up to 80%

"Intel Corp. and IBM have announced one of the biggest advances in transistors in four decades, overcoming a frustrating obstacle by ensuring microchips can get even smaller and more powerful." Intel will be in mass production with the new technology by the second half of 2007. IBM will take until 2008, but they will be integrating it into it's next generation of even more densely packed transisters.

This breakthrough news has the potential for greatly reduced power consumption for mobile devices. The new chips will use an exotic silvery metal called "hafnium" which will replace silicon layers. Power leakage

caused by the increasingly tiny layer of silicon in the part of transisters called a "gate", was the single biggest potential barrier to the continuation of Moore's Law. "The problem with the previous technology is that the layer of silicon-based material is now just 5 atoms thick, meaning lots of electricity leaks out, resulting in wasted power and shorter battery life." That meant that even smaller transisters might not be possible without another breakthrough. Fortunately, that obstacle is now gone.

So for mobile device consumers, it turns out that the new technology is not only the first major materials change in chip manufacturing in decades, but it is also expected to be capable of reducing power consumption by up to 80%.

However, I wouldn't count on this advance alone being able to give us UMPC devices with 14hr battery life next year. While the display and wireless capabilites may be getting more efficient, they still use quite a bit of juice themselves.

From Reuters and PhysOrg.

[IMAGE]

Microsoft will provide more years of support for Windows XP

 Microsoft has extended the number of years it will be supporting Windows XP, even out to 2014, but how long depends on which version of Windows.

It looks to me like if you have XP Home Edition, you might find you only have 2 years of support after Vista is released, but it's hard to tell. If you have XP Tablet 2005,

then you appear to have 2 years mainstream support plus another 5 years of extended support. According to PC Pro the dates might even extend further than that, and will include security updates.

At any rate, that's good news for those who are looking for deals on new computers during the transition to Vista. And it also gives some comfort to UMPC fans who want to buy a device right away, before Vista is available on them.

Via DownloadSquad.

[IMAGE]

MobileRead newsletter - your input is needed!

As some of you know, we are planning to launch a newsletter for e-reader devices. In particular iLiad users might enjoy this because this newsletter should become available automatically via the iRex iDS. But of course we

want to support other readers as well, such as the Sony Reader.

Yesterday I've started coding the necessary backend. It's going along fine, but now we need your help. Here are my questions and I would love to hear as many answers as possible:

1. What exactly should we include in the newsletter? Right now I've written the code to include all frontpage articles of one week, including *all* replies. A related question: how often should we publish? Daily? Weekly?

2. What is the best PDF format for your device? We've discussed PDF formatting ad nauseum, but I'd be happy if you could help me and just write it down here instead of me having to find out by scanning the

older threads.

3. How should we make the newsletter available to disconnected device, such as the Sony Reader? Via a simple download or via e-mail subscription?

That would be all for now! 😊

Related:

Proposed MobileRead newsletter, What-ever happened to MobileRead via iDS?

[IMAGE]

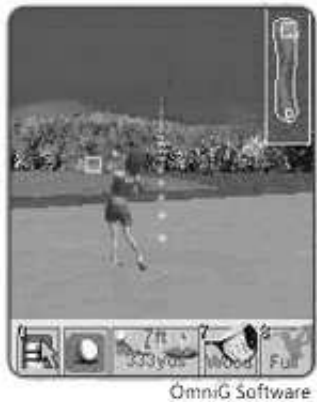# Dutch school to launch iRex iLiad experiment

We've received word from MobileReader Martijn that the Dutch school Bonnefanten College will run an e-paper experiment this February. Initiated by Edupaper, the project will involve a bunch of students who will upload a selection of their school textbooks and homework notes to an iRex iLiad e-reader device. There are some more details available, and we invite our Dutch friends to

provide us with a translation for it (trust me, you don't want to hear the nonsense Babelfish came up with).

[IMAGE]

Free 3-D golf game for Windows Mobile

OmniG Software

Microsoft is offering a free download of a 3-D golf game. There are versions for either Windows Mobile for Smartphone or Pocket PC. *Caution: Registration is required, and I'm not sure how intrusive the process is.*

A similar offer is available for 1-Calc Lite. Both programs are from Omega One.

Via Mobility Site.