

## WHY I'LL NEVER buy an e-reader

As reading goes digital and book shops go to the wall, Alex Bernard remains loyal to the printed page

There is no way Brother Cyrus could have clipped my brother on the back of the head with an e-reader. Nor would an e-reader have remotely worked in the scene in *Bridget Jones' Diary* where her best friend Shaz sits next to the cute guy on the plane and they both pull out their copies of *The Beach*.

When I was five years old my father took me to the local public library to become a member. I thought I would burst with excitement when I got my own library card and the calico bag to put my books in. Sitting in the children's corner reading *Where the Wild Things Are*, being scared and excited about what would happen, remains one of my favourite memories.

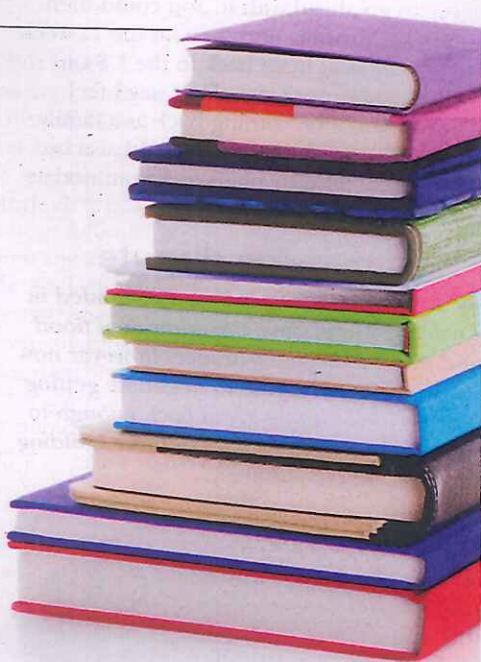
Reviewing books on Greg Cary's 4BC morning radio show is a dream job for me, however, when a listener said to me last year "Do you use a Kindle Alex? I think I prefer the Nook," he may well have been speaking in Swahili. He was, of course, talking about e-readers. Now I've outed myself as a Luddite, but I can't help but smirk as I recall a brilliant cartoon which shows a reader swatting a fly with their portable electronic device, smashing it to smithereens. You don't have that problem with a book.

Call me sentimental, but I love books. And bookshops! The whole experience of buying a book, flicking through the crisp new pages, going to the special desk for those books that are hard to find, looking at those enormous tomes you'll never buy but are almost a work of art to look at (I'm thinking of the Atlas almost as big as me I saw in Dymocks in the city), it's fantastic.

Now I will concede that there are some advantages to going digital. Convenience for a start, you can store and carry around your entire library. But, dear reader, even though it's convenient, what happens when you take it to the beach? It's been my experience that sand and technology don't mix. And what if you knock your e-reader off the bench and it falls on to the terracotta tiles? Bye bye - that'll be a couple of hundred bucks thank you.

E-readers may be more environmentally sound than your old-fashioned printed book which uses three times as many raw materials and 78 times more water to produce. But e-readers have no soul! I love that some of my favourite books are stained with my tears (*The Anatomy of Wings* - Karen Foxlee), have dog-eared pages from being read over and over (*The Great Gatsby* - F. Scott Fitzgerald) and coffee cup rings on their covers (*The Dirty Beat* - Venero Armano) and the indents from my nails as I gripped the book in sheer white-knuckled terror (*Frankenstein* - Mary Shelley).

OK there's a massive collection available at the click of a button on an e-reader, as



my sister found out when she downloaded *The Night Before Christmas* the night before Christmas for her restless two-year-old. And you can store thousands of books in a size and weight smaller than a typical hardcover book, I'll give you that. But it's not the same as lying on the old daybed in the afternoon sun holding a book. And it doesn't have that "book" smell.

And what about the historical significance of books? A first edition collection of William Shakespeare's plays was sold at auction for over \$5million a few years ago. And I just can't imagine Rodgers and Hart being inspired to pen "If They Asked Me I Could Write an eBook".

Speaking of history, I was saddened to hear of Borders and 125-year-old chain Angus & Robertson being placed into voluntary administration last month. It seems modern technology and our love affair with online shopping is catching up with old world booksellers and will undoubtedly rattle the confidence of other traditional bookshops.

I know so many people who buy their latest releases online, especially from American sites offering discounts of up to 50 per cent for Aussie shoppers and made even more attractive recently thanks to the strength of the Australian dollar.

But so what if you can run outside with your entire library in your e-reader if your house catches fire. So what if publishing houses tempt you with free eBook samples. I am resolute. After all, you can't get Lord Jeffrey Archer to write in the front page of your Kindle now can you, nor can you flatten a document with it, use it as an interior design feature or stop a table from wobbling with an e-reader.

Alex Bernard is a writer and radio presenter on 4BC 1116am Saturday and Sunday 12-5pm.

## MALE VOLUNTEERS REQUIRED

New drugs can only be approved after clinical trial testing

We are seeking healthy adults who can assist in a clinical trial of a muscle relaxant.

### Are you:

- A male aged between 18 to 75 years and generally healthy
- Able to attend Q-Pharm at the Royal Brisbane Hospital campus for a screening medical on two separate days and
  - Two additional visits before treatment;
  - One 24 hour overnight stay at the clinic;
  - Seven further outpatient visits over a three month period.

You will be compensated for your time and inconvenience AND provided with amenities and meals during your involvement with the trial (if applicable).



For updates on scheduled trials visit our website:  
<http://www.qpharm.com.au/clinical-trial-volunteers.htm>

For further information please contact Q-Pharm on:

Phone: 1-300-QPharm (1-300-774276)  
Email: [volunteers@qpharm.com.au](mailto:volunteers@qpharm.com.au)  
Web: [www.qpharm.com.au](http://www.qpharm.com.au)

These studies are conducted under Australian and International guidelines for medical research under the approval of the Human Research Ethics Committee of the Queensland Institute of Medical Research.



## House prices double in the next 5 years?

### WHERE?

Extremely tight rental market - virtually no vacancies  
Mining companies resorting to booking out floors of hotels for 3-5 years just to accommodate the influx of workers  
Possibly the best property investment anywhere in Australia  
Completely unaffected by floods or cyclones

Your local Property Specialist is now available for FREE in-home consultations.

- The Gladstone housing market is predicted to go through the roof.
- The current average house price in Gladstone is \$355,000 but that price is expected to rise to more than \$900,000 in just five years.
- Like Mackay and Darwin, the resource boom exploded house prices by up to 300% within five years.
- The rental climate in Gladstone is becoming a bidders market with people outbidding others by offering more money to get a rental property. This is the biggest boom Queensland has ever seen.

By the end of this year, most owners and investors will be priced out of this market.

Comparisons have been drawn between the Super Infrastructure towns of Karratha and Port Hedland WA where prices are more than double and rents are more than four times that of Gladstone.

The only difference is the location and the timing!  
Don't leave it too late.

Some areas have had a 10% increase over the past two months and prices show no signs of slowing down.

Let's have a chat over the phone initially  
call today...



PH. 1300 657 184

INVESTMENT PROPERTY MASTERS

KIERAN MORAN  
FEBRUARY 11, 2011 - THE OBSERVER

[info@investmentpropertymasters.com.au](mailto:info@investmentpropertymasters.com.au)

[www.InvestmentPropertyMasters.com.au](http://www.InvestmentPropertyMasters.com.au)