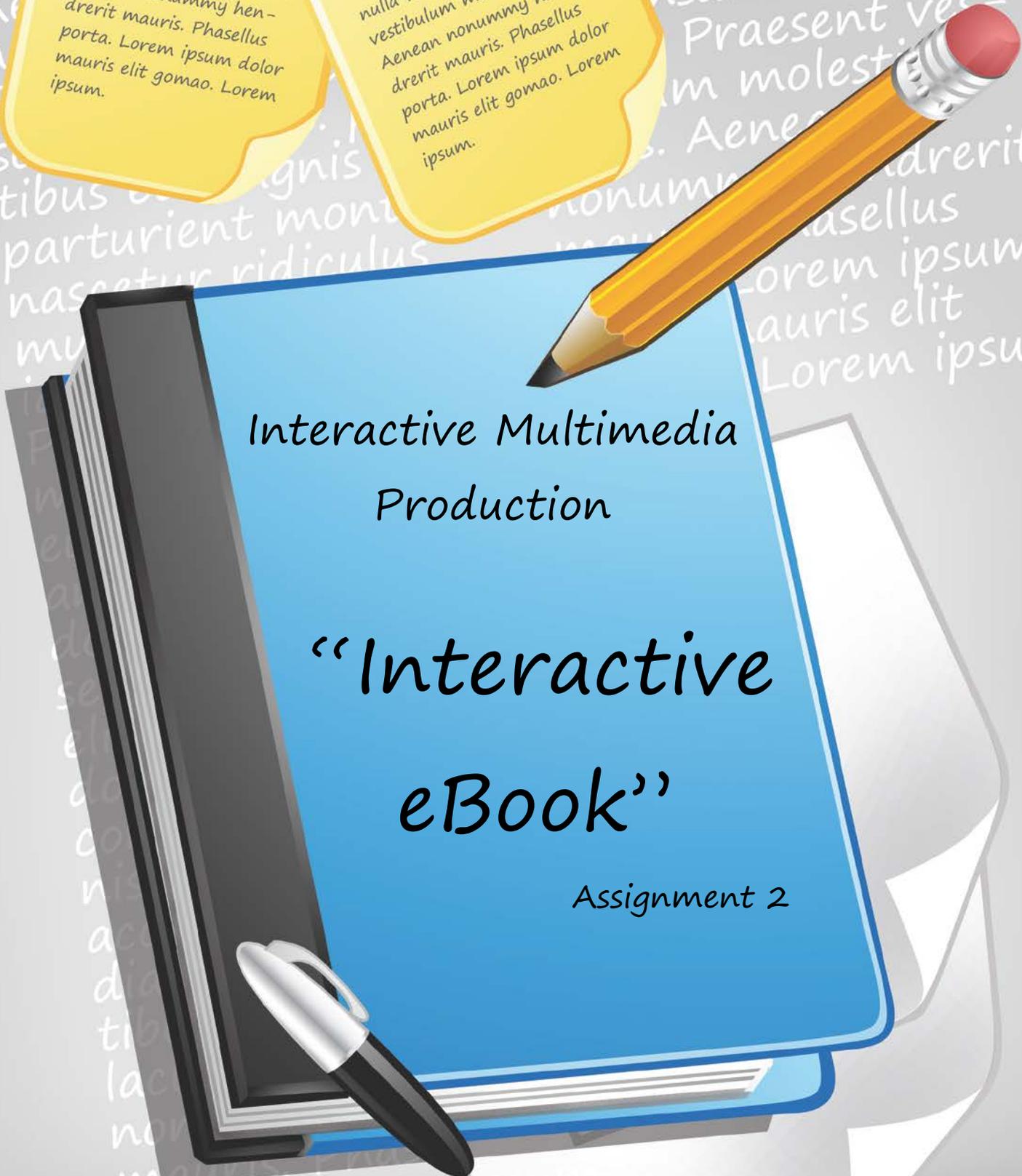


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Interactive Multimedia
Production

“Interactive
eBook”

Assignment 2

TE1002 INTERACTIVE MULTIMEDIA PRODUCTION 2011
ASSIGNMENT 2
“INTERACTIVE EBOOK”

A Comparative Analysis of existing multimedia interactive storytelling

First of all what do we mean by ‘multimedia interactive storytelling’? Well basically we are talking about ‘e-books’. You will have probably seen the adverts and heard words like ‘Kindle’ and ‘ipad’ banded around however unless you have done your homework or know someone who already has an e-book reader you probably won’t have a real clue as to what one is.

So what is an ‘e-book’? E-book stands for electronic book, and is essentially a computer file that contains words and pictures that can be displayed by either a computer or specifically designed reader such as an Amazon Kindle or an Apple ipad. (See images on page 2)

Original e-books were dispersed via Cd ROMs however with the download age upon us, most e-books now come in easy to transfer file formats. These file formats however vary between readers, the crutch being that iPad’s can’t open Kindle files and visa versa. However Apple has recently come up with a programme that can convert Amazon Kindle files to a format that iPad’s can read so that may not be the case for very much longer.

This would probably be more difficult for Amazon to achieve as the Kindle only uses grey scale formatting whereas the iPad utilizes a full range of web safe colours. Amazon has been deliberating over designing a colour version of the Kindle but when Amazon's senior vice president, Steve Kessel was asked if they would be producing one he commented, "We won't add colour if it compromises the reading experience."

Pocket-lint (2010) *Amazon Mulling Over Kindle*[Online]. Available from:<http://www.pocketlint.com/news/34625/amazon-kindle-colour-version-not-ready> [Accessed: 24 March 2011]

If you researched the file formats used by the majority of e-book readers you would probably recognise things such as mp3 sound files, jpeg, bitmap, png image files, html website files and pdf document files, however unless you work in the industry files such as ‘AZW, MOBI, ePub’ would mean nothing to you. A full list of which media formats Kindle and iPad support are in the table below, on inspection you will instantly see how different they are between the two platforms.

However it’s these strange and wonderful file formats that allow the creators to add the interactive elements to the e-books. When I say interactive I’m not just talking about swapping page orientation from portrait to landscape or increasing text and image size. Interaction with iPad e-books has expanded to include user controlled moving graphics, floating images and music elements. The Kindle on the other hand can read the text out aloud to you a feature so far unavailable with the ipad but give them time.

Another feature the iPad has is the facility to choose how you want to read a book. For example if you wanted to say just follow one character in a multiple character story you could choose to just read their bits. A perfect example of this is Stephen Fry’s autobiography ‘The Fry Chronicles’. Available on iPad it provides a non-linear narrative broken down into 112 sections which are colour coded by subject and allow you to explore Fry’s life from several aspects. You can read it from start to finish however if you wanted say just read Stephen’s ‘Feelings and Fryisms’ i.e. the funny stuff you could, you can also bookmark your favorite bits. This none linear approach to storytelling is just one of the methods being deployed within iPad e-books than is not available with the Kindle.

Both iPad and Kindle have the more common interactivity elements such as search capabilities, i.e. the ability to search for a particular word or quote within a whole book. Dictionary referencing, i.e. highlighting a word you’re not familiar with and being able to see a definition of it. They also include the ability to

hyperlink from elements on the page to a website that has more reference information, a popular feature within academic e-books. However the Kindle has a built in full qwerty keyboard whereas the ipad has an on screen touch keypad.

E-books are a great idea and have some very practical applications and advantages, such as being able to store hundreds of books, they are more portable than say a heavy hardback paper book, they don't require the destruction of trees to be produced and are disability user friendly.

Even so with all this going for them there are disadvantages, many readers say they miss the tactile feel of a real book and they are not so easy to snuggle up with. Many e-books are nontransferable so to lend someone an e-book you have to lend them your reader. Readers require power and can be affected by virus's the same as ordinary computers. You drop a book you just pick it up again and carry on reading it you drop an e-book reader and you pray it still works.

There is the cost to consider as well, the average e-book reader will set you back £150 however once you have your reader the majority of e-books cost the same if not a little less than a real book, you just can't dog ear the pages.

My conclusion is that if you just want to read a book with no bells and whistles buy a Kindle if you're after the full interactive experience from your narrative then opt for the ipad.

Model:	Amazon Kindle 3	Amazon Kindle DX	Apple iPad
Unit Image			
Size	7.5" x 4.8" x 0.335"	10.4" x 7.2" x 0.38"	9.5" x 7.4" x 0.50"
Diagonal Display	6"	9"	9"
Pixel Resolution	600x800, Now with 50% better contrast than any other e-reader. The clearest text and sharpest images.	1200 x 824	1024x768
Gray Scale	16-Level	16-Level	Color IPS LCD LED-backlit glossy
Storage Capacity	4GB internal, 3,500 books	4GB internal, 3,500 books	16GB - 64GB
Supported Media Formats	Kindle (AZW), TXT, Audible (Audible Enhanced (AA, AAX)), MP3, unprotected MOBI, PRC natively; PDF, HTML, DOC, JPEG, GIF, PNG, BMP through conversion.	Kindle (AZW), PDF, TXT, Audible (formats 4, Audible Enhanced (AAX)), MP3, unprotected MOBI, PRC natively; HTML, DOC, RTF, JPEG, GIF, PNG, BMP through conversion	ePub, pdf, mp3, jpeg, gif, tiff, doc, docx, htm, html, key, numbers, pages, ppt, pptx, txt, rtf, vcf, xls, xlsx
Touch Screen	No	No	Yes
Text To Speech	Read-To-Me feature can read English newspapers, magazines, blogs, and books out loud to you	Read-To-Me feature can read English newspapers, magazines, blogs, and books out loud to you	No
Weight	8.7 ounces	18.9 ounces	1.5 pounds Wi-Fi model; 1.6 pounds Wi-Fi + 3G
Price	\$139 WiFi only \$189 WiFi+3G	\$379	\$499-\$829 depending upon storage (16-64GB) & Wi-Fi vs Wi-Fi + 3G