



The trusty textbook of the eBook market

TECHNO FILE

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Rather than lament Apple's pre-emptive strike, Ottoy welcomed it as an endorsement of the eBook concept, which has germinated for more than a decade.

With the QuokkaPad launch still weeks away due to manufacturing delays, I borrowed a prototype to compare it with last week's iPad review.

If the iPad is the glossy coffee table book of the eBook market, the QuokkaPad is the trusty textbook.

Powered by a version of Linux, the QuokkaPad is the size of a hardback book (191.4mm x 217mm), weighing 900g.

Although its eight-inch colour screen is a bit smaller than the 9.7-inch iPad, it comes with an included stylus, which makes using the touch-screen easier and more precise.

The QuokkaPad is a durable-looking unit aimed at the business market,

where the lightweight iPad might seem a bit delicate.

With built-in WiFi networking, the unit's built-in battery life ranges from 10 hours to 15 hours, giving it enough grunt to get through a day's work.

Unlike the iPad, the QuokkaPad offers flexible extensions including a USB port for a standard 3G SIM and an SDHC slot for extra external storage.

But what interested me most was its eBook reader, a personal obsession since my bookshelf ran out of space and I started evicting books I will never read again.

The QuokkaPad comes with access to a huge number of books, including out-of-copyright classics such as *War and Peace*, which I've committed this year to reading.

Finding titles is trickier than on the iPad, which has an easy search function. However, once I'd located and downloaded

Tolstoy's doorstopper, the QuokkaPad came into its own.

An on-screen menu switches between portrait or landscape orientation and also selects font style while font size is adjusted by a toggle switch to the right of the screen.

A chunky form factor, with a conveniently grippable bulge on the left, makes the QuokkaPad comfortable to hold. The screen is clear and easy to read.

Unlike the iPad, where your finger activates an animated page turn, the QuokkaPad uses front-mounted buttons to quickly turn pages with no extra effort – a real bonus for a couch potato.

While it lacks the sizzling sex appeal of the iPad, the QuokkaPad's matronly efficiency provides easy access to business documents from textbooks to case records for lawyers or technical manuals for engineers.

The QuokkaPad is

expected to cost less than \$500, which, combined with its flexibility, offers an interesting alternative to the all-singing all-dancing iPad.

■ More details can be found at ubiqtechnologies.com

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The QuokkaPad.