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Digital stories ■ Elearning & online games ■ Elearning via videoconference  
Libraries & QR codes ■ Museums technology ■ Web visualisation

# welcome



Elearning is bringing access to a wider variety of subject experts and educational experiences, as well as offering a variety of

learning styles to better suit varying ages and abilities. In this issue we look at elearning worldwide, plus technologies from online games to videoconference.

Warm regards,

Catherine Dhanjal, Managing Editor

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**catherine.dhanjal@theansweruk.com**

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For advertising, subscriptions and online access, contact:

Catherine Dhanjal  
Managing Editor  
Tel: + 44 (0)800 998 7990  
or mobile: + 44 (0)7941 669925

Email:  
**catherine.dhanjal@theansweruk.com**



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# technology roundup

## Kobo Arc 10 HD Tablet

A big shakeup in the eReader market is taking place right now. Competition is fierce. Even the giant Sony had to withdraw from this market. They have retired their Librie devices in the US, Europe, Australia and Japan. It simply turns out that the product line was no longer economically viable for them.

The eBooks industry is huge, however, being valued at about £10 billion according to PwC and expected to reach £15 billion by 2017. The state of the market is that Amazon dominates with a 79 percent per cent share of the eBook market in the UK with the Apple iBookstore in a poor second with 9 percent. Most eBooks are now read via apps on smartphones and tablets but there does still remain that hardcore group of which swear by their e-ink eReaders. They usually claim that these screens are easier to read in sunlight and are less likely to cause eyestrain than the LCD displays commonly used in tablets.

Kobo, just like Amazon, have moved from eReaders into full-blown tablets with the launch of the Arc, a 7-inch Android tablet. Kobo, offered through WHSmith, according to OFCOM has 5 percent eBook market share. The Arc 7-inch tablet was specifically aimed at bookworms and had a specification quite similar to the Amazon Kindle Fire. However, Kobo lacked the ecosystem of books and multimedia content to make it a true competitor to the Kindle.

Now, however, Kobo have released the 10-inch Kobo Arc HD. It comes with a Tegra 4 1.8GHz quad core processor, 2560x1600 high-definition display, 16GB, dual band Wi Fi, miracast, and Bluetooth 4.0.



Figure 1: Kobo Arc 10-inch HD Google-certified multimedia tablet

The device offers access to nearly 4 million eBooks, as well as apps and games through Google Play. The screen is as good as you will find on a tablet.

Kobo do try to prioritise the reading aspect of eBooks. Recently opened books, magazines and articles are all highlighted on the Reading Life dashboard, and Kobo also makes recommendations based on what you are currently reading. You can quite easily see your entire library of books, magazines and articles, which are organised automatically into collections. You can also create custom collections that

include websites, videos and music and well as books and magazines.

A unique aspect is that they separate the Reading Life interface from the Android interface. Essentially this ensures it looks like a standard Android tablet but with the added value of access to Kobo's eBook library and Reading Mode, that allows you to block out notifications and adjust screen brightness for optimal reading conditions. So if reading eBooks plays a significant role in your life and you don't mind using a tablet to do so, then this might be the ideal tablet for you. It retails at £299.

[www.kobo.com/koboarc10hd#overview](http://www.kobo.com/koboarc10hd#overview)

Image: Courtesy of Kobo. Kobo Arc 10HD - Spain - Library



## ► Bose QuietComfort 15 Acoustic Noise Cancelling headphones

Image: Bose. Image shows QuietComfort 25.



Image shows QC25 headphones and carrying case

I will make a confession. I always buy the cheapest or second cheapest product in the shop — no matter what it is. I just don't like to spend.

So why am I now never going to buy a cheap set of headphones again? Well, because I have seen the light. I have finally seen why people spend 'mad' money on good headphones. They simply make your life better.

These Bose QC 15 noise cancelling headphones are available for about £259 as I type. You will not spend a better £259. Many online reviews agree.

These QuietComfort 15 headphones possess excellent noise reduction. You simply hear so little background noise and more of your music when using them. I have started using them in my car and you would not believe the amount of times I go to start my car when it is already running. Once I take them off, the sounds of the road, engine, interior etc seem so loud.

I have actually had 'good' decent £150 noise cancellation headphones for some years but these just seem to perform so much better. I honestly bought these and this is not a 'product review'. I cannot praise proper noise cancellation headphones highly enough. I actually wish I could get noise

cancellation implants!

The interchangeable audio cables fit the standard 3.5 mm jacks found on virtually every smartphone, tablet or laptop. They come with an additional cable customised for selected Apple devices. A three-button remote and inline microphone let you take calls on your iPhone and manage music on other Apple devices.

You can control volume, track selection and voice applications, plus easily switch between calls and music. I also love the way the fold-flat ear cups rotate 90 degrees for easy storage and portability in the included case. They also come with an airline adapter plug which lets you connect to in-flight entertainment systems equipped with dual output connectors. I wish I had a happy ending but my 13 year audiophile son will not give them back to me. I am not joking.

*Editor's Note: in September 2014 Bose will introduce the QuietComfort 25 Acoustic Noise Cancelling headphones, the next-generation of its QuietComfort headphones.*  
[www.bose.com](http://www.bose.com)

## The BioLite CampStove... no more low battery while camping

The BioLite CampStove uses wood and other biomass fuels, so there is no need to lug heavy gas canisters around with you. It also looks pretty damn cool. This would make me want to actually camp. As the combustion process produces energy, some of this heat is converted into electricity so you can charge small devices like phones and digital cameras.

If this was not enough, the generating unit also features a fan and its own battery supply. The purpose of the internal battery is to power the fan whilst the fire is getting going. As the fire builds, so does the heat, to a point where the stove re-charges its own battery and moves the fan onto a higher-output setting. The fan improves its efficiency, making it burn hotter and cleaner.

It looks cool for camping holidays and festivals. You can cook your food and charge your devices safe in the knowledge that your environmental impact is kept to an absolute minimum.

*The BioLite costs approx £135 and can be found on sites such as [www.iwantoneofthose.com](http://www.iwantoneofthose.com)*

*Find out more at: <http://biolitestove.com/products/campstove/>*



Image: Courtesy of BioLite

## ► UP! Plus 2 — a 3D Printer

Worldwide shipments of 3D printers are expected to grow 75 percent in 2014 followed by a near doubling of unit shipments in 2015.

The consumer market hype has made organisations aware of the fact 3D printing is a real, viable and cost-effective means to reduce costs through improved designs and streamlined prototyping. We can expect to see more serious uses of 3D printing in many areas.

Here is a popular consumer model which currently retails at £1250 and is on sale in Maplin stores in the UK (and online).

The UP! Plus 2 is a small format 3D printer that works straight out of the box and has automatic calibration. The Up! Plus 2 is based on its award-winning predecessor, but with a host of refinements and improvements.

In a review in *Stuff* magazine with the Makerbot Replicator 2 and the 3D Systems Cube, the Up! Plus 2 came out on top.

It is portable, robust and has a small footprint. It is the only printer in its class to have automatic levelling and nozzle height setting. The machine size is (W) 245 x (D) 260 x (H) 350 mm. It weighs 5 kg and has a build volume/size: (W) 140 x (D) 140 x (H) 135 mm. The material used is ABS. It has a layer



thickness of 0.15 / 0.20 / 0.30 / 0.35 / 0.40 mm.

It is also worth pointing out that they also sell a cheaper Velleman K8200 3D Printer for £699. This is a build it yourself 3D printer kit that allows you turn your ideas and designs into real stuff you can hold, like toys, product prototypes, and replacement parts.

The printer works by layering plastic to form a solid object. It works with PLA & ABS filament, has a print size of 20x20x20cm and has a printing resolution (layers): 0.20 - 0.25mm. There are full step-by-step instructions available online to take you through the build process which will take several hours depending on your level of competency. All the tools required to complete the build are available from Maplin if you do not have them already.

Available from outlets including:

<https://isupply3d.com/UP-Printer-Section/UP-Printers/up-printer-plus-2-3D>

<http://www.maplin.co.uk/p/up-plus-2-3d-printer-a25lt>

Watch the video on YouTube: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_UlsMbmGZM](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_UlsMbmGZM)

## Good value tablets: HaierPad W81 & HaierPad 781

Haier will launch a new range of five Android tablets and one Windows tablet at IFA 2014, a leading consumer electronics show. These are ultra-slim tablets boasting a variety of impressive features, including multi-core processors up to octa-core, QXGA (Quad Extended Graphics Array) resolution, dual-band Wi-Fi, powerful batteries (up to 7800mAh), and high-resolution cameras.

### HaierPad W81: Windows 8 tablet mini, slim (8.5mm) and lightweight

IFA 2014 sees the arrival of the new W81, similarly equipped with an INTEL quad-core processor and Windows 8.1 OS. Its 8" IPS HD screen guarantees clear and detailed images while its white TP and silver metal shell gives the W81 a sleek,

modern look. The Windows tablet comes pre-installed with Microsoft Office 365, ideal for use as a mini laptop. Very good value.

### HaierPad 781/HaierPad G781 in WiFi/3G & WiFi

With a depth of just 7mm, the 781 series is the thinnest HaierPad. The HaierPad 781 has been acclaimed as the slimmest tablet in the world and now a 3G model has been added: HaierPad G781. Much like the WiFi model, the HaierPad G781 is powered by a quad-core processor which ensures the smooth running of the Android 4.2 operating system. A 7.85" OGS IPS panel brings better contrasts, natural colours and a wider viewing angle. The HSPA+ device is perfect for watching videos smoothly even without a

WiFi connection.

The HaierPad 781 is available in Europe with an average retail price of £99 and the HaierPad G781 will be available in Europe in October 2014 with an average retail price of £140.

IFA 2014, September 5-10th, Berlin: <http://b2b.ifa-berlin.com/>



Kevin Curran is  
Senior Lecturer in Computer Science,  
University of Ulster

# coming soon...

## November 2014

Features, including:

Review of MMIT Group's Annual Conference: "Sound & Vision Librarianship: Going Beyond Words & Pictures"

Guerilla Librarian project

Digital legacy programme

Sight and sound: the analogue years

News

Reviews

Technology roundup

coming soon...

*Your articles, photographs, reviews, thoughts and suggestions for the journal are always welcome, just contact Catherine Dhanjal on [catherine.dhanjal@theansweruk.com](mailto:catherine.dhanjal@theansweruk.com) or call +44 (0)800 998 7990.*



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*MmIT*, 103 Bath Road, Willsbridge, Bristol, BS30 6ED, UK