

Research Assistance Question - Cross-platform or Syncing E-Reading

Post by “Cassius” of May 2, 2021 at 8:46 AM

There is an overwhelming amount of material to read and keep track of. Is anyone using an on-line or cross-platform PDF/Ebook reader that syncs? In other words, in order to move between devices and spend as much time as humanly possible reading (😊) it would be ideal to have a service where you could either upload your pdf/ebooks and read them on-line (meaning you always know where you are in reading) or else a local program for phones/tablets/desktops which syncs reading locations and documents between instances.

Anyone already using anything like that? This must be a basic function and need of all college and post-graduate students and teachers today. I am sure there are going to be some paid services which may or may not be worth it, but the ideal answer is the closest thing possible to open source and free.

I googled and see some threads that I haven't started reading yet:

<https://www.slant.co/topics/10075/~...eading-position>

<https://kitaboo.com/9-best-cross-platform-ebook-readers/>

<https://pdf.online-reader.com/>

<https://www.guidingtech.com/32838/sync-ebook-read-positions/>

<https://ebooks.stackexchange.com/questions/3637...cross-pcwindows>

Post by “Martin” of May 2, 2021 at 10:34 AM

Probably, you will need to use the cloud as an efficient way to do this (if you always have internet access).

Post by “Godfrey” of May 2, 2021 at 12:43 PM

That's a good question! I've been using Kindle for books and Google Play Books for pdfs. I haven't checked to see how well GPB syncs as I read most e-stuff on my tablet. GPB seems to be limited in the file size that it will accept, so I downloaded ReadEra pdf reader on my tablet to read and bookmark the Epicurean Friends version of Lucretius. ReadEra only works on Android though as far as I know.

It would be nice to find a reader for pdfs and epub that works as well as Kindle does for mobi! Plus there's my love/hate feelings toward Amazon....

Post by “Cassius” of May 2, 2021 at 4:08 PM

I have a love/hate relationship with Amazon too - 99.99% of which is hate! 😊

I think the ideal answer is going to be something that is crossplatform and allows for storing of the ebooks/pdf on a dropbox or nextcloud or similar cloud service, and they syncs the notes and last position by storing something into that cloud folder.

It could be either an app/program or a web-based reader that works inside a browser, but I think an installable app/program would probably be preferable

Or at least that's my current thought.

Post by “Cassius” of May 3, 2021 at 9:54 AM

I am finding that [Calibre](#) has some features of which I was not aware. Apparently it keeps all your bookmarks / annotations in a single file, and then you can go that file to click and open an ebook at the desired point. I see that Calibre also has some form of sharing over the web to allow you to read your books remotely, but I haven't figured that out yet. [This article](#) hints at some of these features and also talks about [Zotero](#), which also seems to be something that might be useful. I played with Zotero in the past but gave up trying to figure it out - might be time to look into it again.

[Don](#) you are actually or effectively a professional researcher. Do you have experience with Zotero?

Note: I see Zotero has a direct competitor - [MENDELEY](#), a British site.

Comparison: https://med.mercer.edu/library/mendeley_vs_zotero.htm

I see Mendeley is owned by Elsevier and that probably means a negative corporate influence

My next question is whether these allow you to read online from more than one computer, and if so how their ability to do that compares with a Calibre server. (this is the stage of complexity in the past where I generally gave out of steam to figure out)

Post by “Joshua” of May 3, 2021 at 7:13 PM

It's been a few years since I looked into the world of Ebooks, but in general outline the problems likely haven't changed; eReaders are shockingly niche products, which don't sell very well. This is partially because they last a long time (not for eReaders the 2-year obsolescence typical of smartphones), and partially because so few people really read. PDF's have meant that unscrupulous users can get the ebooks themselves for free, making the whole enterprise awfully unprofitable.

The upshot is that eReader manufacturers put precious little effort into delivering the kind of options that people want. It took Amazon 8 generations of the Kindle to finally make it water-resistant! Even by then, a user could read a book, OR listen to the audiobook (through audible), but they could never do both at the same time on the same device! Issues like text adjustment (alignment), file compatibility, and connectivity have all likewise been neglected for long periods of time.

The Barnes and Noble Nook is more or less dead as far as I can see. Amazon can afford to prop up the Kindle line probably indefinitely, but it's certainly not a focus. I'd be interested to hear if anyone has tried some of the other options.

Post by “Joshua” of May 3, 2021 at 7:21 PM

I might also observe that when I do read customer reviews for books on Amazon, it seems there's always someone complaining about their ebook being badly formatted or otherwise unreadable. All that being said, I do have a kindle paperwhite packed away in a closet somewhere.

Post by “Cassius” of May 3, 2021 at 8:33 PM

Thanks Joshua. I was not originally thinking of ebooks but that is definitely part of the picture. It is so much easier to read on those for long periods of time than a computer screen or smart phone.

I had a nook a while back and got some reasonable use out of it, but I tend to want to be able to make notes and save them in outlines, and for that the computer works best.

But definitely ebook readers have a place in this discussion and I need to update my research on those as well.

Post by “Don” of May 3, 2021 at 8:47 PM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

Don you are actually or effectively a professional researcher. Do you have experience with Zotero?

Unfortunately, I don't have any personal experience with Zotero, although I've known people that speak highly of it.

I save all my PDFs of articles in Google Drive. That way they're synced across my computer or smart phone. Admittedly, I do most of my reading of Academia articles or other PDFs on my Google Pixel 2.