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GADGET OF THE WEEK

Wiki World

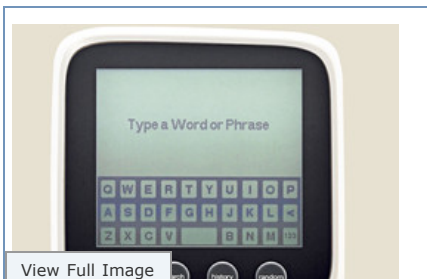
By JAY PALMER | [MORE ARTICLES BY AUTHOR](#)

WikiReader for those who like their gadgets straightforward and simple.

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IT'S THE PERFECT GIFT FOR those who like their gadgets straightforward and simple -- a palm-sized slab whose sole purpose is to access Wikipedia, the sprawling online encyclopedia.



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WikiReader; **Price**: \$99. **Stats**: 3.9 by 3.9 by 0.8 inches. Weighs 4.5 ounces. **Features**: LCD touch-sensitive screen. **Websites**: www.thewikireader.com



Folks with smartphones, of course, can easily consult Wikipedia on the fly to answer almost any question: Who broke up the Beatles? Where did the Whiskey Rebellion take place? What is string theory?

But if you don't want a Web-surfing gizmo with a fat monthly bill, the decidedly offline WikiReader will do the job just fine.

The device comes loaded with the latest version of Wikipedia, addressing some three million topics. Just type in your question and off you go. Then, every six months, you can update the contents, with either a download or a computer chip that arrives by snail mail.

Make no mistake, the WikiReader is nothing like the eagerly awaited but still-mythical Apple tablet. Rather, it is an intriguing example of basic technology that operates on the cheap: The device runs for a year on two AAA batteries.

The downside is, well, that it's Wikipedia. For all its huge scope, the encyclopedia is sometimes criticized for bias and inconsistencies, as well as an editorial process favoring "consensus over credentials." For that matter, you can't contribute to the collaborative writing and editing from the reader. Nor does the device display tables and photos.

But hey, if you want all that, you probably have a smartphone by now. The WikiReader is for everyone else.

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