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First Fire Steps

The tablet computer market is becoming increasingly competitive and the Kindle Fire is fast establishing itself as a significant player in this arena. This chapter introduces the Kindle Fire and shows how to set it up and use the online Amazon Cloud Drive too.

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About the Kindle Fire

Mobility is now a key word in the world of computing and tablet computers are beginning to play a significant role in how we all communicate and access information. The Kindle Fire is a fully-fledged tablet that has evolved out of the Kindle eReader that was originally designed for reading books, newspapers and magazines. The Kindle Fire HD and HDX take this several steps further, with functionality to:

- Surf the web and access your favorite social networking sites
- Use email
- Listen to music
- Download apps
- Play games
- Watch movies and TV shows
- Read all of your favorite books



The Kindle Fire HDX has a superior quality screen over the HD version and a few additional features, such as the Mayday help service, but in most respects the functionality of the two models is the same.



The New icon pictured above indicates a new or enhanced feature introduced with the latest version of the Kindle Fire HDX.



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Kindle Fire and Amazon

One of the first things to say about the Kindle Fire is that it is an Amazon product and most things on it are linked to Amazon in one way or another. To use the Kindle Fire you need to have an Amazon Account with a username and password. If you do not already have one this will be set up if you buy your Kindle Fire from the Amazon website or, if you buy it from another retailer, you can create an Amazon Account during the setup process. Most of the content in terms of books, movies, music and apps comes from the Amazon online store, although there are some items that you can also upload to your Kindle Fire.



The Kindle Fire HD has a standard model and an HDX model: both have 7-inch screen and 8.9-inch models. The Kindle Fire HD has 8, 16 or 32GB of storage and the HDX comes with 16, 32 or 64GB of storage, so the whole range is powerful enough to be able to store the content you need, whether at home or on the move when traveling.



Although it is possible to use other apps on the Kindle Fire, such as Android ones, this is not recommended as it can involve processes that could harm your Kindle Fire. It is best to stick to the items available through the Amazon Shop and Appstore.



A case can be bought for the Kindle Fire HD and HDX, to protect the screen and also, in some instances, act as a stand.

Specifications

The specifications for the Kindle Fire HD and HDX are:

Kindle Fire HD 7-inch

- 7-inch (diagonally) 1280 x 800 pixel HD display
- Dolby audio and dual-driver stereo speakers
- Dual band Wi-Fi for fast downloads and HD streaming
- 1.5 GHz dual-core processor
- 8 or 16GB storage, plus free unlimited cloud storage for all of your Amazon content (see Chapter Four)
- Up to 10 hours battery life for mixed use including reading and surfing the web
- Kindle FreeTime for creating individual profiles for children and specifying the content they can use (see Chapter Twelve)
- Fire OS 3.0 Mojito operating system



The Kindle Fire HD 7-inch model does not have a built-in camera.

Kindle Fire HD 8.9-inch

- 8.9-inch (diagonally) 1920 x 1200 pixel HD display
- Dolby audio and dual-driver stereo speakers
- Dual band, dual antenna Wi-Fi
- 1.5 GHz dual-core processor
- 16 or 32GB storage, plus free unlimited cloud storage for all of your Amazon content (see Chapter Four)
- An HDMI port for viewing your content on your TV or other devices
- Front-facing HD camera
- Up to 10 hours battery life for mixed use including reading and surfing the web
- Kindle FreeTime for creating individual profiles for children and specifying the content they can use (see Chapter Twelve)
- Customized operating system based on Android 4.0.3



The Kindle Fire HD 8.9-inch model is the only one in the range that has an HDMI port for connecting to a High Definition Television.

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Kindle Fire HDX 7-inch

- 7-inch (diagonally) 1920 x 1200 pixel HDX display
- Dolby audio and dual-driver stereo speakers and built-in microphone
- Dual band, dual antenna Wi-Fi
- 2.2 GHz dual-core processor
- 16, 32 or 64GB of storage, plus free unlimited cloud storage for all of your Amazon content (see Chapter Four)
- Front-facing HD camera
- Up to 11 hours battery life for mixed use including reading and surfing the web
- Kindle FreeTime for creating individual profiles for children and specifying the content they can use (see Chapter Twelve)
- Fire OS 3.0 Mojito operating system

Kindle Fire HDX 8.9-inch

- 8.9-inch (diagonally) 2560 x 1600 pixel HDX display
- Dolby audio and dual-driver stereo speakers and built-in microphone
- Dual band, dual antenna Wi-Fi
- 2.2 GHz dual-core processor
- 16, 32 or 64GB of storage, plus free unlimited cloud storage for all of your Amazon content (see Chapter Four)
- Front-facing HD camera and rear-facing 8MP camera
- Up to 12 hours battery life for mixed use including reading and surfing the web
- Kindle FreeTime for creating individual profiles for children and specifying the content they can use (see Chapter Twelve)
- Fire OS 3.0 Mojito operating system



The HDX models of the Kindle Fire also have a 'Mayday' button which can be used to connect to a member of Amazon support staff, via a video chat, to get online support for your Kindle (see page 47).



Both of the HDX models have options for including 3G/4G functionality, for connecting to the Internet on the go, with an appropriate mobile service provider, which incurs additional cost.

Fire OS 3 Mojito

All consumer computers have an operating system, whether they are desktops, laptops or tablets. For desktops and laptops the most familiar are Windows or OS X for Macs, while for tablets the main choice is between the Android operating system or iOS for Apple tablets.

The operating system for the latest models of the Kindle Fire HD 7-inch and the HDX, 7-inch and 8.9-inch, is called Fire OS 3 Mojito. This is an operating system that is unique to the Kindle Fire, although it is based on Android. It is known as a 'forked' system, which means it started as Android and was then developed along a different route, while still maintaining the foundation of the original Android operating system. This has resulted in a unique Kindle Fire user interface, coupled with online access to cloud storage via the Amazon website, where you can store content that has been bought with your Kindle Fire, or created with it.

As in common with other tablet operating systems, Fire OS 3 Mojito uses a touchscreen interface. This means that all of the operations on the tablets are conducted by tapping, swiping or pinching on the screen. For instance, to open an app you tap on it once and to move between screens, such as the Carousel Home screen, you swipe from right to left.



The Kindle Fire HD 8.9-inch model runs on the previous version of the Fire OS operating system, not Fire OS 3.0.



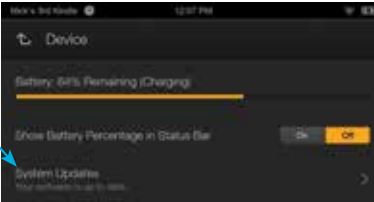
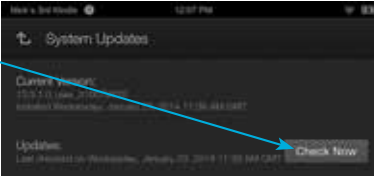



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Checking your OS version

Most operating systems for tablets are updated to a new version on a regular basis, generally between a year and 18 months. However, in between this timescale there are often minor upgrades within the same version of the software, which become version 1.1, 1.2, etc. It is always best to update your operating system when you can, so that you are always up-to-date.

You can check the current version of your Kindle operating system, and see if there are any updates available, from within the **Settings** section. To do this:

- 1 Swipe down from the top of the screen and tap on the **Settings** button 
- 2 Tap on the **Device** button 
- 3 Tap on the **System Updates** button 
- 4 Tap on the **Check Now** button to see if there are any updates to be installed 
- 5 If your operating system is up-to-date it will state **No updates found** 



When there are updates to the operating system you will normally be alerted to this. However, it is still a good idea to check periodically too.



Press and hold the On/Off button to turn your Kindle Fire on or off. Press it once to put it to sleep mode when it is not in use. Press it again to wake the Kindle Fire up from sleep. This will activate the Lock Screen, which can be opened by swiping the padlock icon to the left.

Buttons and Ports

The buttons and ports on the Kindle Fire are located along the edges of the device and consist of:

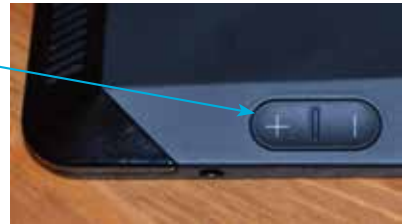
- On/Off button. Press this once to turn on the Kindle Fire or put it into sleep mode. Press and hold to turn it off.
- Volume buttons.
- Stereo jack, for use with headphones or to connect to a stereo system.
- Micro-B Connector for charging the Kindle Fire. This connects with a USB port on a computer or the Kindle Powerfast Charger.

On/Off button



Speakers

Volume buttons



Stereo jack



Micro-B Connector (for charging or connecting to a computer)



The Micro-B Connector is inserted into the Kindle Fire and the USB connector is inserted into the USB port on the Powerfast Charger or a computer's USB port.

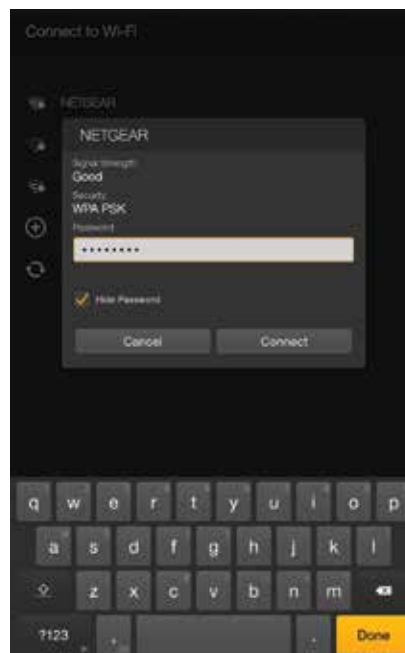
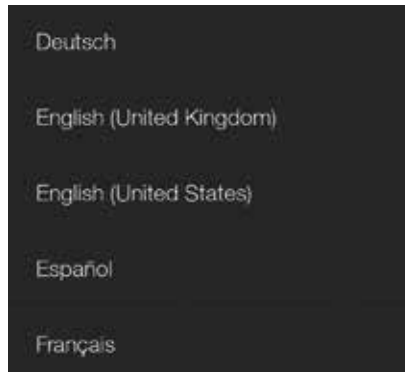
Setting up your Kindle Fire

When you first turn on your Kindle Fire you will be taken through the setup process. This only takes a few minutes and once it has been completed you will be ready to use your Kindle Fire and all of the related Amazon services. The elements of the setup process are:

- Select a language (tap on the **Continue** button after each step).
- Select your Wi-Fi connection (this can also be done at a later time). Your home Wi-Fi should show up for selection at this point.
- Register your Kindle Fire with your Amazon Account, or create a new Amazon Account.
- Select your time zone.
- Link to your Facebook and Twitter accounts (this is optional).

Once you have completed the setup, your Kindle Fire will be ready for use; there are no other system requirements. The first thing you will see is the Kindle Fire Home screen, which is in the form of the Carousel. See pages 24-27 for more information about using this. There is also a Lock Screen that is activated

when the Kindle Fire is put to sleep. This contains promotions from Amazon. This can be turned off for a fee of US \$15 (UK £10) (*correct at the time of printing*). Drag the padlock to the left to access the Carousel from the Lock Screen.



If you do not have an Amazon account you will be asked to create one when you first turn on your Kindle Fire. You do not have to do so at this stage, but you will need an account if you want to download anything from the Amazon Appstore.

Battery and Charging

Battery life is important for any tablet device and the Kindle Fire can be used for up to 10-11 hours from a single charge for general use such as surfing the web, composing emails, reading, listening to music and viewing videos. It comes with a Micro-B Connector that can be used to charge the Kindle Fire. There are two options for this:

- **Charging with a separate AC Adapter.** This comes in the form of the Kindle PowerFast adapter. The Micro-B Connector attaches to the adapter with a USB connector and the adapter can then be plugged into the mains power.



It is best to charge the battery fully each time it is connected to the charger.



- **Charging with a computer.** The Kindle Fire can also be charged by connecting the USB end of the Micro-B Connector to a Windows or Mac computer. However, this takes longer to charge than the PowerFast adapter.

The Kindle Fire charges in approximately four hours using the PowerFast adapter, but up to 13.5 hours if it is connected to a computer via a USB port.

The Kindle Fire charges more quickly if it is in sleep mode and even more quickly if it is turned off. However, it can still be used as normal while it is being charged, if required.



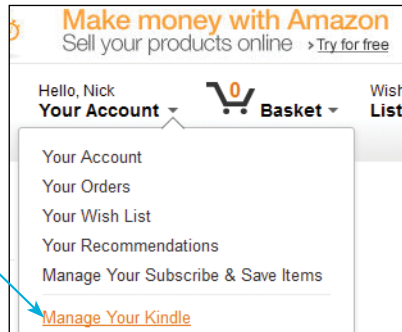
A spare PowerFast charger can be bought, in case you want to use it in more than one location.

Changing the Kindle's Name

When you initially set up your Kindle Fire it will be given a default name based on your own Amazon Account name, e.g. Nick's Kindle Fire. This is displayed in the top left-hand corner on the Status Bar at the top of the screen. However, this can be changed to anything of your own choosing. To do this:

1 Log in to your online Amazon Account

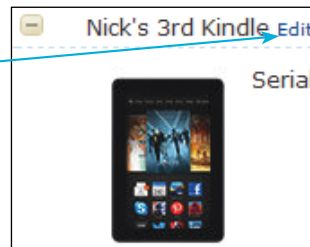
2 Under the **Your Account** heading, click on the **Manage Your Kindle** link from the available options



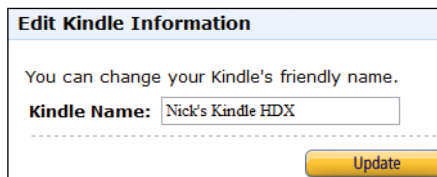
3 In the **Your Kindle Account** section click on the **Manage Your Devices** link



4 Click on the **Edit** button next to the required device



5 Enter a new name and click on the **Update** button. The new name will now appear on the Status Bar on your device



The **Manage Your Devices** section will also display any other devices of yours which have had the Kindle app downloaded onto them and linked to your Amazon account. This includes iPads, Android tablets and smartphones.

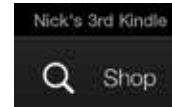


You must have an Amazon account with a credit or debit card registered with it in order to buy items view the Amazon Shop.

Shopping on the Kindle

The Kindle Fire is an Amazon product and it is unashamedly linked to a wide range of content from the Amazon website. This include books, games, apps and music. This can all be accessed from the Shop button on the top Navigation Bar. To do this:

- 1 Tap on the **Shop** button at the top of the Kindle Fire window – this can also be accessed using the Store button from individual sections



- 2 The main Shop window contains a rotating range of promotional items. Tap on the buttons at the bottom of the window to view specific categories



- 3 Content can be downloaded for specific categories such as Apps, Books and Games

- 4 Tap on items on the Home screen to view more details



Content can be downloaded from the Amazon Shop without the need for a password (although one can be set, see page 181) so be careful if someone else is using your Kindle Fire, as it will still be linked to your account.

Using the Amazon Cloud

Another integral part of the Kindle Fire is the Amazon Cloud. This is available on the Amazon website once you have bought a Kindle Fire and consists of:

- **The Cloud** for storing content that has been purchased from Amazon. This includes items such as eBooks and music that have been bought from Amazon. Once this is done, the content is not only available on your Kindle Fire, it is also stored, free of charge, in the Amazon Cloud. All of your compatible purchased content is stored in this way and it can then be downloaded to other Kindles, or by the Kindle app on other tablets and smartphones.
- **The Amazon Cloud Drive.** This can be used to upload your own content, including photos, music and documents, which will then be available on your Kindle Fire. You get 5GB of free storage in the Amazon Cloud Drive but you can buy additional space if required (*correct at the time of printing*).
- **The Cloud Drive Desktop App.** This is an app that can be downloaded to make it easier to add content to your Cloud Drive. You do not have to use it, as you can upload content directly to the Cloud Drive, but it makes the process easier and can be used on Windows and Mac computers. You will be prompted to download the Desktop App when you start to upload content through the Cloud Drive.
- **The Cloud Player.** This can be used to upload your own music, which will then be available on the Kindle Fire. It can be downloaded from the Cloud Drive and then the Amazon Music Importer can be used to scan your computer for music to upload.



The Amazon Cloud stores content that can then be used on your Kindle Fire. You can also access it through the Amazon website.



For more information about using the Amazon Cloud see Chapter Four.

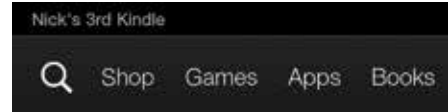
Amazon Prime

When you buy a Kindle Fire you are entitled to a free month's trial of the Amazon Prime service. This consists of streaming of movies and TV shows and a virtual lending library where you can borrow one book a month, free of charge and with no due dates. You also get unlimited free two-day delivery (US, one-day in the UK) on Amazon items. To use Amazon Prime:



Amazon Prime membership costs \$99/ per year in the US and £79/per year in the UK (correct at the time of printing).

- 1 Tap on the **Books** link on the main Navigation Bar on the Home screen



- 2 Tap on the **Store** button at the top of your Books Library



- 3 Swipe in from the left-hand side to access the menu and tap on the **Kindle Lending Library** link under the **Shop** heading



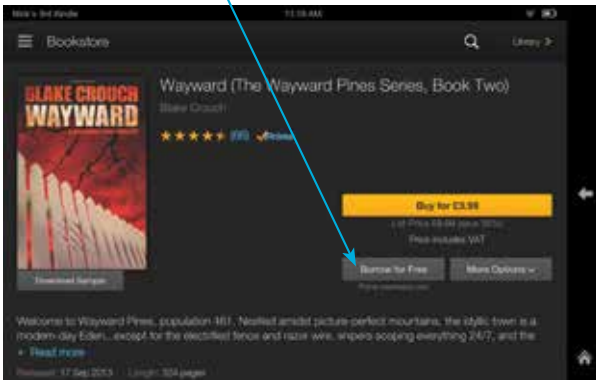
...cont'd

- 4 Tap on a title to view details about it



Movies and TV shows are provided by the Prime Instant Video service.

- 5 Tap on the **Borrow for Free** button to download the title to your Kindle Fire



- 6 Amazon Prime also offers free streaming of a range of movies and TV shows, from the Amazon website



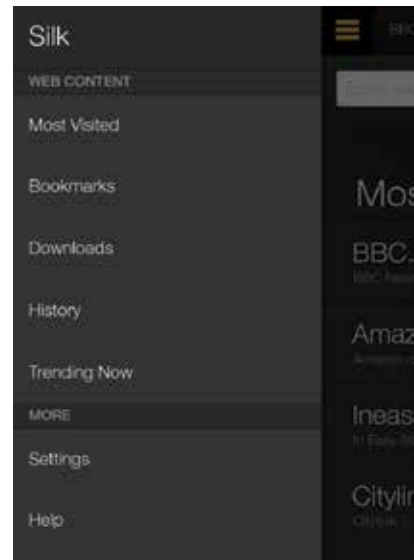
Accessing Menus

Some apps, particularly the built-in Kindle Fire ones that comes pre-installed on your device, have their own menus that can be used for a variety of functions. They are different depending on each app but they can be accessed in the same way:

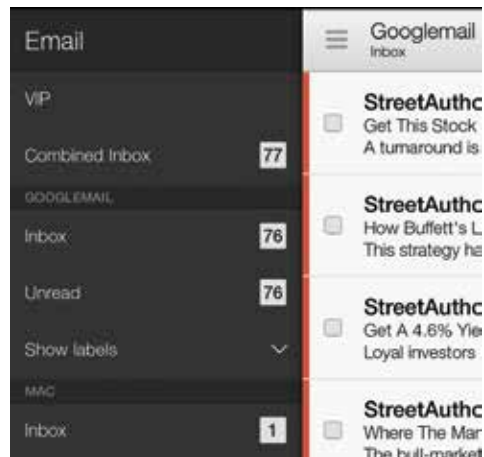
1 Tap on the **Menu** button, in the top left-hand corner of the app's screen (this is either black or gray, depending on the app) or



2 Swipe inwards from the left-hand side of the screen



3 The menus differ for each app. Hide the menu by tapping on the Menu button again or swiping the menu to the left



Tap on a menu item to view it. This could take you away from the current app, i.e. into the Settings app. To get back to the original app, tap on the **Back** button.