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Fire™ Tablets

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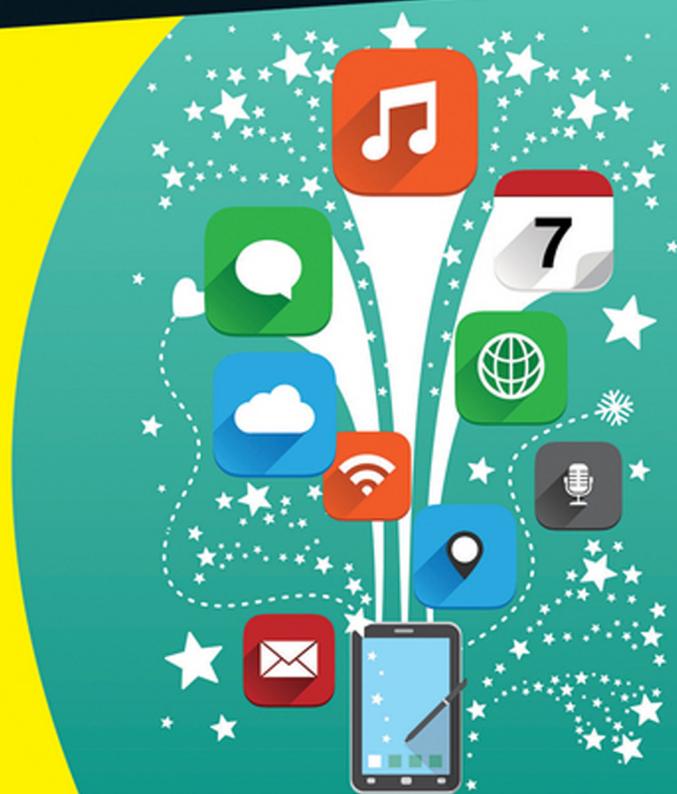
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- Set up your Fire tablet with different profiles for multi-user settings and content
- Regulate your kid's apps and content viewing through FreeTime™ Unlimited
- Extend battery life through the SmartSuspend feature

IN FULL COLOR!

Nancy C. Muir

Author of Kindle Fire For Dummies



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Fire™ Tablets

FOR
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by Nancy Muir

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Fire™ Tablets For Dummies®

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Fire Tablets For Dummies

Introduction

Amazon's Fire tablets provide a very affordable way to get at all kinds of media, from music and videos to books and colorful magazines. Any of the four tablet models also allow you to browse the Internet, connect to your Facebook account, make video calls via Skype, take photos, check your email, and read documents. The portability of both the 6- and 7-inch models makes them incredibly useful for people on the go. The 8.9-inch model is still pretty darn portable, and adds several features that are useful to those who want the most feature-rich tablet experience from Amazon.

In this book, I introduce you to all the cool Fire tablet features, providing tips and advice for getting the most out of these ingenious little devices. I help you find your way around the attractive and easy-to-use interface, provide advice about getting the most out of the Amazon Cloud Drive for storing and managing content, and even recommend some neat apps that make your Fire tablet more functional and fun. Finally, a complete chapter on using a Fire tablet to connect with and protect your family shows you features that integrate into your household.

About This Book

"If Fire tablets are so easy to use, why do I need a book?" you may be asking yourself. When I first sat down with the latest Fire tablets, it took about two weeks of poking around to find settings, features, and ways to buy and locate my content and apps. When was the last time you had two weeks to spare? I've spent the time so that you can quickly and easily get the hang of all the Fire tablet features and discover a few tricks I bet your friends won't uncover for quite a while.

This book uses certain conventions that are helpful to understand, including

- ✓ Text that you're meant to type just as it appears in the book is **bold**. The exception is when you're working through a step list: Because each step is bold, the text to type is not bold.
- ✓ Web addresses appear in `monofont`. If you're reading a digital version of this book on a device connected to the Internet, note that you can click or tap the web address to visit that website, like this: `www.dummies.com`.



This book covers many of the features in the original Kindle Fire, released in 2011, as well as Kindle Fire HD, released in 2012, and Kindle Fire HDX, which appeared in 2013. Though this book is focused on the latest Fire tablet models released in 2014, whichever Fire model you own, you should find lots of advice and answers in this book.

Foolish Assumptions

You may have opted for a tablet to watch movies and read books on the run. You might think it's a good way to browse business documents and check email on your next plane trip. You might have one or more computers and be very computer savvy, or you might hate computers and figure that a Fire tablet gives you all the computing power you need to browse the Internet and read ebooks. Perhaps you see the Fire HD Kids Edition tablet as a great way to direct and monitor your child's computer learning experience.

Fire users come in all types. I don't assume in this book that you're a computer whiz, but I do assume that you have a passing understanding of how to copy a file and plug in a USB cable. I'm guessing you've browsed the Internet at least a few times and heard of Wi-Fi, which is what you use to go online with a Fire tablet (unless you purchased the LTE version, which uses a cellular connection just like your phone). Other than that, you don't need a lot of technical background to get the most out of this book.

Icons Used in This Book

Icons are little pictures in the margin of this book that alert you to special types of advice or information, including



There aren't too many ways you can get in trouble with the Fire tablets, but in those few situations where some action might be irreversible, I include warnings so you can avoid any pitfalls.



When you see this icon, you'll know that I'm emphasizing important information for you to keep in mind as you use a feature.



These short words of advice draw your attention to faster, easier, or alternative ways of getting things done with Fire tablets.

Beyond the Book

There is extra online content about Fire tablets that goes beyond the book itself. Go online to take advantage of these features:

- ✓ **Cheat Sheet** (www.dummies.com/cheatsheet/firetablets): The Cheat Sheet for this book includes a table of information about all the Quick Settings available to you, including settings to adjust screen brightness and the new Mayday online support button.
- ✓ **Dummies.com online articles:** The parts pages of this book provide links to articles on Dummies.com that extend the content covered in the book. The articles appear on the book's Extras page at www.dummies.com/extras/firetablets. Topics include staying safe online, getting more out of OfficeSuite, and ten great apps for kids.
- ✓ **Updates:** Here's where you can find updates in case the book changes substantially: www.dummies.com/extras/firetablets.

Where to Go from Here

Time to get that Fire out of its box, set it up, and get going with all the fun, entertaining things it makes available to you. Have fun!

4

Fire Tablets For Dummies

Part I

Getting Started with Fire Tablets

getting started
with

Fire Tablets



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In this part . . .

- ✓ Take a look at your Fire tablet.
- ✓ Turn it on and set it up for first use.
- ✓ Read about how to use the touchscreen.
- ✓ Set up profiles for yourself and your children.

Getting an Overview of Fire Tablets

In This Chapter

- ▶ Discovering what's new in the latest Fire tablets
- ▶ Comparing Fire tablets to the competition
- ▶ Surveying all of the Fire tablet's features

Your Fire tablet isn't just an ereader. It's a handheld computer with a touchscreen and an onscreen keyboard for providing input, and with apps that allow you to play games, read ebooks, check email, browse the web, watch movies, listen to music, and more.

Amazon, the giant online retailer, just happens to have access to more content (music, movies, audio books, and so on) than just about anybody on the planet. So, when an Amazon tablet debuted a few years ago, and as Amazon stacked up media partnerships with the likes of Fox and PBS, the Kindle Fire tablet was seen as the first real challenge to Apple's iPad.

Now, in its fourth generation and rebranded as simply Fire, these four tablet models offer very nice improvements at the right price and feature mix for many people, while offering the key to that treasure chest of content that Amazon has been wise enough to amass.

In this chapter, you get an overview of the four Fire tablets: how they compare to competing devices and what their key features are. Subsequent chapters delve into how to use all those features in detail.

Checking Out the Four Fire Tablet Models

In 2014, Amazon introduced four Fire tablet models that offer slightly different features and pricing, including a Fire HD Kids edition, which comes in a 6-inch or 7-inch display.

Essentially, the 8.9-inch Fire tablet sports a faster processor, higher resolution screen, higher-end cameras, the most current Wi-Fi standard, and Dolby Atmos multidimensional sound (which means when wearing headphones you hear sounds from multiple locations, as you might in a movie theater).

In addition, the Kids edition has a rugged casing, two-year replacement warranty, robust parental controls, and a free year of access to Amazon's FreeTime Unlimited with age-appropriate content.

Other than these major differences, all the models include

- ✔ Unlimited Amazon Cloud storage for photos taken with your Fire model or content bought from Amazon.
- ✔ An integrated app to work with Microsoft Office documents.
- ✔ A free month of Amazon Prime, which provides free two-day shipping for many Amazon products, as well as access to a treasure trove of free products (video, music, and books).
- ✔ X-Ray provides background information about artists, movies, musicians, and more when you're looking up or playing content.

Table 1-1 helps you make sense of the differences among the various models.

Tablet 1-1		Fire Model Comparison			
Feature	Fire 8.9"	Fire 7"	Fire 6"	Fire HD Kids Edition	
Quad-core 2.5 GHz processor	X				
Quad-core 1.5 GHz processor		X	X	X	
1280 x 800 screen resolution		X	X	X	
2560 x 1600 resolution	X				
Wi-Fi	Dual band, dual antenna	Single-band	Single-band	Single-band	
Support for 802.11 ac Wi-Fi	X				
Dolby Audio		X	X	X	
Dolby ATMOS	X				
4G model available	X				
Front-facing VGA camera		X	X	X	

Feature	Fire 8.9"	Fire 7"	Fire 6"	Fire HD Kids Edition
Front-facing HD camera	X			
2MP rear camera		X	X	X
8MP rear camera	X			
Unlimited Amazon Cloud storage	X	X	X	X
Mayday live help	X			
Battery	12 hours	8 hours	8 hours	8 hours
Storage	16, 32, 64 GB	8 or 16 GB	8 or 16 GB	8 GB
Two-year Worry-Free Warranty				X
Kid-proof case				X
Accelerator/gyroscope	X	X	X	X
Price starting at	\$379	\$139	\$99	\$149
Fire keyboard	X			
Firefly	X			
Dynamic Light Control	X			
One year of free FreeTime				X



In addition to these four models, Amazon offers the 2013 Fire HDX 7-inch tablet for \$179. This is essentially last year's model, but it includes the Mayday help feature, a 2.2 GHz processor, and 1920 x 1200 display resolution, which is better than the newer 6- and 7-inch Fire models for not much more money.



If you prefer working with your Fire tablet on a stand rather than holding it in your hands, check out Meb's Kitchenwares (<http://www.mebskitchenwares.com/accessories.html>) to view their lovely handmade wooden tablet stand. It's portable, handcrafted from cherry wood, and at only \$70 is a beautiful piece of furniture for your Fire tablet. Note it works best with the larger versions of the tablet and works in both portrait and landscape orientations.

What's New in the Latest Fire Tablets

Fire tablets with their new operating system, Fire OS 4.1.1, bring several new or improved features to the table:

- ✓ **Firefly:** A feature that was announced as “coming soon” at the time of this writing, Firefly is essentially a text-recognition app that allows 8.9-inch Fire tablets to identify text on movie posters, music albums, and so on. Firefly finds matches for the movie, music, or whatever in Amazon’s huge online store. See Chapter 3 for more about Firefly. Updates will be posted at www.dummies.com/extras/firetablets.
- ✓ **Profiles:** You can create profiles for different people using your tablet so each has his own settings and content. This feature is like providing unique tablets for all the people in your family, including kids. See Chapter 5 for information about setting up profiles.
- ✓ **Family Library:** This new feature has also been announced but isn’t yet available for Fire tablets as of this writing. Family Library allows you to link accounts to share content among a group or family members without sharing a tablet. See Chapter 5 for details about Family Library. Updates will be posted at www.dummies.com/extras/firetablets.
- ✓ **ASAP:** ASAP stands for Advanced Streaming and Prediction. Essentially, this feature allows your tablet to anticipate content you might want to watch, like your favorite TV show, and pre-load it for faster streaming. You don’t have to do a thing to use this feature; just know it’s working for you.
- ✓ **WPS Office:** Amazon made a change in the latest Fire tablets from OfficeSuite to WPS Office. WPS Office is more integrated into Fire and allows you to create, open, and work with Word, Excel, and PowerPoint files as well as a few other file formats. The working experience with documents is somehow more intuitive and simpler than in OfficeSuite. See Chapter 12 for more details about working with WPS Office.
- ✓ **Fire keyboard:** For the 8.9-inch model only, you can buy a keyboard accessory that attaches to your Fire tablet, making it possible to work on it comfortably as well as using it to view or listen to content like books, music, and videos.
- ✓ **Support for 802.11 ac Wi-Fi standard:** The 8.9-inch Fire has added support for the latest Wi-Fi standard, 802.11 ac. This makes your connection to Wi-Fi networks that much faster.
- ✓ **Second Screen:** This feature allows you to “fling” content from Amazon Cloud to your television. This causes the content to stream to the TV so that your Fire tablet is freed up (so you can do other things with it while watching your TV). You can even explore X-Ray information about the content on your tablet while it plays on your TV. Chapter 10 tells you how to set up and use Second Screen.



- ✓ **FreeTime Unlimited:** This feature, which comes free for one year with the latest Kids Edition Fire tablet, lets you create a unique environment by limiting what content and apps they can use. When you turn on FreeTime, your kids see only the content you've given them permission to use, and it's all shown against a kid-friendly graphical background. See Chapter 5 for more about FreeTime.
- ✓ **Integrated Goodreads:** This service is like a social network for readers. Goodreads was available as an app in previous Amazon tablets, but with the latest models this feature is more integrated. Goodreads allows you to track and share what you're reading and get access to reviews and recommendations from other readers via your Facebook and Twitter accounts.
- ✓ **SmartSuspend:** This is a battery setting that, when turned on in Power Management Settings, turns off your wireless connection when you're not using your Fire tablet. You can even set up a schedule for SmartSuspend to kick in. See Chapter 4 for the details on these settings.
- ✓ **Dynamic Light Control (DLC):** This feature, only available on the 8.9-inch Fire model, modifies your screen when reading ebooks to match ambient light. DLC produces a more paperlike background.

Key Features of Fire Tablets

Every Fire tablet has all the things most people want from a tablet packed into an easy-to-hold package: email, web browsing, players for video and music content, built-in calendar and contacts apps, an ereader, a great online content store, access to tens of thousands of Android apps, and so on. In the following sections, you get to explore some of these useful features.

Storage on Earth and in the Cloud

Fire tablet offers 8GB of storage in its 6- and 7-inch models, and 16GB, 32GB, or 64GB in the 8.9-inch models. Any storage amount will probably work just fine for you because when you own a Fire tablet, you get free, unlimited Amazon Cloud Drive storage for all digital content purchased from Amazon (but not content that you copy onto your Fire tablet from your computer by connecting a micro USB cable). This means that books, movies, music, and apps are held online for you to stream or download at any time you have access to Wi-Fi, instead of being stored on your Fire tablet.

This Amazon Cloud Drive storage means that you don't use up your Fire tablet memory. With the latest Fire tablets, you get unlimited Amazon Cloud storage for photos you take with the tablets and content you buy from Amazon.

As long as you have a Wi-Fi connection, you can stream content from Amazon Cloud at any time. If you'll be away from a connection, download an item (such as an episode of your favorite TV show), watch it, and then remove it

from your device the next time you're within range of a Wi-Fi network. The content is still available in the Cloud: You can download that content again or stream it anytime you like.



If you want to go whole hog into your Fire tablet, you can opt for the highest memory device, the 64GB 8.9-inch Fire tablet 4G LTE Wireless version of the device. Just be aware that 4G devices come with the added cost of an AT&T or Verizon data plan.

App appeal

Your Fire tablet is generally easy to use, with a simple, Android-based touch-screen interface. Its primary focus is on consuming media — and consuming media is what Amazon is all about. Fire tablet also offers its own Silk browser; an email client; clock, calendar and contact apps; and an available Skype app, as well as the Kindle ereader (see Figure 1-1). In addition, the WPS Office productivity app is built in and allows you to work with word processor, spreadsheet, and presentation documents.



Just because a particular type of app doesn't come preinstalled on your Fire tablet doesn't mean you can't get one — you can, and often for free.

At this point, the selection of apps available for Android devices isn't nearly as robust as those available for Apple devices, but that is changing. See Chapter 14 for a list of ten or so apps that can flesh out your Fire tablet with popular features such as a budget tracker, games, weather reporter, and drawing app.

Preinstalled functionality

Here's a rundown of the functionality you get out of the box from preinstalled apps:

- ✓ Ereader to read both books and periodicals
- ✓ Music player
- ✓ Video player
- ✓ Audiobook player
- ✓ Contacts app
- ✓ Calendar app
- ✓ Clock app
- ✓ Docs document reader for Word, PDF, RTF, and HTML format files
- ✓ Silk web browser

- ✔ Camera and Photos (see Figure 1-2) in which you can view and make edits (such as rotate, change brightness and adjust for red-eye, and crop) to photos
- ✔ Email client, to set up the Fire tablet to access your existing email accounts
- ✔ Integration for Goodreads, Facebook, and Twitter
- ✔ WPS Office for simple word processing, presentation, and spreadsheet functionality

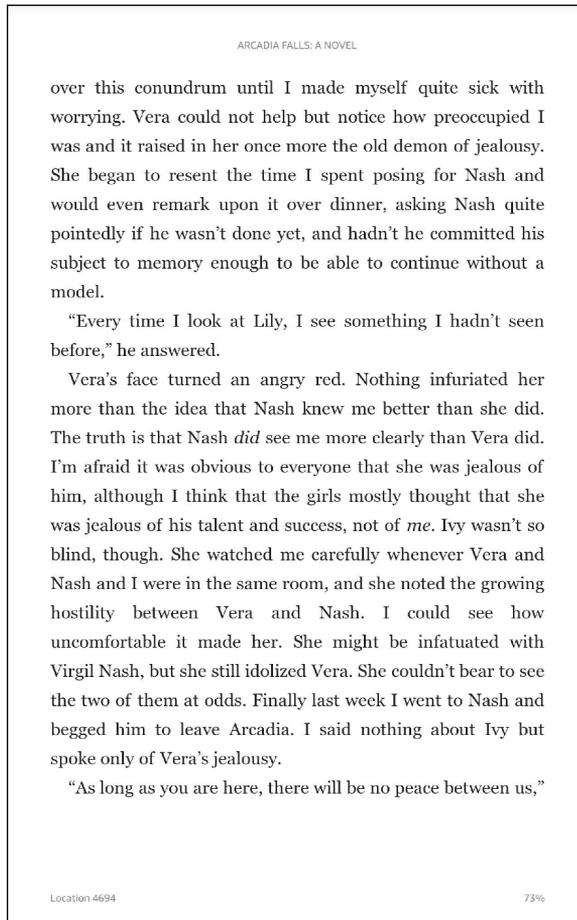


Figure 1-1: Where it all started, with Kindle e-reader functionality.

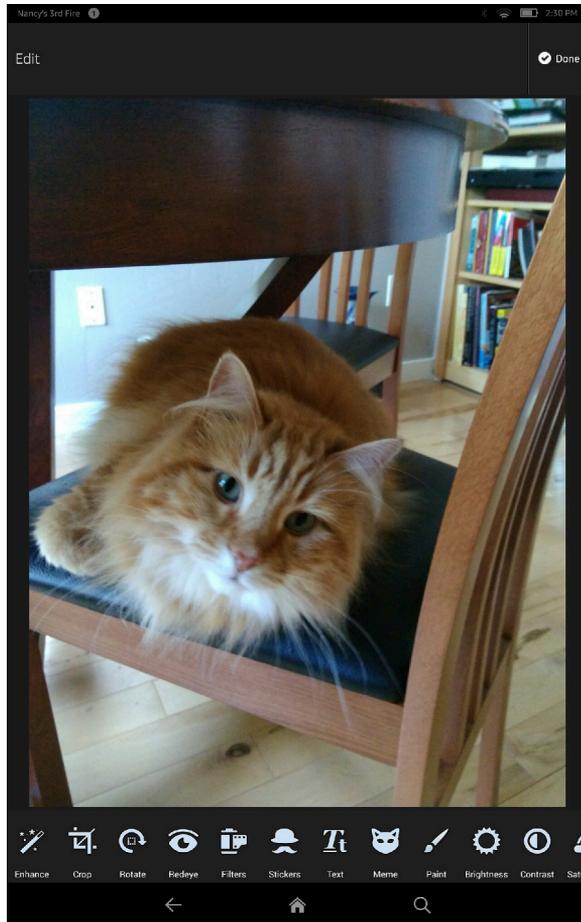


Figure 1-2: Use the Photos app to view photos and edit them.



Check out the apps stored in the Cloud (meaning that these apps are stored at Amazon, rather than being preinstalled on your device) by tapping Apps on the Home screen and then tapping the Cloud tab. Here, you may find a number of free apps, such as a Wifi Analyzer (to check your Wi-Fi connection), free games, and more.

Here are some of the things you can use your Fire tablet for:

- ✓ Shopping at Amazon for music, video, apps, books, and periodicals, and viewing or playing that content, covered in Chapter 6.
- ✓ Storing Amazon-purchased content in the Amazon Cloud Drive and playing music and video selections from the Cloud instead of downloading them to your device. Amazon content doesn't count toward your

Amazon Cloud Drive storage limit (20GB), but other content backed up there does. Note that you can go to www.amazon.com/clouddrive and purchase anywhere from 20GB for \$10 a year up to 1000GB of storage for \$500.

- ✔ Sending documents to yourself at a Kindle email address that's assigned when you register your device (see Chapter 4 for more about setting up your Fire tablet, and Chapter 12 for more about using your Kindle email address to send documents to your Fire tablet).
- ✔ *Sideload*ing (transferring) content from your computer to your Fire tablet by using a micro USB cable that comes with the tablet. Using this cable (see Figure 1-3), you can copy photos, music, videos, and documents (Word or PDF) from any computer onto your Fire tablet. See Chapters 6 and 8 for more about ways to get content onto your Fire.
- ✔ Making video calls using the free Skype for the Fire tablet app.
- ✔ “Flinging” movies from your device to your large-screen TV using the Second Screen feature.



Figure 1-3: The Fire's micro USB cable and a power adapter.

The magic of Whispersync

If you've ever owned a Kindle ereader, you know that downloading Amazon content to it has always been seamless. All you need for this process is access to a Wi-Fi or 4G network. Then you simply order a book, music, or a video, and within moments, it appears on your Kindle device.

The Fire tablet enjoys the same kind of easy download capability for books, audiobooks, music, video, and periodicals.

Whispersync helps sync items such as bookmarks you've placed in ebooks or the last place you watched in a video across various devices. For example, say you have the Kindle ereader app on your Fire tablet, PC, and smartphone. Wherever you left off reading, whatever notes you entered, and whatever pages you've bookmarked will be synced among all the devices without your having to lift a finger. (See Chapter 8 for details on notes, bookmarking, and more features of the ereader.)

Immersion Reading is a feature that uses Whispersync to allow you to play an audiobook and have the current word that's being spoken highlighted in the text. This feature supposedly aids in reader retention, so it might be a nice match for those late-night study sessions with textbooks.

Using content libraries

As I state earlier, the Fire tablet is meant to be a device you use to consume media, meaning that you can use it to play/read all kinds of music, movies, TV shows, podcasts, ebooks, audiobooks, magazines, and newspapers. Amazon has built up a huge amount of content, from print (see Figure 1-4) to audio books via its subsidiary Audible (more than 22 million) to movies, TV shows, songs, books, magazines, audiobooks, apps, and games. Count on these numbers to have risen by the time you read this: Amazon continues to rack up deals with media groups such as Fox Broadcasting and PBS to make even more content available on a regular basis.

Tap a library — such as Books, Music, or Videos — on the Fire tablet Home screen, and you can find various kinds of content in the AmazonStore — by tapping the Store button. Tap Newsstand to shop for periodicals (see Figure 1-5) and Music to shop for songs and albums; tap Video and you go directly to the Amazon Video Store. Tap Apps to shop the Amazon Appstore. If you download content, it's contained in one of these libraries, which have tabs to display content on the device, and you can read or play it even if you're not connected to the Internet. All the content you purchase is backed up on the Amazon Cloud Drive automatically.

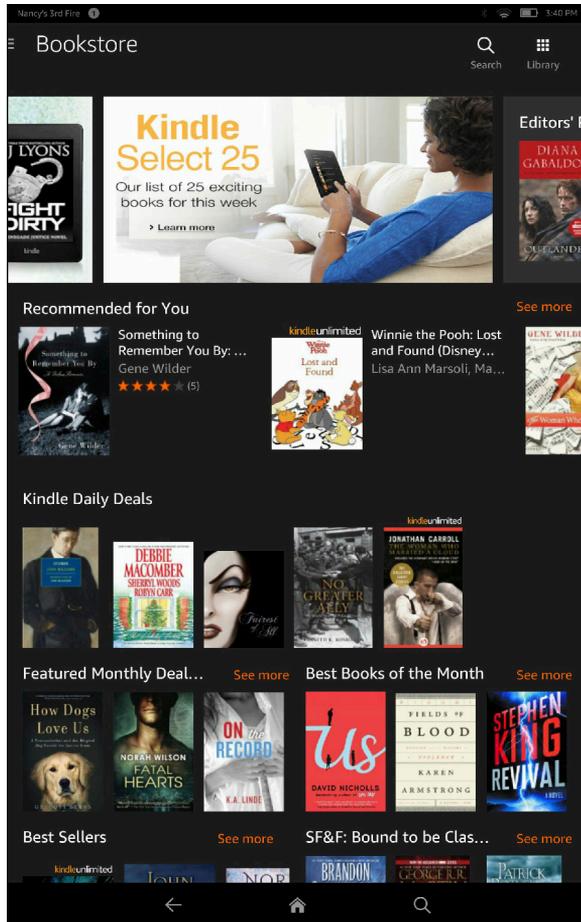


Figure 1-4: The Kindle Bookstore offers more than 1 million books for the Kindle ereader app.

Another form of content that you get for free is the information contained in the IMDb, a database owned by Amazon. This information is used by the X-Ray feature to show you information about actors and characters in videos, song lyrics in music, and characters or other information referenced in books.

When you own a Fire tablet and have a Prime account, you can take advantage of the Kindle Owner's Lending Library, where you can choose from more than 200,000 books to borrow at no charge for as long as you like. If you have an Amazon Prime membership, you can also get one free book a month for your permanent library.



If you're concerned about kids who access content over a Fire tablet, check out the limitations you can place using the parental controls (see Chapter 5) or buy them their own Kids Edition of Fire for even more control over their content.

See Chapter 6 for more about buying content and apps for your Fire tablet.

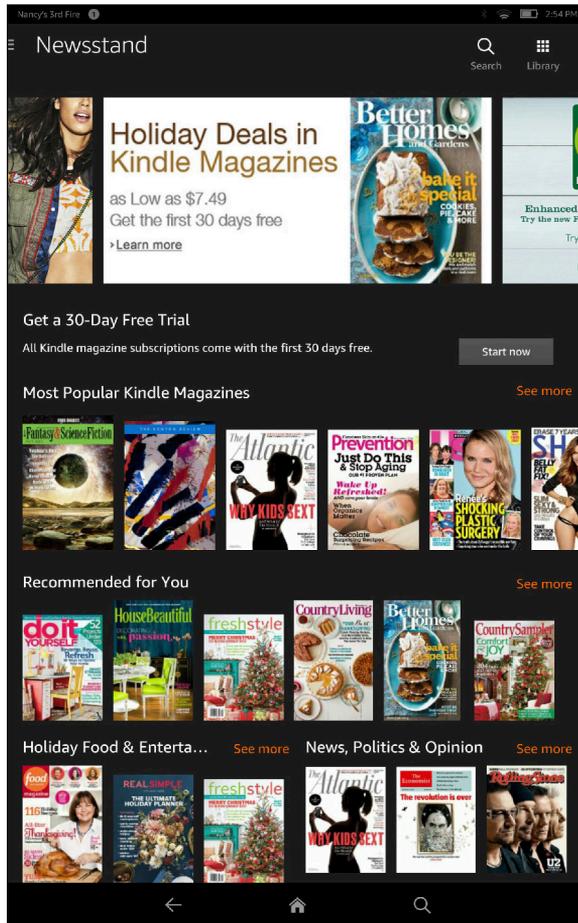


Figure 1-5: Amazon's magazine selection is constantly growing.

Browsing with Amazon Silk

Silk is the Internet browser for Fire tablets (see Figure 1-6). Silk is simple to use, but the real benefits of Amazon Silk are all about browsing performance.