E-readers versus Tablets

While most tablets and many smartphones can double as e-reader devices using available apps (most notably Kindle and Nook apps or iBooks on iOS devices), we have some good reasons for also getting dedicated e-readers. The two best-known and most successful players in the e-reader industry, Amazon (Kindle devices) and Barnes & Noble (Nook devices) have tried to challenge the tablet market by offering color display tablet devices capable of streaming media as well as presenting books. The tablet devices offered by Amazon do not compare favorably to the leading Android-based tablets (Samsung’s offerings) or the iPad in terms of their functionality. They do compare favorably in terms of cost. If you simply want a device that will let you stream media, play movies, read books and magazines, and let you play a few games and answer some e-mails, these tablets may prove to be a viable option for you. If you want more, you will not match the functionality of the Samsung tablets, let alone the even more functional iPad from Apple. The newest tablets from Barnes & Noble are, in fact, Samsung tablets put out under the Nook name and are far more functional than the older Nook tablets.

Amazon and Barnes & Noble, along with several other vendors, offer a gray-scale e-ink technology in smaller and less expensive devices. These devices do not compete, in terms of watching videos, browsing the Internet, or streaming media, with your iPad or Samsung tablet but supplement it in two very important ways. First, their more diminutive size makes them an easier carry, and second, their display technology makes them usable in direct sunlight (which color tablets generally are not). We regularly use iPads and e-readers (we prefer the Kindle Voyage of the currently available e-ink books). You can check out the various models, features, and pricing structures at the Amazon and Barnes & Noble websites (www.amazon.com) (www.barnesandnoble.com).