Digital Talking Book Players (Hardware)

Traditionally, Talking Books were played on records, and then, as the technology changed, on cassette tapes on specially adapted machines. Eventually, Talking Books became digital files on CDs or another device. These books allow users to skip directly to specific places in the book, insert bookmarks, and more.

There are two types of players for reading digital Talking Books—stand-alone players and software players that are used on computers. The stand-alone machines are the easiest to learn to use, and they can be small and portable. They are also the most affordable players for people who do not own a computer. MP3 files and commercial music CDs can also be played on these

Digital Talking Books are not really things that you can hold, although they usually come on a CD-ROM today. Rather, they are files, which may also be available on the web. To put it technically, digital Talking Books are well-organized collections of computer files produced according to specifications that are published in the standards that define them. They are a medium-independent information access-and-delivery technology—the files can be stored on CD, in a directory, or on a memory card—that is based on open standards, primarily the World Wide Web Consortium's (W3C) XML (Extensible Markup Language) and SMIL (Synchronized Multimedia Integration Language), pronounced "smile."

A fully coded book in the DAISY (Digital Accessible Information System) format can have many levels of navigation, accessed by using the player's keypad or buttons. For example, Level 1 could be chapters, Level 2 could be subheadings within a chapter, and Level 3 could be paragraphs. Using the appropriate keys, the user can navigate forward or backward through the book using these levels. The user can also go to a particular page, navigate by phrase (as defined by the book's coding), or place a bookmark at a memorable passage or at the beginning of a section to be studied. Digital Talking Books can include both text and audio files.

When digital Talking Books contain text, it is possible to send the text to a braille embosser or display it on a refreshable braille display or on a screen—in any font and font size. It is also possible to check spelling and search for text the way one can now search on the web.

No longer does one have to wait for that long rewind or fast forward; digital Talking Book players take one forward or backward almost instantaneously. They also allow users to increase or decrease the speed of the reading using speech compression—they cut the pauses between words rather than just increasing the speed at which the book is played. So, a favorite narrator will seem to be reading very quickly in his or her own human voice, instead of sounding high-pitched like a mouse.

Digital Talking Books are a particular kind of electronic book—the kind defined by and for people who are blind or otherwise print disabled to best meet their particular information access and reading needs. Digital Talking Books will not work on players that are not designed to play them.

PLEXTALK Pocket

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Playback Digital Talking Book
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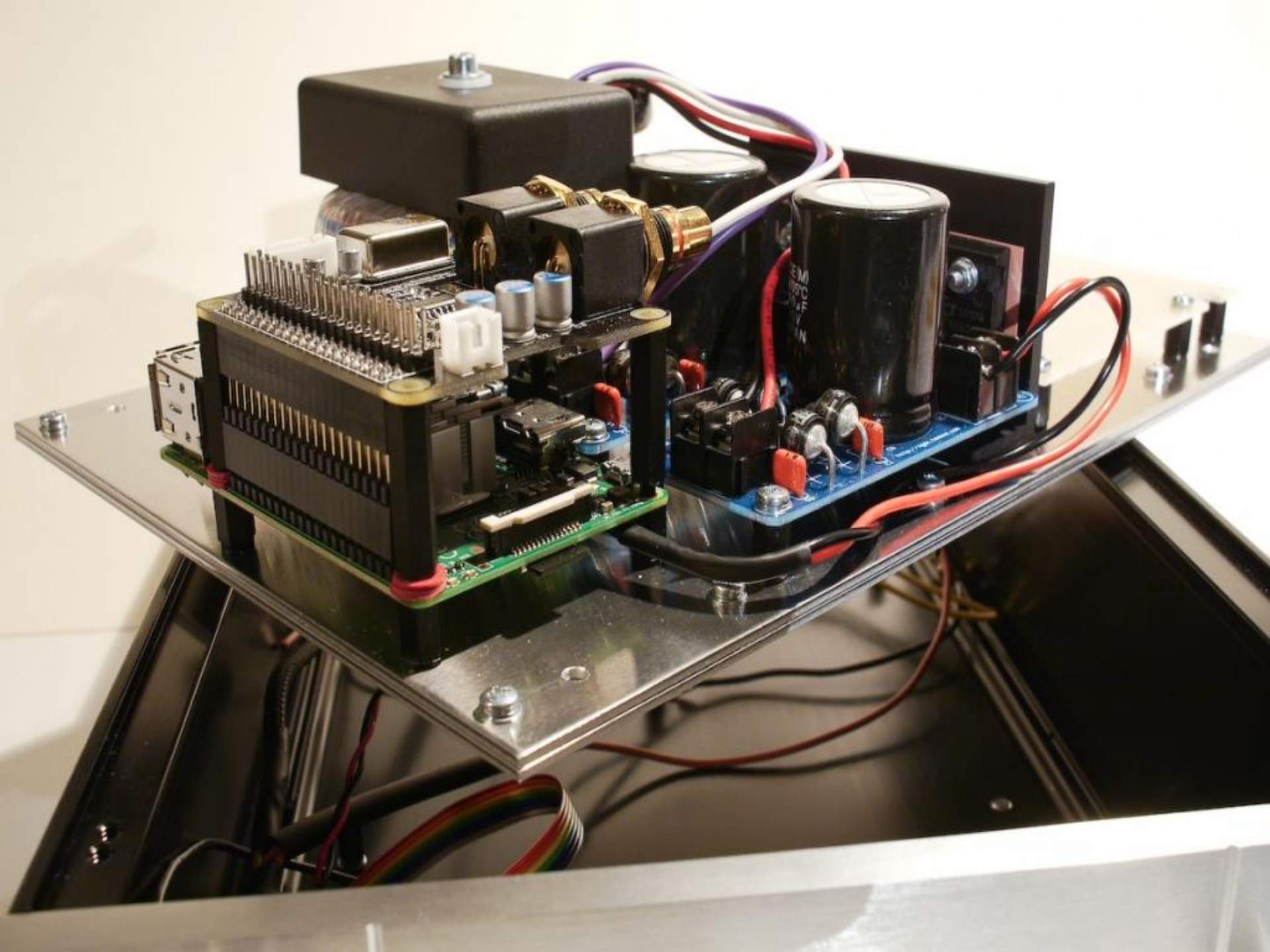
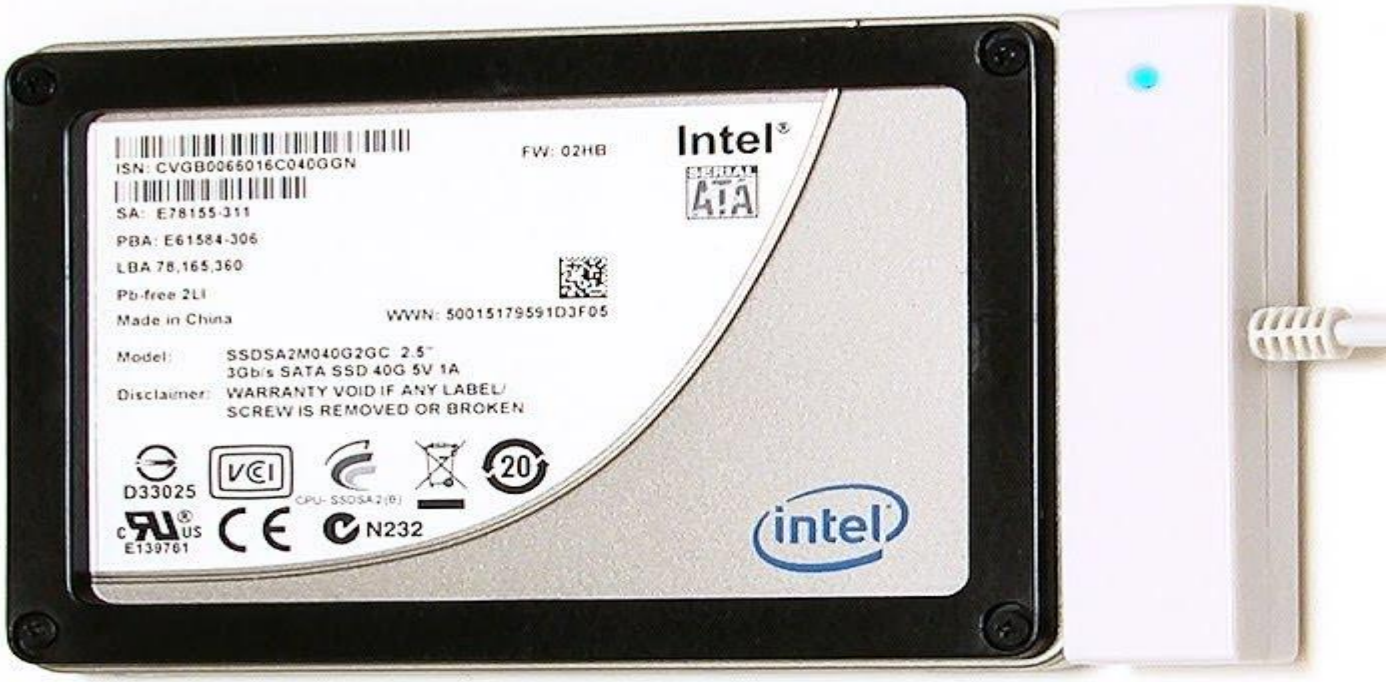
CD

With mask cover

RUBY
garden of the cottage.
The misty morning was heavy
the scents of autumn: the ling
smoke from a bonfire and the per
of the last roses trailing heavy and
washed against the old red-brick
The grey car who had adopte
hen she first arrived at the

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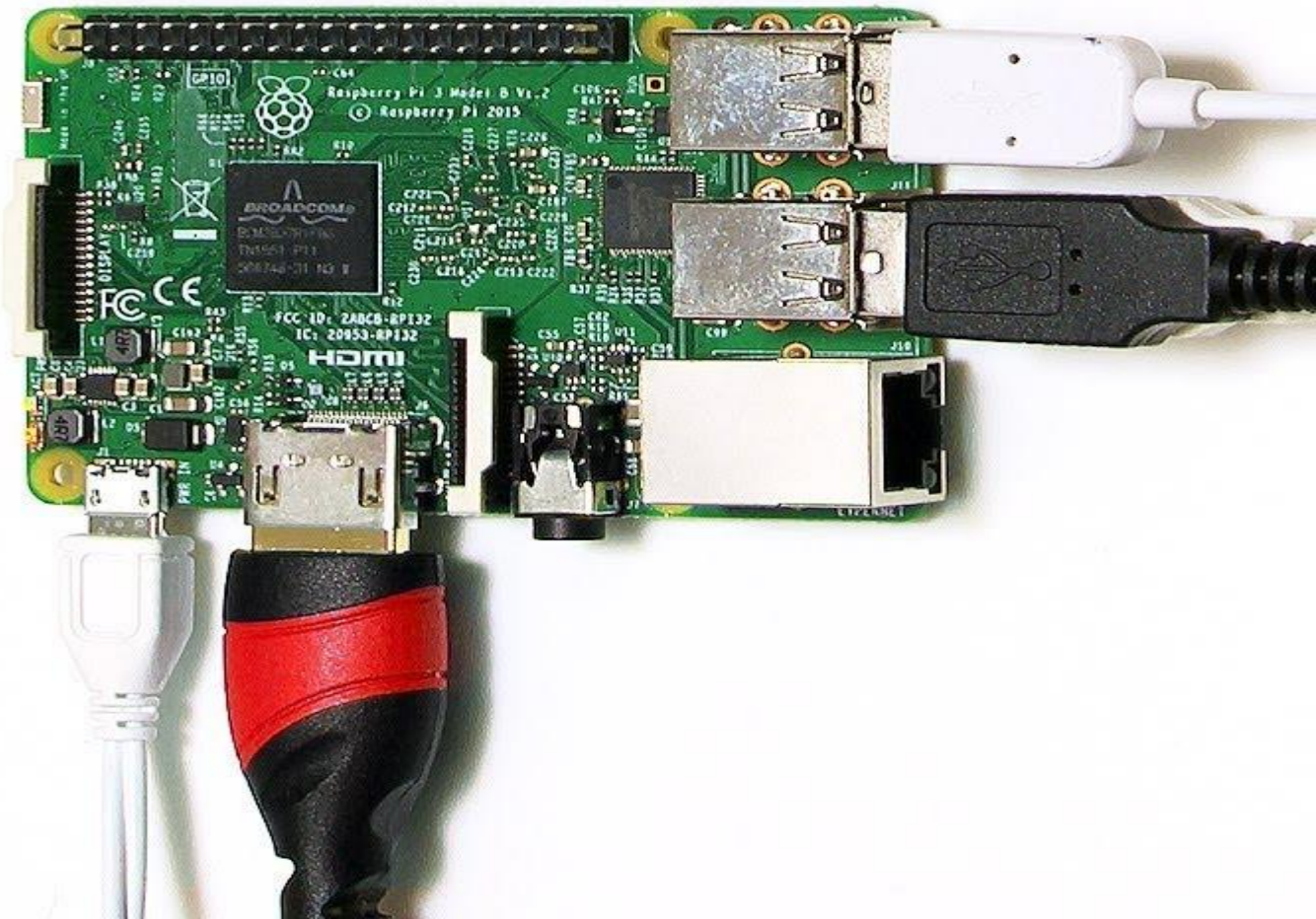
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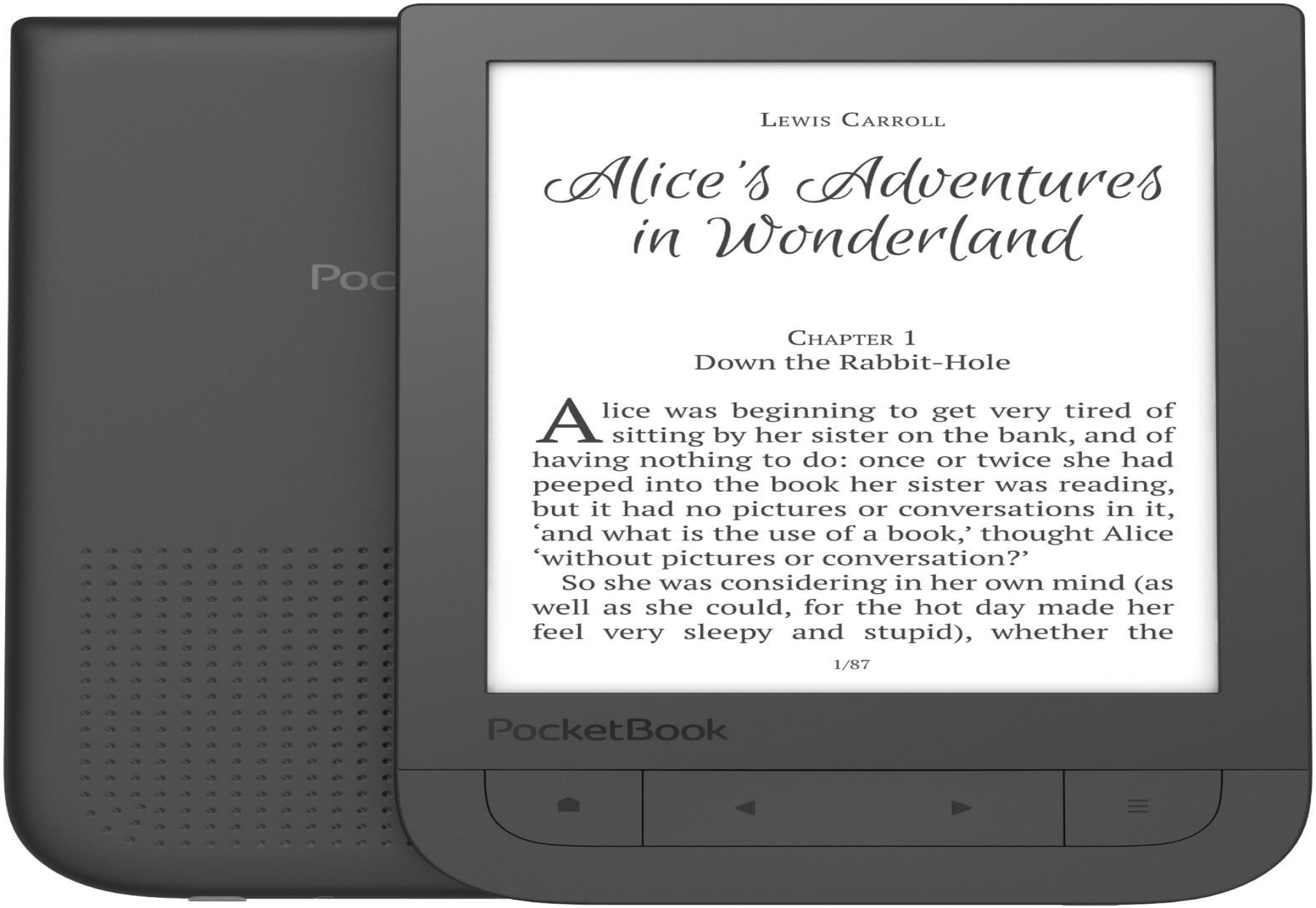
Lewis Carroll
Alice's Adventures in Wonderland
Chapter 1
Down the Rabbit-Hole
Alice was beginning to get very tired of sitting by her sister on the bank, and of having nothing to do: once or twice she had peeped into the book her sister was reading, but it had no pictures or conversations in it, 'and what is the use of a book,' thought Alice 'without pictures or conversation?'
So she was considering in her own mind (as well as she could, for the hot day made her feel very sleepy and stupid), whether the
1/87
PocketBook

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Skiff

TOP OF THE NEWS

World/Nation

Radiation tests: A study shows how much radiation Americans are getting from sometimes unnecessary medical tests.

Bay Area

Today's extra: Take a stroll with urban design writer John King through the ever-changing urban terrain that is SoMa.

Business

Development sunk: Plans to turn S.F.'s Pier 38 into mega-yacht harbor flounder.

Datebook

Haute dogs: High-end franks are the latest must-eat on Bay Area restaurant menus.

Markets
NASDAQ: +23.63
S&P 500: +10.77

San Francisco Chronicle

SKIFF EDITION | Tuesday, November 3 | UPDATED 10:10 AM PST

SF Weather
Currently 62°

FRONT | WORLD & NATION | BAY AREA | BUSINESS | SPORTS | DATEBOOK | MORE

OTHER STORIES

Palo Alto lands Tesla sweepstakes

After scouring the Bay Area for the right site, luxury electric carmaker Tesla Motors said Tuesday it has chosen Palo Alto to house its long-awaited facility for assembling powertrains.

Older job-seekers face special hurdles

Americans in increasing numbers are being faced to work past retirement, and retirees who find their nest eggs cracked are dusting off resumes in hopes of re-entering the workforce.

The Carver Kids

What happened to 28 students, 13 years later. The Chronicle recently located the members of one Carver kindergarten class from 1995-96, and found that something had gone right for most.

Venice Film Festival

Catch all the red carpet action and get hints on the cinematic season to come.

Exercise: what is it good for?

In this era of widespread obesity, there's this familiar mantra: diet and exercise.

BAY BRIDGE REOPENS

Commute back to normal today after repairs

By Henry K. Lee, Demian Bulwa, Jill Tucker
CHRONICLE STAFF WRITERS

The Bay Bridge reopened at 6:30 am today after crews working around the clock repaired a crack in a steel link on the eastern span, bringing relief to thousands of people who had assumed they would have to find other ways to get across the bay. Cars led by a phalanx of California Highway Patrol officers began crossing less than two hours after the reopening time that Caltrans originally set when it

CA POLITICS

Schwarzenegger threatens vetoes

By Robert Selna
CHRONICLE STAFF WRITER

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger has threatened to veto all bills unless state lawmakers address his top priorities before the legislative session ends this week.

"The governor believes that we must address major issues facing this state such as water, prison and renewable portfolio standard before we consider anything else," Matt David, Schwarzenegger's communications director, said Tuesday.

Some state lawmakers blasted Schwarzenegger calling the tactic "his latest ransom note."

"You're not the emperor, you're not the king," Assemblyman Alberto Torrico, D-Fremont, said. Still, the issues of water, prisons and renewable energy have been floundering in the Legislature.

The governor's prison package gained approval in the Senate.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Major Shift in Bird Species Predicted in Next 60 Years

By Peter Fimrite
CHRONICLE STAFF WRITER

Birds of a feather will no longer flock together, and some California species will face extinction as a result of a global warming, according to a study released Tuesday by PRBO Conservation Science. The study predicts how birds in California will adapt to changing climatic conditions, says there will be a dramatic change in the pecking order of the avian world over the next 60 years.

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Chapter One