



# Guide to Acquiring Literature in a Digital Age

By Harrison Wang | Apr 13, 2019

When we think about the impact of digitizing literature on consumers, one key aspect that cannot be ignored is the dramatic increase in options. From traditional paper format books to ebooks, and from audiobooks to TV shows, literature is being presented to us in unprecedented varieties. As literature consumers, thriving in this digital age requires not only digital literacy, but also clever considerations. Based on my experience of acquiring and consuming literature in diverse forms throughout the past few months, I have come up with some ideas regarding how to make the best use of those options.

## 1. Explore different options

The first step is to explore different options. Everyone is different and knowing our own learning habits is crucial to success. Some people are auditory learners, some are visual, and others might be somewhere in between. When you feel like you're struggling with one format, try something else. When I started listening to *The Night Circus*, I was struggling with understanding the plot. Reading an ebook while listening had greatly facilitated my understanding. Similarly, watching Netflix with no subtitles on might not be the best for everyone. Try turning subtitles on — you'll probably find it helpful as I did!



## 2. Minimizing cost

Costs can be a deciding factor in literature acquisition for many people. We can't actually cut the prices of many digital items but there are smart ways to get around it! I got *The Night Circus* for free on audible by creating a trial account and *Pierre* for free by borrowing it from the library!



## 3. Cost and efficiency tradeoff

When we buy commodities from a market, getting the cheapest ones is not equivalent to getting the best ones. As we are going for cheaper options, we might be sacrificing quality. Consuming digital literature is the same! Sometimes, there is a tradeoff between cost and efficiency of consumption. I printed some readings, such as "The Man of The Crowd," out because I could focus better and annotate as I read in that way. Although printing increased my cost, it boosted my efficiency of reading!

As technology advances rapidly, more and more formats of literature emerge. Getting the books is no longer as simple as going to bookstores: the diversity of formats brings convenience and new possibilities to us but also challenges us to be smart consumers. The best options are not necessarily the cheapest ones or the most familiar ones, but the ones that suit the us, the consumers.