Amazon.com offers new lower-priced Kindle DX

(AP) -- Online retailer Amazon.com Inc. said Thursday it is introducing a new version of its higher-end Kindle at a lower price as competition among electronic-book readers intensifies.

The new version of its Kindle DX has a better screen that will display sharper images.

The large-screen reader, which Amazon hoped would catch on as a textbook substitute at universities, has free wireless over 3G cellular networks. It will be sold for $379, about 23 percent less than the $489 Amazon charged for the previous generation of the larger Kindle DX.

Amazon also said it improved the way the Kindle DX handles PDF documents, potentially solving a major complaint among students who tested out the Kindle in a pilot program over the past academic year. The original Kindle DX didn't allow people to zoom in closer on PDFs, leaving graphics and small print difficult to decipher.

The new device can be pre-ordered immediately and will ship on July 7.

E-reader price wars have been heating up. Last week, Amazon, which is based in Seattle, cut the price of its smaller Kindle by $70, to $189, after Barnes & Noble Inc. reduced the price of its Nook e-reader by $60, to $199. Both face competition from Apple Inc.'s iPad, which starts at $499.

The Kindle DX has a 9.7-inch screen and is about one-third of an inch thick.

Shares of Amazon rose 47 cents to $109.73 in midday trading Thursday.

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