



Literature for the World's Children

The opportunity to become literate and develop a love of reading is a fundamental right for children around the world. The reality is that although we live in a global marketplace, most of the world's children have no access to traditional libraries or well-stocked bookstores. They have few opportunities to read traditional stories from their own or other cultures. With such limited access, how can we expect them to become effective members of our global society?

Imagine the possibility of enabling children all over the world to have access to thousands of books in dozens of languages. The technology necessary to make this a reality is here today.

The mission of the International Children's Digital Library (ICDL) and its Foundation is to build worldwide access to a digital library of children's books and to preserve the best of children's literature for future generations.

A Library for the World's Children



About Us

The Children's Digital Library Foundation is the home of the International Children's Digital Library (ICDL), currently supported by a number of international government agencies, corporations, and individuals including the Library of Congress, National Science Foundation, the Institute of Museum and Library Services, and Microsoft Research.

The ICDL grew out of research at the University of Maryland. A team of interdisciplinary researchers from computer science, information studies, education, art and psychology work collaboratively with groups of children throughout the world to design the ICDL. The Human-Computer Interaction Lab focuses on user interface issues relating to children's reading while the College of Information Studies focuses on collections, copyright, and preservation issues.

Together, this intergenerational team brainstorms, explores design strategies, tests new ideas, and implements technologies to make the ICDL possible. Children's ideas drive the design process, resulting in more intuitive online experiences for them.

All this creativity is managed by the Foundation, the oversight organization that supports the collection strategies, builds alliances worldwide, promotes the value of the ICDL, and expands access to the digital collection.



Building the Library

The immediate goal of the International Children's Digital Library is to build an exemplary collection of 10,000 books in at least 100 languages, freely available to children and scholars of children's literature around the world, by 2008.

Throughout this exhaustive compilation and digital conversion process, the ICDL and its Foundation are focused on gathering materials that help children understand the world around them and the global society in which they live. The altruism behind the Foundation is to encourage tolerance and acceptance of the world's peoples and cultures through children's literature.

The ICDL includes children's literature that represents exemplary artistic, historic, and literary qualities. Books are selected by experts in children's literature in the country or culture of origin. All books are presented in their entirety and in the original language(s) in which they were published. Only books that have already been published in print form are included in the collection. This effort intends to make children's books more accessible worldwide and preserve the best of children's literature through technology.



Search. Read. Grow.

Learning theorists know that children categorize information differently than adults. The ICDL research team has verified this difference and built interfaces for children 3 to 13 that allow children to search for new books, retrieve previously read books, and enjoy reading them online.



Children's book categories, such as true or make believe, book color and length, how a book makes a child feel, and genres that meet children's needs, make it easier for young children to find books they'll enjoy.

For older children, the ICDL has designed a more advanced interface that allows them to be more precise in their search strategies to quickly access appealing books.

The ultimate technology strategy of the ICDL is to present an experience that evolves with each child in order to foster children's interest in books and the world.

How You Can Help

The Children's Digital Library Foundation has an ambitious goal of expanding its collection of children's literature to 10,000 digital books by 2008.

To meet this aggressive goal, we need help from:

- Authors
- Illustrators
- Translators
- Publishers
- Agents
- Libraries
- Philanthropies

For more information on how you can contribute to a love of books and reading on behalf of children worldwide, contact the Foundation at:

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