

Digital Libraries and Digital Book Collections for Children (Selected Examples in the World and in Europe)

Anita Has-Tokarz

Institute of Library Science and Scientific Information, Maria Curie-Skłodowska University, Pl. Marii Curie – Skłodowskiej 4, 20-031 Lublin, POLAND;
e-mail: ahastokarz@interia.pl

Abstract – The goal of the report is to present digital libraries and digital book collections for children and teenagers. The following projects will be discussed: International Children’s Digital Library, Children’s Digital Library “Story Place”, Fairrosa Cyber Library of Children’s Literature, Baldwin Library of Children’s Literature Digital Collection, The European Virtual Children’s Library on the Internet (CHILIAS), Children’s Historical Literature Disseminated throughout Europe (CHILDE) and some other proposals.

Keywords: digital library, children’s virtual library, digital book collections, collection of children’s literature, information literacy

The article is going to present selected European and world’s digital library projects developed with children-users in mind. The study will discuss the largest children’s virtual library – *The International Children’s Digital Library* created at the University of Maryland. The main goal of the project is to create a digital collection of over 10,000 volumes, which will be accessed without restrictions in at least a hundred languages. To the authors of the project the most important thing is to enhance the library’s interface and develop technology (to improve browsing, search, and making digital books available) in cooperation with children, and to better understand the issues connected with copyright law in the digital world. One more goal is to assess and investigate the impact of access to digital resources upon the activities of public and school libraries, as well as the development of book collections of traditional children’s libraries.

The paper will also present another American project: *Baldwin Library of Children’s Literature Digital Collection*, founded at the University of Florida’s Special Collections Department. The library holds over a 100,000 book volumes (over 6,000 are digitalized), which have been published in the United States and the United Kingdom since 1600 until the present. Moreover, the library assembles manuscript collections and multimedia products, e.g. films, board games, and jigsaw puzzles. The main advantage of the collection is that it has many editions of the same title, e.g. several hundred editions of *Alice in Wonderland* and a collection of materials related to L. Carroll’s text, as well as over 300 editions of *Robinson Crusoe*. The collection also contains nineteenth-century editions of historical and

adventure novels for boys, nineteenth-century series for girls, and the world's unique collection of children's periodicals of the same period.

Among the examples of European children's digital libraries, the article will discuss the project: *The European Virtual Children's Library on the Internet*, whose implementation was contributed to by children's and school libraries, as well as scientific and business institutions from Finland, Germany, Greece, Spain, and Portugal. The project was coordinated by the Stadtbücherei in Stuttgart. It was addressed to children aged from 9 to 14. The main objective of the project's authors was to support children's computer literacy and to develop a new idea of the European library for the youngest children, which would include the creation of adequate environment for novel teaching and learning processes.

An interesting project is the *Children's Historical Literature Disseminated throughout Europe*, which contains illustrations and copies of whole pages of selected books for children and teenagers from all Europe. The project was developed under the CULTURE 2000 Project. This library now consists of over 1,000 digital objects. As part of the project, the partners were also able to formulate special guidelines on the modes of preservation, cataloguing and promotion of unique children's book collections and to develop an educational program serving to present the website to children-users.

The article is also going to present European undertakings such as the British children's library, then "*StoryPlace*", a US public library project developed by the Public Library of Charlotte & Mecklenburg County, the *Fairrosa Cyber Library of Children's Literature* (US) and the collection of children's literature in the *Cyfrowa Biblioteka Narodowa Polona* [National Digital Library Polona]. Polona's collection for children contains virtual copies of Polish children's literature classics in beautifully illustrated editions of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. They can be accessed at www.polona.pl completely free. The bulk of the collection are classical works, no longer protected by copyright. An exception is the texts by Joanna Papuzińska, the Polish contemporary author writing for children, who consented to their publication in the Polona National Digital Library.

These projects will be presented in terms of the structure and character of the resources available and the role and functions that they perform.

References

1. *Biblioteki cyfrowe*, red. M. Janiak, M. Krakowska, M. Próchnicka, Warszawa 2012
2. *Polskie biblioteki cyfrowe 2010*, red. C. Mazurek, M. Stroiński, J. Węglarz Poznań 2011
3. J. Mikołajczyk, Internetowe biblioteki dziecięce, „Poradnik Bibliotekarza” 2004, nr 2
4. M. Zając, *Biblioteka dziecięca 2.0 – najnowsze tendencje komunikacyjne i organizacyjne*, [w:] *Biblioteki w systemie kultury jednoczącej się Europy*, red. M. Zając, E.B. Zybert, Warszawa 2007