



International Children's Digital Library (ICDL)

Imagine a world where a library of international children's literature is available to all children across the globe through technology that was developed specifically to meet their unique needs. This vision captures the mission of the International Children's Digital Library (ICDL) – to use technology to help strengthen access to children's literature worldwide by providing a large-scale digital archive of literature for children ages 3 to 13.

Literature is one of society's means for exposing young hearts and minds to new and foreign ideas. Engaging stories help children grow intellectually and emotionally, understand who they are, and inspire them to explore the world around them. Yet the quality of public education varies considerably across the globe and not all children have access to a well-endowed library. The ICDL seeks to bridge this gap by bringing high quality children's literature within easy access of children everywhere via the Internet.



About Us

Funded by the National Science Foundation (NSF), the Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS), and Microsoft Research, the International Children's Digital Library is a research project of the Human-Computer Interaction Lab and the College of Information Studies at the University of Maryland.

A unique aspect of this work is the partnership between children and adults in a process of cooperative inquiry to develop computer interface technologies that support searching, browsing, reading, and sharing books in electronic form. Interdisciplinary researchers from computer science, information studies, education, art and psychology work collaboratively with a team of children (ages 7-11) to design the ICDL. Children's ideas are heard throughout the entire technology design process. Together, this interdisciplinary and intergenerational team brainstorms, sets project directions, tests new ideas, and implements technologies.

The Team is investigating the differences and similarities between children's use of digital and print books, as well as the impact that access to digital materials may have on children as readers and on collection development in school and public libraries. In addition, the ICDL Team is exploring the research value of a digital collection of historical children's literature from all over the world.



The Collection

The ICDL Research Team's goal is to create an exemplary collection of more than 10,000 books in at least 100 languages that is freely available via the Internet to children from all over the world.



The collection's focus is on materials that help children to understand the world around them and the global society in which they live. It is hoped that through a greater understanding of one another that tolerance and acceptance can be achieved.

The collection also includes children's literature representing exemplary artistic, historic, and literary qualities. All books are selected by experts from within the country or culture and are presented in their entirety and in the original languages in which they were published. Only books that have been published in physical form are included in the collection. The goal of the project is not to replace physical books, but rather to support greater access to the world's literature for children through technology.



Search Interfaces

Involving children in the design process has verified what researchers already know about learning theory – that children categorize information differently than adults.

The ICDL's Simple Search and Location Search interfaces allow young children to search for new books and retrieve previously read books through categories they can easily understand such as true or make believe, book color, length, how a book makes them feel, or by spinning a globe.



Adults and older children who have acquired more sophisticated search skills may use ICDL's Advanced Search interface, which allows them to be more precise in their search strategies and immediately see the results of their queries.

As children develop and become more skilled in their information-seeking behavior, ICDL's interfaces grow with them to meet their searching needs.

To Participate

The ICDL Team welcomes participation from international publishers, authors, illustrators, translators, libraries, and others interested in children's literature.

For more information, visit the ICDL web site at <http://www.icdlbooks.org> or email icdl-info@cs.umd.edu.



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International Children's Digital Library



*Bringing the joy of books to
children around the world
through technology!*

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