



Europeana Cloud – Work Package 1
Additional Document

**Research Themes for Aggregating Digital
Content: Children’s Literature**
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1. Research Themes for Aggregating Digital Content

Examining work conducted in the context of digital research infrastructures across Europe, it was considered that it is not particularly agreeable to view the Humanities and the Social Sciences as two solid disciplines, or, in fact, any particular disciplines within them as self-contained when almost all empirical studies on user requirements in the context of digital research infrastructures have revealed numerous underlying variations in the ways researchers carry out research. As Ian Hodder put it recently, “one of the things I thought was very important during the 1980s was the idea that culture is meaningfully constituted. I still think that is right. But now, I put the emphasis on the "meaningful constitution" rather than the "cultural" bit. (...) I prefer to break it down and talk about the various processes that constitute it”¹.

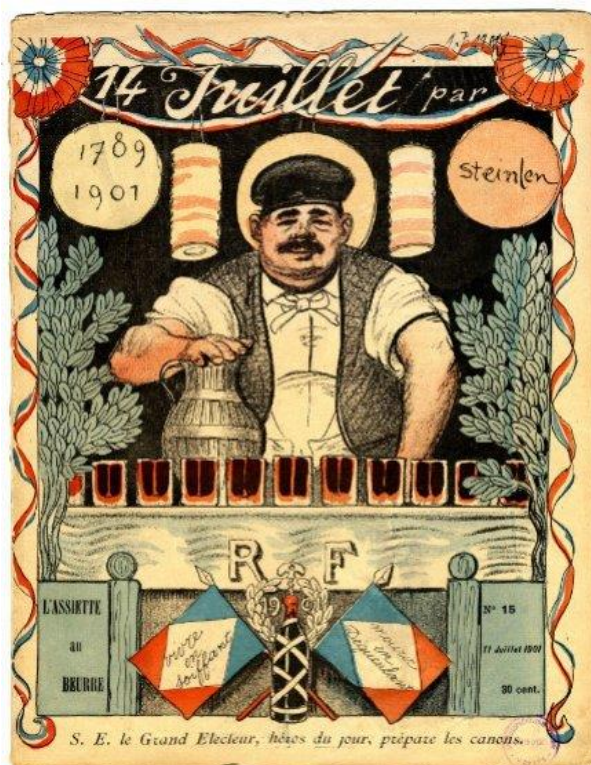
To this end, and within the course of the work conducted within Work Package 1 we soon realised that a focus on particular research communities would provide much better insight to both the User Requirements, tools use and Content Strategy recommendations than a generic approach to what is called the Humanities and Social Sciences researchers. Based on the respective areas of expertise of the members of this Work Package, but also of other external colleagues, and after consultation with the Research Communities Advisory Board, we decided to concentrate on particular research areas in the broad fields of the Humanities and the Social Sciences, namely: Parliamentary Papers, Population Displacement, Political Propaganda, Children’s Literature, School History, and The Ancient Mediterranean. Focusing on Children’s Literature, the methodology employed was both background as well as empirical research in order to further deepen and also consolidate our understanding of the ways researchers make use of data, digital and non, and what needs and expectations they have of existing tools and services they use in this area of research.

Children’s Literature

Point of departure for defining children’s literature as one of the thematic topics for Europeana Research was the successful DARIAH web survey conducted in 2014 on digital practices in the Arts and Humanities. In the question “Identify your more specific field(s) or area(s) of research”, out of 1833 replies, “literature” was a commonly met term. This popularity of the term “literature” led to the first search in the portal of Europeana resulting in 104 163 only text-based material

¹ To The Trowel's Edge: An Interview with Ian Hodder, <http://ucexchange.uchicago.edu/interviews/hodder.html> (consulted on 07.10.2015)

found under this term. Setting literature as the wider thematic topic, next step was to narrow it down to a more specific area of literature, thematically or even chronologically. Children's literature thus emerged as a narrower sample of literature leading to a second search in the portal of Europeana resulting this time in 1596 only text-based material; nevertheless, these results were multilingual and spanning in a period of 500 years. While this number is quite low, it thus showcases that there is room for further research and exploration for enforcing the presence of this field in the new portal of Europeana Research.



Title: Obálka časopisu L'Assiette au Beurre, č. 15

Creator: Steinlen, Théophile Alexandre

Data provider: www.esbirky.cz

Provider: Partage Plus

View item at: www.esbirky.cz

CCO

The methodology followed in researching this topic was a mixed methods approach. Exploring Children's Literature as a research field, inside and outside Europeana, required at first an extensive desk research to record its current state of the art. In this way, the aim was to understand the particularities and characteristics of the field, the extent of its digital, mainly, presence in Europeana and in other libraries and archives around the world, the tools and services build so far on top of such content and its recent orientation as an academic field. This would also allow delimiting the topic in chronological and geographical range for the purposes of the project. Apart from that, desk research was further complemented by virtual meetings held with researchers of the field. Semi-structured interviews were designed and conducted via Skype while in some cases the designed questionnaire was answered offline by the researchers, if their schedule did not allow a virtual real-time conversation. Having questions on research career and background, research practices, resources and digital tools and finally on future developments needed or expected, researchers were asked to share their own expertise and experience of the field and also their vision for its ideal future development. The results of this methodology will be further analyzed below and will ultimately lead to findings and suggestions for the platform of Europeana Research.

Definition of the topic

"As a term, "children's literature" does not easily fit into any cultural or academic category; rather, it is a diverse and paradoxical area of study."² This suggestion mirrors the large number of definitions and theories found in the literature around this term as well as the challenge of setting specific chronological and geographical boundaries in this current research. According to the International Companion Encyclopedia of Children's Literature it "*is (among many other things) a body of texts (in the widest senses of that word), an academic discipline, an educational and social tool, an international business and a cultural phenomenon*". Even its definition is quite controversial and meets various explanations. Karin Lesnik-Olberstein in 1999 suggested that children's literature is a "category of books the existence of which absolutely depends on supported relationships with a particular reading audience: children".³ If we adopt this suggestion then "children's literature is defined by audience in a way other literature tends not to be".⁴ Apart from the various definitions that this topic accepts, it also seems to embody a number of different content types, genres and interested disciplines. For the purposes of this

² "To Instruct and Delight: A History of Children's Literature" in Random History.com, published in January 2008 <http://www.randomhistory.com/1-50/024children.html> (Accessed" 13 October 2015).

³ Hunt (Ed.), *Understanding children's literature*, Routledge, 2006.

⁴ Ibid.

project, children's literature will be approached as a research theme rather than as type of content concerning this academic audience.

In an effort to capture its historical dimension, we render here Peter Hunt's suggestion:

*"In the early stages of a printed literature, there are few or no books published specifically for children. There are perhaps a few books intended for broadly educational purposes, such as the courtesy or behaviour books printed in the fifteenth or sixteenth centuries in European countries, or the twentieth-century text books published to support the formal school curriculum in developing countries. In this situation, children, as they learn to read, also take over adult books which appeal to them."*⁵

It is evident that attempting to specify the topic chronologically and geographically is quite problematic. Projects in this area, or even individual research initiatives, do not usually approach this kind of literature by countries of origin or by chronological period. Even if they do, this is quite restrictive for the aims of the present task. For this reason, research conducted here was quite inclusive focusing mainly on European literature of the 18th to 20th centuries – thus the 'Golden Age' of literature.⁶ However, earlier works, when found and documented, were also listed as potential content for the platform.

Matching academic disciplines corresponding to this topic with possible research questions helps contextualizing children's literature in an academic sphere. Hence, below is a list of research questions as these emerged from the children's collection and research conducted at the Henry Madden Library in California, US.⁷

1.	Comparison of books to the movies that were made from them.
2.	Comparison of different editions of the same book.
3.	It used to be thought that novels written for children or young adults had to follow a chronological plot or be told from one point of view. How have those theories changed over the years and why? What books were influential as examples of the

⁵ Hunt, "Children's literature", p.4.

⁶ "To Instruct and Delight: A History of Children's Literature" in Random History.com, published in January 2008 <http://www.randomhistory.com/1-50/024children.html> (Accessed 13 October 2015).

⁷ Children's Literature in Arne Nixon Center in <http://libguides.csufresno.edu/c.php?g=288884&p=1927022> (Accessed: 18 September 2015).

	contemporary view?
4.	Selection and research of children's and young adult books with ambiguous endings.
5.	What picture books present subplots in the illustrations that are not referred to in the texts? Are there common themes among these subplots?
6.	New writing trend: Books by celebrities. Quality and effect on other authors.
7.	Ethnicity/gender of authors: should Caucasians be able to write about Native Americans? Women about men? Can the reader tell if a man is writing under a woman's name or vice versa?
8.	What is the history of multiculturalism in children's literature?
9.	Comparative Literature: Comparison of award-winning books over time.
10.	The study of the history of the portrayal of a particular group such as women, Muslims, children, the elderly, the disabled etc., in 20th century children's literature.
11.	Comparative Literature: Comparison of books written about a specific event.
12.	Comparative Literature: Comparison of book reviews for the same titles in publications in the fields of library science, education, and English. What other professions review children's books?
13.	Illustrations: our collection emphasizes cat books, the Alice books by Lewis Carroll, and Oz books. What roles do cats play in children's books? How is Alice depicted by different artists from different countries? How have Oz illustrations changed over the years?
14.	The study of types of literature (e.g.) graphic novels.
15.	Comparison of the books of controversial authors who write on similar topics.
16.	History of censorship in children's literature: Which subjects get censored? Do

	these change over time?
17.	Comparison of the same fairy tale as told in different cultures.
18.	The history of illustration techniques used in children's books.

These types of research questions could correspond to a list of disciplines such as: History, Cultural History, Literature and Languages, Education, Library Studies, Philology, Textual Studies, Linguistics and Media Studies. According to Wolf et al., scholarship on children's literature was primarily conducted in three different disciplinary fields: literary studies / cultural studies, library and information science and in education.⁸ Apart from disciplinary variations, the audience of Children's Literature could be distinguished according to its professional status, from literary scholars to critics, teachers, authors or simply readers and amateurs. As Peter Hunt suggests, "it is attractive and interesting to students (official or unofficial) of literature, education, library studies, history, psychology, art, popular culture, media, the caring professions etc... Its nature...has been to break down barriers between disciplines, and between types of readers".⁹

Literature aimed specifically at children has been written and published since the 15th century around the world absorbing elements of folktales, different cultural traditions, fairy tales and oral tradition. Intended to educate, instruct and entertain, this distinct type of literature gradually developed rich literary variations according to the time period, geographic or cultural context, author etc. Thus, six genres have been identified by literature critics determined by technique, tone, content of length:

- Picture books
- Traditional literature: further divided in subgenres of myths, fables, legends and fairy tales
- Fiction: fantasy, realistic fiction and historical fiction
- Non-fiction
- Biography and autobiography
- Poetry and verse

⁸ Wolf et al, 2011.

⁹ Hunt, "Children's literature", p.1.

Content-wise research

As introduced before, Europeana holds a relatively important number of records on Children's Literature. According to the search term or the search filtering option, the number of retrieved results varies as well as their actual relevance to the topic in question. This suggests that there may be more relevant records in Europeana that could not be retrieved due to different metadata used to describe them.

In order to document relevant datasets that Europeana currently holds, a number of various searches have been conducted to explore the portal. To begin with, the first search conducted had 'children's literature' as search term.¹⁰ This resulted in records:

- Text (1596)
- Image (194)
- Video (25)

These records ranged chronologically from 1450 to 2014 and geographically from all over Europe, mainly by the United Kingdom.¹¹ The information provided for these results suggest that the main provider of children's literature in Europeana is the European Library with 359 records. It should be noted here that the providers listed there vary from the data providers which refer to the actual institutions holding the resources. Therefore, as most of the content has been ingested into Europeana through projects or digital libraries, such as TEL, the main content provider in this topic has been the Bodleian Libraries of the University of Oxford. Interestingly, the British Library, which holds a significant number of resources in the field of children's literature and is leading research in this topic with specially dedicated space to its webpage on such issues, it has incredibly weak presence in the portal of Europeana.¹²

Examining the retrieved results of the first search, it was observed that a number of them are quite irrelevant and could not support research in this area. Therefore, a second search was conducted using this time quotation marks to accompany the same search term used before.¹³ This resulted in half the records presented before. More specifically "children's literature" resulted in records:

¹⁰ <http://www.europeana.eu/portal/search.html?query=children%27s+literature&rows=24>

¹¹ Note that the chronological range refers to the date of the object while the geographical refers to the country providing the object and not to its geographical origin.

¹² <http://www.bl.uk/romantics-and-victorians/themes/childhood-and-childrens-literature> (Accessed: October 20 2015).

¹³ <http://www.europeana.eu/portal/search.html?query=%22children%27s+literature%22&rows=24>

- Text (809)
- Image (126)
- Video (3)

The chronological range was different as well, dating records from 1709 to 2014 provided mainly from the United Kingdom. It could be said that the aim of retrieving more relevant results was in a large measure achieved in this second search despite the fact that this observation is again not absolute. Since using quotation marks in search terms enforced the relevance of the results retrieved various searches were then conducted using Boolean queries.

Evaluating the results retrieved as potential sources for research in the field of children's literature, some drawbacks but also potentials have been observed. To discuss drawbacks first, as introduced before, resources retrieved in Europeana after searching on this topic are not always relevant, at least to their full extent. For example, the textual results have rarely to do with the actual literary works for children. Even when searching for *Alice in Wonderland* for example, it is not clear if among the results there is the actual book for further research. Apart from that, even when tracing relevant or useful results, it is not ensured that the actual digital object, and thus link, is still online and accessible. What is useful on the other hand is that the retrieved results include various articles commenting on this work in different national contexts. Europeana thus offers a brainstorm of results relevant to the search term that may lead the researcher to new ideas on how to explore the topic or to new interpretations. Even the idea of displaying a variety of text, image and video results on children's literature sorted randomly could prove to be useful for research as it sheds light in content that the researcher might not have thought of searching and accessing or might not have known of its digital existence.

What is going on outside Europeana?

Identifying material outside Europeana has been a rather interesting procedure with incredibly rich results. It seems that the topic of Children's Literature has attracted academic and public interest in various countries that sought to create associations to host such content, discussions and events. Focusing on digital content already available to the community, there is a number of digital libraries that host collections of this field. Below is a list of such stakeholders that are, as can be seen in the column "Institution", mainly deriving from the United States. This does not suggest that European libraries and archives do not conduct significant work on this topic. It is observed however that the latter offer mostly online services and catalogues that support

research based on analogue content found in the shelves of the library. The institutions listed below on the other hand provide open access to digital content on children's literature.

Title/URL	Features	Institution	Timespan	Access/ License
International Children's Digital Library	Repository of 2,827 children's books in 48 languages viewable over the Internet	ICDL – Network of partner organizations, advisors etc. Goal: to build a collection of books that represents outstanding historical and contemporary books from throughout the world. Ultimately, the Foundation aspires to have every culture and language represented so that every child can know and appreciate the riches of children's literature from the world community.	15 th – 20 th centuries	Freely accessible on the web / Copyright policy: all rights reserved
Baldwin Library of Historical Children's Literature	Over 5800 fully digitized children's texts from the Baldwin Library of Historical Children's Literature. A continually growing archive of children's books published in the United States and Great Britain.	University of Florida	19 th century	Copyright
Literature for Children	This collection is part of the Publication of Archival Library and Museum Materials project comprised of digitized volumes from the Departments of Special Collections at several of the State University System of Florida libraries. It is a collection of digitized titles published predominantly in the United States and Great Britain.	University of Florida	17 th -20 th centuries	Copyright
Internet Archive Children's Library	Books for children from around the world. [Item description rather than collection description – each item has information on its copyright policy, date of creation, content contributor etc]	From University of California Libraries (list) , the University of Florida's "Literature for Children" Collection , the National Yiddish Book Center , the New York Public Library , International Children's Digital Library , and other libraries.		

<p><u>The John MacKay Shaw Collection</u></p>	<p>Collection of books, poems, songs and other works written for children and for childhood with illustrations, photos, prints, and music. They represent some of the most famous children's stories, poems, songs and rhymes of the 18th through the 20th Century in the Shaw Collection.</p>	<p>Florida State University.</p>	<p>18th-20th centuries</p>	
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The libraries and archives listed here are just indicative examples of rich content found in leading - to this topic - associations freely accessible in the Web. While not exhaustive, this content concerns world literature works dated since the 15th century. It is thus quite inclusive as potential content for the platform of Europeana Research consisting of texts and images (illustrations).

Engagement with the community

Apart from the digital libraries and archives presented before, research led in tracing and documenting an even more significant number of associations on children's literature worldwide. Most of them function as networks for either public discussion among teachers, librarians and parents or academic discussion and research. In general, they connect stakeholders with an interest in Children's literature thus creating a community networks. Creating a web space with digital content has not much to offer unless it is linked to a community. Thus, this section has been largely explored as engagement with the community has been considered as an extremely important factor in the initiative of Europeana Research.

By tracing and documenting below a number of research societies existing worldwide on the topic of children's literature, it was attempted to monitor the wider community and their current needs. Most of these societies function as networks for discussions, research and events rather than content repositories.

- Children's Literature (<http://childrenslit.com/>)

To begin with, Children's Literature is an association founded in 1993 functioning as an independent review source. It is not affiliated with any publisher and accepts no advertising. Its mission is to help teachers, librarians, parents, and childcare providers make appropriate literary choices for children. It has thus developed two services:

- 1) Children's Literature Author/Illustrator Booking Service: to assist schools, conferences, and other organizations in identifying authors and illustrators
- 2) Children's Literature Comprehensive Database (CLCD): spin-off from Children's Literature. It uses reviews from a variety of sources, including Children's Literature, to provide an Internet based acquisition, research and reference service.

Based in Washington DC, the people currently involved as reviewers in this network are more than 125.

- Sussex Centre for Folklore, Fairy Tales and Fantasy, University of Chichester (<http://www.sussexfolktalecentre.org/>, <http://www.chi.ac.uk/research/research-centres/folklore-fairy-tales-fantasy>)

Moving on to the United Kingdom, the Sussex Centre for Folklore, Fairy Tales and Fantasy is quite keen in giving a space of dialogue and research on the three aspects of folklore, fairy tales and fantasy as creative forces in literature and culture. With national but also international scope, its aim is to provide a forum where writers and scholars from various disciplines can discuss folk narratives, fairy tales and fantasy works, both as independent 'genres' and also in terms of the resonances and dissonances between them, and other cultural forms. The services it currently hosts are:

- 1) Sussex Folklore Index: An online, multilingual, multi-authored, annotated bibliographic index consisting of links to primary sources of folktales, fairytales and fantasy works available in the public domain, as well as to secondary sources for scholarly discussion on these subjects.
- 2) FOLKTALES Mailing List (<https://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/cgi-bin/webadmin?A0=FOLKTALES>): Used to facilitate interdisciplinary discussion of folktales, fairy tales and fantasy literature.

Constituted mainly by academics from various leading universities, American and European, it provides a more scientific perspective on research in children's literature.

- International Research Society Children's Literature (IRSCL) (<http://www.irscl.com/index.html>)

With the aim of bringing together scholars interested in children's literature globally, the International Research Society for Children's Literature is an international scholarly organization

established to support and promote research in the field of children's literature with members from over forty countries worldwide. Acting as the worldwide point of reference in this area, it serves in facilitating cooperation between researchers in different countries and in different branches of learning and in enabling researchers in different countries to exchange information, share discussion of professional and theoretical issues, and initiate and coordinate research.

Similar initiatives are documented in various European countries such as France, the Netherlands or Germany which mainly focus on the aspect of networking rather on providing access to digital content. For the purposes of this project, the networks are listed here either as potential communities to be engaged in Europeana Research or as examples of academic collaboration in this field.

- The Web-Site of the French 'Graduate Centre International d'Etudes en Litterature de Jeunesse' (<http://www.ricochet-jeunes.org/>)
- Children's Literature in Italy (<http://users.unimi.it/childlit/>)
- Spanish Research Society Children's Literature (<http://anilij.uvigo.es/>)
- The Irish Society for the Study of Children's Literature (<https://issclblog.wordpress.com/>)

In addition to the initiatives listed before, research on children's literature is also conducted in a number of research centers developed within university institutions. Similarly connected to the topic of children's literature, academics and students develop and promote scholarly work in this field.

- Center for Children's Literature and Culture, University of Florida (<http://cclc.english.ufl.edu/>)

Its aim is to encourage the exploration of this vital area of cultural life through scholarly and critical investigations; through meetings, symposia, and seminars; and through the development of innovative ways to make the research and concerns of its members available to the general public.

Interestingly, this center provides, apart from its networking activities, a list of online resources divided into categories of community and local resources, blogs, illustrations and visual art collections, exhibitions, film and theatre, institutions, organizations and museums and photography.

- Centre for International Research in Childhood, University of Reading
(<http://www.circl.co.uk/index.htm>)

Established in the English Department at the University of Reading in Reading, England, in October 1996, CIRCL aims to promote and coordinate international and interdisciplinary academic research in childhood, focusing particularly on research in children and culture, children's literature, and children and the media.

- The Folklore Society (<http://folklore-society.com/>)

The Folklore Society (FLS) is a learned society, based in London, founded in 1878, devoted to the study of all aspects of folklore and tradition, including: ballads, folktales, fairy tales, myths, legends, traditional song and dance, folk plays, games, seasonal events, calendar customs, childlore and children's folklore, folk arts and crafts, popular belief, folk religion, material culture, vernacular language, sayings, proverbs and nursery rhymes, folk medicine, plantlore and weather lore.

- The Cambridge/Homerton Research and Teaching Centre for Children's Literature
(<http://www.educ.cam.ac.uk/centres/childrensliterature/>)

Both the Faculty of Education of the University of Cambridge and the Homerton College have a long tradition in children's literature and a strong national and international profile for high quality research and teaching. The Centre brings together researchers, teachers and students in a vibrant, thriving scholarly community.

Aim for:

- The creation a favourable environment for high-quality and innovative research in children's literature
 - The combination of literary, aesthetic and educational approaches to the subject
 - The accommodation of theoretical, empirical and interdisciplinary research
 - The support of practitioners through dissemination of research findings
- National Centre for Research in Children's Literature, University of Roehampton
(<http://www.roehampton.ac.uk/Research-Centres/National-Centre-for-Research-in-Children-s-Literature/>)

The Centre promotes academic excellence in research into children's literature, primarily through thriving postgraduate MA and PhD programmes, conferences and staff publications.

This long list of research centres, institutions, groups and people surrounding children's literature in all its aspects clearly reveals the wide interest in this topic by the academic community but also the public. It could be said that one of the particularities of this field lies on its diverse audience. In any case, research conducted here aimed in exploring and documenting the measure of interest and engagement of – at least - the scholarly community with Children's Literature as a significant factor in enriching this kind of content in the new platform of Europeana Research.

Tools and Services

As introduced before, the types of content found in Europeana but also outside Europeana in various institutions on this topic are mainly text and image. Apart from that, interestingly enough, none of the websites/research societies dealing with this field have reference of employing a digital tool or service when dealing with such content. Does this suggest that there is no digital potential in the area of children's literature?

Literature suggests that “the twentieth and twenty-first centuries have seen a great increase in the diversity in children's books, from picture books to flap books to online multimedia texts”.¹⁴ This “explosion of multimedia and intertextuality” as has been described, has led to an interplay with digital technologies in terms of storytelling, authoring or simply presenting such content.

In this context, a project called FABULA has been traced as an example of innovative use of technology in the area of Children's Literature.¹⁵ Developed between 1998 and 2000 and funded by the European Commission, Fabula was a multidisciplinary, multinational project aiming to produce a simple-to-use tool for making bilingual multimedia story books in the lesser used languages of Europe. In this way, the project would help ensure that minority languages were not excluded from the Information Age and it would increase the perceived status of lesser-used languages by associating them with new technologies. While having a different focus from actual research on Children's Literature, it is presented here as indicative of technology

¹⁴ “To Instruct and Delight: A History of Children's Literature” in Random History.com, published in January 2008 <http://www.randomhistory.com/1-50/024children.html> (Accessed” 13 October 2015).

¹⁵ Edwards, Pemberton, Knight and Monaghan, “FABULA: A BILINGUAL MULTIMEDIA AUTHORING ENVIRONMENT FOR CHILDREN EXPLORING MINORITY LANGUAGES”. Retrieved from <http://www.it.bton.ac.uk/staff/lp22/fabula.doc> (Accessed: 18 September 2015).

development in education and story writing with a linguistic perspective. Its particularity also lies in the fact that its target audience is children who are not perceived as simply 'consumers' but they are rather actively involved in the process.

Based on the idea that "creating an artefact is a more powerful way of learning than consuming another's product", the project planned to involve its target audience, children, in the process of creating story texts based on fables, myths or fairy tales, audio recordings and images then combined into a full Fabula storybook. In this way, children would develop a range of social and organizational skills as well as deepening their understanding of Information and Communication Technology. Thus, one of the requirements of the software, apart from being simple to use, was to create an aesthetically pleasing environment. Interestingly, it was considered that creating digital versions of bilingual books "would give minority languages the high status attached to computer based material and give children enjoyable, engaging language learning/exploration tools". Digital content was thus highly valued as an asset in engaging the community to interact with this particular type of content.

What was also considered important was the fact that, for children, "the prospect of having their work published for the rest of Europe to see has proven highly motivating".¹⁶ The software developed, apart from its potentials it offered to teachers and students, it also formed the focus for a community of users with a commitment to high quality and innovative language teaching, keen to look outwards to share their experiences". For the purposes of Europeana Research, knowledge rendered here would be:

- To actively engage users in editing and elaborating on resources, stating clearly the provenance of the new editions
- To build a network of users/researchers
- To enable researchers to share knowledge and publish views
- To create an environment simple to use

Another interesting technological innovation that should be discussed here is digital storytelling. "Digital storytelling at its most basic core is the practice of using computer-based tools to tell stories".¹⁷ Applied mainly for educational purposes but also as a mean to enrich user experience in GLAMs, this service is in general the idea of combining the art of telling stories with a variety

¹⁶ Edwards, Pemberton, Knight and Monaghan, "FABULA".

¹⁷ "What is Digital Storytelling" in <http://digitalstorytelling.coe.uh.edu/page.cfm?id=27&cid=27&sublinkid=29> (Accessed: 20 October 2015).

of multimedia, including graphics, audio, video, and Web publishing. As an increasingly popular technological asset, digital storytelling has various potentials and applications that have only been partially recorded or explored. In respect to education, it provides both teachers and students an effective instructional and learning tool respectively by encouraging the integration of new multimedia in the classroom or by enhancing the student experience through personal ownership and accomplishment. Despite the fact that this does not correspond directly to researchers of Children’s Literature, it does provide a more contemporary view of how literature is taught and perceived, how digital means transform or influence the relation between user and content and sheds light in potentials given to children’s literature to be enriched or presented to the public in the GLAM sector.

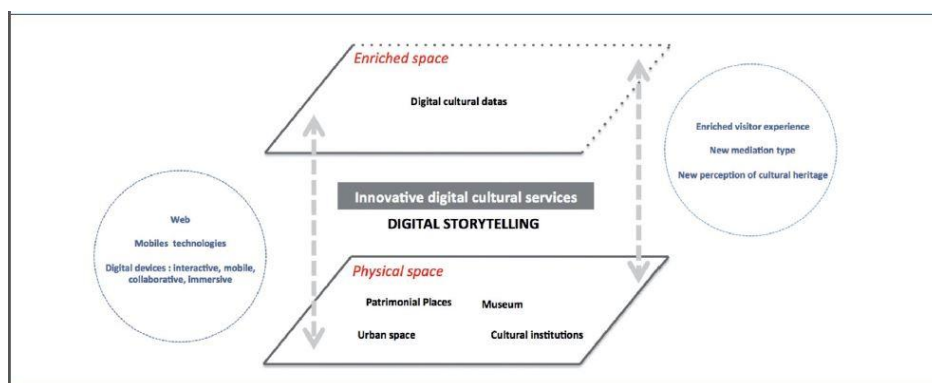


Figure 35. *Depiction of the enriched space visit in respect to digital storytelling, AthenaPlus Project Report, p.12.*

It could be thus suggested that such digital services have a dual function. Apart from enabling new uses or enhanced elaboration of digital resources, they also impose new research questions as they create a new reality of interaction between the user and the respective field/content. In this context, digital storytelling, as a new form of digital mediation of cultural heritage, has served, among other, in enriching the visitors’ experience cycle by offering them new action and participation capacities. In order to guarantee cultural data attractiveness over time, in research, education or simply in visiting experience in libraries, museums and archives, such services are incredibly valuable and become objects of study themselves in respect to their function and outcomes.¹⁸

Despite the fact that there is no other reference to digital tools or services employed in research in Children’s Literature, the type of tools and services that would be potentially useful in this field

¹⁸ “Digital Storytelling and Cultural Heritage: Stakes and Opportunities”, AthenaPlus Project Report, 2015, p.14.

could be inspired by the type of content of the area, in particular text and image. Therefore, annotation tools would be such an example or digital illustration tools.

Researchers' views

Desk research was further complemented by informal discussions with researchers of the field aiming to explore and document their current digital practices and in particular their needs that Europeana Research could attempt to meet in the future. To this purpose a questionnaire was prepared on investigating how the community conducts research in this area, which methods it employs, available tools and resources it currently uses and future aspirations. This structure was not strictly followed but it rather encouraged an open discussion with researchers according to their interests or points that they would like to stress more which lasted 40 minutes approximately.

Research societies and networks of Children's Literature, as these were identified and documented before, served as the initial contact point for reaching researchers in the field. Eventually, the sample of researchers that contributed in this task was mainly mobilized through the Spanish National Association and Investigation on Children's Literature (ANILIJ).¹⁹ In particular, three discussions were held in September-October 2015 with:

- Dr. Juan Senís Fernández, Department of Teaching of Languages and Humanities and Social Sciences, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zaragoza, Spain
- Dr. Xavier Mínguez López, Department of Teaching of Languages and Literature, University of Valencia, Spain
- Dr. Patricia Hansen, Independent Researcher

While this cannot be considered a representative sample of researchers in Children's Literature, it will help to illustrate here the different parts of the interview questionnaire as well as points made earlier in presenting desk research. All three researchers have conducted extensive research in this area and had valuable insights to share. The issues that emerged from the discussions held were:

1) Geographic coverage of available digital material

¹⁹ Spanish National Association and Investigation on Children's Literature (ANILIJ) <http://anilij.uvigo.es/>

Researchers observed a gap between national contexts in producing digital data and thus be represented online in digital libraries and archives. As digitization projects are not equally developed in all countries, their digital presence is also unequal. Apart from that, even in cases where digitized material is produced, its good quality is not ensured. Producing thus digital content was considered the first and most significant step before moving on to building tools and services.

2) Collections as means of organizing content

Building collections on children's literature was considered to be the best way to organize and orient research. Collections either thematically or content-wise would potentially serve as ready-made research material.

3) Easy access to references, databases, journals and books

Researchers heavily rely on textual resources, such as journals and books, to support their research argument and explore their research question. Thus, one of the issues stated in the discussions was the need for online access to such multilingual material.

4) Map of publications

In relation to the previous suggestion, it was considered useful to have a constantly updated record of publications on a specific research topic that would serve researchers to trace what are the new publication trends on Children's Literature. This could be translated into a map of publications which would potentially enforce networking aspects in the field.

Discussion

Following the desk research conducted as well as the discussions held with researchers of the field, it is suggested here that the area of Children's Literature could indeed serve as a research topic in the new platform of Europeana Research. The arguments supporting this suggestion are:

1) Enrichment of content:

Currently the online presence of content related to Children's Literature in the portal of Europeana is important but it is still quite underrepresented. Therefore, there is room for further

enrichment, considering also the number of digital libraries that have been traced and documented earlier with such available digital resources.

2) Networks:

Evaluating the number of research associations that currently exist in this area, there is a surprisingly wide interest in academic circles that are already joined in various networks around the world. Mobilizing them in respect to new digital resources, tools and services will immediately embrace this research path in Europeana Research with potential users and community.

3) Interest for further development of tools and services:

Despite the fact that there is only a small number of researchers in this field employing digital tools and services on such content, the prospect of developing such in the future gathers great attention among researchers. Moreover, the low engagement with digital technologies so far could be seen as an opportunity for new developments from the scratch in a field which is currently not well imprinted in respect to digital tools and services.

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