

International Library of Children's Literature and Its Digital Library

overview of the projects for the national center of children's literature

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Abstract

The International Library of Children's Literature will be founded in January 2000 and partly opened to the public in May of the same year.

This new library will have combined functions: it will collect and preserve a wide range of domestic and foreign children's literature and related research materials. It will also offer various services for children and give them opportunities to experience the attraction of reading as well as to feel closer to libraries.

It will develop digital library functions to carry out the above-mentioned services and activities. The digital library functions of the International Library of Children's Literature consist of two different categories, namely, the digital archive function and the digital museum function. The former will enhance the document/information center function, store and preserve primary, secondary and other professional information on children's books, and make it available widely via networks. The latter will be a virtual exhibition function, in which the stored juvenile literature contents will be edited, processed and provided, which will help attract broad attention to both domestic and foreign juvenile literature.

Keywords: International Library of Children's Literature, National Diet Library, digital library, digitization, electronic library, juvenile literature, electronic library, copyright clearance, digital archives, digital museum, picture book gallery

1 Introduction

The International Library of Children's Literature, which will be a branch library of the National Diet Library and the first national library specializing in

juvenile literature in Japan, will be founded in January 2000 and partly opened to the public in May of the same year. This new library will develop digital library functions to support its services and other activities.

The digital library functions of the International Library of Children's Literature are closely linked with its general aims, functions and services. Therefore I will start with the general picture of the International Library of Children's Literature, then move on to its digital library aspect.

2 Establishment of the International Library of Children's Literature

The establishment of the International Library of Children's Literature in January 2000 was approved late this March, when part of the National Diet Library Law was amended. Organizationally, it will be a branch library of the National Diet Library, which is the only national and deposit library in Japan as well as the parliamentary library which belongs to the National Diet (our parliament).

The point of revised article 22 of the Law is as follows:

"The International Library of Children's Literature shall be established as a branch library of the National Diet Library that provides, through international collaboration, library services concerning books and other library materials whose main readers are assumed to be approximately eighteen years or less of age".

"Books and other library materials whose main readers are assumed to be approximately eighteen years or less of age" means juvenile literature in any media, not limited to printed matter. Therefore, the Library will be founded "for the purpose of providing library services in international

cooperation concerning juvenile literature”.

The International Library of Children's Literature will be housed in the present Ueno Branch Library building in Ueno Park in Tokyo. Before that, complete remodeling work will be done. The Ueno Branch Library as such will cease to exist.

The building was built in 1906 for the then Imperial Library, but it was not until 1929, when the building was extended, that its shape became what we see now. It survived the Great Earthquake of 1923 and the Second World War. In 1990 it was designated as a historic building by the Tokyo Municipal Government. It is one of the few remaining brick-built structures of the Meiji era (1868-1912) in Tokyo.

We respect the historic value of the building when we remodel it; in particular, the interior and exterior design and the part built in the Meiji era should be kept as unchanged as possible. It will be a precious cultural heritage for children in the 21st century. Japan has earthquakes very often, so to make an old building earthquake-proof is essential. We had decided to adopt a quake-free retrofit technique, and also added some new functions which are necessary for a contemporary library.

The basic remodeling plan, drawn up by Mr. Tadao ANDO, a Japanese architect, includes not only the repairs to the present building, but also the new attachment of two big box-shape glass structures, which will pierce the original building diagonally. Thus the building will be a combination of three eras, Meiji, Showa (1926-1989) and Heisei (1989-present), and with it, the Ueno Branch Library will be reborn as the International Library of Children's Literature.

The remodeling work falls into two phases. The first phase will focus on the Showa attachment and will be launched during this fiscal year. The part will be opened to the public next May (2,600 m² floor area). The second phase, on the Meiji building, will be done during FY 1999 – 2001. In FY2002 the library will provide full services (6,600m²).

3 Basic functions and services

The International Library of Children's Literature, to improve the reading/information environment for Children, will collect and preserve a wide range of both domestic and foreign children's literature and related research materials, and support studies on

publishing for children and the associated culture, as a national document/information center. It will also offer various services for children and give them opportunities to experience the fun of reading as well as to feel fine to libraries.

Organizationally, the International Library of Children's Literature is more or less similar to the Children's Literature Center of the US Library of Congress, as both of them are an affiliate of a national library. However, when it comes to its function, as the International Library of Children's Literature will be a national document/ information center for research support and, at the same time, offer direct services to children, the combination makes it rather closer to the Internationale Jugendbibliothek in Germany.

Besides, as the name “International” shows and the National Diet Library Law stipulates (“through international collaboration”), it should be emphasized that “international” cooperation and services are indispensable part of its functions and services.

The National Diet Library is the only national library in Japan and the deposit library, which comprehensively acquires, preserves and makes available domestic publications. Juvenile literature is certainly among these domestic publications. The International Library of Children's Literature will play a fundamental role in its specific area and serve as a deposit library. Now the National Diet Library holds about 130,000 volumes of juvenile books and 2,000 titles of juvenile periodicals, all published in Japan. When the new Library opens next year, its book stacks will have not yet been rebuilt. Therefore, only current juvenile books and research materials, 10,000 volumes respectively, will be transferred from the main library. In 2002 when it is fully opened every juvenile book and periodical will be removed from the main library and be housed in the new Library.

In addition to the domestic materials acquired via legal deposit, foreign juvenile literature is also important not only for research but also directly for children, especially for cross-cultural understanding. We have begun actively to collect major picture books and juvenile literature from foreign countries. We target every country in the world, namely, more than 180 countries. At next year's opening, nearly 20,000 volumes of juvenile literature published abroad will be available.

Besides the role of a national document/

information center for juvenile literature, we also emphasize that the readers of children's books are children and the International Library of Children's Literature will be a library whose doors are open to children. Certainly it is part of the national library and its role is different from that of local public or school libraries, which are basically in charge of lending services. The more popular books are, the more easily they are lost. This is the fate of children's books and we need something that will allow both functions to work together: the document/information center function which will secure future access to juvenile literature, and the library function for children today. This is why we are stressing digital library functions for the International Library of Children's Literature.

4 Aims of the digital library

We believe that the International Library of Children's Literature has to develop digital library functions. Without these, it would be impossible for the Children's Library to provide the functions and services which I have already mentioned, or to contribute to culture and education in the advanced information society of the 21st century.

While printed books will remain important in future, the convenience of digital information will boost the range and accessibility of information for children. It is most important and highly desirable to enhance the contents of the new Library and make them available at schools and libraries around the country via networks.

The aims of the digital library are summed up as follows:

1. Improvement of information supply functions in networked environments, such as organization of bibliographic/location information and digitization of information resources.
2. Multimedia information services. The features of children's culture should be considered.
3. Enhancement of networks. They will support the global information delivery and two-way relationships among related organizations.

To achieve these aims, since 1995, systems and contents have been under development. We have categorized the functions of the International Library of Children's Literature and its digital library into the following two:

a. Digital archive function

To collect and preserve a wide range of

bibliographic/location information on juvenile literature and related materials, primal digital information and professional information and to make them available via networks. This will be the foundation for the national document/information center.

b. Digital museum function

This will be an intellectual base for children in the new era. Subjects or themes are chosen to make the most of the attraction of multi-media and associated culture. Multimedia information (animations, static images etc.), either from the digital archive or collected selectively according to the themes, is edited and processed. Then these contents are exhibited in digital space.

5 Digital Library for Juvenile Literature

Pilot Project

We carried out the Digital Library for Juvenile Literature Pilot Project from FY 1995 to 1996 to develop a digital library model. It included two major works, the infrastructure system and the experiment system.

5.1 Infrastructure system

This is equivalent to the above-mentioned digital library function's first category, the digital archive function. It is for the retrospective conversion of the bibliographic information on juvenile literature held by the National Diet Library, the development of a full-text image database of juvenile literature, the development of a system to supply those data via networks and the enhancement of contents.

We retrospectively converted bibliographic data of some 40,000 volumes of juvenile books published before 1976 among our holdings, whose data had not been input machine-readable format. Full texts (image data) of some 9,000 volumes published before 1950 (for picture books, before 1955) were also digitized. When digitizing, we had to clear the copyright problem. With the exception of materials whose copyrights had already expired, copyright holders were directly contacted and asked for their permission, which most of them granted. However, we failed to identify or locate many copyright holders and only 3,000 volumes, a mere one third of those we intended, were available for digital images. The other 6,000 volumes are still under investigation.

We used colored images for picture books. For others, the text is monochrome (binary), while the illustrations are colored.

We have been experimentally making them available to more than ten domestic organizations which are working as monitors to review the interfaces and so on.

5.2 Experiment system

This is the equivalent of the digital museum function I mentioned above. Three experimental systems for the multimedia information services were developed.

1. Multi-lingual Picture Books for the Internet

In cooperation with the UNESCO Asian Culture Center, three picture books published by the Center, which depict the lives of children in Asian countries in 11 different languages (Chinese, English, German, Hindi, Japanese, Korean, Malay, Spanish, Thai, Urdu, Vietnamese), were digitized into colored images and text data. We also added narration data. This multimedia system is accessed with a WWW browser. It will enable children around the world to interact with the system and enjoy picture books, and then feel close to the culture, languages and the lives of children in Asian countries.

2. Woods of Books: navigation system for children

This is a navigation system to find books you want. You can search for books not only by titles, authors, publishers, classifications and other ordinary means, but also, according to illustrations or oral guidance, by characters or the background of the story, which will attract children's interest. Images of book covers, plot summaries and so on are displayed (376 volumes of 33 publishers).

3. Voice Interactive Retrieval System

This is a voice recognition system, so you find books by talking with the system. When you retrieve, bibliographic information and introductions will be delivered in synthetic or narrative vocals.

5.3 Review and evaluation

A demonstration was offered to people interested in libraries as the first step of the review and evaluation of the whole project. Participants were anticipating the possibility of digitization and digital library systems and, at the same time, were cautious about the idea that a person could be easily replaced with a machine. It was also suggested that the concept of multimedia information service, which takes account of the features of children's culture,

needed further examination.

6 International Library of Children's

Literature Digital Library System

Based on the results and reviews of FY 1995 and 1996, we launched practical system development in FY 1997. It is a three-year plan to be finished in FY1999, just before the opening of the International Library of Children's Literature.

6.1 Launch of Union Catalog of Children's Literature Project

When the establishment of a children's library at the National Diet Library increased its reality, we discovered that the Children's collection of our library was far from complete. The Imperial Library before World War II had no deliberate acquisition or preservation policy for Juvenile Literature, and, in particular, it held hardly any juvenile periodicals from before the War or publications under the allied occupation after the War. Even after the National Diet Library was established and the legal deposit system started to work, there were plenty of publications which did not find their way to the Library.

The International Library of Children's Literature, a national document/information center to support research and studies on publishing for children and the associated culture, should collect information about the materials when the Library does not hold them. It sought cooperation from five organizations (International Institute for Children's Literature, Osaka, Tokyo Metropolitan Hibiya Library, Kanagawa Museum of Modern Literature, Museum of Modern Japanese Literature, Sankou Library), which had a great deal of old juvenile literature, and began to develop the Union Catalog Database of Juvenile Literature. You can retrieve bibliographic/location information of domestic juvenile literature, both books and periodicals, in a unified manner.

This database will also work as a foundation on which cooperative networks will be built between the related professional organizations and the International Library of Children's Literature. It will form a social and institutional basis for resource sharing of rare juvenile literature in Japan and act as a core database to advance resource sharing, such as interlibrary loans, cooperative preservation activities

and shared acquisition.

The juvenile literature held by the National Diet Library, not only Japanese books but also foreign literature, periodicals and related research materials, which we will categorically collect from now on, will be put into the database in a unified way. After the opening of the International Library of Children's Literature, it will serve as an OPAC of the Library and be available on the Internet. We have already started the system development.

6.2 Unification of primary and secondary information

I have already mentioned the text/digital image database of juvenile literature, a product of the Digital Library for Juvenile Literature Pilot Project. The database will be linked to the Union Catalog Database of Children's Literature and they will be reorganized into a system which will allow unified operation and maintenance. It is called the International Library of Children's Literature Digital Library System.

6.3 Expansion of contents

The system development itself, which was launched in FY1997, has almost ended. It has to work effectively as not only the foundation of the cooperative networks between the related organizations and the International Library of Children's Literature, but also as the social and institutional basis for resource sharing of rare juvenile literature in Japan. This is why we regard the enhancement of the contents of the system essential.

We need also to improve the contents to make them attract and amuse children. The Picture Book Gallery Project, which I will explain next, is based on this idea.

In addition to general bibliographic and location information,

- a. book reviews/awards information,
 - b. plot summaries/annotations,
 - c. story subject headings/classification symbols for children,
 - d. evaluation on works/authors,
- will be carried in the database.

7 Picture Book Gallery

We launched the Picture Book Gallery Project in FY1998. It will collect and store domestic and

foreign picture books in digital images, so it is, in a sense, a successor of the above-mentioned infrastructure system, but is also based on a brand-new concept. The outline of the project is as follows.

It aims to make people understand the attraction of picture books, which transcend the language barrier and can be understood and enjoyed by both grown-ups and children around the world. As the history of juvenile literature and picture books shows, this is an international genre unlike other literature.

This project will follow the development of the picture book genre through books, which at present no one has many opportunities to touch. According to this historical perspective we will select domestic and foreign materials, reproduce them into digital images, annotate them, and create a virtual exhibition program edited according to themes.

When we started the project, we fortunately received the full support of Ms. Tayo SHIMA, the authority in the field of picture book studies and President of the International Board on Books for Young People. Especially, in case of foreign picture books, we completely relied on her to select the materials for the program as well as to provide her own collections.

The first phase of this project include Japanese and Western picture books from the previous century, when the modern picture book took shape, to around the 1930s.

For Japanese picture books, we chose *Kodomo no Kuni*, Children's World, (January 1922 to March 1944, published by Tokyosha, 287 volumes) and *Yonen Gaho*, Children's Picture Magazine (January 1906 to December 1912, published by Hakubunkan, 89 volumes published during the Meiji era). Though both of them are representative pre-war picture periodicals, the National Diet Library does not hold even one issue. 16,400 works, namely, all works carried in these periodicals, were digitized by borrowing original materials held by the International Institute for Children's Literature, Osaka, and other two organizations.

For foreign picture books, we chose for digitization 400 works, major works in picture book history, from among the picture books published from the previous century to around the 1930s in Western countries (Argentina, Denmark, France, Russia, Sweden, UK, USA etc.)

Copyright clearance, a prerequisite for digital image conversion, turned out to be pretty difficult,

because the number of works and copyright holders is immense and some of them were contributed by child readers more than five decades ago. However, eventually, 15,900 works were available in the range of the Copyright Law and digitized into images, with the exception of about 500 for which we could not obtain permission. (For the details of the copyright clearance, please see the *National Diet Library Monthly Bulletin June 1999*, which is in Japanese.)

The copyright clearance for foreign picture books is ongoing, sometimes with the cooperation of related organizations abroad.

We will gradually create a virtual exhibition program, edited by theme, from the digital images. The themes will be: Soviet Picture Books, Creators of Picture Books, Kodomo no Kuni World, Petersham World, Mother Goose and Picture Books, Japonism in Picture Books, Avant Garde Picture Books, Alphabet Picture Books, Picture Books of Fables.

Although we have started the project on our own initiative, it can be described as a picture book version of the Memory of the World project, and we think in future it should be developed within the frame of international cooperation, calling in related organizations abroad.

8 Service plan

Finally, I would like to mention what sort of services we will provide, taking advantage of the systems and contents I have been explaining.

We will start a number of services from next May when we open the first phase of the International Library of Children's Literature. However, for the time being, direct services for visitors will predominate. Services via networks will mostly remain unrealized until 2002 when the whole Library finally opens.

8.1 Direct user services

As digital archive functions, we will provide all the digital library contents I have already referred to, both primary and secondary information, via user terminals. We will offer a seamless system which links bibliographic retrieval with primary images. Children will use Children's OPAC in which user interfaces, retrieval approaches, book cover image displays and so on, will be specially designed. Photoduplication/printout services will be available.

As digital museum functions, besides the Picture

Book Gallery, Children's Image Encyclopedia, consisting of three parts such as vehicles, animals and literature masterpieces and featuring animations will be available. We will also provide multimedia contents acquired through legal deposit and so on.

Special computer terminals and large-sized screens (150" by 70") will be available for these services.

8.2 Remote services

For the time being we will offer only secondary and professional information to unspecified Internet users via the Web site of the Library. Text/image primary information will not be available.

Although copyright-cleared primary information can be provided to public, we will limit the network users to the participants of the National Union Catalog Network, related professional organizations, school libraries, public libraries and so forth for a while, for the following reasons:

1. The Finance Law and the National Property Law limit the free provisions at present.
2. The copyright holders we negotiated with often expressed their concern about unlimited utilization of digital images. Some holders said that, without technical protection measures on data file duplication, downloading, printouts etc. they could not give us permission. Prevention of forgery, prohibition of duplication and other prevention measures against unfair use must be examined.

9 Conclusion

I have outlined the International Library of Children's Literature and its digital library projects. It will be a document/information center on children's literature, a library which targets children, and an international library. As such, it will settle each specific legal and institutional issue on information supply and make it accessible all over the world. It will also enhance the available contents steadily and cooperate with the related organizations and specialists around the world. I believe these will be our mission.