The International Impact of the International Children’s Digital Library

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The research goal…

…To understand children’s interests and concerns in books, libraries, technology, and the world around them during extended use of a digital library.
Emerging trends that inform our research …

• Increasing diversity in a child’s world

• Changing roles of books and libraries for children
  (Lance, 2002; McIntyre, 2002; Sabljak, 2003;

• Increasing use of all forms of technology by children
  (Cole, 2003; Dresang et al., 2003; Druin, 2005)
The **participants** and **places**…

- 12 children, 12 parents, 6 teachers, 6 librarians, 4 principals
- 2 private schools, 2 public schools

Honduras  
Germany  
U.S. (Chicago)  
New Zealand
Research approach…

• Qualitative **case study**
• Multiple **methods**
  – interviews, drawings, book reviews
• Over 4 years, in 4 countries
  – 3 visits, frequent email contact, remote data collection
Children’s experience…

• Given a Tablet PC with ICDL
• Asked to read a certain number of books a month (varied by year)
• Wrote book reviews and submitted
• Interviewed three times over 4 years (along with adults)
• Drew ideas and asked their classmates to draw
Data collected…

- **301 Book reviews**
  - first reviews any 4 books a month
  - 2nd & 3rd reviews pre-selected and choice books
- **236 Drawings** from children and classmates
  - world trips, current and future libraries, computers of the future, favorite books,
- **152 Interview transcripts** (see URL for tools)
Data analysis…

• Open coding based on 4 interest areas
• Frequency/omission analysis of artifacts/content
• Trends identified when:
  – 3 or more countries raised the issue in interviews
  – AND could be confirmed in drawings or book reviews
Findings concerning books/libraries...

- **Variety** of books children read increased
  - “First I used to read cartoon books. Now I read long books, short books, funny books, a lot of kinds of books!” (Honduras)
- Preferred physical books for reading but **technology for searching**
  - “… “[The ICDL] was okay, but it was not the same as reading a real book.” (Germany)
  - “It’s quite cool to be able to go through all of the processes to be able to find a book.” (NZ)
- Increased **social interaction** surrounding books
  - “[I wanted to] teach her how to spell and read better and handle fluency.” (US)
- **No change** in interest for traditional libraries
  - “I don't want to split the ICDL up with the library. I like the library, but I like the ICDL, too!” (NZ)
Findings concerning technology...

• **Increased technology skills and confidence**
  – most dramatic changes in children less technology-aware, less academic-achievers, from low-incomes
  – “I like the fact that since I’ve used the ICDL, I’ve become more confident with the computer.” (NZ)

• **Use of technology motivated reading**
  – “Kids wanted to come to the library and use the computers--they were motivated to use the ICDL.” (US)
Findings concerning world view…

• Children showed increased interest in exploring other cultures
  – “With all the different languages and stuff in [the ICDL], it sort of dawned on me, like, all the different cultures that are out there and the possibilities that you could read about them.” (NZ)
  – “Because of the ICDL [my daughter] was able to see that there are other [cultures]…she was able to accept other cultures.” (US)
Implications of research...

• Important to develop **diverse digital library** materials
• Greatest **impact** may be on less tech-savvy, and less experience with diversity
• **New reading tools** needed for future
• Libraries of the future should include **computers** side-by-side with **books**
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Interested in getting involved with the ICDL?
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