Children Sharing Stories with ICDL Communities: A Pilot Study in Mexico and USA

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International Children’s Digital Library Communities

• Develop communities for kids to discuss books in ICDL

• The communities should
  ➢ be safe
  ➢ support social interaction
  ➢ be entertaining & fun
  ➢ be challenging

• For children who speak different languages

• Improve cross-cultural understanding
  (Allport, 1988)
Creating new story endings in Hungary

Interpreting the new story endings in the USA
Creating profiles on paper in Mexico

Creating profiles online in the USA
Data Collection – Fall 2005

• Time: 8 weeks (September – December)
• Three private elementary schools in:
  – Baltimore, Maryland, USA,
  – Monterrey, Nuevo León, Mexico

• USA
  – 4 boys & 3 girls between 7-9
• Mexico
  – 4 boys & 4 girls between 7-10
Activities

• Getting to know each other & team building
• Individual & group representation on paper
• Individual & group representation using ICDL Online Community prototype
• Reading a story from ICDL – *Sweet, Sweet Mango Tree*
• Creating and sharing new story endings
• Asking & answering questions between countries on the new endings
• Interviewing
Our Challenges

- Sociability
- Usability
- Privacy
- Culture
- Design for kids
- Work with kids
The Community Works

- Children (7-10) thought the community was a good way:
  - to communicate with other children and
  - to get to know children from other countries
- They enjoyed drawing, but making stories was hard
- They enjoyed communicating and exchanging questions and answers
Identity

- Gender and age identities: could clearly specify
- Ethnic identity:
  - physical characteristics
  - language
  - food
- Understood that people from different countries:
  - look different,
  - speak different languages,
  - eat different foods,
  - and probably play different games
- Cultural/national identity: confused about the city, state, and country concepts
Getting to Know Other Kids

- Had positive attitudes towards other kids
- Stereotypes played a role
- They wanted to find out:
  - games, toys
  - food
  - holidays
  - sports
  - family
  - school
Identity Representation

• Individual identity
  – Girls drew themselves
  – Boys drew “evil monsters” or game characters

• Team identity
  – Girls: use their own images as group representation
  – Boys: use names of video games, soccer teams, school image
Blaire

My name is Blaire
My secret word is Blaire
I was born on 7/9/1998
I am 7 years old
I live in United States

My favorite color is Blue
Favorite food is Macaroni
Favorite icecream is Chocolate
Favorite holiday is Christmas
Favorite game is Cards
Favorite book is Heidi
I have a pet Rabbit

Marcelo

My name is Marcelo
My secret word is futbol
I was born on 11/1/1997
I am 7 years old
I live in Mexico

My favorite color is Green
Favorite food is Icecream
Favorite icecream is Chocolate
Favorite holiday is Christmas
Favorite game is Game Cube
Favorite book is Where is the Bear
I have a pet Guinea Pig
Communicating across Cultures

• Language was not as big a problem as anticipated
• Kids are visually-oriented: interested in showing and seeing physical environment
• Multimedia identity representation is useful
• Learning as much as possible about the other kids is important
• Finding similarities helps defining common ground and build trust
Design for Kids

• Usability problems identified
• Interactivity
  ➢ Make their own drawings
• Entertainment & fun
• Challenge & feedback
• Social interaction with other kids
  ➢ Language is not such a huge barrier!
• Identity online & ownership
Working with Kids

- Team building is very important and takes a long time
- Older children are more decisive and direct about their opinions
- Short interviews will yield more and better data
- Have an authority figure do the interview and not the researchers
- Smiley face questionnaires worked well
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