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Travel, books, reading and the Internet

Hints and tips for encouraging reading

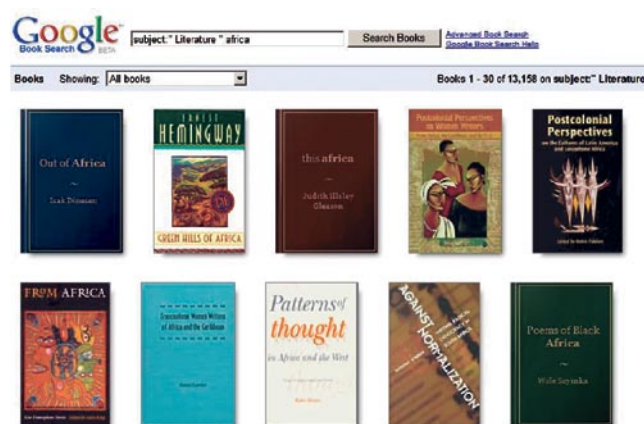
One assumes that in the face of technology people stop reading. This could be the case especially if people have not developed the habit in the first place but the bookshops don't seem to be closing down, in fact just the opposite. If one goes according to the laws of Ranganathan, one of which is "every reader his/her book" meaning that there is an appropriate title somewhere to suit the interest, age group and reading level of a potential reader then accessing books online becomes an imperative. This is especially so when schools might not have a library or appropriate reading material.

S. R. Ranganathan, known as the "the father of library science in India," and respected by librarians all over the world, proposed five laws of library science. Many librarians worldwide accept them as the foundations of their philosophy (e.g. Koehler et al, 2000). These laws are:

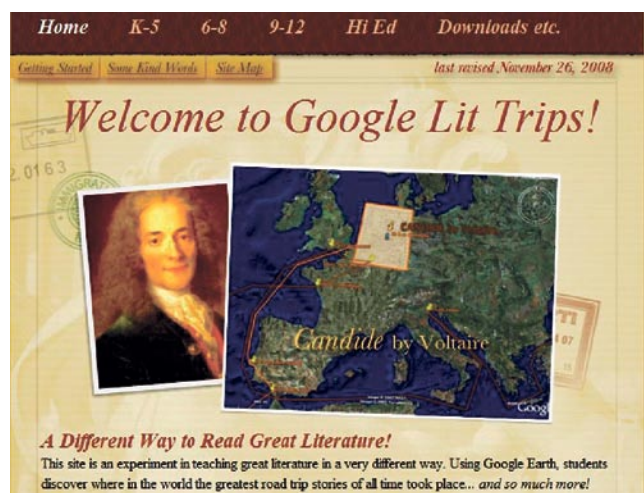
- Books are for use
- Every reader his [or her] book
- Every book its reader
- Save the time of the user
- The library is a growing organism

Wikipedia http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Five_laws_of_library_science [accessed 17 December 2008]

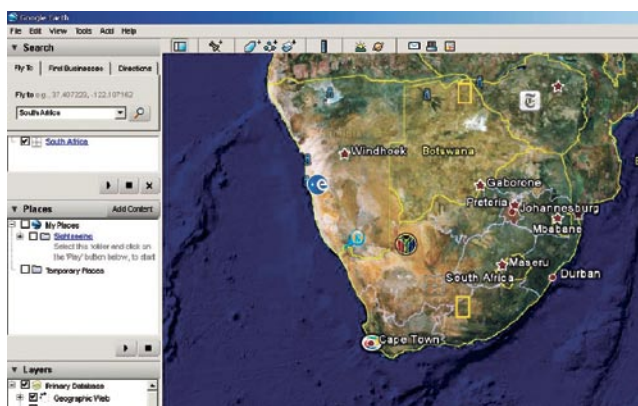
There are many websites which provide assistance when it comes to reading generally, and which offer free "e-books" (some are subject to copyright restrictions according to country) in a digital format. Examples are Project Gutenberg <http://www.gutenberg.org> which has an immense library including a Children's Bookshelf. Although largely made up of classics there are still some wonderful novels which children worldwide can relate to. An example is Around the World in Eighty Days by Jules Verne, a charming adventure story set in the 19th century when jumbo jets and cell phones hadn't been thought of. "Phileas Fogg bet his entire fortune that he could cross the Nineteenth Century Earth - with no plans, no special arrangements, and no air travel - in exactly eighty days. Any delay, any breakdown, any missed connection, and Fogg would lose - everything"



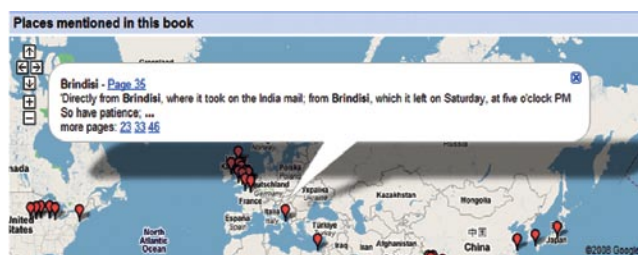
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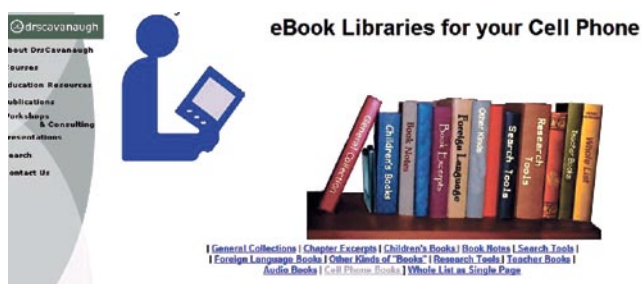
It is an interactive application which means that you can find places and their positions in a realistic way and also related facts and photographs. This really brings travel related books into a different dimension as you can pinpoint places and see exactly the route the author or the story took. "Research shows that when students use geographic maps as adjuncts to text, they recall more text information than they would if they studied the text alone" (Vekiri 2002). Below is an example of Verne's book with relevant pins where the travel took place.



Another useful aspect to this is that one can use a spreadsheet programme to map the co-ordinates of a place bringing in mathematical and geographical skills. An online version is EditGrid <http://www.editgrid.com/>

Where else can one find online books and accompanying tools and ideas? A very good resource is the e-Book Libraries site http://www.drscavanaugh.org/ebooks/libraries/ebook_libraries.htm which gives an excellent list of other electronic book sites including Connexions - Open Source Textbooks <http://cnx.org>. Here one can register and become involved in writing educational materials.

Books needn't be printed to be read. There are many audio books available online and a website for cell-phone book resources is also Drs Cavanaugh http://www.drscavanaugh.org/ebooks/libraries/cell_phone.htm.



Incidentally Dr Terence Cavanaugh has also uploaded a paper on this site called *Using the Cell Phone for Class Content: An Exploration...*

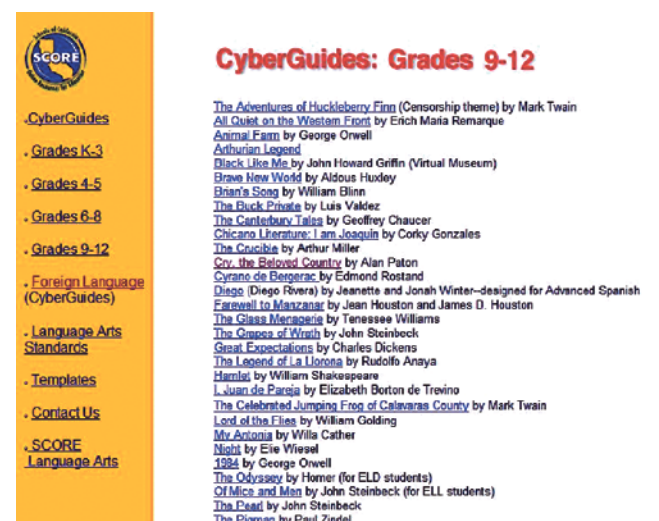
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There is also the International Children's Digital Library <http://www.icdlbooks.org/> which is a great source of reading material in different languages, including African ones. ICDL welcomes contributions and it would be great to see more of our eleven languages featuring on this site.



Although not a new resource, SCORE Cyberguides <http://www.sdcoe.k12.ca.us/score/cyberguide.html> are a great way of using literature in the classroom. Although based in California the guides can be easily tailored to the Assessment Standards and Learning outcomes of the South African curriculum. "CyberGuides are supplementary, standards-based, web-delivered units of instruction centered on core works of literature. Each CyberGuide contains a student and teacher edition, standards, a task and a process by which it may be completed, teacher-selected web sites and a rubric, based on California Language Arts Content Standards".



One of the best things about the Cyberguides is the related resources linked to the activities. Ideally our teachers will be able to create and upload their own, based on South African literature and also in indigenous languages. There is even a template on this website which would make the task so much easier!

Finally there is Inanimate Alice <http://inanimatealice.com/>, an online story that uses a variety of media to plot Alice's story as she grows up in different countries. This is an entirely free resource on-line and also has supportive teaching notes.

I've travelled the world twice over,
Met the famous; saints and sinners,
Poets and artists, kings and queens,
Old stars and hopeful beginners,
I've been where no-one's been before,
Learned secrets from writers and cooks
All with one library ticket
To the wonderful world of books.
~ Unknown ~