

Digital Story-Hours at the Tokyo Children's Library

by Emiko Goeku, Librarian, Tokyo Children's Library

In Tokyo, some public libraries have been closed since the end of February (after the prime minister declared the state of emergency on 7th April, the number is growing) some are partly open, only for loan service of the reserved books and some are fully closed down except for remote copy service, reference service or e-book loan service.

At [Tokyo Children's Library](#), a small non-profit organization, we started [digital story hour via YouTube](#) on 29th Feb, when we decided to temporarily suspend our face-to-face story-hours. As we have our publication section, we made short video clips of our librarians reading-aloud a picture book and folktales from our storybooks. With generous permissions from several publishing companies, we could also bring a short book talk.

Providing High Quality Resources and Respecting Copyright

by Naoko Nakajima, Librarian, National Diet Library

In the online world, we can find much content available for children for free: Tokyo Children's Library's story telling initiatives; [Japanese folk tales read by actors or entertainers](#) (provided by a show business production company); or online picture book hours for signed-up members by librarians, researchers and related professionals, and so on.

We can find more read-aloud content on the web, but some of which seems to have copyright issues. For example, some movies on YouTube fully show visual images and texts of picture books without indicating reliable credit about copyright holders. Some publishers don't appreciate such free online read-alouds. Furthermore, the quality of them is not always very good. Sometimes, text has been simplified without respect to the original one, or they are accompanied by very common illustrations without genuine aesthetics.

As for general school education, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology provides a linked [collection of free e-learning contents](#) on its website. And many education-related companies disclose their e-learning contents. But it remains difficult for children's guardians to find free, reliable, and high-quality reading content on the web, the great sea of information. COVID19 has affected all of Japan and forced children to stay away from schools or libraries. Although Japanese children's librarians seem to have paid less attention to digital content on the web until now, recent circumstances are making us more aware of the necessity of providing knowledge and skills on e-learning and reading content. Japanese children's librarians now need to learn more about them, so they can provide good navigation to reliable, good quality sources.