

## Australia

### **Paintings from the Collection**

#### **By Claire Stuckey**

Pauline Fitzgerald, currently leading the Learning team at the State Library NSW, was keen to produce a complimentary version of an audio guide in our *Paintings from the Collection* exhibition for children, created by children. She worked with ten fabulous students from Summer Hill Public School in Sydney and their two super teacher librarians. It was a very successful project and apart from the audio guide version they have also produced a classroom friendly version. Teaching notes will be available shortly. A further version of the project for secondary students is underway.

Please see the links

Classroom version <https://dxlab.sl.nsw.gov.au/kids-audio-guide/>

Audio guide version <https://audio.sl.nsw.gov.au/kids-audio-guide>

## Croatia

### **Croatian Library-Themed Board Game**

#### **By Alicia Kolarić**

The worldwide COVID19 crisis disrupted everyday life around the globe, including lives of Croatian public libraries which were forced to close their doors in mid-March. Seeking to meet the needs of their users under these new and challenging circumstances, librarians all around Croatia immediately started to offer additional online library services. To offer the overview of all services available online, Croatian Library Association started the platform *Remote Library Services* which gathers digital collections and portals, information services, e-book platforms, educational and recreational content and information for librarians in one place

[https://padlet.com/hkdrustvo/knjiznicne\\_usluge\\_na\\_daljini](https://padlet.com/hkdrustvo/knjiznicne_usluge_na_daljini) . Much of the newly created online

content is intended for children, families and other children libraries' users, for example digital storytelling on YouTube, digital picturebooks created in library workshops, online book club meetings, old postcard puzzles and many more. The National and University Library in Zagreb offers coloring books created out of materials selected from its rich collections for all ages.

Rijeka City Library took a creative step towards designing a library-themed board game. The idea is to develop a fun and educational board game for all ages, inspired by the library, reading and books, available to be printed at home. The process started by librarians providing a basic design. The board game will soon be offered to library users to try out and to provide feedback which will be used for further development and improvement. The main intention is to inspire and engage the user community in collaborative work and a joined creative process of designing the board game which will be a result of collective inspiration, imagination, work and joy. In these challenging days, this is the best a library can do!

## Denmark

### **Digital Services for Children and Young Adults During COVID19**

**By Søren Dahl Mortensen, Senior Project Manager, Odense Central Library.**

In Denmark all libraries have been closed since March 13, 2020. Many library employees are working from home, with all the challenges that come with that. Danish libraries have been focusing on digital services for all – especially the reading pages – <https://ereolengo.dk/> (the e-shelf) which serves both adults and children. It is a huge success, with 85% more users than normal - even when we have competition from commercial services like SAXO.com.

For students we provide full access to all the digital services – magazines, master files etc. We also provide access to films through <https://fjernleje.filmstriben.dk/> which includes non-commercial, online films for children. One library has started a program about writing stories and poems on a website: <http://www.ordskaelv.org/lockdown> Here children can start their own short stories.

Many Libraries have been focusing on reading and telling stories on social media and on library webpages. Also, there is lots of singing and playing songs for children on our library webpages and social media accounts. Several Libraries have created a take-out option. You can borrow a bag of up-to five books at a from the Library on request at your local library og delivered through a local shop.

Some have created “Little Libraries” in different places around town. Here children can take a book and swap it for a new one. These are not necessary library books, but also their own books. But here we have to announce that you borrow from these at your own risk, and that it is important to clean the books before reading them. If your children do not like to read, the website “All Read” helps parents inspire their children to read: <https://www.xn--allelser-n0a.dk/>

The libraries will stay closed at least until May 11th. But at that point, (or whenever we actually can open), I think we will be opening a totally different library experience for children and young adults. I expect to see less focus on borrowing books, and more focus on events like storytelling, music, theater, meeting, and especially, social interaction.

## Germany

### **Children’s and Young Adult Library Services in Germany during Coronavirus Pandemic**

by Benjamin Scheffler, Director of the Children’s and Young Adult Library at the Central and Regional Library Berlin, Germany

In Germany, all libraries, including those for children and young adults have been closed since March 13, 2020. Many library employees are working from home, while others come to work on a tightly restricted basis. In some districts, employees have been deployed to other areas of public administration, for example, some serve on information hotlines run by the health authorities.

Depending on each library's capacity, libraries are providing a range of digital services to their youngest patrons, providing opportunities to participate in online events, and supporting students' home learning. For example: the Potsdam State Library has organized a writing competition for children; in Munich you can follow employees on Instagram to see what their home offices look like; and Hamburg's libraries are providing services similar to the Association of Berlin Libraries (VÖBB). Nearly everywhere lending periods (Ausleihfristen) have been prolonged automatically, and digital library services have been expanded.

Starting in May 2020, libraries will start to gradually reopen. As they do so, there will be a reduction in some of these new digital services. But going forward, some of these new digital services will remain to complement and enrich the range of services offered by children's and young adult libraries in Germany. Examples of what VÖBB is providing, described below, are representative of what many German libraries are providing. At this point the main focus lies on digital services: learning tools and resources, film streaming, music streaming – everything is possible with the library card. For those lacking a library card [Berlin's VÖBB](#) offers a library card to access the digital services. One registers online – the card is valid for three months and free of charge.

### **Online Storytelling**

Children can listen to stories or have books read to them across all possible channels, sometimes with, sometimes without video. On Mondays through Saturdays at 5:00 p.m., the children's library of the Central and State Library of Berlin presents a reading or narration event via Facebook Live. Twice a week, professional storytellers, who usually tell fairytales from around the world in the Mongolian yurt in the library's garden, now perform virtually from their own living rooms. On other days, the library staff take turns reading stories, poems, or fairy tales. Even if you are not on Facebook, you can [watch the stories](#) here (you don't need a Facebook account!).

### **Online Learning Support**

Even while schools and libraries are closed, preparations for Germany's nationwide "Abitur" exams continue in May. Usually, young people study in the Central and State Library of Berlin, where free homework help takes place daily, and sessions with detailed advice and training for high school graduates are held twice a week. These consultations now take place online. Students book an appointment via email and then receive detailed, individual advice on their exam topics via Skype or Jitsi or telephone. This service has become very popular.

### **Online Learning Opportunities**

The Berlin libraries are united in a network [www.voebb.de](http://www.voebb.de) and offer a wide range of [digital tools for school age children](#), including: a vocabulary trainer program; student tutoring in German, English, French, mathematics and Latin; learning aids for the most important school subjects; and full access to a large database with up-to-date information on countries, biographies etc. Media services and special databases on newspapers and magazines make it possible to research even very topical subjects on which there is little literature. Access to all of these services is provided free-of-charge with a valid library card.

Apart from that, Germany's [Stiftung Lesen](#), a foundation that works on reading promotion throughout Germany, replenished their website with all kinds of tips and useful resources for parents with small children. Not only do they recommend storytime apps and promote reading aloud stories, they also have a reading challenge, DIY instructions for fun things to make from stuff everyone has at home and materials and guidance for teachers. Everything is free of charge.

<https://www.stiftunglesen.de/aktionen/vorlesen-corona/>

## Italy

### **Italian Libraries During the Coronavirus Emergency**

**by Antonella Lamberti, Children's Librarian, Member of Italian Library Association National Committee Libraries for Children and Young Adults and of IFLA SC Libraries for Children and Young Adults**

During the last two months, at different times and following the spread of the Coronavirus throughout different regions of the country, little by little the Italian libraries had to close to the public and stop their services. At the present (April 16<sup>th</sup>), they are all closed to the public and they will stay closed until May 3<sup>rd</sup>, unless there are new government decisions.

Just as is typical of the library services in Italy, the response to this situation is not homogenous. The different levels of the organization and development of modern technologies in each library impacted both how work was reorganized, and the kind of services offered to the community during the lockdown.

One factor impacting the kind of services offered to the population, was what kind of contract the working staff had. If librarians were employed by a local municipality, they were mainly moved to remote work. In this case they did some work from home with differing degrees of success, depending on the organization of the home institution.

In cases where the staff were privately employed, remote working was not necessarily implemented, so many librarians just had to stay home without working at all. Their salary was only partially guaranteed by social security, and they could not contribute to the community.

And so, some libraries just disappeared. They stopped all forms of communication, even via social media, as none of the staff was asked to keep working. This was the lowest level of service under the situation--not serving at all. In somewhat better cases--but still not satisfactory--some children's librarians continued to post book suggestions, or entire bibliographies on social media. While this was a good idea, often no one checked if the

suggested books were available for digital lending or download. So in the end, this content was not useful.

A medium level of service happened with libraries that used social media to spread content created by others--for example, they shared content from publishers or authors that could be used by children at home. These libraries provided at the very least high quality content, chosen among hundreds of activities, storytelling and reading options for children that were shared via the web during this period. A rich and interesting one is [Lezioni sul sofa](#) (Lessons on the couch), which offers storytelling, crafts, lessons of the kitchen using the language of signs, drawing lessons, and much more, all uploaded by Italian book authors for children.

I also want to point to [Fuad Aziz's studio](#). Aziz is a formerly Kurdish (now Florentine) author and illustrator for children, who daily presents an art activity for children on his Facebook pages.

At the highest level of service, we find libraries that offer real and complete programs online and use the best technology and staff skills to continue to provide services and establish contact with their users.

In this period what was more evident than ever, was how differently libraries are organized in Italy, and how much is invested in training and educating staff in new technologies--or not.

Another problem has been also the different working contracts of library staff.

Public employees – also because of governmental emergency laws – were pushed to encourage remote work. This way some librarians were able to work from home. Some of them had been trained to do so and others not. Therefore in some cases there were very good reading programs for children, prepared professionally and presented well on the screen. But there were also some more “homemade” programs, executed with smartphones or other available devices at home, with different qualities of WiFi. These results were mixed.

Many libraries in this period promoted like never before the lending of e-books and the use of the digital libraries within their library network. It has been reported that in the period between February 24<sup>th</sup> and March 24<sup>th</sup> e-book lending increased in the amount of 104% in Italian libraries compared to the same period in the 2019. (source: [Italian Library Association](#))

Among the many examples of excellent activities in Italian libraries I would like to highlight the following:

[Library of Concesio](#) (Brescia province, Northern Italy)

A wide and rich program for all age ranges with activities primarily for children and families, but not only. This library offered everything from help with understanding the rules and regulations for the COVID19 emergency, to tutorials for games to be downloaded via the library's website and printed at home, to reading for children performed by the children's librarians, to reading clubs via video conference.

[Biblioteca di Melegnano](#) (near Milan in Lombardy)

Everyday this library offers storytelling for children (by the children's librarians) on its Facebook page, or riddles to guess.

[Biblioteche civiche torinesi](#) (Municipal libraries of the city of Turin)

This library promotes the digital library, shows videos of recorded events that took place in the library, hosts a library web radio (<https://www.reteitalianaculturapopolare.org/web-radio.html>) with reading, conferences, entertainment about books, reading of books to children, a help desk for the use of technology, Ask a Librarian (reference desk via video or Whatsapp).

[Biblioteca Centrale Ragazzi di Roma](#) (Rome Central Library for children)

Created a tutorial about the International Children Digital Library, relaunching a digital resource often forgotten, but still valid--even if not updated.

<https://www.facebook.com/centraleragazzi/videos/660911471148186/>

In general activities for children are those most frequently offered by the libraries. It's nice to see that a library can prepare a wide program of video events for its users, but what communities seem to appreciate more is on one side the possibility of getting e-books, movies, and other digital content, being able to choose freely as in the physical library, and on the other hand, being able to stay in contact with the librarians.

Even when the video storytelling is not perfect, children and their parents do prefer to see their favorite librarians on a screen, reading to them as they are used to. This allows them to reconnect with the warm feeling of being part of a community and recognizing somebody they know and miss.

We hope to be more prepared for the future by analyzing what was done now during this health emergency. We will need to prepare a good range of technological tools and skills, so that in case of a new problem (that we do not want!) we can continue to communicate-- physically or remotely if necessary--with the vibrant communities that we care so deeply about.

## Japan

### **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 7<sup>th</sup> 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 29<sup>th</sup> 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.

## Norway

### **Limiting the Spread of the Coronavirus and Providing Library Service in Norway During a Difficult Time**

**by Jorun Systad**

Due to the Coronavirus, almost all public libraries (and the rest of Norwegian society) closed from Thursday 12th of March. A week later, most libraries started to offer “take-away” services outside the library. Users order books online in our databases, and pick them up outside the library. It is also possible to deliver borrowed material in the same way. All loans can, as usual, be renewed digitally, or by contacting the library by email.

There is a public digital library on the Internet: [Karanteket](#) - A collection of free digital resources offered by Norwegian public libraries. For example Filmbib offers a free film-streaming service.

The Norwegian government also offers extra free access to information and databases to students and researchers. The Norwegian National Library offers free access to all legally deposited Norwegian publications, and extra funding to increase the number of e-Books in public libraries.

Our libraries try to stay in contact with our users through social media, and to inform about all the great digital library resources we had available already before COVID19. Additional digital development of library services is developing fast. Almost all public libraries are now doing reading and storytelling via social media, webpages, podcasts, and digital classes. Ingunn is a librarian in the Sunnfjord Kommune Library system. Here she is, [telling a story on YouTube in the local Nynorsk dialect](#) (spoken in northern Norway). But we miss our users and are looking forward to opening the doors again!

## Russia

### **Digital Dictation Campaign in Russian Libraries in the Time of a Pandemic**

*by Maria Khokhlova, head of the priority projects and programs department and Maria Alekseeva, head of the international relations department, Russian State Library for Young Adults*

From March 28th to April 11th, 2020, the National Educational Campaign: “Digital Dictation” was conducted in Russia. It is the largest digital literacy testing organized by the Regional Public Centre for Internet Technologies, the Microsoft Corporation, and the All-Russia People’s Front Public Movement.

Digital literacy is one of the most important skills a modern person can have, which has an impact on all spheres of our life: personal, professional, and social. Our financial and information security largely depends on it.

The [Digital Dictation](#) is an online testing designed matching different age groups: children (7-13 years old), teens (14-17 years old) and adults (18 years and older), and divided into 4 content blocks:

- Basics of digital consumption (various devices and knowledge of basic programs and applications)
- Digital competencies (work with the Internet, social networks, online stores and other online services)
- Digital security, including protection of personal data and devices
- New technologies (artificial intelligence, blockchain, Internet of Things)

This year, libraries around the country joined the campaign for the first time. The Russian State Library for Young Adults (RSLYA) has become its informational partner and coordinator of its implementation in the public libraries in the whole country.

Building society with a high level of digital literacy is one of the priority tasks the state is facing today, and libraries as information and intellectual centers can play an important role in this process. So far, 115 libraries from 38 regions of Russia have taken part in the campaign. Initially, the organizers of the campaign have offered the libraries various forms of participation as offline locations and sample scenarios for holding events on them. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic in the country and in the world, libraries have not been able to become offline locations, but have actively joined the information campaign by posting materials about the Digital Dictation on their electronic resources and social networks. Besides, 42 libraries have conducted closed corporate testing for their staff members.

At the beginning of the Digital Dictation Campaign, the RSLYA offered its users an online lecture called [\*"You Are Predicted. Soft Power of Artificial Intelligence"\*](#) by the independent expert on the AI, journalist and blogger Igor Shnurenko who spoke about this popular and exciting technology of today.

As campaign coordinators, we are convinced that participating in it has allowed libraries to demonstrate their potential as an intellectual and information center, interested in developing digital literacy of their community and having the necessary resources for this.

We also think the current, challenging situation, when almost all libraries around the globe are closed due to the COVID19, is a good chance for libraries and librarians to show their digital knowledge and competencies, providing online services, improving digital content, opening databases and electronic resources, actively interacting on social networks with their users left in forced isolation.

## Singapore

### **Catch Up on Your reading and Learning from Home**

Like most libraries around the world, our libraries in Singapore have temporarily closed from 7 April to 4 May 2020.

We have curated learning packages, with new content uploaded weekly on NLB (National Library Board) mobile app. This includes topics on:

1. Virus breakouts, pandemics, vaccination and public health in Singapore, in the past 100 years.
2. Mindfulness, dealing with uncertainties, working from home effectively and new hobbies.

In support of Singapore schools in full home-based learning from 8 April to 4 May 2020, we have also put together the following resources:

1. Stay Home Activities on [discoverReads](#)

Fun DIY printables, discussion worksheets, inspiring STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics) activities, literary quizzes and reading resources to engage children, teens, families and educators in reading and learning.

2. Information Literacy – Home-Based [Learning Resources on S.U.R.E](#)

A one-stop resource portal for information literacy, library resources, library activity, quizzes, infographics, videos and e-learning for teachers, parents, students and the general public.

3. Unlimited checkouts of eBooks from several publishers, including Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone in multiple languages and literary classics.

To engage children in reading at home, we will be offering weekly storytelling sessions featuring titles in our four official languages of English, Malay, Chinese and Tamil on NLB's [Public Libraries Singapore Facebook](#) starting from 13 April.

## Sweden

### **Actions at Stockholm Public Library During the Coronavirus Pandemic**

**By Salomon Hellman**

During the Corona crisis, Swedish authorities have chosen to rely on people's sense of civic responsibility, asking rather than ordering them to avoid non-essential travel and contact with others. Compared with other countries, Sweden remains fairly open, although most of the population stays at home in accordance with the recommendations of the authorities.

Considered essential civic institutions, most of Sweden's public libraries remain open, but of course with limitations.

In Stockholm, 12 of 40 public library branches stay open, but with reduced opening hours and with strict limitations regarding the number of simultaneous visitors. All public events have been cancelled, although some of them have been transformed into virtual ones instead.

#### **Some initiatives during the crisis**

- Campaign for e-book reading together with an increased e-book budget
- Extended loaning periods for paper books and removal of all overtime and reservation fees
- Home delivery of books by bike (see picture). The ordered books are hung on the recipient's door

- Live-streamed storytimes for children
- Live-streamed debate about the effects of the crisis on socio-economically vulnerable areas
- Virtual book clubs

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## **Thailand**

### **Library Services Behind the Scenes**

by Yoshimi Horiuchi (Ms.)

Introduction (by Benjamin Scheffler, IFLA SC C&YA): The Bookworm Foundation is a NGO, non-profit and non-religious organisation which provides mobile library services to children and adults both with and without disabilities in rural areas of Thailand. The organisation was founded in 2010 by Ms. Yoshimi Horiuchi.

Though we don't have activities for children at the moment, Rang Mai Library is open as usual. We make sure that no more than two staff are in the library at the same time, and the rest work at home. Actually, people are borrowing our books more than ever. Nok, our librarian, makes sure that we have books from all genre for all generations, she uses her home office days to wrap-up new books in film, and repair damaged books.

The Bookworm Corner Project, our little bookshelves scattered around Phrao District, is partially operating. More than half of the bookshelves are cleared because schools are closed, and nobody gathers around at community temples, and so on. But 6 out of 16 bookshelves are filled, and Ann, our

outreach staff, makes sure to disinfect all books before delivery and after the return. This, in fact, is a lot of work though it may not be visible to anyone!

Our home visit program for elderly and people with disabilities is still going on. In fact, we thought of stopping the project during Corona time, because most of our beneficiaries are very vulnerable due to poor health. But to our delight, we received requests from them to continue the project, so we decided to deliver books under the condition that Ann does not interact with our members and their family to minimize the risk of infection. She goes and delivers the books twice a month at their doorstep.

Bookworm Foundation, 169 M. 6, T. Wiang, Phrao, Chiang Mai 50190 Thailand

Website: <http://www.alwaysreadingcaravan.org/php/index.php>

## United States

### **A New Normal: Creative Library Services to Young People during Abnormal Times**

**By Marianne Martens**

In the United States, the Coronavirus pandemic is presenting challenges to young people's learning and highlighting issues of the digital divide—those who have access to technology, versus those who do not.

This lack is especially prevalent in Spring 2020 as learning for all children has moved online. Even before the pandemic, the Pew Research Center described a “homework gap” which exists because “roughly one-third (35%) of households with children ages 6 to 17 and an annual income below \$30,000 a year do not have a high-speed internet connection at home.” Subsequently, many young people are left struggling to attend online classes and get their work done. The full outcomes of this inequity remain to be seen, but we can already guess at the results of this disparity. Those who have access to technology and Internet at home (as well as parents who can support their learning) will undoubtedly fare far better academically, socially, and psychologically than those without.

Libraries are doing what they can to fill the gaps in access to technology. According to Kyra Nay, Children's Librarian at the Maple Heights Branch of the Cuyahoga County Public Library, CCPL is lending portable hotspots, which provide free internet access to those who have phones, tablets, or computers, and is providing reference services and reading recommendations via email. Nay has ideas for digital programming for children, including weekly LEGO building challenges, “read-to-a-librarian,” and an online children's art show.

The American Library Association has recommended that libraries leave their WiFi on beyond usual building hours so that people can have free Internet access from outside the building. Libraries are working with Internet providers to expand the reach of their WiFi and are even using bookmobiles to bring WiFi out into remote communities.

Libraries are also boosting online learning opportunities. According to Heather Soyka (Sokya, in Johnston, 2020), libraries are increasing their spending on digital streaming services, such as hoopla, which offers access to digital versions of all the types of resources libraries have always provided: ebooks, audiobooks, magazines, movies, and music, and making these resources available. Children's librarians are curating lists of authors and illustrators offering reading books or providing drawing lessons.

Virtual storytimes are available for those with internet access, but also for those without. As Alaska Librarian Claudia Haines points out in her blog, her library was accustomed to planning for the types of disasters that could strike in Alaska, such as tsunamis and earthquakes, but not for a pandemic. In rural Alaska, where Haines lives and works, lack of Internet access is also an issue. Instead of internet-based storytimes, Haines has partnered with a local AM Radio station to provide radio-based storytimes.

Outside the Homer, Alaska library, there are storywalks, with book's pages spaced 6 feet (2 meters) apart. Storywalks encourage reading, whole-family-engagement around literacy, and as an added bonus, exercise.

During the Coronavirus pandemic, librarians are proving their worth, providing access to the Internet, creating and curating materials which enhance learning, and thinking creatively to provide out-of-the-box (or building) service to all patrons. The spirit is very much: We will get through this together!

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