A New Children's Reading Environment in a Library

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概要： 近年では読書活動の重要性は広く認知され，読み聞かせ等の活動が盛んに行われている。子どもの読書活動推進のために，より多くの絵本に接することのできる新しい読書環境も必要である。現在多数の電子化された絵本と冊子体絵本を区別なく，探したり読んだりできる BrowsReader システムの研究に取り組んでいる。児童図書室内に，BrowsReader システムを利用できるテーブル型ディスプレイを設置することで読書環境を実現する。ここでは，この読書環境の設備と子ども達が利用した感想について紹介する。

"Brother, I wanna the picture books about rabbits." "It's my turn, Sister." "Mum, it's much bigger than our TV set." These are the conversation among the family who visited the children's reading room in the 2007 Children's Event Site of Oita University. In this children's reading room is placed the BrowsReader system, which can help children find printed/digitized picture books and reading digitized picture books. On that day, about 300 children and their families happily used the system.
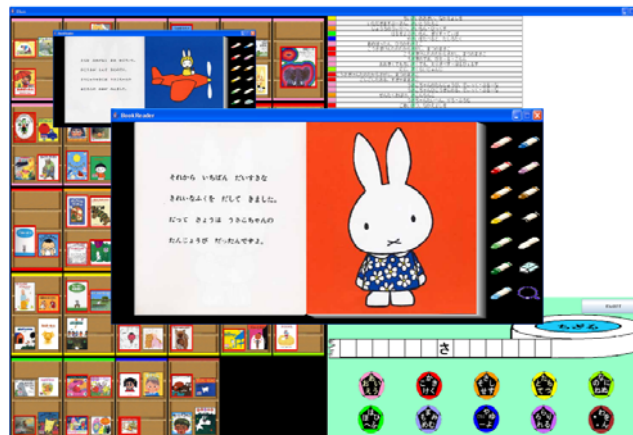
In the recent years, more scholars and parents have become to feel that picture books play an important role as textbooks for children. Some of them begin to worry about that children do not like to read the picture books any more in today's information world with various kinds of electrical games and products. But from the above scene we saw in the Children's Event, we can say that children still like to read, and they just need a reading environment.

In a conventional children's reading room as shown in the following picture, let us set a table with a built-in touch display and a personal computer installed with the BrowsReader System, a new children's reading environment then can be built.

An image of a new children's reading environment.

In this new children's reading environment, children can easily find the books of their interest from a large quantity of intermixed collections of digitized/printed picture books, and read both digitized and printed picture books with the same interface on the table. It can be set in a library, a common center, or a kindergarten, and so on.

Using the BrowsReader System to find the picture books.

The picture in the above shows an example situation of using the BrowsReader System. The system consists of a part for finding picture books by browsing, as shown in the background, and a part for reading digitized picture books, as shown in the front. In the former part, the front cover images and the titles/author-names of the picture books are put in the same interface together for children to understand the relationship between the primary information and the secondary information. When a child, who has imagined about "うさぎ(rabbit)," can find a book by dragging an icon for a character, e.g., 'さ,' that occurred in his/her mind, by browsing in the enlarged index of the titles and the author names or the enlarged bookshelf and then by checking the details of the front cover images in some bookcases. The books found can be read with his/her friends in the latter part, where they together or one after another flip the pages by dragging the displayed images. In this picture, another book about "うさぎ" which had been under reading is displayed behind the reading one.

Children need a reading environment in a public place, where they can visit with their friends and families. Let's do something to help children's reading activities together.

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