How and Why to Read and Create Children's Digital Books

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‘This is an exciting and innovative book – not least because it is freely available to read online but because its origins are in primary practice. The author is an accomplished storyteller, and whether you know, as yet, little about the value of digital literacy in the storymaking process, or you are an accomplished digital player, this book is full of evidence-informed ideas, explanations and inspiration.’ – Liz Chamberlain, Open University

‘This guide, written by the leading expert on personalised e-books, is packed with app reviews, suggestions and insights from current international research, all underpinned by careful analysis of digital book features and recognition of reading as a social and cultural practice. Providing accessible guidance on finding, choosing, sharing and creating digital books, it will be welcomed by those excited by the possibilities of enthusing children about reading in the digital age.’ – Cathy Burnett, Sheffield Hallam University

How and Why to Read and Create Children’s Digital Books outlines effective ways of using digital books in early years and primary classrooms, and specifies the educational potential of using digital books and apps in physical spaces and virtual communities. With a particular focus on apps and personalised reading, Natalia Kučirkova combines theory and practice to argue that personalised reading is only truly personalised when it is created or co-created by reading communities.

Divided into two parts, Part I suggests criteria to evaluate the educational quality of digital books and practical strategies for their use in the classroom. Specific attention is paid to the ways in which digital books can support individual children’s strengths and difficulties, digital literacies, language and communication skills. Part II explores digital books created by children, their caregivers, teachers and librarians, and Kučirkova also offers insights into how smart toys, tangibles and augmented/virtual reality tools can enrich children’s reading for pleasure.

How and Why to Read and Create Children’s Digital Books is of interest to an international readership ranging from trainee or established teachers to MA level students and researchers, as well as designers, librarians and publishers. All are inspired to approach children’s reading on and with screens with an agentic perspective of creating and sharing.

Natalia Kučirkova is a Senior Research Fellow at Institute of Education, UCL. Her research concerns innovative ways of supporting children’s book reading, digital literacy and exploring the role of personalisation. She co-edits the book series, Children’s Reading and Writing on Screen, and the journal, Literacy. Natalia’s research takes place collaboratively across academia, commercial and third sectors.