



BETWEEN THE PAGES

NOVEMBER 2017

eBooks ... Online access for all!

Here's a quote from an article published by The National Children's Book and Literacy Alliance:

The 2013 National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) reading test results demonstrate that far too many young people continue to read below grade level. Sixty-five percent of all U.S. fourth graders scored "below proficient," which means that they are not reading at grade level. Only 35 percent of 4th graders are reading at or above grade level. In addition, 64 percent of 8th graders are reading below grade level, whereas 36 percent are reading at or above grade level.

- U.S. Department of Education, "The Nation's Report Card," 2013.



While these numbers seem troubling as children who are reading below grade level in the fourth grade become more likely to stay "below proficient" as they advance through higher grade levels, there are solutions for concerned parents and educators. Participating in literacy programs, making reading not only a part of the daily routine but a pleasant moment of parent/child interaction, and instilling a love of reading in children can help. Turning to technology is another option to examine as children generally love gadgets just as much (if not more) than adults do. Utilizing technology can be a way to hook in reluctant readers.

Jeremy Brueck is studying how electronic materials should be utilized in early childhood education with help from the U.S. Department of Education. "We have to get out of saying 'ebooks,'" he says. On the one hand, eBooks can refer to a pdf of printed titles while on the other, it can refer to an electronic resource with animation, sounds, interactive quizzes, and online games all of which accompany texts that can be played while each spoken word is highlighted on the screen. It can be difficult to determine which resources are helping children become engaged in a story and improve reading skills and which are just "bells and whistles."

Traditionally, eBooks were not marketed for children; instead they were originally intended for older students or adults who used Kindles, Nooks, and other devices. But with the popularity of iPad tablets, many eBooks became available in app stores that were colorful and marketed for children.

The School Library Journal conducted a survey in 2011 and found that the majority of school librarians indicated that they either will or may purchase eBooks in the immediate futures. As schools and libraries work to purchase access to eBook collections, more and more children will have 24/7 access to eBooks. Instead of waiting for "library day" at school or for a parent to be available to drive them to a public library, children can log in at any time to browse digital bookshelves. Many librarians see eBooks as a way to increase how many books children are able to access even if the library is closed.

The question has also been raised if eBooks can help people with dyslexia. Colored overlays are a popular option to help those with dyslexia and visual stress syndrome. The idea behind color overlays

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The Texas General Land Office: One heck of a good source for Texas family historians

The Texas General Land Office was founded by the Republic of Texas in 1836 and has served ever since as the oldest state agency in Texas providing land and resource management.

The promise of new land and new beginnings drew immigrants largely from the Old South to Texas beginning under Mexican rule after Mexico's independence from Spain in 1821. Mexico continued to follow closely the immigration and land policies began by Spain. A new crop of Anglo Americans began arriving in 1835 after the lifting of an immigration moratorium. Eager immigrants came to Texas seeking to file their claim for generous land offerings at minimal cost.

All changed in March of 1836. Texas won its independence, but then had to face a hard reality. Texas had lots of land, but little money. In fact, Texas was broke. Something had to be done and had to be done in a hurry. The newly formed Republic of Texas legislature established the General Land Office to administer and maintain the land records of Texas dating from the Spanish Empire period.

Land became a type of scrip for ser-

vices rendered during the Republic and early statehood periods. Veterans of the battles against Mexican forces rightly needed to be rewarded and land titles were issued as payment. Republic of Texas courts looked to documentation to settle frequent land disputes. Texas sought to attract hardy individuals and families willing to move to Texas with a promise of land, abundance and opportunity. The fledgling economy required labor to plant crops, build roads, and transport agricultural products to market. Texas needed entrepreneurs to establish trading centers for the exchange of goods and services. Land was at the heart of the early Texas economy. It still is.

The GLO has continued for the past one hundred and eighty-one years to provide archival services dating to the Spanish and Mexican periods and economic information essential to the development of our state's natural resources. Today's General Land Office has evolved into a modern and technology driven state agency. The GLO has digitized maps, land records, documents, letters, and a large collection of items of historical note and made them available to the public by internet access. A



quick visit to www.glo.texas.gov offers genealogists and family historians a tremendous resource. Researchers will find land grant information, research links, and helpful land survey maps and natural resource maps available with a few clicks of the mouse.

Here's a bit of advice. The website may appear overwhelming, but a few minutes of review and study will render it friendly and useful.

- Richard Lane, *Reference & Genealogy*

Book Reshuffle at HPL

The library has been undergoing a minor "facelift" these past few weeks, with the changes starting off subtly. First, it was books on CD. If you're a fan of BCDs – as we librarians like to refer to them – you became aware they were "MIA" after making a fruitless search of their usual shelf space.

"No, you're not hallucinating," said adult reference librarian Mary Kokot, trying to reassure patrons of their sanity. "We moved 'em. Please return to the entrance area and you will find the BCDs next to the DVDs."

Young Adult Graphic Novels (YA GN) were the next part of the collection to relocate. They invaded the space formerly occupied by Adult Graphic Novels, which found a new home further along the shelf next to periodicals and newspapers. Of course, this meant that "New Books" had to find shelf space elsewhere. That new space is near the library's entrance but many patrons haven't noticed yet and tend to walk right past it.

"Oh, shoot!" Looking up from the computer, I find Mrs. S. standing in front of the reference desk staring at the shelves, appearing quite startled.

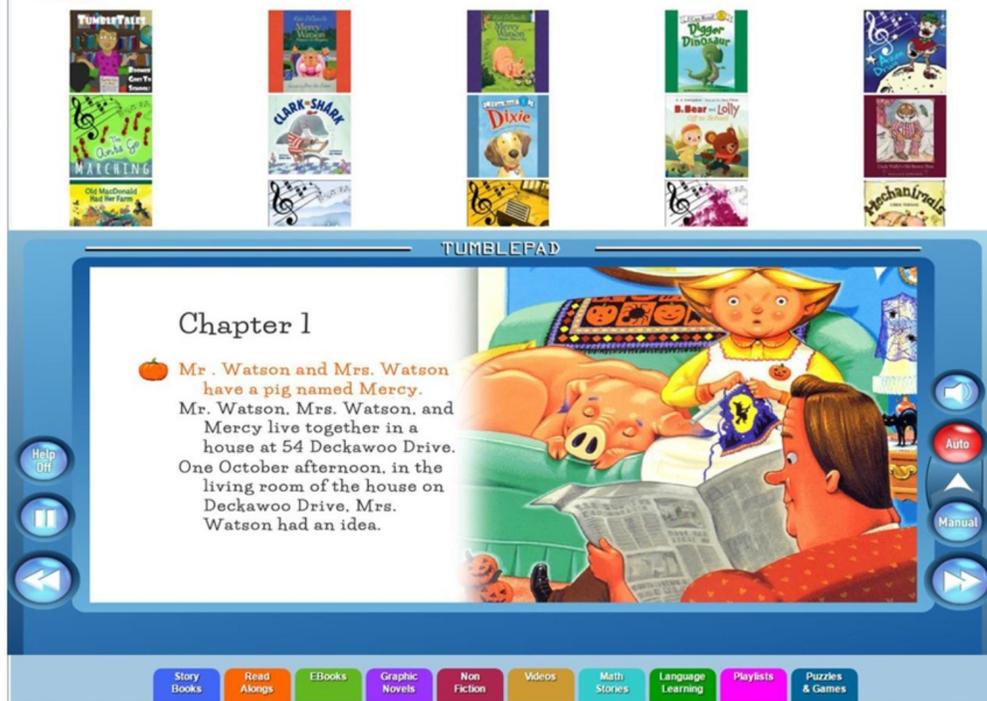
"Where have you put them?" she asks. Yes, she



had come to the adult section where new books normally occupy place of honor – the 1st row. Although this scenario plays out frequently during the day, patrons seem to accept the changes good-naturedly. Earlier in the facelift process, patrons noticed the migration of their comfortable seating area to other regions of the library. Supposedly, this provides an area where quiet conversations can happen without disturbing other patrons. It also frees up space for relocating the Young Adult books – the original reason for this reshuffle.

Totally confused? Just ask a staff member and maybe together you will find what you're looking for.

—Mary Kokot, *Adult Coordinator*



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is that many people with dyslexia struggle to read due to the sharp contrast between the white paper and the black text. A colored sheet of transparent paper is placed over the text which often relieves the visual stress and helps the person focus on the words on the page. In a 2016 edition of the "Psychology of Education Review," researchers Laura Machan & Paul Aleixo report on a recent study on the effectiveness of color overlays vs. eBooks for adolescents with dyslexia. During the study, seventeen participants who had been diagnosed with dyslexia and had already been using color overlays were tested.

First the participant would read the first five pages of a book. Both the time and errors were recorded.

After a break, the participant switched to the eBook and read the next five pages of the same book with both time and errors recorded. The study concluded that using eBooks with customizable font and background color was just as effective in helping people with dyslexia as using color overlays in printed books.

The implications of this study show that eBooks can be an asset for people with dyslexia. Instead of having to purchase an overlay, children can access the eBook for free and change the background color to suit their particular needs.

Since eBooks can be helpful for reluctant readers, those without regular library access, or readers with dyslexia, what's the best way to find them? *TumbleBooks* is a collection of online books for children. Access to this collection is pur-

chased by schools and libraries and given to students and families who pay no fee for the service.

As the child reads on the screen, each word is highlighted, often with accompanying narration. *TumbleBooks* often includes games and quizzes that further the child's engagement with the story and retention of the material.

In a 2011 *School Library Journal* article, Lisa Guernsey explores the topic "Are eBooks Any Good?" The author describes the experience of Julie Hume, a reading specialist in Missouri who decided to test the merit of *TumbleBooks* in her remedial reading classes for 4th and 5th graders.

At the beginning of the year, she randomly split her students into two groups. One group would continue with Hume's traditional teaching method of reading from printed books at a table with Hume. The other group utilized *TumbleBooks* by spending time at a computer reading and listening to eBooks at or above their reading level.

Hume tested each group at the beginning of the school year and performed regular evaluations to mark the progress of each group using texts different than what the children read in printed books or on *TumbleBooks*.

Three months after her experiment, the average rate for the *TumbleBooks* group was 23 percentage points higher than the control group. By January, the entirety of students in the *TumbleBooks* group had progressed enough to be tested out of the remedial program and into level classrooms. The control group took two

months longer to be placed out of Hume's remedial classes.

Hume believes that *TumbleBooks* is an effective resource as an intervention tool because of its ability to narrate the story. She believes that electronic books found on *TumbleBooks* are excellent for building confidence in children that they can read.

In her opinion, this technology can be a way to help readers find a love of literature. She does not believe that eBooks should replace printed books.

The most pressing concern seems to be not if but how teachers and parents should use electronic books. Experts advise educators to use collections like *TumbleBooks* very intentionally. In some schools, children are taught the vocabulary for a book before utilizing the online reading portion.

The narration is paused frequently so the teacher can ask questions and gauge understanding. Teachers are also encouraged to still use printed materials.

Literacy Coach Pam Oviatt recalled the power of eBooks for *School Library Journal's* article. She saw three boys laughing and enjoying a narrated electronic version of a picture book on *TumbleBooks*.

Later when Oviatt brought a printed version of the same book, the boys rushed to see it and spent a lot of time re-reading it and recalling what they remembered from the eBook.

If you are interested in your child trying out *TumbleBooks*, the Huntsville Public Library provides free online access to the collection in both English and Spanish.

Getting started is simple; visit the library's website at www.myhuntsvillelibrary.com and click on the Children's Department Page. From there, access the Children's Databases page and scroll down until you see the *TumbleBooks* heading.

Happy Reading!

—Rachel McPhail,
Children's Librarian



Tech Talk: Computer Languages

Computers can speak, but only through a language called code. What exactly is code or coding?

Coding is what makes it possible for us to create computer software, apps and websites. Your browser, your OS, the apps on your phone, Facebook, and the library website are made through code.

Code is a set of instructions (or rules) that computers can understand; it might be helpful to think of code as a recipe. In fact, anyone can write code. Code powers computers and computers power many objects like phones, watches, microwaves and cars. In fact, almost anything powered by electricity uses code.

People who code go by many names: coders, programmers, developers, computer scientists, software engineers and the list goes on. Computers run on binary code written in 1s and 0s, which can be difficult to work with. Nevertheless, just as people can understand different languages so can computers.

Different languages for computers can include Python, C, C++, Perl, Visual Basic, Java, JavaScript, Ruby and PHP that translate our instructions into

binary.

A good place to start your research in coding is the library.

We have variations of book that are about coding and computer programming. For early readers, we have *The Story of Coding* by James F. Kelly this book is about the history of computers and coding. Another good non-fiction book appropriate for juveniles would be *Understanding Coding with Lego Mindstorms* by Patricia Harris; this book is all about teaching kids how to start customizing computer hardware and software.

For young adults/adults we have a practice book, *Automate the Boring Stuff with Python: Practical Programming for Total Beginners* by Al Sweigart. In this book, you will learn how to use Python to write programs that do in minutes what would take you hours to do by hand with no prior programming experience required.

The more you practice coding, the better you get, but some prefer visual learning than reading. Websites like *CodeConquest* provides a beginner friendly guide to learn coding. Other webpages like *Codecademy*, *Code Wars* and *Code Fights* are all interactive sites

involving gaming with code and creating projects.

Learning coding empowers you to do many things you would not otherwise be able to do. These things include handcrafting your own websites, becoming a career coder or even starting a technology business. Most importantly, you will be able to understand the technology shaping your world.

Starting Jan. 4, 2018 the library will be hosting its first-ever coding club. *Girls Who Code* is a national nonprofit organization that is closing the gender gap, one girl at a time. This free after school club is for 6th-12th grade girls that want to learn computer science skills like coding and programming.

Club meetings will be 5:30-6:30 p.m. Thursdays during the spring semester in the Community Room. As a condition of acceptance, members are required to attend at least 80% of meetings throughout the semester.

Space is limited and registration is required.

For more information and registration, contact IT Services Technician, Bella Abril at brabil@huntsvilletx.gov or call 936-291-5472.

—Ashley Newsome, IT Coordinator

JOIN THE *girls who* MOVEMENT CODE

Want to learn how to build an app, design a videogame, and change the world through code?

JOIN HPL'S GIRLS WHO CODE CLUB FOR FREE!

+ WHO: Girls in 6th-8th Grade

+ WHEN: Thursdays from 5:30-6:30pm starting **January 4, 2018**

+ WHERE: Huntsville Public Library Community Room

SPACES ARE LIMITED AND REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED!

You can register online at www.myhuntsvillelibrary.com or contact Bella Abril at (936) 291-5485.

Listing of Events Find this information online at www.myhuntsvillelibrary.com

NOVEMBER EVENTS:

The Huntsville Public Library will close at 2:30 p.m. Thursday, November 16th for the Annual City Staff Charity Bowling Tournament and will reopen at 10 a.m. Friday, November 17th.

The Library will also close at 5 p.m. Wednesday, November 22nd and will be closed all day Thursday, November 23rd, Friday, November 24th, and Saturday, November 25th in observance of Thanksgiving. The Huntsville Public Library will reopen at 10 a.m. Monday, November 27th.

Get in on the fun! Play Texas 42 - a dominoes game similar in style to bridge and spades at the Huntsville Public Library from 1 to 3 p.m. Wednesdays in November. Studies show playing dominoes can be beneficial for the mind as attention to detail and strategy are essential to play. Come to the Community Room each week and strategize your winning moves. We'll supply the dominoes and refreshments. Please register in advance at www.myhuntsvillelibrary.com or call Mary at 936-291-5471 for more information. Games will be played weekly if eight or more players register. This program is for adults 18 years and older.

The ever-popular, free Spanish classes are underway at the Huntsville Public Library! Instructor Beth Williamson teaches Intermediate and Advanced classes Tuesdays in the Community Room. The 13-week program ends Tuesday, December 5th, and materials are provided. Intermediate class will meet from 1 to 3 p.m. and advanced class from 3 to 4:15 p.m. Call Mary at 936-291-5471 for additional information. It is never too late to join!

Do you have symptoms from Diabetes such as fatigue, pain, stress and frustration? These new workshops from 10:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Mondays from October 30 through December 4 at the Huntsville Public Library are focused around self-managed care for Diabetes. This workshop is sponsored by Texas A&M Center for Population Health & Aging and hosted by Huntsville Public Library. Other topics covered include: healthy eating, medication use, and working with health care providers. Limited to 16 participants, classes are hands-on and highly interactive. Cecilia "Ce" Schlicher, Master Trainer, recently completed her certification in the Chronic Pain Self-Management program, and works under the Texas A&M Center for Population Health & Aging license. Please contact Mary at 936-291-5471 for more information or register online at www.myhuntsvillelibrary.com.

Do you have children ages 2 or under? Then Mother Goose Lapsit is a story time designed for you! Held on Mondays at 10:30 a.m., enjoy a half hour of developmentally appropriate play featuring stories, songs, and rhymes. This program introduces little ones to the story time experience and is perfect for their language development and developing vocabulary. Sign-up is not required.

Come to Story Time – a fun early literacy program for kids 5 and under. Join us for interactive stories, songs, rhymes, and crafts. The early literacy practices featured each week help build the foundation for a lifelong love of reading and learning. For parents and caregivers, Story Time offers an opportunity to experience early literacy practices in action, discover great books and resources for home use, and socialize with other parents. Wednesday and Friday sessions share a theme

with something new each week. Sign-up is not required. Story Time is held on Wednesdays and Fridays at 10:45 a.m. This program will not be held on November 24th.

The First Friday Book Club is an exciting program for 3rd-5th graders from 1 to 2 p.m. on the first Friday of each month. November's book is *The One and Only Ivan* by Katherine Applegate and will be discussed Friday, November 3rd. Participants can pick up printouts of the first few chapters at the library to read before the club meeting. Registration is required and can be found at www.myhuntsvillelibrary.com.

Don't miss out on Family Movie Night, a fun, free way to start your weekend. The Huntsville Public Library will show *Captain Underpants: The First Epic Movie* at 5:30 p.m. Friday, November 3rd. Enjoy complimentary popcorn during the movie. Bring a blanket and pillow as well as something to drink. All ages are welcome and sign up is not required.

Music will fill the air from 2 - 3 p.m. Saturday, November 4 compliments of the self-styled chamber rock duo "Mystery Loves Company" in the Huntsville Public Library Community Room. The pair is comprised of Madeline "Maddy" Herdeman, a conservatory-trained cellist with a highly technical musical background, and Carlos Machado on guitar, a self-taught songwriter from Venezuela. Formed in 2012, they perform regularly around Houston, and tour all over Texas and the Midwest as well as. Original live music performed free with no registration required! Please visit www.myhuntsvillelibrary.com for more information.

Cell Phone basic classes will be once a week at 10 a.m. Tuesdays November 7th-28th in the Adult Computer Lab. These classes will feature class activities on basic cell phone use, iPhone basics, Android basics and cell phone app usage. This program is for adults 17 years or older and a library card is needed to attend class. Class size is limited and registration is required. Please sign up online at www.myhuntsvillelibrary.com

Is your student interested in design and technology? Come to the Huntsville Public Library for 3D Printing Classes! In just two days, you and your child can learn how to design a three-dimensional printed object. At the end of the course, each participant will be able to take home his or her printed object. This program will be held from 5:15 to 6:15 p.m. over two evenings. This course is best suited for ages 7-17. Parental attendance is required for children under 13. Participants must bring their own USB drives to the class. Sign-up is required and can be found at www.myhuntsvillelibrary.com. The November dates are as follows: November 7th and 8th as well as November 13th and 15th.

Drumroll, please! There'll be that and more at the noon hour on Thursday, November 30 during Brown Bag Lecture Series, when Dr. John Lane, Director of Percussion Studies and Associate Professor of Percussion at Sam Houston State University, will demonstrate several instruments and speak on "A Brief History of Percussion." His presentation will provide an overview of the development of percussion used in Western music. John Lane is an artist whose creative work and collaborations extend through percussion to poetry/spoken word and theater. Attendees may bring a brown bag lunch. Lunch time begins at 11:30 a.m. and the lecture will begin at noon. Beverages will be provided. Admission is free. For more information contact Mary at 936-291-5471.