

Summary



Books That Glow in the Dark / In the World's Oldest Monastery Ancient Manuscripts Meet Digital Technology: Invisible Writing Becomes Visible Once Again (Susanne Petrin)
(pp. 388 – 393)

High tech photography is being put to use in the middle of the desert, of all places, at the oldest active monastery of the world, Saint Catherine's Monastery on the Egyptian peninsula of Sinai. Deep within its walls, the monastery is home to the oldest clerical library of the world. One after the other, its 5,000 manuscripts are being photographed with a high-definition camera for multispectral imaging and made available online.

Particular attention is being drawn to previously invisible particles in the monastery: its palimpsests. More of these parchments have been studied here than every before. 6,800 pages with a total of 308 hidden texts from ancient and medieval times have already been photographed as a part of the »Sinai Palimpsests Project«. These include amazing discoveries: ancient Bible translations in a wide number of languages; a 60-page long poem in Homeric style, but with Christian content; novellas and textbooks. Considerable excitement was engendered by texts in two languages thought to be now dead: Caucasian Albanian and Palestinian Aramaic. The former is the language of the one-time kingdom of Azerbaijan, which had remained evident only in a number of stone inscriptions. The latter was a dialect of the language spoken by Jesus.

Because so many more palimpsests have been discovered in Saint Catherine's Monastery than was expected, the original goals of the project were achieved, but the project itself is not yet completed. A further phase is now in planning. The first seven years of work were financed with a 2.3-million-dollar grant from the Arcadia Fund in London. Due to the coronavirus pandemic all digitalisation projects at the monastery have been put on hold.

Retrospective Digitalisation of BuB: All Volumes through 1948 Will Become Accessible / Developing the Digital BuB Archive in Cooperation with the Thuringian State and University Library in Jena (Petra Kunze)
(pp. 398 – 401)

The German library journal »BuB–Forum Bibliothek und Information« has been in print for 73 years. Until now only the issues published since 2006 have been available online at the BuB website. To access older articles, it was necessary to consult bound volumes held in various libraries. There have long been deliberations about expanding the archives, beginning with the first volume published in 1948. Now the assistance of the Thuringian State and University Library (ThULB) in Jena has been won for the retrospective digitalisation project.

The future BuB Archive will begin with the first volume from 1948 and continue through to the freely accessible issues of the current publication year. The volumes 1948 to 2003, with a total of 45,000 pages, will need to be scanned. Thanks to the availability of duplicates held at BuB's editorial offices in Reutlingen, the process of digitalisation could be somewhat simplified. Recent years through 2004 were already available as PDF documents and could be easily transferred to Jena.

Development of the digital archive will proceed in two steps. Since cataloguing the individual articles will require some time, the first step will involve successive uploading of all issues upon digitalisation. Step two is dedicated to indexing of the content. There are an estimated 25,000 articles amounting to 70,000 pages to be processed. The indexing will encompass not only submitted articles, but also all news items in the journal, so that future readers will have access to the complete content of BuB.

Research, Testing, Interviewing / Students on the Trail of Good Software for Children (Eileen Sommer, Hanneke Wessel)
(pp. 426 – 429)

Whether adventure and jump'n'run games, games of strategy or educational games found as programs, apps or via streaming: games for entertainment and education are now an integral part of the everyday lives and culture of children. Learning and play take place in groups, with bots, alone at a computer or a tablet, with a smartphone or a console. There is hardly a business sector that is more viral than the children's software market. Because both software and hardware quickly become out of date, new systems not only force users and libraries to (re)learn and acquire new skills, but also impose a high level of competitive pressure on media studios and publishing houses. In the growing market of children's software, it is increasing difficult for children and parents, but also for libraries, to keep pace with developments and to assess this software in its various user environments. What makes good children's software? How should genre, content, interactivity and multimedia, graphics and animation be evaluated? What ethical and legal requirements are applicable with regard to child protection and the protection of privacy? How can problematic content and the potential for addiction be identified?

On behalf of the German children's software prize TOMMI and its co-founder Thomas Feibel, a student project group was established at the Hamburg University of Applied Sciences (HAW) to study the issues related to the evaluation of software for children. Its goal was to develop a set of criteria for the assessment and rating of good children's software, which would, on the one hand, serve librarians as a reliable orientation for acquisition decisions, and, on the other hand, also be made accessible to children, educators and interested parents.

Translated by Martha Baker