Betwyll, beyond the borders of reading.

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What we do

We have developed a method for social reading, a practice combining traditional reading with the potential of social networks.
1. The community chooses a book to read.

2. We set up a reading calendar (i.e. one chapter a day).

3. We start reading and commenting the book together with messages of maximum 140 characters.
What happens

Having to produce their own content under a length constraint, participants are led to develop deep reading, creativity and synthesis.

They play with the language, with the text and also with the other readers, starting conversations around cultural contents.

This exercise develops self-confidence and critical-thinking, and encourages dialogue, collaboration and empathy in a safe space.
In 2012, a few experiments we made on Twitter gathered a growing number of readers together. A community was born.

We understood that commenting books on Twitter (technology) could foster audience development & audience engagement.

Most interestingly, people reading together on Twitter became friends and decided to meet up where the book had been written.
A powerful learning and teaching tool

We soon realized our method could become an innovative resource for teachers and students and thus started designing games for schools of all grades, to play both online and on paper.
Our own webapp for social reading

In 2014 thanks to a grant for cultural innovation we developed the beta version of Betwyll.

Betwyll allows students, teachers and all community members to play social reading games within a closed environment, directly attaching their comments to the text on the app.
Read and play within the text, comment on it together with other readers following TwLetteratura's method.
Main results

- 31,200 followers on Twitter.
- Over 2,500 downloads on Betwyll.
- More than 50 books read.
- 14,000 students, 500 teachers from 280 schools in Italy.
- 5 universities involved: Pavia, Cardiff, Gent, Harvard, Indiana.
- Projects developed in Belgium, Romania, Wales and the U.S.
- International programmes won: Transition, Benisi, Tandem, Creative Business Cup Italia, Creative Business Cup semifinals.
- Included in the curriculum for digital civic education of the Italian Minister of Education.
In 2016, TwLetteratura was acknowledged by the European Commission as a good practice in the white book “Promoting Reading in the Digital Environment”.
Our projects with foreign students of Italian language, literature and culture

- *Io non ho paura* - Harvard University (2 rounds, in 2016 and 2017)
- *#Proverbi* - Harvard University (2016)
- *Scontro di civiltà per un ascensore...* - Indiana University (2016)
- *The Fortunate Pilgrim* - Indiana University (2017)
- *The Sopranos* - Indiana University (2017)
- *Venuto al mondo* - Indiana University (2017)
- *Un anno sull’altipiano* - Ghent University (2017)
- *Orlando furioso* and *Gerusalemme Liberata* - Ghent University (2017)
Our projects in Wales: #TwWonka

Reading and commenting on Charlie and The Chocolate Factory in English and Welsh with students from Merthyr Tydfil.

27.02.2017 - 28.03.2017 including offline creative workshops facilitated by writers/animateurs and an illustrator.
Our projects in Wales: #AdventuresInWonderland

Reading and commenting on Alice’s Adventures In Wonderland with diverse reading groups in Blaenau Gwent libraries to encourage reading, support well-being and address isolation.

3 rounds, from May to October 2017, including offline creative workshops facilitated by writers/animateurs and an illustrator.
#AdventuresInWonderland

The project involved:
- elders
- people with mild dementia
- intergenerational and family learning groups
- "isolated" people
- economically inactive library users
- adult Welsh-language learners

and was studied by Dr. Ellie Byrne from Cardiff University as part of her broader research on cultural participation.
#AdventuresInWonderland: main results

• 640 twylls with 87 app users
• 5 libraries
• 2 primary schools (parent & child groups)

23 sessions:
• 2 events
• 7 Adult Reading group sessions
• 5 family engagement sessions
• 3 family reading sessions
• 1 session with Welsh learners
• 5 arts workshops with 3 community artists (poet, printmaker and visual artist)
#AdventuresInWonderland: lessons learned

- Perception of a **significant impact** on readers and non readers: *social reading* as a bridge between reading and IT.
- Key **champions** are essential, as well as dynamism and enthusiasm from library staff.
- Opportunity for elders to **revise** books read in childhood, getting new insights.
- Being introduced to technology and writing through Betwyll can motivate people to become **more proficient and active online** and to join other groups.
- Factor in **time** to ensure library staff and participants have the right software and technical capabilities to use the app, and that library staff feel confident about helping others.
Alice reminds me of Cinderella because she has the same colour hair and was on adventures.

My favourite part was when she escaped from the bunny hole.

I liked the part when they played croquet with the lamplighters and used a hedgehog as the ball.
Thank you

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