

MIGLĖ VINGIREVIČIŪTĖ
Kaunas county public library

Educational app “The Book Code”

I am going to introduce an interactive educational application “The Book Code”. It is a mobile game about literature. We believe the game might help young people get interested in reading and it might also be useful for studying.

It is no secret it's usual to play, read, search, socialize, and even work online today. Technologies have become very important part of our everyday life. People born after 1970 are the ones who are technology wise since they have grown up witnessing the technological development. The ones born in 1996 or later are even more technology and internet savvy because they have been growing up in the digital era. They have always lived in a connected world and they are used to constant updates from dozens of apps and media sites. This is the world they have always known. We shouldn't be surprised that young people find it easier and more practical to Google instead of opening a book for finding answers as well as they find it more interesting to spend their free time on social media sites instead of reading books.

Therefore it is no wonder we are witnessing the drop of reading habit indicator which is a common concern nowadays. It is just a result of a lifestyle of today's society. Yet I believe we would agree reading books not only affects one's taste of literature but also defines one's literacy and shapes personality. Reading can help us become educated, intelligent, and conscious.

Both previously mentioned cases—living in the digital era and the decrease in reading habit—made us think of a possible solution which would be helpful in motivating young people to read. This is how we came up with the idea of “The Book Code”. The application should be understood as our attempt to combine technology and literature. In other words, the app is just a way for us to reach users and communicate with them in a way that would be usual for them.

So, let us move to the game. Our target audience is pupils although the game itself has no age limit. There are 7 tasks; each task consists of several levels. The more correct answers are chosen the more challenging task becomes as questions get more difficult and more answer options are given.

We decided to invoke visualization for two particular tasks as it is a very important criterion in order to attract users. Wherever we'd look today, we'd see dozens of colors, shapes, prints, and anything that's meant to catch an eye. That is why articles come along with a good number of photos. It proves the importance of visualization. Even book covers are very colorful and vivid nowadays. Hence we tried to get some benefit of it.

One of the tasks based on this criterion is called “Porininkas” which could be translated to English as “Mate”; player sees a certain number of cards on the screen. These cards are hidden book covers which

open up as they're being clicked on. Player needs to find matching book cover pairs. No knowledge is needed here; this task is just for fun and has a purpose to excite user's interest to keep playing and try the other tasks out later.

The other task which was also created based on visualization is "Portretai", or "Portraits", where you need to recognize author from given photos or pictures. Here you need a little bit of knowledge of what authors have looked like otherwise you'll just be guessing.

Other tasks are more like quizzes. I am going comment on each task shortly.

There is a task called *Autorius* (that would be "Author" in English) which asks you to select author of a given book; no need for further information about this one, I believe.

Then there is another task, "Knygiažodis". It could be probably called a crossword. Here you need to find and cross the given words out. All words are related to literature in some way; it may be a concept of literary theory or author's name, or name of a book.

"The Book Code" also offers a task "Fragmentas" ("Fragment"). You need to identify the book by given quotation. Player reads the quote, and then chooses a book which he/she believes is the one the quote belongs to.

Next task is "Lašai", or "Drops". This task is like an attempt to combine both visualization and quiz since this task gives questions and answer options while there's a drop falling down from the top of the screen to the bottom. As you can guess, once the drop reaches the bottom, player loses some time and thus begins losing, in other words, drowning. In this task you need to choose an answer about the time period which the work of fiction was written in.

The last task is "Žinovas", that would be "Expert" in English. This is a quiz about literary genres and sub-genres. Since there are 3 literary genres, only 3 answer options are possible on the first two levels, which are drama, poetry and prose. As we move on to the third level we can now find various answer options such as short story, fairytale, memoir, tragedy, poem and etc. In my opinion, this task is one of the most beneficial for pupils since they have some trouble with identifying literary genres and sub-genres.

Talking about books which appear in the app, few things could be mentioned. First, the game includes works both of local and foreign authors from all over the world meaning it includes well known classical works, like "The Picture of Dorian Gray", "Dracula", "Hamlet" and others, as well as it includes contemporary fiction, like "The Life List", "The Divergent", "Harry Potter" or "Hunger games" series and much more. We've made a selection of books by age, starting with the books for children on first levels and moving to teenagers' and adult groups as the level gets higher.

There is one more section "The Book Code" has to offer—"Catalog", we named it "Žinynas". It is a guide to Lithuanian literature which is included in the school reading list. "Catalog" offers a synopsis of authors' biographies and major works. We call this section "notes for exam" and I would like to mark that synopsis is

based on a reliable source which is “The Encyclopedia of Literature”. Also, the game doesn’t require to be connected to Wi-Fi so you can use this anytime anywhere once you install the app.

“The Book Code” was released on September, 2017. To this day we have already given several game presentations in Kaunas region; we’ve also announced the game during Vilnius Book Fair this year. People had an opportunity to try the game and they seemed pretty excited and curious about it which was very pleasant for us.

In summary, “The Book Code” is our way of adapting to the habits young people have today and we also hope this would deliver over the message saying we are thinking about them. We hope it could be a step towards creating a more-reading, more-conscious, smarter thus happier society.