

# SINGAPORE

**NATIONAL LIBRARY BOARD, SINGAPORE**

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## **ANNUAL REPORT TO CDNL 2003 – 2004**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The National Library Board (NLB) was established on 1 September 1995 with the mission to continuously expand the learning capacity of the nation. NLB oversees the management of the National Library, two regional libraries, 20 community libraries, 20 community children's libraries, as well as libraries belonging to 20 government agencies and 12 junior colleges. NLB also administers the Singapore Management University Library, Singapore Armed Forces Training Institute Library, Meridian Junior College and Republic Polytechnic Library.

NLB's digital library, eLibraryHub, provides patrons with access to information resources and services any time, anywhere. Through its innovative use of technology and its collaboration with strategic partners, the NLB ensures that library users have access to a rich array of information services and resources that are convenient, accessible and useful. More information on NLB can be found on <http://www.nlb.gov.sg/>

### **MAIN HIGHLIGHTS (MAR 2003 – APRIL 2004)**

#### ***LIBRARY RENOVATION***

NLB continues to upgrade the facilities of its existing libraries to cater to the changing needs of users. Queenstown Community Library underwent extensive improvement works and reopened on 31 Oct 2003 with better facilities and a newer layout with special emphasis on promoting intergenerational bonding between the senior citizens and the young. The Jurong East Community Library is being upgraded and will reopen on 29 May 2004 as NLB's 3rd Regional Library, with a special teen library space, created for teens and to be run by teens.

#### ***NEW NATIONAL LIBRARY***

On Jan 28 2003, NLB announced the impending closure of the National Library at Stamford Road on April 1, 2004. To mark the closing chapter of the landmark red-brick building, which housed the National Reference Library and the Central Community Library, a closing ceremony was held on March 31, 2004. About 7,000 people visited the National Library on its last day.

The new National Library will be relocated to its new site at Victoria Street and slated for opening in 2005. A ceremony to mark the laying of the foundation stone of the new building was held on September 15, 2003. The new National Library will house the reference and research collection with a focus on areas such as business, the arts, and the national languages, special and donor collections and the Singapore Heritage Library and the Singapore Collection. The new building will also incorporate a new Drama Centre in its design. Co-locating the new Drama Centre in the new National Library building will create an unprecedented synergy with the institutions and arts facilities in the surrounding area.

## **SERVICES**

### ***REFERENCE AND LENDING SERVICES***

The reference and lending services continued to be well used in Financial Year 2003. The number of enquiries received increased from 1.8 million to 2.3 million. Increases were also recorded for total loans from 32.1 million to 34.8 million.

NLB participated in the AskNow! Pilot Project with the National Library of Australia as part of the Memorandum of Understanding between these two libraries. This participation was also to explore and to assess the capability of the 24/7 software as well as the feasibility of adopting chat reference service in NLB. This real time digital reference service offers another opportunity for libraries to provide reference assistance for their users. The trial project ended at the end of Oct 2003 with a total of 69 enquiries received on various topics.

### ***CONTACT CENTRE***

NLB's Contact Centre was launched on 14 Jul 2003. On 3 Sep 2003, the Centre took over the Customer Service Officer's lines of all the 23 libraries as well as the Digital Library Services Helpdesk and Cybrarian service of 3 Community Libraries. The Centre also took over the enquiries of the Children's Community Libraries from 1 April 2004.

### ***ELECTRONIC AND DIGITAL LIBRARY SERVICES***

"Singapore Pages", NLB's gateway to online and print resources on Singapore was launched on 31 Oct 2003. One of the resources available in this portal is the digital collection of old and rare Singapore imprints, taken from both NLB's collection and from other libraries like the British Library's Collection. More than 13,000 digital images documenting Singapore's history currently reside in the "Singapore Pages".

NLB is also embarking on a project to source and seek permission for digitization of scripts/artistic works from prominent local authors, playwrights or poets for online delivery in the Digital Library. The initial phase of the project would focus on scripts/artistic works that are unpublished or out-of-print.

### **LEGAL DEPOSIT, GIFTS & EXCHANGE, BIBLIOGRAPHIES, INDEXES**

In the Financial Year 2003, a total of 43,818 items were deposited with the NLB under the Legal Deposit requirement and 47,385 volumes were received as gift and exchange. The NLB also received a donation of some 5,000 books and other library materials from a famous local artist, Tan Swie Hian. His donation will be one of the highlights in the new National Library Building due to open in 2005.

Two issues of the CD-ROM of the Singapore National Bibliography were produced in Feb and Mar 2004 respectively. The latter issue contained a cumulative total of 57,588 bibliographic records for both print and non-print materials added to the database so far. The Singapore Periodical Index (SPI) CD-ROM 1981-2003, which contains indexes to periodical literature published in and on Singapore, was produced in March 2004 and contained a cumulative total of 92,784 articles.

NLB also developed a Taxonomy/Thesaurus and Metadata for E-Content for the Singapore Heritage digital library service - "Singapore Pages". 700 metadata records were created for the China InfoMall and "Singapore Pages" digital library services, using the Dublin Core standard adopted by the National Library Board for e-content.

### **PRESERVATION & CONSERVATION OF RARE/HERITAGE MATERIALS**

Some 85,000 items of rare and heritage materials have been identified to undergo anoxic treatment in order to conserve them. From these, smaller subsets will undergo various other forms of conservation and preservation, such as encapsulation, boxing, binding, restoration, microfilming and digitization.

## EVENTS

The NLB organized the 4th Asian Children's Festival (ACF) from 13 to 23 Nov 2003. The festival once again captured the imagination of children with its storytelling, drama performances and other activities. ACF saw a turnout of 300,000 and garnered wide media coverage. Apart from the two professional conferences – Asian Storytelling Congress and Asian Children's Writers & Illustrators' Conferences – new programmes such as the ASEAN Children's Art Exhibition on Kindness, Indian Children's Book Exhibition and KidzVoices Children's Forum also drew in the crowds. In conjunction with the festival, the Asian Children's Expo was held from November 13 to 16 2003 at Compass Point Shopping Centre. It showcased a plethora of products and services that meet the educational needs of children.

The NLB hosted the IFLA RSCAO Mid-Year Meeting from 24 to 25 Feb 2004. In conjunction with this meeting, a one-day seminar on "Lifelong Learning and Leadership in Libraries" was held for the local library professionals and the RSCAO members on 23 Feb 2004. This seminar was jointly organized with the Library Association of Singapore and IFLA RSCAO.

The NLB will be hosting the 2004 INTAMEL Conference from 26 Sep to 2 Oct 2004. The theme of the conference is "Library as a Fusion Space: Possibilities and Opportunities". The conference participants will comprise library directors of the INTAMEL member countries.

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