

Annual Report to CDNL 2005 – 2006

Name of Country : Singapore
Name of Library : National Library Board, Singapore
Name of Chief Executive : Dr N Varaprasad

MAIN HIGHLIGHTS

NEW NATIONAL LIBRARY

The National Library reopened on 22 July 2005 in its new premises at Victoria Street. With a gross floor area of over 58,000 sq m, the new National Library is nearly 5 times larger than the old building at Stamford Road.

The new National Library building houses the Lee Kong Chian Reference Library and the Central Lending Library. It has a start-up collection size of over 634,000 volumes on-site. The Lee Kong Chian Reference Library is the crown jewel of the new National Library. Named after the late Dr Lee Kong Chian, founder of the Lee Foundation which donated S\$60 million to NLB for the new building in September 2003, the focus of the Reference Library is on Singapore and Southeast Asia. It has a collection size of over 500,000 volumes in the four official languages of Singapore, namely Malay, English, Mandarin and Tamil. Other collections in the Reference Library include the Social Science, Humanities, Science and Technology Collections, the Arts and Business Collections, the Chinese, Malay and Tamil language Collections, the Asian Children's Collection, the Donor Collection, and a Rare Materials Collection. Another 200,000 volumes of reference materials are housed off-site and can be made available to users upon request.

The Central Lending Library consists of 134,000 items and offers a strong collection of fiction and award-winning materials, also in the four official languages.

The new National Library building also houses the National Arts Council's Drama Centre, programmes zone, gardens, café, an open plaza on the ground level and the NLB's corporate headquarters.

LIBRARY 2010

NLB unveiled the Library 2010 (L2010) on 21 July 2005, a plan that puts forward its strategic direction for the next five years in. The L2010 plan is NLB's response to the changing needs of the Singapore society and economy and marks the next phase of development in the NLB's roadmap. The L2010 plan follows the successful implementation of the Library 2000 (L2000) plan that resulted in providing Singaporeans with a world class library system that is affordable, accessible and convenient.

The L2010 plan will focus on expanding the role of libraries in the knowledge economy and to develop knowledge-enabled Singaporeans. The new framework will entail in making information accessible, building knowledge and expertise and sharing and exchanging knowledge.

L2010 focuses on five key areas:

- Building a network of knowledge assets and making them accessible;
- Leveraging on technology especially in support of collaboration;
- Organising around customer communities to serve them better;
- Expanding its professional competencies to deliver on its objectives; and
- Measuring its impact to ensure continuing value and relevance.

LIBRARY ADMINISTRATOR

Dr N Varaprasad joined the National Library Board as Chief Executive Officer on 15 September 2004. Prior to joining the NLB, Dr Varaprasad was Deputy President of the National University of Singapore (NUS). He was the Principal and CEO of Temasek Polytechnic before joining NUS.

NLB ONLINE REPOSITORY OF ARTISTIC WORKS (NORA)

The NLB Online Repository of Artistic Works (NORA) was launched on 27 January 2005. It is a collection of works by local authors and composers, and serves as a source of reference for people interested in Singaporean literature and the arts. This is the first time that a comprehensive collection of unpublished and out-of-print artistic and literary works have been made available to the public through an online platform.

The newly launched NORA currently contains about 150 unpublished, out-of-print works, and excerpts from published works including poetry, plays and works of fiction by more than 20 prominent Singaporean writers and composers. These include Ovidia Yu, the late Kuo Pao Kun, Lee Tzu Pheng, Stella Kon, Desmond Sim, Haresh Sharma and Felix Cheong.

NORA aims to preserve the literary heritage of Singapore and provide public access to a collection of literary and artistic resources.

LEGAL DEPOSIT, GIFTS & EXCHANGE, BIBLIOGRAPHIES, INDEXES

The NLB Task Force on Legal Deposit of Materials was formed in 2004 to review NLB's legal deposit function and explore collaboration possibilities with local institutions and agencies towards developing a more comprehensive national heritage collection. The Task Force consists of NLB librarians and professionals and academics from the Nanyang Technological University and the National University of Singapore, the Library Association of Singapore and the National Archives of Singapore. The Task Force recently presented its findings and recommendations to the NLB Board.

The recommendations are:

- New Legal Deposit Framework is needed that will incorporate decentralised collection points for legal deposit. In the short term, a one-to-one collaboration with Singapore government agencies and work with libraries and institutions to source for materials and build a comprehensive legal deposit collection. In the long term, an amendment to the NLB Act to legislate a hybrid approach will be required.
- Legal Deposit of online electronic resources should be included. For the immediate future voluntary deposit by publishers should be encouraged.
- To define a preservation policy and create a centralised database. NLB should obtain rights to create surrogate copies and authorise procedures necessary to meet preservation objectives. A central storage space for legal deposit materials in all formats with proper climatic controls is needed.
- NLB should review its existing organisational structure and provide adequate resources and staff to enable them to perform their duties.
- Conduct regular sharing sessions with publishers to create an awareness of Legal Deposit, ISBN and ISSN and motivate them to deposit their publications. NLB should also inform them about the plans to collect online electronic publications and invite publishers to participate in a voluntary deposit scheme.
- NLB to play a key role in defining the Singapore Heritage Collection and develop a high-level framework based on collaboration. NLB can play a central role in preservation and spearhead a multi-agency project that includes the Media Development Authority and the National Heritage Board, especially the National Archives. Awareness of this collection among Singaporeans needs to be created and sustained to ensure that Singaporeans will continue to support this collection. NLB should also seek national funding to develop the Singapore Documentary Heritage Collection and implement the recommendations made by the Task Force.

DIGITAL LIBRARY

The Digital Library Services (DLS) group was formed in November 2004 with the merger of the Econtent group, the Digitisation group and the Digital Library Operations group. DLS has proposed a change in the reported metrics to report on the comprehensive coverage of electronic materials, enhance the precision in usage reporting and include quality metrics. The reason for the change is to align the DLS metrics with international standards ANSI/NISO Z39.7 and Recommended Quality Metrics by DLF where necessary.

The change to international standards will facilitate the benchmarking of NLB's services with other libraries and add another dimension to monitor quality of services. Another reason for the change is the ability to control the management process before the users encounter them. Most of the quality metrics can be detected before the users start to perceive a drop in the quality of services. The proposed metrics will cover electronic access, electronic access expenditure, electronic subscriptions, Internet resources, timeliness, sufficiency and correctness.

PUBLICATIONS

The National Library Board (NLB) as the depository of locally published materials publishes the *Singapore National Bibliography*. It also publishes the *Singapore Periodicals Index*. Both the *Singapore National Bibliography* and the *Singapore Periodicals Index* are published in the CD-ROM format.

The *Singapore Periodicals Index* (SPI) CD-ROM 1981-2004 was produced by NLB in March 2005 and contained a cumulative total of 96,260 articles. A total of 3,476 citations in English, Chinese and Malay were added to the SPI database for the year, to provide more current access to periodical literature published in and on Singapore.

Two issues of the *Singapore National Bibliography* CD-ROM were produced in October 2004 and March 2005 respectively. The December 2004 issue contained a cumulative total of 73,475 bibliographic records for both print and non-print materials added to the database. During Financial Year 2004, 2,834 bibliographic records in English, Malay, Chinese and Tamil were added to the Singapore National Bibliography database for both print and non-print materials.

PRESERVATION & CONSERVATION OF RARE/HERITAGE MATERIALS

NLB continued with its preservation project of rare and heritage materials that first started in 2003. Working closely with the National Archives of Singapore, NLB identified about 85,000 items, including rare books, donor collections and maps and posters on Singapore. Materials in poor physical condition were treated while relevant ones were preserved through microfilming, meta-tagging and digitisation. The materials will be housed at the Lee Kong Chian Reference Library's Rare Book Collection. Another 100,000 items of rare and heritage materials will undergo similar conservation and preservation treatment for the next 3 years.

NLB acquired some rare materials during the current year. They are:

- Irathinasurukkam by Syed Muhamed Haneefathul Kadri, and printed in the Javi Peranakan Company owned by Syed Printing House, Singapore, in 1878.

This is a religious text, which expounds the teachings of the Koran. It is written in Tamil with a liberal use of Arabic terms. This is currently the earliest Tamil book published in Singapore held by NLB.

- An unpublished letter of Sir Stamford Raffles dated 21 April 1825. This was written to a friend after his return to London.
- 'Nova tabula Insularum lavae, Sumatrae, Borneonis et aliarum Mallaccam usquae, delineata in insula lava, ubi ad vivum disignantur vada et Brevia scopulique interjacentesdescripta a C.M.A.L. - Neuwe und Eijgentliche Furbildung, der Inseln, Java, Sumatra, Borneo, bis gen Malaca, mit alen umligenden kleinen Inseln, corect und mit gansem fleis in der Insel Java observiert und abgerissen durch G.M.A.L.'

This is a rare map showing Malaya, Singapore, Sumatra, Java and Borneo by Theodore de Bry, 1598. Size: 43cm x 37 cm

- An Album of 116 photographs on Singapore, Malaya and Batavia taken between 1880s and 1890s. Pictures of Singapore include important landmarks like Esplanade Drive, City Hall and Boat Quay.

INTERNATIONAL PROJECTS / RELATIONSHIPS

NLB signed a letter of intent with the Thai Government on 28 May 2004 to help establish a Design Reference Library for Thailand. NLB will provide supporting services from library conceptualisation and facilities planning, to actual development and deployment.

NLB signed a Memorandum of Understanding on 6 July 2004 with the Perpustakaan Nasional Republik Indonesia for co-operation in Library Management, Reference and Information Services.

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