



LIBRARY SERVICES FRAMEWORK



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Foreword



H.E. Dato Lim Jock Hoi Secretary General ASEAN

therefore timely that the ASEAN Committee on Culture and Information (COCI), Subcommittee on Culture (SCC) through the National Library of the Philippines has developed this publication on Library Services Framework.

Based on the discussions at the Conference on ASEAN Capacity Building in Library Services: Reframing Libraries, Setting the New Normal held from 17 to 19 November 2021, the publication provides information on the available services and the adaptation strategies developed by ASEAN national libraries to cope with current challenges. It also offers a framework on library services that can help guide us on where to focus our efforts, and how to iterate our services effectively and efficiently as we evolve and embrace the digital realm to adapt to the 'new normal' while ensuring that we do not leave anyone behind. To this end, cooperation between libraries in ASEAN and beyond should be strengthened and promoted to seek support from each other by sharing knowledge and resources to enhance the capacities of libraries and their staff.

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the Government of the Philippines, particularly the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA), for their continuous support in advancing and strengthening people-to-people exchanges in culture and the arts. I hope the publication will enlighten not just library professionals, but all public servants and the general public on the importance of libraries in our communities, now and in the future.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lim Jock Hoi'.

DATO LIM JOCK HOI
Secretary-General of ASEAN

Libraries and archival institutions are an integral part of society as they play significant roles as entryways to knowledge and repositories of our history. They are crucial in documenting local, regional and global experiences, and contribute to the accumulation of social and cultural capital for communities.

Libraries also play an important function in countering the ongoing 'infodemic' where the overabundance of information has led to the proliferation of fake news and misinformation, creating a climate of mistrust and prejudice. As custodians of knowledge, libraries are a source of reliable information and advocate for information and media literacy among the public.

COVID-19 has unfortunately forced several cultural and archival institutions around the world to close their doors to the public. As these institutions have relied predominantly on their physical spaces and collections in transmitting their knowledge to the public, the pandemic has compelled libraries, galleries and museums to adapt to the situation through innovation and digitalization.

COVID-19 and the 4th Industrial Revolution are prompting us to rethink the way we do things. Libraries will need to transform digitally in order to adapt to shifting demands. In this regard, there is a need to expound and increase peoples' awareness of the functions, challenges, and future of our libraries and archival institutions. It is

Preface



Cesar Gilbert Q. Adriano

Director IV

National Library of
the Philippines

affect the delivery of library services through the workshops and lectures delivered.

Challenges in funding, infrastructure improvements, opportunities in collaboration and even bilateral regional agreements, to name a few, are some of the more crucial factors that have been raised during the online forum. Addressing these would mean better library services and this is where innovation of library services takes place: adapting new methods or incorporating new products or services to ensure continued and sustained success of our libraries in the region.

The pandemic required us to look into digital capabilities. Thus, this publication compiled the records of the ASEAN member states library services framework before and during the pandemic and its prospect in the recent future. Member states presented recommendations for the fullest and effective delivery of library services. The aim is to gather support not only from the public and private sectors but also from the citizenry to give importance to information access. It also encompasses the various structures adopted by the member states in order to cope with the challenging times. May this humble work further enables our ASEAN national and public libraries to look into the many sustainable ways that we can innovate our services in order to give the best library experience for all.

Library services have gone to evolution when the Covid-19 pandemic took over. While the outbreak continues to immobilize the normal activities, libraries reframe their services. The closed down of libraries did not halt the delivery of library services. For its continuance, we struggled to utilize and rule the virtual domain. We confronted numerous digital complexities, recreated and reinvented the systems and completely changed the unnecessary and adapted to the new normal.

The process is strenuous particularly to libraries that are not digitally well-established. It is in fact technically complicated that requires special skills and financial resources. Moreover, the constant change in the government policies in addressing the spread of the virus implies change in the management and operations of the libraries as well.

To document the journey of the libraries, the National Library of the Philippines, together with the ASEAN-COCI and NCCA, conducted the online activity on Reframing Library Services on 17-19 November 2021 wherein ASEAN Member States representatives from national and public libraries shared their insights on how their library services changed given the impact of Covid-19. The event tackled not just the effects of the pandemic but also many other external factors that may

Acknowledgements



The National Library of the Philippines (NLP) extends its appreciation to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations-Committee on Culture and Information (ASEAN-COCI) through the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA) in funding this initiative on reframing library services.

While the effects of the pandemic have been felt globally, there have been opportunities as well that can be leveraged on in order to deliver better library services to the members of the public. This is the intent of the publication: to capture new ideas and insights collectively and assess how these can pave the way to a resilient way of providing library services in this time of pandemic.

Our Southeast Asia region is rich in culture, heritage and tradition, and

the preservation and conservation of such give weight to the mandate of ASEAN national and public libraries to ensure that the generations to come can fully experience how unique and special our region is. Truth-telling as a way of storytelling has never been as important as it is now given the spread of misinformation everywhere. The libraries are here as sources of truth and history.

Once again, thank you to all the ASEAN Member States representatives from national and public libraries who gave their time and contributed in the formulation of the framework. Maraming salamat at mabuhay kayong lahat!



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Synthesis of Country Reports

*Libraries beyond Covid-19: status,
challenges, and prospects*





Brunei Darussalam

Emi Suryaney binti Haji Hipny

Libraries in Brunei Darussalam in general are very fast developing institutions to offer leadership, training and so on. Public libraries are very well developed even if a national library is yet to be established. Special libraries and government libraries are growing rapidly. Special libraries function as the knowledge hub in their respective departments or ministries and mostly open to their staff and members. The Language and Literature Bureau Library, **DBP Library (Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka Library)** is the largest library providing public library services for the whole of Brunei governed under the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports.



Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka Library
Source: Wikipedia

Brunei has yet to establish its own National Library, hence the **DBP Library** acts as the **national focal point** in the field of librarianship at the national, regional, and international level. The library is responsible for providing a comprehensive collection in various fields of knowledge and has become the main sources of information for the whole general public.

It is also the focal library for **e-library** in Brunei and has transformed the traditional library management system to a fully automated system as well as easing access to library services and collections online including digital collections. The DBP library serves a total population of about 400,000 people in the whole country through its main library and branches. To date, there are more than 143,000 numbers of registered users. The DBP library has experienced ups and downs in the number of visitors over the years. However in 2019, it has broken its record and reached its highest peak of 180,000 visitors which is approximately 45 percent of the population.

The **Bruneiana collection** or the local collections to date has reached 33,706 volumes comprising print materials such as books, journals, serials, annual reports, government publications and proceedings, as well as non-print materials such as DVDs and VHS tapes. The general collections have a total of 941,710 columns of books, 24,281 periodicals and 2,802 non-print materials such as CDs, DVDs, audio and visual materials.



There are a total of 129 library personnel at Dewan Bahasa Pustaka Library, of which 32 are professionals, 62 are paraprofessionals and 35 are support staff.

The **Books Collection Act Collection** was handed over from the Department of Brunei Museums on 1st of March 2016 and the Language and Literature Bureau now acts as the custodian for these monographs. A total of 87,913 titles and 180,635 volumes of monographs were acquired from the Books Preservation Act 1967 Revision 1984.

As for the **Special Donation Collection**, the library has received donations from the embassies in the country which are named **American Shelf Collection, Russian Literature Collection and Al-Khalil bin Al-Farahidi Publications Corner**. The American Shelf Collection has a total of more than 230 volumes of books, The Russian Literature Collection with over 100 volumes and I-Khalil bin Al-Farahidi Publications Corner from the Embassy of the Sultanate of Oman with over 250 volumes.



DBP provides equal access to information to all users

Source: dewanbahasadanpustakalibrary.org

Library Services

Digital Collections

To date the library has digitized about 44,000 materials.

E-Books

This is in collaboration with PNM to provide access to e-books. The library provides open access through the e-library portal.

Reference

Bruneiana reference service and general reference library are only allowed to be used in the library premises. The Bruneiana reference service is the most sought-after service in the library.

Mobile Library

Second largest contributor towards number of visitors with 90% serving primary schools in the whole country, especially in the rural areas and the communities in the vicinity.

Circulations

Patrons are allowed to borrow books 10 at a time. Fines are imposed (\$0.10) for late returns.

Reading at the hospital

This is an extension to the existing circulation service and is carried out monthly at major hospitals in the country. Patients can make use of their time reading while waiting for their consultation.

Bulk Loan Service

Allows for lending collections of up to 500 books at a time for 90 days.

Reading Corners

This is the outreach service for longhouses in the rural areas. Apart from the mobile library service, reading corners allow the residents to borrow a set of books placed at a designated location. A minimum of 300 books are provided for the service in the location and are exchanged every three months or less depending on the demand. This service has thrived and was set up in rehabilitation centers, prison and scout headquarters. This ensures people from all walks of life are able to get access to the library collections all over the country.

Autism-friendly Library

This provides a space for users with autism and through the conduct of monthly activities for them. There is a sensorial room where users get to wind down or calm themselves while they are at the library. The children enjoy joining the storytelling sessions, arts and crafts activities, play and sing-along activities which are done routinely during their library visits. The librarians are especially trained by the Autism Center in communicating and interacting with the children. Apart from that the children are also first made familiar with the librarians to ease their experience in the library. Graphic signages were also installed in the library for them to be able to know what to expect while at the library.

Before the pandemic there was a circulation service where library users need to be registered in order for them to be able to use the facilities and services provided by the library. Registration for locals and residents are free whereas for expatriates and foreigners there is a charge according to their user category. Those below the age of 21 will be charged an amount of \$5 whereas for those above 21 years there will be a charge of a one time fee of \$50.

During the outbreak of the pandemic, all libraries, museums and galleries are closed to minimize any public gathering and to avoid outbreak of COVID-19 infection in the community. To carry on with the library services and to ensure the community is still able to engage with the library and use its services, a few emerging new services were created.

One of the strategies to ensure the number of visitors to the library reach its yearly **Key Performance Indicator** (KPI), each branch librarian has been given their own individual KPI to conduct a number of library activities for members of the public. This is to encourage the public to visit the library and make the library as a place for the communities to engage with each other, learn from each other and exchange expertise and knowledge.



There's the **Book and Contactless Pick-up** for the circulation services to ensure the lending services are available during the building closures. Effort was made to utilize the library hotline. Users send their borrowing list through WhatsApp and the focal person will forward their request to the respective libraries. They would also need to book a slot for pick-up times so that the materials can be prepared on time. As for book returns, users used the book drops available in all library branches. SOPs were in place for handling books returned by our users. During the closure, no late charges are incurred.

Online Reference Services also make use of the DBP Library hotline utilizing WhatsApp for any reference inquiries our reference librarians will provide all information needed and shared with the users online.

The constant engagement with the library users as well as potential users prove to be beneficial to the library.

To keep up the momentum, the librarians conduct their weekly activities virtually during library closures. The activities are carried out in the form of live and recorded videos, live sessions using Zoom or Google Meet, online games and quizzes using Kahoot.it, Wordwall, Quizziz and other platforms. Social media platforms as well as the library portal are used to socialize the online activities. Apart from that, it is also shared to users' group chats. Users are also encouraged to send and share their own videos to get them involved actively online.

DBP is committed to provide lifetime of learning for adults

Source: dewanbahasadandpustakalibrary.org

Challenges

The online activities participation statistics is very encouraging since it can reach a wider audience and is not limited to communities in the nearby libraries only. There have been more than 400 online activities conducted with an active participation of 48,000 from library users as well as members of the public during the pandemic. The challenges faced are in terms of **visitorship, service delivery and digital divide**.

DBP library has managed to attract the greatest number of visitors a year before the pandemic broke out. In 2020, all libraries, museums and galleries were closed. The closure lasted for about 3 months and operations were opened up in phases and libraries were able to serve at full capacity only in August 2020. This definitely affected the library visitors, which went **down by almost 30 percent** for the year. Brunei was then hit with the second wave back in August 2021. It is more severe and this has affected the number of visitors to the library; however, taking into account the online visitors as well as their participation in online activities, this latter approach has been an alternative in engaging with the users.

The **Digital Divide** strongly emphasized users who are non-digital literate as the need to move towards digital transformation is inevitable. The gap has further widened on users who do not possess digital skills, as well as those who experience Internet connectivity issues. Equal access to information and services provided by libraries would be harder to achieve. The ecosystem for the Library's Service Delivery has experienced a huge change and accelerated the need for digital transformation. This affects the services, the workforce as well as the users' take on migration towards the Internet of things.

In conclusion, the pandemic does have its positive and negative effect on libraries all over the world. However, in order to see the challenges and turn it into opportunities, librarians need to have a positive mindset, push their creativity to the limit and strategize to get the most out of what they have. Collaboration, sharing and acquiring best practices from others are also beneficial towards serving the community during these tough times. The ability to adapt and avoiding resistance to change is also important to achieve a positive outcome from the whole situation.





Libraries Beyond Covid-19: Status, challenges and prospects

Cambodia

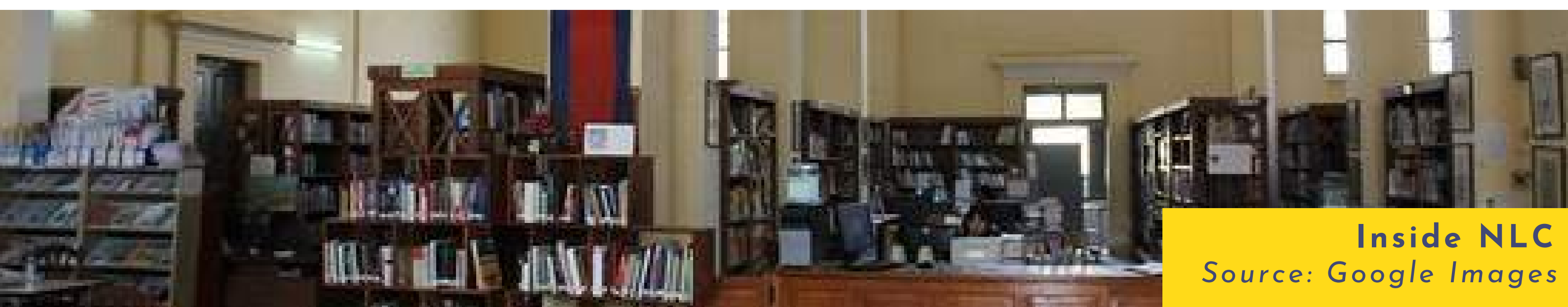
Meng Piseth

The **National Library of Cambodia** (NLC) was built in the early 1920s in French Colonial style and is located centrally in Phnom Penh on the same site as the National Archives. It was opened in 1924 with a collection of 2,879 volumes. While it was originally built by the French for use by French researchers, when the colonial rule ended in 1953, it was given back to Cambodia and served as the country's central library for almost 2 decades. After this, during the 1970's, Cambodia suffered the devastating effects of wars and political uprisings that occurred within its borders – its darkest period being from 1975-1979.

This is when Pol Pot's Khmer Rouge took over the country. Like the country itself, the library was all but destroyed during this period. The genocide was followed by desperate years of neglect due to a lack of resources that caused the library to fall into even greater deterioration. Still, the recovery began – very slowly at first – but it began. One by one people started to return to their country to witness for themselves the devastation Cambodia had become and to try to do what they could to rebuild. It was from these ashes a vision of hope was birthed in the hearts and minds of dedicated Khmer librarians, volunteers and generous foreigners.

**NLC has a rich history given
the country's past**
Source: Khmer Times

As the country started to rebuild itself, these heroes of the library held onto a belief that the library was essential – and could become something bigger and better than it had once been. They understood the power of people having access to history and knowledge and had a vision of how a new, “re-born” library could play an important role in the healing and rebuilding of the culture and the country.



Inside NLC
Source: Google Images



Pre-pandemic activities at NLC

Source: NLC Facebook



The library is open Mondays to Fridays nowadays from 8am to 4pm. There are 20 permanent staff including the management team, IT team and librarians.

There are three offices: Catalog, Conservation and Legal Deposit. There are around 125,000 books.

The NLC is preserving all kinds of Khmer books and documents in their collections which are available to all Cambodians. This provides the young and old alike with the opportunity to learn more about their history. This is particularly important as some recent history is difficult for parents, who suffered tragically, to discuss with their children. The library provides a safe place for the young and old to read, research and learn about their history – even the more difficult chapters.

The National Library of Cambodia has acquired recovered books and book fragments, literary gifts and donations from many sources.

The result is the library's resources have greatly increased in recent times. The NLC has established **nine collections** so far.

Depository Collection

Cambodiana Collection

French Protectorate Collection

General Collection

Landing Collection

Palm Leaf & Manuscript Collection

Royal Collection

Map Collections

Children Collection

Library Services

The National Library has digital services that have been compiled from old documents and new documents that include: Khmer legend, history, literature, economics and maps, etc. Digital services are aimed to help students in their research and improve search techniques. To use this service students are required to type the topics they need in the NLC website. The results can be read for free.

- Information Services
- Electronic Resources Services
- Information Literacy Services
- Reader Advisory Service
- Circulation Services
- Serial Publication Service
- Lending Services
- Membership Registration

In order to ensure the original and good condition of documents, NLC has initiated the following services: lending service, guiding service, legal deposit service, ISBN service, accessing cultural and historical manuscript service, reading service, and microfilm service. During COVID-19 pandemic, NLC still implemented all above services and added more such as: ISBN issuing online, online Cambodia Book Fair, Weekly Book online, and online reading service.

Registration Fees

- Cambodian students, 4,000 riels per year
- Cambodian, 8,000 riels per year
- Foreigners, US\$10 per year and US\$5 for 6 months.

Some activities before pandemic were reading and painting books in the Children and Young Adult's Section of the library. The NLC used its website and social media platforms like Instagram and Facebook in promoting its services.

Challenges

Source: movetocambodia.com

The NLC is a safe haven and valuable resource for students and families, but it has not been immune to the severe effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. As there were so many people infected by the virus, the government's temporary lockdown of the country had a negative impact on both students and families who rely on libraries as places to study, to access the internet, and to socialize. There has been a significant decline in library access – both in person and online as a result of the COVID-19. Contributing factors include the government lockdown, an interruption of online server access and recent flooding that hampered electrical service in homes and businesses.

NLC has not **digitized** all of its collections or available resources at this time, so students, families, and researchers cannot access needed e-books, periodicals, etc.

There are **fewer and fewer patrons** coming to the library as a result and for those who do come, the library cannot provide them with full service. Many positions in the library have been suspended due to the decline in live visitors to the library.

One of the main obstacles has been the **lack of cooperation** from the Ministry of Health and the head of Provincial leadership in providing pandemic records. Poor communication and a lack of factual information seem to keep everyone in the dark, making it difficult to move forward – even while the number of vaccinated Cambodians is increasing.

The pandemic has prevented the ongoing process of **creating a meaningful presence in the community**. Plans to create partnerships and build relationships with schools and businesses in the area remain only an idea since everyone has been affected and pursuing community relations is no longer an option. The best plan under this “New Normal” is to increase presence online and increase efforts to digitize collections for online access. Unfortunately, this takes time and resources which are not readily available.

In summary, the National Library is the only place in Cambodia that preserves the Kingdom’s literature and documents of cultural and historical significance. The NLC, together with Cambodian Librarians and Documentalist Association, has been working closely to promote the library’s work in creating a space for

Cambodians to easily access information about Cambodia and its culture. While the COVID-19 pandemic put an abrupt stop to the progress of recovery being made in the past 50 years – the commitment is there in pursuing collaboration efforts to create and develop more resources to meet the current and future needs of the patrons and further establish the important role the library plays in Cambodian culture and society.





Libraries Beyond Covid-19: Status, challenges and prospects

Indonesia

Arief Wicaksono

Legal Deposit Library
Research library
Reference library

Preservation library
Foster library
Center of library network

Highlighted above are the sixth functions of the National Library of Indonesia. There are two divisions in the National Library of Indonesia: Deputy of Library Resource Development and Deputy of Library Materials and Information Services Development. NLI has 912 employees out of which 538 are librarians. The field of study of librarians is mostly Library Science where 59% hold Bachelor and Master's Degree in Library Science.

The number of collections of NLI is about 5,721,385 copies, 78% of which was obtained through fiscal funding, with the 22% from legal deposit. The NLI has two buildings. The first one is located on Jalan Medan Merdeka Selatan No.11 Jakarta where the government has built a new library service building which has 24 floors. The second building is located on Jalan Salemba Raya No. 28A Jakarta.



The facade of National Library of Indonesia
Source: Wikimedia Commons

Library Services

Generally when the government decides a lockdown, building library services are closed.

For **circulation services** a patron can book online and take the book through a smart locker and return the book through book-drop available 24/7. Under the new normal, patrons have to comply with health protocols when they visit the building. These include maintaining distance and wearing plastic gloves when using books or computers

The **reference service** has shifted to online environments like online user education through Zoom and live streaming on YouTube, virtual reference (ask a librarian through email and chat, send selective dissemination of information through email, reference access series that publish on websites. There are a lot of digital book recommendations that are promote in social media and website.

Technical training for the community in the new normal, hybrid methods, mixed online and offline are used.

Challenges

COVID-19 pandemic has driven the National Library of Indonesia to implement information technology in all activities.

First challenge is about **collection development**. The National Library has 21.2% e-books. The library is dependent on the digital publisher environment to acquire local e-books, and on the culture of the locals in using e-books. Although the use of e-books is becoming a solution to community reach and a means to read a book in the pandemic era, e-books have only been chosen by 22.8% of the Indonesian people. The opinion poll that was done by the Ministry of Communication and Informatics through social media showed 77.2% of Indonesian people still choose conventional books.

Second challenge is about reference service. In March 2020, the National Library started performing virtual reference service (ask a librarian) through chat. This service is a synchronous environment that presents its own challenges to make effective library services, the references to meet the demand, and improve the librarian's competencies.

The third challenge is technical training for the community. The National Library started a new tradition when carrying out technical training: full online and hybrid technical training have been learned in order to give the same experience and result with offline technical training.



Books on display at NLI
Source: LibGuides

The National Library of Indonesia has been learning fast to implement information technology especially when the pandemic situation calls for restricted movement. Full online and hybrid services have been delivered in order to keep giving the community their information needs.

Recommendations are as follows:

- Carry out full online and hybrid library services.
- Circulation services be provided without the need for librarians and through the use of book machines for borrowing and returning books.
- Reference services be delivered through the use of virtual/online media communication.
- Librarians may create content that is useful to patrons, i.e libguide, pathfinder, index, etc.
- Libraries may learn how to organize effective seminars/workshops/training and carry out those community development.



North Borneo Provincial Public Library

Yoseva Silaen

The **North Borneo Provincial Public Library** in Indonesia was established in 2017 and it is located in Tanjung Selor, the capital city of North Borneo. North Borneo or Kalimantan Utara is the youngest province in Indonesia.

The library consists of 2 Divisions: Development and Cultivation of Reading Interest Division and Deposit Service and Preservation of Library Materials Division.



Inside a library (L) and a mobile library in Indonesia (R)

Source: reuters.com



There are 9 personnel who specifically work in the library services assisted by 4 contract workers.

Part of the library experience is to direct personnel to do good librarianship tasks in carrying out excellent, correct and friendly library services. Every so often, the library rotates the personnel to perform tasks on other services so that all personnel are always available and capable when placed in any library service.

The library has around 3,500 titles of printed books equivalent to almost 12,000 copies and around 5,000 titles equivalent to almost 18,000 copies. Not as many as other existing libraries may have, but part of the library's strategic plan has been approved by the provincial leader to buy books both in print and electronic form every year for the library.

Considering that the library supports the economic welfare of the people of North Borneo, the last two years have been tended to provide library books which are related to the livelihoods of our society, such as books about marine and river fish farming, agriculture, farming, small and medium enterprises, crafts, cooking, etc.

Library Services

Library services were easier to implement before the pandemic. The services have been established both **manually and digitally**, as well as mobile. **School visitations** were also conducted. Librarians and library administrators usually go to the library for consultations about their challenges, as well as discussions related to the development of their libraries.

At the beginning of the pandemic in March 2020, there were major changes to the library's services. The library services were not available for two to three months and at the same time users were not allowed to enter the library. The library implemented a **shifting system for staff and librarians**. Some users would still go directly to the library building and there was a pressing need to refer them to use the **digital library**. All library service personnel also provided their mobile phone numbers for users to contact them when the user needed information, especially information related to reference materials.

When the new normal started in July 2020, the library services did not immediately open as there was a need to peruse a lot of health protocols and visuals in the library. The **library circulation service scenario** was also simulated to prevent the spread of the virus. The library services were one by one opened under the new normal with limited number of users allowed to use the library materials. Even if most of them preferred to use digital libraries, it still took a lot of effort to discipline everyone to stick to the existing health protocols.

Challenges

The first challenge is the social distancing needed due to the pandemic to minimize contact between librarians and users or between them and library materials. These conditions have forced library users to be more digital than ever before in quick time. It took the shortest possible time to shift to digital library service which in a way revolutionized the way these services are delivered.

At the same time the pandemic also required the improvement of the **information literacy skills** of library users, given the sudden change to a massive digital direction. Even though the library has digital versions, users also use information sources from search engines. This digital literacy improvement has been carried out at the beginning of the pandemic and the new normal, and has been running until now through guidance via phone calls, emails, text messaging and socialization through Zoom meetings.

The **digital collections** pose a significant challenge given that users will be more digital than manual.

This made the library rely heavily on the network during pandemic, considering that the number of collections are still not optimal in meeting the library users' information needs. Another challenge that has a common thread with the use of digital online libraries was how to support library users when using these services. This made the library improve the capabilities of digital library and Internet access speed, not to mention the library wifi access distance.

North Borneo library also need to consider the future challenges to make sure that when the new normal becomes normal, the North Borneo

Library must be able to anticipate changes, as well as to balance the use of library materials both printed and digital in the future.

The pandemic pushed the change of North Borneo Library to become a more digital library than before, which in turn had an impact on encouraging users to be more digital as well. The library has been continuously socializing with users so that they are familiar with online services. They didn't have to come to the library if their request for information wasn't urgent. The library also increased the speed of Internet access and expanded access locations around the library so that users have been able to access the Internet while maintaining social distancing among users.

It is important for librarians to improve their online-based information search capabilities, so that they can respond to user information needs without having to meet face to face. The next recommendation is that libraries should have to increase their ability to anticipate the changing circumstances of this pandemic so that in the future the balance between the use of print library materials and digital library materials can be maintained.



Libraries Beyond Covid-19: Status, challenges and prospects

Lao PDR

Khanphathat Manotham

The **National Library of Laos** is under the Publishing, Literature and Library Department in the Ministry of Information Culture and Tourism. The library is responsible for the development of all libraries in Laos with the objective of being the center of data information in the country. It also aims to be the central technical library for other libraries in Laos to share knowledge and experiences about library work, also in partnership with ASEAN regions and abroad for library development, preservation and conservation of intellectual property, cultural heritage and necessary documents for managing, collecting information, rescuing Palm leaf manuscripts, and for providing public access.



Facade of the National Library of Laos
Source: nationallibraryoflaos.net

Laos has over **2,000 libraries nationwide**, all included in the library association. The National Library consists of: 11 public libraries, 5 mobile libraries, 2 boat libraries, 78 university and college libraries, 55 special and private libraries, 1,956 school libraries and more than 8,500 bookcases for remote areas.

The NLL has books, magazines, newspapers, Indochina collection, palm leaf manuscript, audiovisual collection in which our main collection is an archive of traditional music in Laos.

There are 429,000 volumes in the book collection and the library provides 93,665 volumes for public service. There are books in Lao and foreign language such as Thai, English, Chinese, Korean, Japanese and French but for Lao language we there are 142,500 volumes.

For **magazines** there are a total of 30 titles with 12,580 volumes within the NLL.

For **newspapers**, there are 10 titles for a total of 27,180 volumes. The issues are collected and sewn into monthly versions for each title. These are not yet scanned and not yet available via the Internet.

The library started doing **clippings** in 2005 because the books are not enough for library use and needs. The library has included many articles in newspapers and magazines for clippings for more information searching. There are now 3,790 sheets which are then scanned to a database and made available for searching in internal services only.

On **rare books**, there are 3,000 volumes of Indochina books which have been cataloged and digitized. These are also available through internal services and not available via the Internet. For **palm leaf manuscripts**, there are 86,000 texts (368,000 fascicles).

Over 12,000 selected texts are now incorporated in the Digital Library of Lao Manuscripts collection. For more information: <http://laomanuscripts.net>

On the archive of **traditional music** in Laos, there are a total of 3,260 audio recordings from 28 different ethnic groups. The library also has 5,736 minutes of video recordings, 1,560 photographs, 146 transcriptions of music, 70 drawings and descriptions of musical instruments. These materials are accessible to the public but only through internal services and not through the Internet.

Library Services

Before the pandemic after the NLL moved to a new building in December 2016, the library continued to collect library resources to a new system for services preparation. Services provided to the public for both locals and foreigners include library loan, book, newspaper and magazine rooms, audiovisual rooms for members, including information on traditional music and palm leaf manuscript.



Inside NLL

Source: nationallibraryoflaos.net



34 staff, divided into 6 sections:

Administration, Reading and Public Relations Services, Acquisition and ISBN Issue, Cataloging and Technical, Palm Leaf Manuscript, and Reading Promotion and Library Network.

There are also **mobile libraries** to provide information and literacy programs to remote areas and assist in improving quality of education development in the communities. The library also contributes to community and school libraries in cooperation with EFA Japan and ALC organizations.

Workshops for library development are also organized throughout the country, covering library cataloging, technical resources workshops and in creating activities to promote children's reading for teachers. **Workshops on building capacity for library services, management and leadership** are also conducted. The purpose is to have more skilled library staff development on knowledge and experience sharing with librarians to strengthen collaboration development of libraries in the ASEAN region. For example, the library sent representatives to attend the International Network of Emerging Library Innovators (INELI) ASEAN project, ASEAN Public Libraries Information Network (APLiN) and Virtual Regional Conference of Public Librarians (1st ASEAN VRCPL).

In the early period of the pandemic, the library was still open for public services with rules set for new normal services such as keeping distance, washing hands by gel or alcohol and putting on masks before entering the library. Nowadays library services are severely affected. Services have been suspended at the library and community but some urgent work is continuing throughout **social media** such as WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger, e-mail, and Zoom for communication connection.

From 2020 to the present, the pandemic caused a decrease in the number of people accessing library services.

Challenges



During the pandemic, the National Library saw several challenges in the new normal of life, including the need for modern technology systems to be used as well as skills to use in online media, highlighted as follows:

Lack of Library, IT and ICT Professional staff

Knowledge of online applications remains limited

Staff capacity on Library management remains limited

Work equipment is not as modern as should be

Lack of budget

In this situation, the library has implemented the regulations of the National Commission on Pandemic Control. The board library committee has ongoing talks about plans to transform and develop the new ways on public services including implementation of planned development of library services with the agreement of all relevant boards of the Ministry as according to government policy and to continue performing National Library services during the pandemic. Cooperation is needed to work hand in hand together with the board directors, sponsors, partnership and all relevant libraries employees to develop personnel for responding to the work needs, including self-improvement in all aspects such as knowledge of communication, online media use, library management and library services development for modernization and sustainability.

On the history of public libraries in Laos, the project was initiated 30 years after the first step of the program. The project aims to run reading program in the school libraries, community libraries and provincial public libraries for children and adults.

Public and provincial libraries can be found nationwide, with main activities and programs such as storytelling and reading activities led by professional instructors. There are 11 provincial libraries and 27 public community ones. The main objective is to open for public use. Public library is a welfare center which provides useful service to the community by fostering education, providing scope for healthy recreational and dissemination information to all sections of the society and supporting educational institutions in the society.

Basic Objective

provide information to the general public to satisfy their information, education and recreational needs.

- personality development
- human adjustment
- spread of education
- self development
- service and technology
- culture of leisure

All public libraries have formation and objectives according to the National Library rules. Public library is defined as a library which is accessible to the public and generally funded from the provincial government, public source and may be operated by civil servants.

Public Libraries in Laos

Thongphanith Phoukham



Library Luaprabang

This famous and very popular library is used by the local students, tourists and local staff. The library has many outdoor activities in the villages such as reading promotion by boat.

Vientiane Capital



Xieng Khouang



Pakse



Other public libraries include **Saravane, Sayaboury, Attapu**, etc.

Due to the outbreak of Covid-19, the work of the public libraries in Laos became very different. Currently the public library is unable to operate as per normal. The number of infected people in the city is increasing. The public library has to follow the Ministry. The National Library service had to adapt the work process to the new normal way to remain safe from COVID-19. With some provinces on lockdown, the Public library is using online service like **WhatsApp, Zoom, and telephone** as ways to influence people to rent and return the books. This is now the new normal way.

Other big and small libraries in different towns had to close due to the pandemic and will only be allowed to operate if permitted by the local government. Child play areas must remain closed but some libraries have continued to provide digital services such as virtual storytime. There is not enough budget but as for the future plans towards the development of library services, the intention is to move forward from this pandemic and adapt to the new normal.



Libraries Beyond Covid-19: Status, challenges and prospects

Malaysia

Hasnida Jakeria

Perpustakaan Negara Malaysia (PNM) is a Federal Government agency under the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture. It was established in 1977 under the National Library Act 1972. PNM is headed by the Director General of the National Library of Malaysia.



Perpustakaan Negara Malaysia
Source: National Library of Malaysia

The National Library of Malaysia has a total workforce of 457 staff consisting of 3 main groups: Top Management (2), Professional and Management Group (134), and Executing Group (312). The top management includes the Director General and the Deputy Director General. The Professional and Management group includes professional librarians, finance and administrative, and professional IT officer. The largest group in the workforce is the Executing Group. These three groups are working together to achieve the library's mission and vision.

The 6 divisions that give services to the public are the Malaysiana and Foreign Reference Center, Circulation Department, National Center for Malay Manuscript, Electronics Resources Division, National Depository of Publication Center and National Bibliography Center.

Library Statistics for Malaysia

1 National Library

5 Community Libraries

1,079 Rural Library

655 Special Library

10,887 School Library

426 Academic Library

340 State Library

As for the **Collections of the PNM**, there is the Monograph Collection for Malaysiana and foreign collections. There is also a Serial Publication for magazine, bulletin, journal, annual report, index, government publication, daily newspaper and also government gazette and legislation including microfilm. The other is Special Collections for personal, rare, maps, archive, ephemera and rated collections. In addition, handwritten documents are available in Malay language in the Manuscript Collection. Finally, there is also the Electronic Media Collection of CD, VCD and Audio Books.



Inside PNM

Source: National Library of Malaysia

Library Services

Before the Covid-19 pandemic, the library has been providing services such as consultancy and advisory, reference services, lending material, ISBN and ISSN applications etc. Within, PNM published one standard operating procedure (SOP) for the libraries. This standard operating procedure (SOP) is now used as a guide on how to operate the library during the pandemic. The delivery of services has changed and has shifted more to digital.

u-Pustaka

This is a system to supply reading material to the consumer. This system was already built by PNM before the pandemic. During the pandemic, the usage of the system increased because of the high demand from the user. Among the services provided to consumers are: landings, returns and bookings books, access to audio books, electronic books, electronic newspapers, database services and government publications

Service to the Publisher

Before the pandemic, publishers used to come to the PNM premises to apply for International Standard Book Number (ISBN), International Standard Serial Number (ISSN), or asking for consultation. During the pandemic, a new system has been introduced called My Repository. All the applications for ISBN and ISSN only applied from the system. It's become easier for the publisher.

Inter-library Loan

During the pandemic, the method of lending and returning the material is changing. Books are mailed directly to users using a courier service and also use the same method when returning the books. Application for the material implemented through email and phone call.

Reference Material

For reference services, applications for the material are through email and phone calls. Digitized information is then prepared to give to them however; this is still subject to the copyright act, which is why the whole photocopy of the book cannot be given to the user.

Users are allowed to attend the library by appointment made in advance to enable the material to be prepared in advance for user reference.



Challenges



First is the **access to information** as not all the users have the right devices to access the information. The situation is the information provider does not reach the whole community. They may have a barrier to access the information, such as internet connectivity, devices and so on. Not everyone is IT-literate and some of them are not familiar with the system hence this is one of the challenges and the barrier into giving and receiving the information.



The second one is the **copyright**. It is required to transform or convert the material from printed to digital. It is also at this stage where copyright issues are faced.

As a conclusion, libraries are seen to have to go through a process of drastic change in providing maximum services to users during and after COVID-19. This is to ensure that the library is able to provide and meet the information needs to the maximum level. Along with the current situation, libraries need to continue their role in disseminating information to the whole society with reforms in terms of the information delivery methods.

First recommendation is to focus on **Digital Collection** by increasing the collection of the digital collections to fulfill user need. Next is **Transforming Library Material** from printed to digital format with consideration to the Copyright Act. The library and the author must work together. It is one of the more important things that need to be done. Last one is promotion of intensive courses to encourage use of online material. There is a need for information access skill so there is a need to double up the promotion, double up the intensive course to encourage the use of online materials.

The **Sabah State Library** is a public library located in the North Borneo of Malaysia. It is currently governed by the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation. The library is massive: 1 headquarter, 25 branches, 4 additional service centers, 74 rural libraries (state), 13 mobile libraries and 8 Des@net.

Sabah State Library

Ron Ely Julian, Veronica Vivian Estrop and Rafiqqa Binti Kamarudin

The workforce is led by the director assisted by two deputies and 13 heads of divisions. Overall the Sabah State Library currently has a total of 334 staff.

Library collections are divided into two types. The first one would be the physical collections. These loan materials are fiction and nonfiction, general references



Sabah State Library
Source: Sabah State Library

such as academic reference for school children, encyclopedias and others. There is also reference and special collections. Current policies dictate that it is only for in-house reference and not to be loaned out; examples are the Local History Collection, Local Collection, Malaysiana Collection, Government Collection and Antiquarian Collection. The library also enjoys abundant titles for magazines and selected subject journals for research.

The **e-Resources Collection** has a total of 21,403 digital collections which can be accessed through Sabah.elib, Sabah.Overdrive and u-Pustaka Portal.

Sabah.elib has 2,578 titles in Malay and English languages by local publishers, academic references for school teens ages 11-17. **Sabah-Overdrive** has 18,825 titles in English and Chinese language provided by International publishers. It comes with the personal Libby mobile app. Apart from that, the library also has joint collections as it is one of the 11 members of **u-Pustaka Consortium** which provides 24 online databases and various local e-journals.

Library Services

As other public libraries before the pandemic, services were fully operational and were actively providing loan and reference services every day and every week from Mondays to Sundays. Various physical activities were done to interact with patrons such as make and take programs, lab classes and there was a luxury to host in-house programs such as storytelling sessions, educational visits and information literacy awareness.

During the pandemic, a lot of physical and face to face services had to be temporarily shut down. Online services were pushed for e-resources towards patrons using **LiveChat** assistance, and platforms such as **Sabah.Overdrive**, **Sabah.elib**, **i-Learn ACE**, **u-Pustaka**, and **CLARE**.

Utilizing social media like **Facebook** and **TikTok** were helpful as platforms to virtualize our patrons' interactions with the library such as storytelling sessions, poetry reading, book reviews, and book-lending drive through.

Challenges

Internet Access Copyright

Nowadays proper Internet access has become more of a necessity rather than a privilege. This is especially important in providing authentic information for all. With COVID-19 identified as a new virus just over a year ago, fake news has been spreading like a wildfire over the pandemic years.

The Malaysia Copyright Act of 1987 protects the authors, copyright owners and performers' work from being produced or distributed without authorization. This has restricted the Sabah State Library from digitizing most of the library collection and providing digital access to patrons.

Library Access

When the library doors were closed, physical engagement with patrons is also cut-off. This has led to the patrons' inability to utilize library facilities such as Wifi, computer devices, and even facilities or areas like discussion rooms and students' studio areas.

Recommendations

Digital Library Services

The **eLibrary Management System Integrated Conversational AI** comes in the form of chatbots and virtual agents. The plan is to implement this over the reference area and official website. Automated replies done by these conversational AI would surely be able to limit physical traffic over reference desks when it comes to FAQs by patrons.

The **ThingLink** platform is a software for virtual experience. Virtual library tours would be on the library website so patrons are able to experience the library and browse further information. This would definitely be valuable when it comes to contributing more on digital library strategies.

Lastly is the **digitization of Reference Collection** which proves to be an urgent need. It should be about making it easily accessible to patrons and less restrictions.



Libraries Beyond Covid-19: Status, challenges and prospects

Myanmar

Kay Thi Aye

Currently the National Library of Myanmar is under the Department of Historical Research on National Library, Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture. The National Library has been established as two national libraries.

In 2017, the National Library Yangon had been transformed into a modern library. The National Library (Yangon) has been systematically renovated, relocated, and installed into a digital library system in a central area of downtown in Yangon District. On 1st July 2017, the renovation of a century-old building for the National Library was originally scheduled to open in April 2020 but it has been postponed due to coronavirus disease.

Library Services

The National Library of Myanmar is applying a hybrid system; with information technology some prefer to read the books. The National Library is taking responsibility to preserve the national literary heritage to hand on to the next generation. Therefore, any library collection is not allowed to be taken outside of the library. Mainly, the library provides reading room services. Moreover there is a plan to put in a place a library membership program as the library circulation policy allows for (limited) books to be borrowed.

The National Library can also give services such as **reading room services, reference services, circulation services, multimedia room services, digital library services, audio video services, services for the disabled, children library services, online reference services: ask a librarian, and document delivery services.**



National Library of Myanmar
Source: Southeast Asian Archaeology

Reference

Reference services and research inquiries can be made through email, telephone. Users can find many catalogs in digital from online public access catalog. It is offered to user through the website.

Multimedia Rooms

This is offered to users to play multimedia data from voice of video acquisition and provide the **eTekkaatho** digital library database which contains over 1,700 full text academic resources. The Digital Library Reading Room provides OPAC or Online Public Access Catalog. It is offered to users to search national library collection books, digital periodical papers, educational reports and documents, archaeological digital reports and Buddhist literature.

Audio and Video

Patrons have access to Myanmar cultural and ethnic documentary films, Myanmar traditional entertainment, and records are planned to show weekly or monthly. The National Library Yangon, with the Blind Education Center to collect the brilliant books and an audio system. Users can read the books and listen to the audio books in the reading room.

Children Library

The children's library contains children literature such as tale books, illustration books and journals etc. Books are collected in Myanmar and English languages.

Digital Database and Electronic Resources

During the COVID-19 pandemic and stay at home period, the use of physical space in the library cannot be provided to users.

On March 3, 2020, the National Library (Yangon) announced the online e-resources and online database, which provides the user free online access to the following digital databases: IG Publishing Database, E-Tekkaatho Digital Database, Research4life Programm Database, ProQuest Database.



Online Reference Services

The **Ask a Librarian** is an initiative **Virtual Reference Desk** where library staff check all inquiries submitted via email during the office hours.

- Use online form <http://www.nlm.gov.mm/bhlib/message/add.ftl> to ask a librarian.
- Any library questions will be reply through nlm.reference@gmail.com after one week from the date of receipt.

Document Delivery Services provided electronic delivery of full-text articles, eBooks or book chapters (to copyright restrictions and availability), provide free scanning and electronic delivery of articles and book chapter of library collections. All materials requested will be sent through email after 2-4 days from the date of request.

Staff participated in the **ASEAN and Korea** program and the project of **All Together reading campaign**. Many trainings and activities are conducted by the National Library of Myanmar and implemented by the librarians.

“Read Aloud” training was provided to the school teachers, librarians from school and private libraries and librarians of the National Library (Nay Pyi Taw & Yangon) offered lectures and practices to trainees.

For the **Librarian Capacity Building Training “Reference Services” Training**, on April and March 2020 Reference Service Training and “User Experience Research, Volunteer Service” training to the librarians from schools and private libraries President and Vice President of MLA offered lectures on that training.

Online Public Program, Japan's Toshokan Ryutsu Center (TRC) and The National Library (Yangon) have jointly organized a public program during the COVID-19 period. It is the **Homemade Face Project** as a children’s program not only for Japan and Myanmar but also from all over the world. A video of the various faces was created by librarians and host weekly on the National Library Facebook page.

Online Basic Library Training on 1 December, 2020 The National Library (Yangon) and (Nay Pyi Taw) jointly launched the first online basic library training course during COVID-19 period. Two weeks course of online library training or any interested persons on library information, librarians, school teachers, private school librarians, and various background. Online library trainings with Zoom Platform conducted by librarians from National Library (YGN & NPT).

Starting from February 2021, all planned courses were canceled due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

In 1 November 2021, due to the declining rate of the diseases to reopen the libraries and museums in accordance with the COVID-19 prevention and control guidelines, the library reopened in November. On the first week, the National Library has opened only three reading rooms; redesigning of the library spaces with the social distancing, re-organization of library services and restrictions of the number of users visiting library. The number of clients to be used inside the library according to the space of each reading room to ensure the physical distancing shall be observed at all times. References and the new library room in the second floor and general reading room on the same floor, the general library room is opened top floor.

Most libraries are temporarily closed due to COVID-19 pandemic, at the time when the library is struggling to provide services. There is insufficient staff to carry out library work and in the context of the country



Inside NLM

Source: Myanmar Digital Newspaper

Currently more people are relying on the online delivery of services and information. All online services have to be promoted through the social media of the library such as email, instant messaging and website to support their services and reach out to the community.

The **Information and Public Relation Department** is under the Ministry of Information established in 1990. There are now 414 libraries under the Information and Public Relations Department. In 2017 public libraries were changed to a Community Centers (Yangon, Myitkyina, Lashio, Kytong, Mandalay, etc).

Public Libraries of Myanmar

Cho Nwehtay Win

Library Services

For Library Service, public library is open to the public using Open Bookshelf System. The library is open Monday to Saturday. Users may borrow any books, except reference. A user can rent two books for free for two weeks at a time. The public library wifi service is available.

Children Library Service

In the Children Reading Room the library conducts storytelling, drawing, painting, telling story and singing poem. Quizzes and games for children are held on special days like National Day and Independence Day.

Mobile Library Service

A bus goes around the target area twice a day. The target places are schools, prisons, monasteries, churches and sometimes offices. This service is provided in target areas once in two weeks.

Training Services

Computer training services are offered from basic to advanced, as well as a variety of language courses like English, Japanese Chinese and Korean. All courses are taught by volunteer teachers.

Community Center Services

Community-based centers have also been set-up for the free use of local people, such as meeting, gathering, party and club member activities (eg. book clubs, women's clubs, youth clubs).

Sports Services

The library can support the outdoor or indoor sports equipment and activities depending on participants size. in addition, the library supports not only physical fitness exercises but also brainstorming activities.

During COVID-19, **online services** were offered and the library heavily used **social media**. On the Facebook account of libraries, **book reviews** were posted and **storytelling** and **talk show programs** were also conducted. The library also implemented social distancing, covered the counters with plastic shields, removed the chairs and manually cleaned and disinfected the books. In collaboration with the TRC in Japan, online studies with Japanese representatives on **Japanese language** were also done and on how they set up their services.

Most public libraries are using online systems but some are not. It depends on the situation of the public library. Some are small, some are in the rural areas so digital services may not be provided. But in 2022, all public libraries will change into the digital library system.

Challenges

The biggest challenge of public libraries is attracting people to use the libraries again. After COVID-19, services of public libraries need to be restored. As COVID-19 introduced a new way of life, public libraries need to adopt and provide better services to the public.

During COVID-19, people learned to seek knowledge in their own way. Therefore public libraries need to find a good answer to the question of why people should come to the libraries. Getting to the answer is the process we will have to undergo post-COVID-19. COVID-19 is said to have opened the door to technology for libraries and brought about change. I recommend that post-COVID-19 libraries make changes with the help of technology. We are trying to transform the public libraries and innovate online services in Myanmar. Technology is good but the way people communicate is better.



Exterior of NLM
Source: Facebook



Libraries Beyond Covid-19: Status, challenges and prospects

Philippines

Chona San Pedro-Galo

The National Library of the Philippines (NLP) is the repository of the printed and recorded cultural heritage of the Philippines and other intellectual, literary and information sources.

National Library of the Philippines

Source: NLP Facebook page

On September 2007, the NLP was reorganized into **9 Divisions** for its rationalization plan:

- Filipiniana Division
- Reference Division
- Research & Publications Division
- Finance & Administrative Division
- Catalog Division
- Public Libraries Division
- Information Technology Division
- Bibliographic Services Division
- Collection Development Division

The divisions or departments are under the offices of the Director and Assistant Director, with the former being attached to the Office of the President. The workforce as of September 2021 has a total of 187: 1 Director IV, 1 Director III, 54 are librarian positions and 131 are non-librarian positions.

The non-librarian positions are composed of copyright examiner, archivist, book binders, history researchers, information technology officers, computer programmer, administrative positions, job orders and contract services. There are two director positions: Director IV is the Director or head of the National Library and Director III is the Assistant Director.

NLP materials are acquired through gift or donation, purchase, exchange with libraries abroad and copyright deposits. Materials not selected for the NLP collections are used in the library's book allocation program for public libraries. Majority of the library's collections are in Filipino and English languages.

The focus of NLP's collection is on Filipiniana materials in line with NLP's mission. Filipiniana materials are about the Philippines and Filipinos, written in any language, regardless of place of publication or authorship. NLP has 1,782,617 library collections of books, serial, multimedia, e-resources, theses and dissertations, cartographic materials, photographs, rare books and manuscripts, braille, large prints, audiobooks and other assistive devices. One of the most prized possessions of the NLP are the works of Jose Rizal such as *Noli Me Tangere*, *El Filibusterismo* and *Mi Ultimo Adios*. Another prized possession is *The Philippine Declaration of Independence*. These are all kept in a special double combination vault in the Rare Books and Manuscripts Section.

Library Services



The reader service offers one **Reading Room** open to the public. It is for the circulation of the Filipiniana Division (FD) and the Reference Division (RD) collections. Currently, the accessible onsite collections in the reading rooms are books, theses, and dissertations while e-resources can be accessed offsite and onsite. During the pandemic, the Reading Room is available to the public by appointment and with reduced seating capacity. The appointment system is implemented to control or limit the number of clients per day. Minimum health standards set by the government are strictly observed. To ensure the safety and well-being of everyone, all library clients are required to fill out a health declaration form before any booking for appointment is processed.

The **copyright registration** is a service for creators of authors who wish to protect their original works. The NLP accepts applications for copyright registration via email. Applicants whose applications were approved have the option to personally claim their Copyright Certificates at NLP or have their certificates sent to them through mail or courier.

Another service is the **International Standard Numbering System** (ISBN, ISSN, ISMN) registration with NLP. The Bibliographic Services Division (BSD) of NLP assigns ISBN, ISSN, ISMN, whether published in print, online or other media.

During the pandemic, the BSD launched its **International Standard Numbering Systems-Philippines Online Application Systems** (INS-POAS). Through the implementation of this system, publishers are now provided with better services such as less face to face registration application and easy update on publisher status and application information, system implementation, monitoring of the release number and an alternative platform for publishers to promote their works. In addition to the online application, the NLP started providing consultation service via Zoom to promote INS-POAS, its features and requirements and to provide a venue for publishers to raise questions, concerns and suggestions for the improvement of the online application system.

Another service NLP offers is the Cataloging in Publication (CIP) which is a voluntary service offered free of charge to Philippine publishers by the NLP through its Catalog Division. Its purpose is to produce standardized bibliographic descriptions for Philippine publications. During pandemic, publishers could opt to request for Cataloging in Publication (CIP) via email. Once the CIP is created, publishers receive it via email also.

Through its **Public Libraries Division**, the NLP actively campaigns for the establishment of public libraries and provides guidance and technical assistance to Local Government Units (LGUs) in the establishment,



The URL of the Online application of the Numbering System in the Philippines: <https://ins-poas.nlp.gov.ph/>.

development and maintenance of public libraries all over the country. There are 1,572 public libraries affiliated with the NLP as of 2021. The NLP continues to actively campaign for the establishment of public libraries via online communication and coordination even during the pandemic. NLP consistently searches for LGUs without established or affiliated public libraries and these become the target LGUs for invitation letters and campaign materials from the NLP. Once communication is established, NLP then provides technical assistance on the establishment and affiliation of reading centers.

NLP also organizes training, conferences, and seminars for public librarians. NLP-PLD is tasked to provide regular orientation sessions, follow-up training sessions, conduct services enhancement training, and professional development for public librarians and staff. NLP also provides relevant training and regularly communicates regarding learning opportunities available at NLP and other library organizations.

During pandemic, capacity building through classroom training has shifted to online learning and webinars.

These are regularly being conducted by personnel of NLP. The webinars and other training opportunities are free of charge. One of the NLP programs that train librarians and library-in-charge with basic concepts on managing a public library was transitioned into an asynchronous mode of learning called **Online Learning on Essential Skills for Public Library Personnel**. Aside from the three-year development plan as the major output of this online learning, submission of impact stories is also a required output. NLP also offers a leadership training program for public librarians or personnel called **Network of Emerging Filipino Library Innovators** (NEFLI) which is now in its second batch.

Book allocation is another NLP service. The NLP provides books and other reading materials to existing affiliated public libraries. NLP provides initial book allocation to newly affiliated public libraries and annual allocation of library resources to existing affiliated public libraries, if it renders reports promptly to the NLP-PLD. Libraries that do not submit monthly reports and other reports regularly are not entitled to allocation. During the pandemic, provision of book allocation to affiliated public libraries is still being conducted. In 2020, the NLP partnered with a third party distributor to facilitate the delivery of resource allocation to affiliated public libraries outside the National Capital Region (NCR).

For those nearby libraries that are capable of going to NLP and providing service vehicles, their assistance was asked to facilitate the distribution. In 2021, newly-affiliated public libraries signified their intent to personally visit NLP to acquire their initial allocation.

Next public library service is the **monitoring or ocular inspection** wherein officials of the NLP conduct periodic monitoring of affiliated public libraries to be able to evaluate their status, activities, and services in terms of performance and support from their local officials. Monitoring and evaluation of public libraries during this pandemic is still ongoing through the use of an online monitoring form. The NLP no longer has to physically visit the public libraries in order to gauge their activities. NLP also conducts scheduled monitoring of libraries thru video chat via FB messenger, Zoom, Google Meet, and other meeting applications.



NLP also has services for children which include storytelling, read-aloud, puppet show, arts & crafts, and mascot appearances. These are offered occasionally during tours and outreach activities. For this time of the pandemic, storytelling, read-aloud, puppet shows and arts and crafts are now conducted virtually via Facebook, StreamYard and YouTube.

In addition, a Live Kwentuhan program was added to the children's section services. It is a one-on-one interview with known children books' authors, book illustrators, storytellers, and reading advocates via Facebook. The themes and subject of the interviews revolve around the love reading, appreciation of books and literacy.

Another service is the **reproduction of alternative materials**. To meet the needs for information resources of persons with print disabilities, reproduction into braille and audiobooks is offered at the Library for the Blind Section. Even with the pandemic, clients can still request for braille reproduction and audiobooks via email. The requested materials will be sent via email.

Health and safety protocols are enforced to ensure the safety of clients and staff:

- Wearing face mask and face shield are mandatory. Library furniture is spaced out with lower seating capacity.
- Transparent protective shields are installed at all service counters.
- Body temperature scanners are also available at the entrances.
- Borrowed books are sanitized or disinfected.
- Cleaning in high traffic areas and high-touch surfaces are strengthened.
- Hand sanitizers are provided at service counters and in different areas of the library building.

The reading room is closed and clients are encouraged to use the NLP's e-resource portal whenever the government imposes a lockdown affecting public spaces. The NLP's e-resource portal has extensive digital collections that can be accessed online or offsite by the authorized or registered clients of NLP. The portal contains e-journals, ebooks and e-serials and other electronic resources.

Challenges

- Lack of funding for ICT for the improvement of its technology-based services
- Increased cost of electronic & printed resources due to economic instability brought about by pandemic
- Growing concerns on data privacy of clients
- Limited/no access to internet of some clients

Some recommendations to combat pandemic-related challenges are as follows:

- Analyze organizational structure of NLP to allow a restructuring of its systems to align with the demands of its beneficiaries and be responsive to their needs
- Augmentation of library resources through partnerships
- Increase the collection of electronic resources for wider access
- Strengthen networking and collaboration with other libraries (national, regional, international)
- Maximize social media to increase awareness on NLP programs, activities and services
- Online (full) application systems for all the NLP services

In conclusion, NLP is stepping up and continuing to provide resources and services to its stakeholders. As the Philippines continue to deal with COVID-19, NLP is still innovating new ways to provide services for Filipinos that reach beyond physical books and buildings. NLP is expanding, transforming and enhancing its services wherever and whenever possible. Digital collections continue to be accessible and other digitally-enabled services are delivered without interruption. Recognizing the enormous value of the library to its stakeholders, NLP is working extremely hard to offer library services during this challenging time.

The “new normal” taught the library a new way of doing business by exploring all possibilities and flexibilities in order to better serve its clients. Libraries in different countries and regions have different strategies to support clients in the best way possible. Despite the challenges, COVID 19 provides a unique opportunity to rethink key roles and core values during this very challenging time.

Facade of Cagayan Provincial Learning and Resource Center

Source: The Northern Forum

Public Libraries in the Philippines

Michael Pinto

Public Libraries in the Philippines are run by the Regional, Congressional and Local Government Units pursuant to the provisions of RA7743 or “An Act Providing for the Establishment of Additional Congressional, City, Municipality, and Barangay Reading Centers throughout the Philippines and appropriating the Necessary Funds therefore and other Purposes”. Majority of public libraries in the country are affiliated to the National Library of the Philippines. Those that are not affiliated with the National Library of the Philippines are not included in this report considering that there are no available data gathered.

As of November 2021, below are the number of **affiliated public libraries** with the National Library of the Philippines:

Library Category	# of LGUs	# of Libraries Affiliated	Active	Inactive	Temporarily Closed	Closed
Provincial	81	56	43	5	1	7
Congressional	243	6	5	0	0	1
Regional	17	1	1	0	0	0
City	146	115	88	16	3	8
Municipal	1488	603	200	265	12	126
Barangay	42,046	791	196	358	1	236

In terms of supervision of public libraries in local governments, public libraries are experiencing confusion especially on the provisions of the Local Government Code of 1991.

As of 2019, below is the statistics of public libraries based on **who have the administrative supervision** over them:

Library Category	Libraries under Legislative	Libraries under Executive	No information whether legislative or Executive
Provincial	13	28	7
City	18	69	15
Municipal	85	78	161
TOTAL	116	175	183

Majority of the Public Libraries are run by non-licensed librarians. This is because there is a dearth of librarians in the country caused by the limited number of board passers and the career shifting of some librarians. But despite this scenario, many public libraries excel through the innovative services that they offer.

In the survey conducted by the National Library of the Philippines that focused on Luzon Island, the majority of the library managers belong to the 35-44 age bracket. Majority of the public libraries are located in urban areas. Majority are open five days a week, there are some six days a week. Pre-pandemic the Cebu City Public Library is open 24x7 - the Philippines' first and only public library that offers its services 24 hours a day for 7 days.

In some libraries, the personnel were utilized as frontliners in the battle against COVID 19. Some staff were assigned as vaccination area manager, assistants in the distribution of relief assistance (cash and in kind) and other tasks since the library is closed. In the metropolis, some libraries were converted into isolation facilities for the infected individuals especially during the surge.

In terms of collection, all public libraries have printed materials (mostly books, magazines, newspapers). Only a few have subscriptions or have acquired online resources as part of their collection. Some public libraries, especially those who are financially stable have other resources which may include internet connectivity, puppets, and online databases while some of the libraries have shifted from acquisition of print materials to online resources to respond to the pandemic.

Library Services

Before the pandemic

- Circulation Services
- Selective Dissemination of Information
- Referral, Advisory, Technical Services
- Tech4Ed Center Services
- Internet Services
- Build a Library Program
- Book Donation to Barangays
- Bibliographic
- Services/Research Assistance
- Outreach and Extension Services
- Storytelling and puppetry
- Digital Literacies

During the pandemic

- Library Virtual Reference
- Assistance (L-ViRA)
- Selective Dissemination of Information
- Referral, Advisory, Technical Services
- Tech4Ed Center Services
- Online Bibliographic
- Services/Research Assistance
- Online Children's Show Program
- Virtual Orientation
- Teleradyo program via Facebook
- Outreach and Extension Services
- Build a Library Program
- Book Donation to Barangays
- Book Bike Program
- Virtual Library Tours
- Community Book Pantry
- Capacity Building

Challenges

- Increasing number of infected individuals by COVID-19, causing the change in quarantine status
- Funding to acquire online resources
- Intermittent Internet connectivity
- Transfer of manpower due to other or new assignments
- Lack of manpower due to the difficulty of hiring process due to pandemic

With the challenges brought about by the pandemic, the public libraries continue to strive to provide quality services to all its clients. Innovative services are introduced to reach out to the clients. With the innovative minds and resourcefulness of library staff, public libraries are rising to the challenges caused by the pandemic.

Considering the challenges of the pandemic, library staff should continuously upgrade themselves in terms of the needed skills to provide better services to our clients. Library managers must communicate properly the needs and the direction of the library in order to seek support from authorities and funding offices.

Recommendations to address the challenges:

- Retooling of library staff through skills training especially on the use of technology
- Review the development plan of the library to cope with the demands of time
- Proposed for the acquisition of online resources and establishments of online platforms for the clients to access the resources of the library
- To encourage more public libraries who are not yet affiliated to affiliate themselves with the National Library of the Philippines.
- For the National Library of the Philippines, Association of Librarians in Public Sector and other agencies to lobby for the interpretation of the provisions of RA7160 or Local Government Code of 1991 on the place of public libraries in the organizational structure of the Local Governments
- For non-license library in-charge to qualify themselves to become a full pledge librarian as stipulated in RA 9246 and RA 7743





Libraries Beyond Covid-19: Status, challenges and prospects

Singapore

Zulkifli Amin and Lee Maeiyu

The **National Library Board** was established in September 1995. Through the years, NLB has continually advanced itself through systematically rethinking roles and following through with plans based on strategic blueprints.

NLB's network of 25 public libraries is conveniently located across Singapore to ensure reading is made accessible to everyone. Besides promoting reading, the National Library Board (NLB) also provides reference services and preserves the nation's cultural and literary heritage, under the National Library and National Archives of Singapore.

Singapore is a small city state, high urban density (over 5 million people) in a space of 724.2 sq km (for reference, New York City is 783.8 sq km). NLB runs 26 public libraries, the National Library and the National Archives of the country, with over 1,000 staff. In a typical year, the library system sees 26 million visits and 32 million loans of physical library materials. Many people use libraries and they are often crowded, making a pandemic situation highly challenging.

During the first phase of Covid-19 before Circuit Breaker (January to April), NLB quickly organized itself under the guidance of the national steering committee. At the first instance of COVID-19 January, NLB placed its Business Continuity Plans and Crisis Emergency Response on standby.



National Library of Singapore
Source: Wikipedia

The NLB has **23.18 Million items** with the National Library (NL) responsible for 3.98 million physical and digital Items:

- Websites
- Manuscripts (e.g. typescript)
- Books
- Audio (Music and Non-Music)
- Moving Images (e.g. video, etc.)
- Periodicals, Documents (e.g. ephemera)
- Maps
- Newspapers
- Still images (e.g. photographs, posters, postcards)

Public Library Services (PLS) have 8.5 million of physical items such as books, magazines, newspapers, DVDs and audiobooks.

On the other hand, the National Archives of Singapore (NAS) contains 10.7 million physical and digital items such as government records, audiovisual materials, oral history interviews, photographs, posters, speeches and press releases, maps and building plans, straits settlements records, and overseas and private records.

Challenges



- Disruption of onsite service
- Rapid response to moving our onsite services to digital services to minimize disruptions
- Shift from physical visitorship to digital visitorship
- Staff to acquire the required IT skills and familiarity with new software
- Setting up safe distancing protocols/procedures when libraries reopened

For the digital access to **newspapers, books and magazines, and interlibrary loans**, NLB worked out an agreement with Singapore's leading media organization, Singapore Press Holdings to provide **free access to its stable of daily digital newspapers and magazines for library patrons** from the comfort of their homes. This arrangement was not available prior to the circuit breaker. During the circuit breaker period, eNewspaper readership increased multiple fold (daily average of 29,000 views) compared to when patrons visited libraries to read physical newspapers. Although libraries were closed and most of the services were temporarily suspended, librarians continued to respond to reference enquiries received via email. Librarians focused on providing resources that were available online or via NLB's digital resources. NLB's mobile app was enhanced during the circuit breaker, where more than 8,000 eBooks were uploaded with unlimited checkouts. Organizations who relied on interlibrary

loans of NLB's physical resources for research during the circuit breaker had their due dates extended to support their research during this period.

Going Digital meant new roles for Library Staff. In the second phase during the Circuit Breaker (Apr to June), Singapore implemented its version of a lockdown, more accurately “circuit-breaker” where libraries had to close. It was an opportunity to push library services to go digital. Going digital allowed us to reach 1.2 million views/participants online for 3 months. On one hand, this is about ensuring access, keeping people mentally healthy through online access to learning but it was also an opportunity to both promote what NLB already has (eBooks, digital content) and to create new digital content. There was **digital storytelling** (30 sessions with 200,485 views), **bite-sized workshops, talks by librarians, active blogging** by librarians to introduce content, learning packages (each learning package comprised of a good mix of formats including books, eBooks, online articles and bite-sized videos & podcasts). The **Get Professional series** focused on vital skills to improve workplace productivity and efficiency, especially soft skills that are often overlooked.

Staff also did their part for the community during library closure. Frontline staff were redeployed as safe distancing ambassadors to aid in public education and assisted at call centers of other government agencies

that needed help to handle public inquiries arising from the pandemic.

NLB also addressed **inequality of access to information/technology**. A lot of work has been done in terms of making access to info equitable as we make programmes free, storytelling available regularly etc. Special attention is given in bridging the digital divide among seniors through programmes such as **Digital Clinics** which provide one-on-one assistance on how to make digital devices work better for them. A variety of online programmes was also curated and themed “Stay Home” to encourage seniors to read, learn and play. NLB was ready because the library has established teams for library services for different user segments in the last few years. Content knowledge has been developed and the library knows its customers' learning needs. COVID-19 just opened up a digital opportunity to deliver learning packages and engagement online.

Learning Packages and NL Blog were launched. To encourage reading and learning among people staying at home, several learning packages were rolled out on the NLB mobile app. Each learning package comprises a mix of books, eBooks, articles and bite-sized videos and podcasts. These packages revolved around themes such as virus breakouts and pandemics in the past 100 years, working from home effectively, coping with isolation and new hobbies to explore. This was also in line with NLB's role in promoting information literacy by recommending reliable

resources for the public when there has been much misinformation regarding COVID-19.

Like many countries all over the world, Singapore effected a circuit breaker, which saw the closure of most workplaces, schools and businesses for 2 months. NLB kicked off a nationwide initiative in partnership with the National Museum of Singapore in May to **collect materials such as websites, photographs and ephemera that capture the impact of COVID-19 on the daily lives of residents** that include their videos, audio recordings, photographs, flyers, posters, journals, diaries and social media postings. NLB publicized the initiative on mainstream media and social media and reached out to organizations representing the various sectors in society impacted by the pandemic, such as hospitality, aviation, migrant workers, healthcare, in order to capture the diversity of voices in the

collection.

This is part of the library's efforts to collect history as it happens, and to learn how to collect digital materials. More than 10,000 items have been collected to date. This initiative is ongoing until 31 December 2020.

For the **Third Phase and safe reopening**, principles for safe management stay the same – only that the library is reopening cautiously, phasing the opening according to guidance from the government. The library is taking a cautious approach – limiting numbers, enforcing a time limit and phasing in programmes slowly. At the same time, some of these digital programmes are continued and the library has been encouraging more independent self-services, such as making more eBooks and eNewspapers available, and installing a book dispenser machine. The library is also planning to try out a **children's book delivery service** by the end of the year.

In relation to building a cultural repository of the Singapore COVID-19 experience, as it has been an extraordinary year, NLB as a cultural institution of memory and history, is also encouraging citizens to document their journey, so that next generations will know how the nation faced the pandemic together.

The Libraries and Archives Plan 2021 – 2025 is the masterplan for the next five years to ensure strategies, products and service offerings better serve the future needs of Singaporeans. The development of LAB25 started before COVID-19. The temporary closure of libraries and archives was an opportunity for experimentation and to pilot preliminary ideas, and the warm public response was encouraging to the library's many initiatives.

This affirmed the strategy of four “Beyonds” – **Beyond Reading to Learning, Beyond Books to Programmes, Beyond Collecting to Engaging, and Beyond Physical to Omni-channel.** Libraries and archives can be a platform business, well before this concept became fashionable. NLB operates a wide-reaching and inclusive platform that supports people in their different pursuits, which range from doing research and working on projects to studying for examinations. There is now a need to pivot the business on how the services can continue to help Singapore and Singaporeans in the new normal.

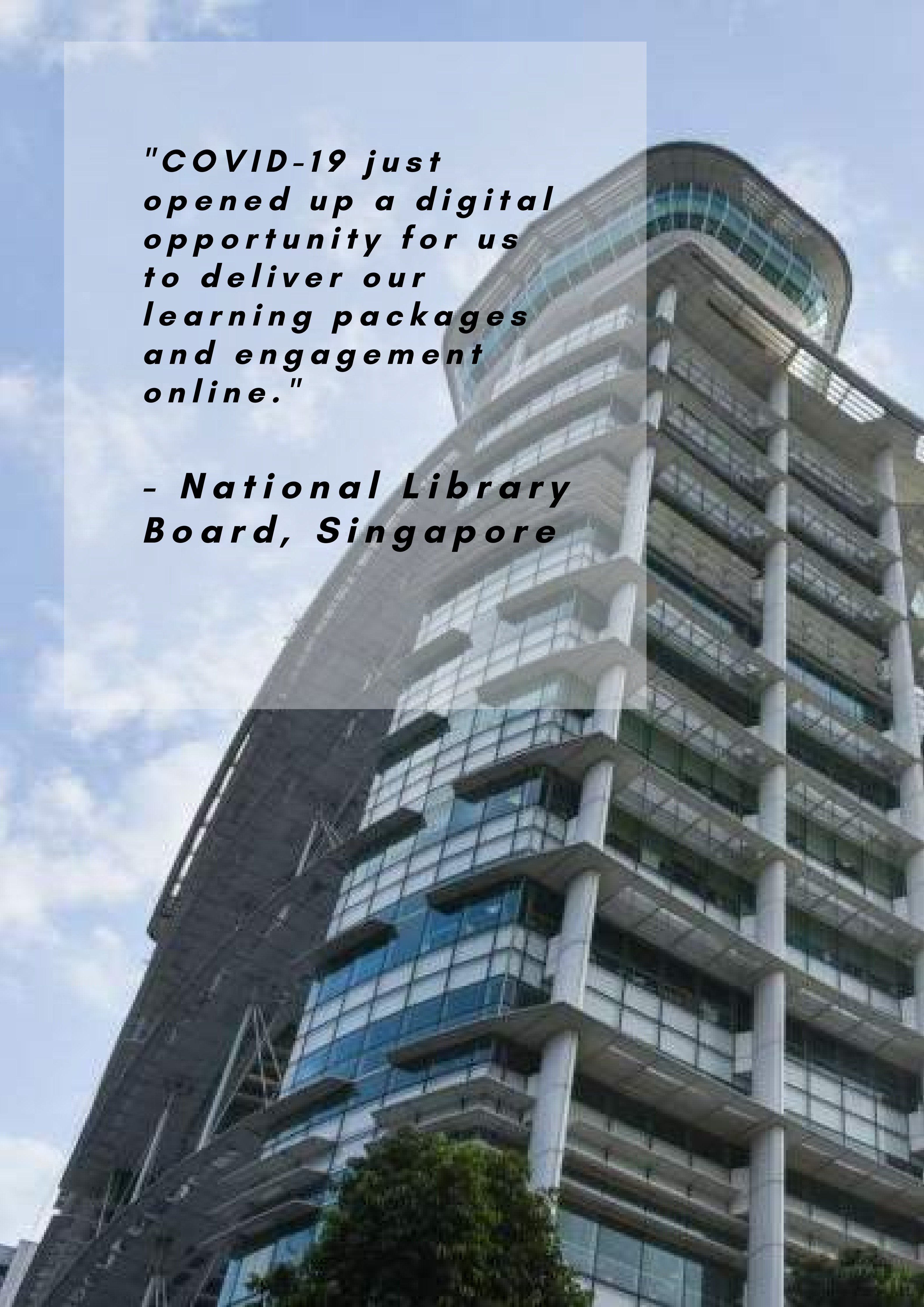
How can the library address some of the threats to society and take some of the opportunities that the changed world offers?

There is a need for libraries to emerge as the **Equalizer** to help the have nots level up to the haves. Further exacerbated nativism and polarization – how can libraries pull communities together that might otherwise pull apart. Fake News exacerbated – how to elevate the **SURE Campaign and reading movements** to national movements to help people evaluate information and read widely across sources.

There are opportunities for rebuilding society with the help of the citizenry – **collecting national assets for a stronger sense of identity.** With the population getting used to a digital way of living and working, building a national learning framework that has a strong digital element so that opportunities for learning that could lead to better employment and education could be made discoverable by all.

In an era of transformation and disruption, libraries must extend their role to support the pursuit of lifelong learning, by curating materials such as books, articles, videos and podcasts, and also by organizing programmes to introduce new technologies and fields of study that cater to working adults. To meet the needs of adults, especially those whose careers have been impacted by COVID-19, NLB will introduce business and career services that will support the information needs of aspiring entrepreneurs and people who aim to expand their businesses and work experiences beyond the shores of Singapore.

Beyond collecting and preserving materials, NLB will involve and engage members of the public to collect and preserve their memories together. NLB developed a framework for contemporary collecting in tandem with the **Documenting COVID-19 experience.** NLB will step up efforts to bring our collections out to the public in an engaging and informative manner. To do this, NLB will harness technologies, adopt innovative approaches and use our imagination to create meaningful experiences to help Singaporeans appreciate our diverse history and inform our identity as a nation.



"COVID-19 just opened up a digital opportunity for us to deliver our learning packages and engagement online."

- National Library Board, Singapore



“

We were ready because we have also established teams for library services for different user segments in the last few years. They have developed content knowledge and know our customers' learning needs. Covid just opened up a digital opportunity for us to deliver our learning packages and engagement online

- Singapore's National Library Board



Various digital library services are available at NLB
Source: National Library Board



Libraries Beyond Covid-19: Status, challenges and prospects

Thailand

Ngampen Yawong

Library Services

Before the pandemic, **The National Library of Thailand** served users to access information and we served equally for all. Our library includes newspapers and periodicals, general books, children and juvenile books. Books about Thailand, international books collection, thesis and research, law books, manuscripts and inscriptions, manuscript cabinets, audiovisual materials, international standard books numbers, international standard serial number, computer, wifi and Internet, mini theater, and meeting room.

There is also a small library. This is a concept of bookless library function which is focused on online reading technology by access to digital library resources via smartphone or tablet and is a co-working space.

The NLT is open everyday except national holidays, Monday to Friday at 9am to 6:30pm and Saturday and Sunday at 9am to 5pm. The Smart Library is open everyday, Monday to Friday from 7:30am to 8:30pm and Saturday and Sunday from 12:30pm to 8:30pm.

During the pandemic the department has announced the closure of the National Museum, Natural Park, National Library, and National Archive to control the spread of COVID-19. Work from home policies have been in place to maintain social distance and to avoid crowded places.



Online Databases

The NLT's D-Library provides full-text digital resources which has more than 14 collections such as rare books, back-issue periodicals and newspapers, and ancient manuscripts. The digital resources are available over 17,000 items online at the National Library of Thailand website.

E-Magazines and E-Newspapers

We provide the online or electronics magazines and newspapers which are available in more than 100 countries, 60 languages and over 7,000 subscriptions. The NLT also provides full-text of e-Books collection of over 12,000 items.

NLT Library and NLT Video on Demand

Application softwares for the National Library of Thailand. They contain a digital collection of more than 1,500 of e-Books in various subjects, and provide the video which are produced by the Fine Arts Department, respectively. It includes over 550 videos of conferences, seminars and other events of the National Library of Thailand.

Learning English and Coding

For platforms for learning English and Coding, there are 4 learning English platforms and 2 learning coding platforms.

The pandemic provided excellent opportunity to create new content on social media platforms. NLT has programs that encourage and promote online reading at home via social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram). Users can accept a QR code. Read a Book Everyday with the main point of a book. With podcasts we read a book and posted on YouTube and Spotify. We postponed or changed the projects, activities, seminars, training to live online format and for exhibitions we adapted to live performance.

In October 2021, the NLT officially opened for service. We had prevention measures to prevent spread of COVID-19.

- Users have their temperatures checked before entering the library.
- QR code registration for check-in and check-out
- Wearing of face masks
- Washing hands or using hand sanitizer
- Closing from 12pm-1 pm and 3pm -4pm for disinfection everyday
- Sitting only at specific areas and keeping physical distancing of 2m
- No food or drink in the library
- All the books must be cleaned before being returned to the shelves

Finally the COVID-19 pandemic is an unprecedented challenge with immediate impact on the library and everyone. Leaders have to recognize the value of digital library, online database or e-resources which will influence budget considerations in the coming years. Librarians have to adjust to the unprecedented crisis. On the other hand services have to be re-designed during the COVID-19 phase and may be re-oriented with new policies, working methods, revised budgets, and different postures in library governance.

“National Library of Thailand: Treasure of Wisdom”

National Library of Chiang Mai

Wannapa Pawino

The library was constructed in the Northern Thai architectural style on August 31, 1989. It is a two-storey building. It has a total area of 3,300 sqm. The library is part of the 7th Regional Office of the Fine Arts Department of Chiang Mai under the Ministry of Culture. The aim of setting up this library is to be a center for collecting regional ancient books and documents.

Ratchamangkhalaphisek National Library of Chiang Mai
Source: CMHY

Organizational chart of the library and administrative structure consists of **12 staff**.

The amount of information resources in the library is **127,378 items**. Breakdown of information resource: 113,482 print, 8,117 audiovisual, 4,315 ancient manuscripts, 866 ebooks, and 593 artifacts.

It has the responsibility of 14 provinces:

- Chiang Mai
- Chiang Rai
- Lamphun
- Lampang
- Mae Hong Son
- Phrae
- Nan
- Phayao
- Tak
- Phitsanulok
- Sukhothai
- Kampaeng Petch
- Pichit
- Uttaradit



Library facade
Source: Mapsus.net

Library Services

Library information resource services include:

- Northern Thai Book section
- Ancient Language section
- Northern Art and Culture collection
- Children's and Youth section
- Periodicals and Newspapers section
- General Books Section 1 and 2

The library also offered **book service for the visually impaired** and **Internet service** for searching information, news and knowledge, and **reference service**. It also provided **consulting**, advice and training in the field of **library science and information science** for library personnel and regional agencies. A **rotating exhibition service** was also put up together with a **meeting room service**.

During the pandemic **guidelines** were implemented for accessing library services. The library adjusted the operation plan and managed it according to COVID-19 protection policy, for example, wearing masks every time while inside the library. Guidelines were implemented for preparing library areas and preventing disease such as arranging the chairs to have a distance of at least 1 or 2 meters between users. The guidelines for providing library services in the new normal included promotion of library services through online system such as Facebook, website and Instagram. Dissemination of information to users about services was also done for awareness of the importance of preventing the spread of COVID-19. QR codes were also used for book recommendations by librarians, with ancient manuscripts recommendation, to connect to wifi, for public relation articles, and for public relations library news.

Challenges

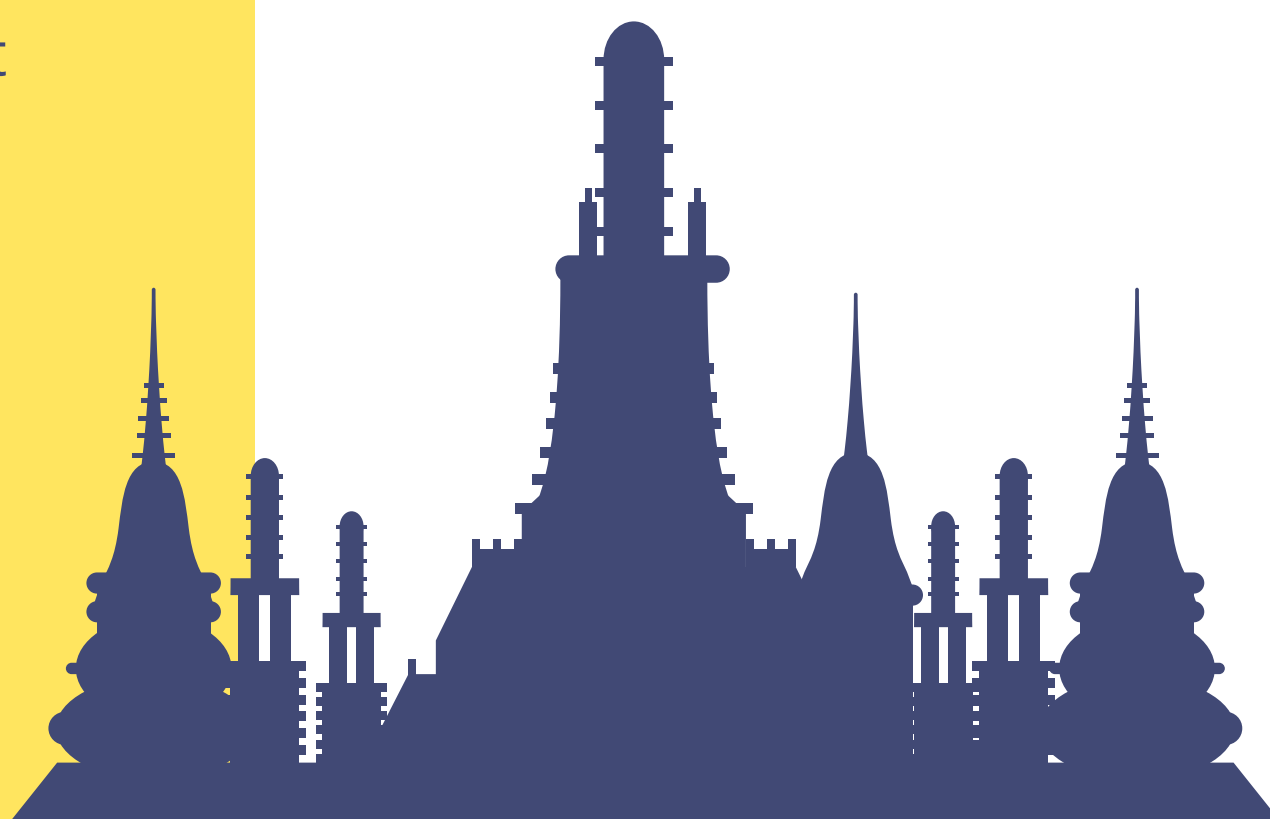
COVID-19 has affected library service, following government announcements on temporary shutdown. The culture of the library is one of the biggest challenges.

The challenges consist of:

- Library role development
- Librarians development
- Information resources development
- Developing of service
- Reading activity development
- Information technology development for library work

Library and librarians have to use other skills to develop use of new technology in servicing the library user in every situation.

Due to the COVID-19 outbreak, the crisis has affected the library services all over the country. This effect causes the library and the librarian as well to start to adapt and develop new ways of service. Library needs cooperation among the community, management, library network and users.





Vietnam

Libraries Beyond Covid-19: Status, challenges and prospects

Bui Thi Thuy

The **National Library of Vietnam** was established on 29th November 1917 and opened to the public on 1st September 1919. The original name was Central Public Library of Indochina, under the Service of Archive and Library of Indochina. Now, the National Library of Vietnam, the country's central library, a governmental agency under the management of the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism functions for collection & preservation of the nation's documentary heritage; acquisition, organization & provision of information resources; compiling and publishing National Bibliography & the General Bibliography of VN. conducting scientific & technological research projects in the library-information field; organizing professionally further training courses & providing professional guidance to librarians throughout the country, cooperating with domestic and foreign libraries in the field of library and information sciences.



Khue Van Cac

Source: National Library of Vitenam

The organizational structure includes a **Directorial Board, a Scientific Council and 9 Divisions:** Legal Deposit, Acquisition and Exchange, Cataloging, Information Technology, Preservation, Reading Services, Reference, Science Research and Profession Guidance, and General Administration.



- 1 Director
- 2 Deputy Directors
- 9 Division Heads
- 14 Vice Division Heads
- 160-180 staff (70% female)
- 20% Master degree
- 70% Bachelor degree
- 16% senior librarian

The library services:

- Vietnamese with valid identification
- Foreigners working in Vietnam with valid passports
- Vietnamese & foreign children staying in Vietnam between 3–13 years old

Note:

The library opens 7 days a week, from 8am to 8pm and is closed 1 day each month for internal service. Service method is reading on the premises by self-selected service and upon request service. It hasn't provided a lending service yet because of limited copies.

NLV has 11 reading rooms, issues 20,000 membership cards per year, serves over 9,000 users at library and website everyday.

The 11 reading rooms:

- Reference Room
- General Reading Room
- Social Sciences & Humanities Reading Room
- Natural & Applied Sciences Reading Room
- Multilingual Reading Room
- Reading room for Researchers & Entrepreneurs
- Newspaper & Periodical Reading Room
- Multimedia Room
- S-hub Sharing Space
- Children's Cultural Library
- Library Document Reading Room

Before COVID-19 pandemic, the reading services focused on services at the library premise, multimedia service and internet access, photocopy/scanning. Other services include:

- Targeted information searching, press clipping
- Compile subject bibliographies, local history bibliographies, selected bibliographies
- Organize & co-organize exhibition of books/paintings/photos/artifacts, author-work exchange
- Organize & co-organize conferences, workshops, professional training for librarians over the country
- Consult, support library's organization, cataloging data and services of preservation & restoration, create CIP data for publishers
- Compose National Bibliography, subject heading, Keywords, professional guidance for libraries nationwide

During the pandemic NLV worked on **promoting existing digital/online services and enhancing digital collections**. NLV cooperated with the National Library of France (NLF) to launch the **French-Vietnamese Portal** in early 2021 to introduce over 2,000 typical documents of the two national libraries with partners talking about culture, historical & scientific interactions between France & Vietnam from the 17th century to the middle 20th century. NLV also cooperated with The Asia Foundation to build Vietnamese content on **Let's Read Asia Digital Library** for children. This is a digital library for children in Asia with over 7,000 titles in more than 33 languages including Vietnamese.



**French-Vietnamese Portal "Hoa
Phuong Vi Library**
Source: Accueil Vietnamien

The Second group of activities that were done include organizing and co-organizing many activities, events, exhibitions and book festivals virtually drawing great attention of the library users and public, Online Book Exhibitions, Online National Book Festivals 2020, 2021, Read Me a Book Campaign and Book donation to libraries in remote areas. One online book exhibition is on celebrating the 130th birthday anniversary of President Ho Chi Minh. Another online exhibition is Celebrating the 75th Anniversary of the National Day of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. During COVID-19 time the goals are to maintain all the

library services, control the spread of the virus and build a plan of action for the worse situation. NLV has actively propagated disease prevention, maintained all the library activities and services with the limitation of participants and divided the big event into small topic groups.

COVID-19 pandemic is a global crisis, and presents in itself a great opportunity for the library to change. This is a driving force that opens up paths and steps for development. There is an opportunity for libraries to connect, cooperate and share expertise and experiences to find out the suitable orientations and effective performance.

It is expected to strictly follow medical instruction to ensure safety of staff and users. In addition, it is important to work together to enhance online services in parallel with onsite services, open direct online communication channels, social networks to support library users, and strengthen lending activities and create self-service kiosks outside the library to facilitate users' access to the library collections. The library website can be improved and upgraded to become the library's portal to support access to the digital library remotely or online effectively and prepare the readiness of all staff to face and adapt to the crisis.

Challenges

Challenges include the rapid progression of COVID-19 & state of uncertainty making it difficult to plan and implement on time; IT infrastructure & platforms in supporting online services & remote working of staff; digital literacy skills of librarians and users; adapting to the changing environment of staff & users; and reduction of library budget contribute in making it difficult to expand technology-based services.

Monograph Collections

2.6 million items
680,000 items (~1,580,000 copies) in Vietnamese & about VN
37,000 Doctoral Thesis
5,280 Han-Nom manuscript items
68,500 Indochina items (1,700 newspaper-magazine titles)
3,996 items published in the period of resistance 1946-1954
500,000 items of foreign languages
·9,000 titles of Vietnamese & foreign newspapers, magazines
10,000 book titles published in Viet Nam before 1954.

Digitized Collections

112,000 items (~ 8 million pages)
Doctoral Thesis: 25,502 items (~ 6,2 million pages) <http://luan.nlv.gov.vn/>
Sino-Nom: 1,952 items (~147.955 pages) <http://hannom.nlv.gov.vn/>
Indochina books (including microforms): 8,000 items (~1,1 million pages), <http://sach.nlv.gov.vn>
Indochina periodicals and newspapers, magazines: 72,000 issues (~430,000 pages), <http://baochi.nlv.gov.vn>
English books about Viet Nam: 338 items (~92,520 pages)
CD/DVD collection: 3,800 items.

Online Databases

ProQuest, Wilson, e-books of Igroup Publishing and SpringerNature, SAGE Journal, Sage Research Method, Vietnamese law, French law, Traditional Theatre Opera
Online Digital Collections: Monthly/annual National Directory, French – Vietnamese Portal, training materials of SIDA Foundation, the ISO file of monthly directory data of NLV
Microform materials: 10,000 books (microfilm) published before 1954 in Viet Nam, those were the present from National Library of France.
4,300 microfilm rolls taken by NLV





Mobile library at Bac Lieu
Source: Bac Lieu province library

Public Libraries in Vietnam

Hoang Thi Thu Trang

The public library system (or network) in Vietnam is divided into 3 levels:

City/Provincial-level Library

Communal-level Library
(Communities
library/community learning
centre)

District-level Library
(Urban
district/town/suburban
district)

Provincial-level libraries are public non-business units under the Department of Culture, Sports and Tourism or the Department of Culture and Sports. Provincial-level libraries have legal status, independent seal (stamp) and bank account in accordance with law. Provincial-level libraries have the function of: building, processing, storing, preserving, connecting, organizing and using of information resources in accordance with the local characteristics and requirements for socio-economic construction and development; disseminating information resources for local socio-economic development; supporting, guiding and equipping library users, district/commune library with skills in searching, exploiting and using information; organizing reading areas for children and people with disabilities;

District Libraries perform the functions and tasks of the public library system. Some major tasks are: receiving documents and library facilities from the provincial library; circulating documents to local libraries; organizing activities to serve the lifelong learning needs of people in the locality; performing other tasks assigned by competent state agencies. District libraries develop reading culture and contribute to create a lifelong learning environment for the people, build a learning society, improve people's intellectual level, and build a comprehensive Vietnamese people.

Commune Libraries

These libraries perform the functions of the functions and tasks of the public library system such as: Receive information resources and library utilities from provincial libraries, district libraries and other legal sources; Rotating library resources to grassroots, local bookcase libraries, school or private libraries and serve the community in the locality; Participate in building reading culture, forming reading habits for the people and perform other tasks assigned by competent state agencies. Commune libraries play the function of an extension arm of the public library network to the grassroots level, bring library activities and information and knowledge to all people.

As for the number of public libraries in Vietnam, there are 63 City/Provincial, 667 District, 3,290 Commune and 14,934 Grassroots Reading rooms.

Category	Titles of Book	Copies of Title	News & Magazine	Electronic	# of Users
City/Provincial	4,967,249	17,115,260	9,943	2,206,064	33,575,811
District	2,410,987	13,106,571	5,303	24,577	9,492,366
Communal	-	7,400,000	-	-	-

Source: Niên giám thống kê ngành Văn hoá, Thể thao và Du lịch = Statistical yearbook 2019 of Cultural, Sport and Tourism / Minister of Cultural, Sport and Tourism. – H. Van hoa dan toc, 2020.

Library Services

Services at the public libraries are of two types, services at the **library campus** and **outdoor and network services**.

Service at the library campus:

- Reading service inside the library
- Searching, consulting document
- Wi-fi, Internet connecting
- Accessing electronic documents
- Lending books
- Children reading service
- Propaganda information: book introduction, book workshop
- Photocopy, scan document in demand
- Service for people with disabilities



Children's reading

Source: Nam Định province library

Service for the local public library outdoor and network such as:

- Professional guidance from provincial libraries to district libraries
- Organize professional training courses for librarians
- Coordinate activities, exchange / rotation (alternative document) documents with libraries which establish by local agencies and organizations
- Assist from province library to district library, from district library to commune, grassroots or local bookcases library or other library such as school library, commune cultural post office, local prison library
- Organize a mobile library to serve the people in the locality, coordinate with district units serving at school, in export processing zones, industrial parks and prisons
- Organizing movement activities to strengthen, encourage and create reading habits for children and young people such as the Book festival, the World book day, Vietnamese Book and reading culture day, children's day

The public library services during the pandemic changed. Firstly, changing the indoor services to **remove and delivery services** such as:

- Receiving book loan via email and sending books to readers at homes
- Allow users to borrow more books and for a longer time than normal, renew (extend book loan) online.
- Organize bookcases in the quarantine zone, Books from the public library will rotate to the bookcases, instant library in special places.
- Special program such as Book gift program

Secondly, public libraries provide information and consulting online through running **Digital libraries**. Public libraries also advise readers to use the online library, provide guidance on methods and skills of searching and using online information, improving readers' ability to search and exploit information. Instant consultant service online. Using the social app or software to communicate, connect and share such as Tawk.to, Messenger, and Zalo to users.

Thirdly, public libraries have been promoting **remote reading activities** on YouTube channel which introduce books as well as digital storytelling video. Enhance information propaganda via websites and social channels; organize online playground contests (which normally will be held directly in such big events) such as drawing contests, making book introduction video contests.



Challenges

- Lower infrastructure and platforms to support online service and remote working staff for almost all public libraries.
- Various types of users that demand flexible service.
- Financial challenges like limited budget of the library is now further reduced due to the Covid-19 pandemic, making it more difficult to provide technology-based library services.

The recommendation is to continue following medical instruction and support the community to always exercise awareness of the pandemic. Strong connection in public libraries system allow for change of the commune/grassroots, bookcases as the **self-service kiosks** for lending activities and library other activities in small groups. Libraries must also continue to improve and upgrade the library website, library digital portal to connect and create the library activities for studying and play ground as well as support access to digital documents.

COVID-19 pandemic created so much difficulty for the public library system. In this difficult situation, public libraries still raise many good activities and services to support the communities. It also shows that librarians have to be more creative and need to connect and share.



Children's culture library
Source: National Library of Vietnam



Prior to the pandemic, most national and public libraries within the ASEAN region were able to cater to the needs of their citizens on a business-as-usual basis. Except for some whose funding and budget were limited, services were relatively rendered with ease. Common library services available across the ASEAN network include reading, circulation, information and services available through digital and mobile. Reading services cater to reading to children

and dedicating rooms or having reading corners within the library to accommodate reading sessions. Storytelling activities are popular as well, with some incorporating puppetry such as in the case of National Library of the Philippines. The objective is to make reading an accessible service, especially to children in the region. Case in point here is the famous boat library in Laos where the reading experience is brought to the children through a boat in Luang Prabang.

Service accessibility is becoming increasingly important in delivering library services to the ASEAN citizen and remains to be aligned to the International Federation of Library Association's core values as shared by its President Barbara Lison as *"IFLA believes that people, communities and organizations*

need universal and equitable access to information, ideas and works of imagination for their social, educational cultural, democratic and economic well-

being." Several libraries in the region already provide accessibility to the many segments in the society, including services catering to persons with disabilities (PwDs). Accessibility is given importance in this case by Brunei's Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka (DBP) Library and Vietnam's public library where they make this service accessible.

This is essentially an increasing service offering aspect in order to maintain the equitableness to the access of information.

Synthesis



Library services delivery depend largely on available funding which is usually provided or budgeting by the governing agency or authority. In terms of jurisdiction and administration, most libraries are under government agencies involved in the arts, culture, information, science and technology and innovation. For Philippines and Indonesia, libraries are put under the Office of the President. However, in the case of the Philippines, there is an acknowledged in-country challenge given the confusion brought about by the Local Government Code of 1991. This confusion contributes to the challenges in providing consistent library services across the country.

Most of public libraries are affiliated with National Library of the Philippines which is under the Office of the President; while others are in the LGU jurisdiction, making the roll out of services inconsistent as it varies based on geography and affiliation.

Malaysia has challenges in terms of their copyright law as governed by the Copyright Act 1987. Under the Act, the copyright automatically exists upon the creation of work which does not need any formal registration. This poses as a major challenge given the massive use of internet at this point in time and issues on piracy and rights infringement.



The disruption brought about by Covid-19 affected the delivery of library services in the region. Most ASEAN countries had to resort to delivering online what they can based on the infrastructure and resources they have. Some may be digitally set up when the pandemic happened and so it was not difficult to transition to online, however, some countries are still facing challenges in terms of infrastructure and hence could only rely to simple digital services using smartphones and social media platforms.

Effectively, it is during the pandemic that both public and national libraries resorted to conducting activities online. Traditional reading sessions are now converted to digital reading sessions supported by online platforms such as Zoom and Facebook; phone calls and text messaging also replaced physical interaction in lieu of the varying lockdown and quarantine periods affecting ASEAN countries in the process.



*Boat Library
Luang Prabang, Laos*

REFRAMING LIBRARY SERVICES



National Library
Yangon, Myanmar



The COVID-19 outbreak imposed sudden library closures and brought about the need for the library sectors to find suitable ways to operate.

Emma Rey, President of Philippine Librarians Association, Inc., stressed on the importance of reframing. In her words, *"to reframe is to reformulate your goals, realign your targets, and redefine outcomes. What library services are there to reframe or to replan? This may require us to look at the past, assess the present in order to judge the future."*

Amid the new social norms of social distancing, the libraries' role had to be transformed in a completely new operational model. This is where digital transformation plays a critical role in reshaping how libraries operate and provide services to its stakeholders, patrons and members of the public.

Digital transformation is the acceleration of business activities, processes, competencies, and models to fully leverage the changes and opportunities of digital technologies and their impact in a strategic and prioritized way. Libraries need to pursue digital transformation initiatives in order to adapt to the new normal.

The key questions that need to be answered are:

- Which in-person services can be successfully transferred into the digital space?
- How exactly to do this?
- How to optimize the use of digital resources which already exist?
- What new digital resources are needed this time?
- How to develop resources which support the stakeholders, patrons and members of the public best – rather than overwhelm them in a world where they are anyway spending plenty of their time online?
- How can existing resources be optimized or retooled?
- Are there intervention programs that need to be put in place in order to make the shift or pivot to digital relatively easy?

To understand how and what to transform in the context of digital transformation, bodies of research have relevant information available that will guide libraries in their transformation journey. Based on recent literature, one characteristic of digital transformation is the use of innovation across the organization. Innovation refers to the usage of novel ideas, products, services, processes that are new to the implementing organization and create an advantage for the organization. Innovation also refers to the organization's pursuit of improvement and growth through the development of innovations.

Drawing from the ten types of innovation framework of Keeley et al., the Library Innovation framework is proposed.



Figure 1. Library Innovation Framework

The library innovation framework covers four key areas. These areas are (1) **operations**, (2) **services**, (3) **customer engagement** and (4) **people and culture**.

Operations deal with internal processes, policies and other arrangements necessary to create services. Funding is an important component under operations. Operations serve as input into the service creation process.

Services refer to the service creation and delivery. The overall services provided to customers or members of the public then become input in customer engagement. The channels used and the branding efforts both contribute in defining the customer engagement experience.

The library's people and culture are also critical factors in determining how innovation can be applied in the library as these would also address the need for intervention programs, if any.





National Library in Bangkok, Thailand

The Library Innovation Framework covers all the aspects of library operations, services, customer engagement, and people and culture. Digital transformation can happen through innovations in some or most of the ten components of a library, namely:

- **Funding model** - how the library raises funds
- **Network** – how libraries build connections to create value
- **Structure** – the alignment of the library’s talents and resources to deliver greater value
- **Process** – the superior methods that the library uses
- **Service performance** – the distinguishing features and functionality of the library’s services
- **Channel** – how offerings are delivered to customers and users
- **Brand** – the representation of offerings and business
- **Customer engagement** – the distinctive interactions the library fosters
- **People and culture** – the ways of working and interacting inside the organization

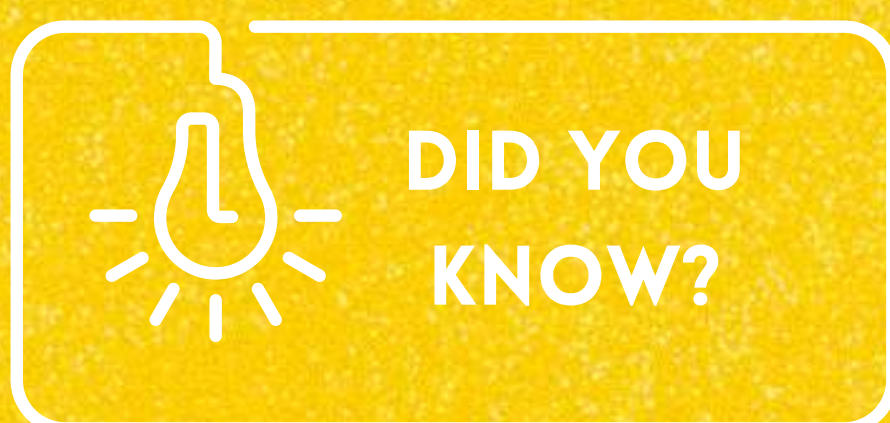
The framework helps library administrators understand where innovation can happen, and not limit to themselves to certain types of innovations. Several innovation tactics can be explored for each of the ten components, to wit:



Funding Model



Examples of funding model include *government funding*, *private funding*, *crowdfunding*, *membership*, *subscription*, *memorandum of understanding* and *collaboration*.



**DID YOU
KNOW?**

In Singapore, the government funded a project called the Singapore Memory Project. This aims to collect the personal memories of residents of Singapore and together with the documented history of Singapore, will give Singaporeans a more rounded sense of Singapore's social history.

Network



Examples of network include *volunteer network, strategic partnership and alliances, collaboration, open innovation, and regional agreements.*



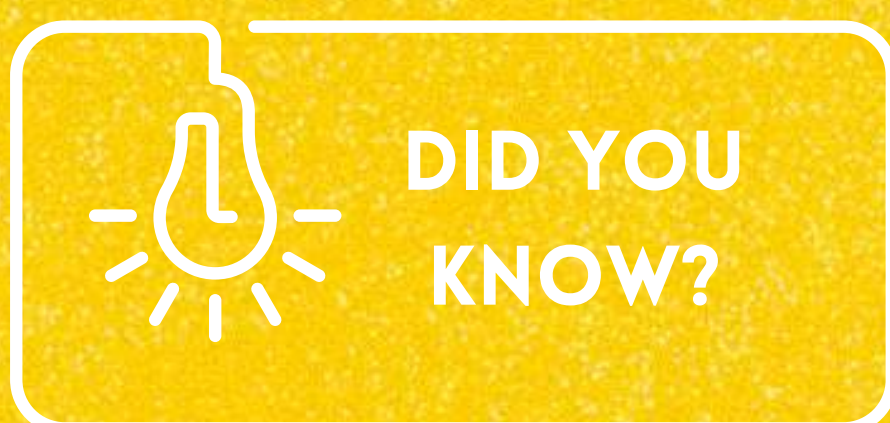
**DID YOU
KNOW?**

The National Library of Australia has an extensive volunteer program since 1989 to and support and promote the work of the Library.

Structure



Examples of structure include *virtual space*, *asset standardization*, *infrastructure*, *decentralized management (run by community)*, *digital clinics*, and *library space rearrangement*.



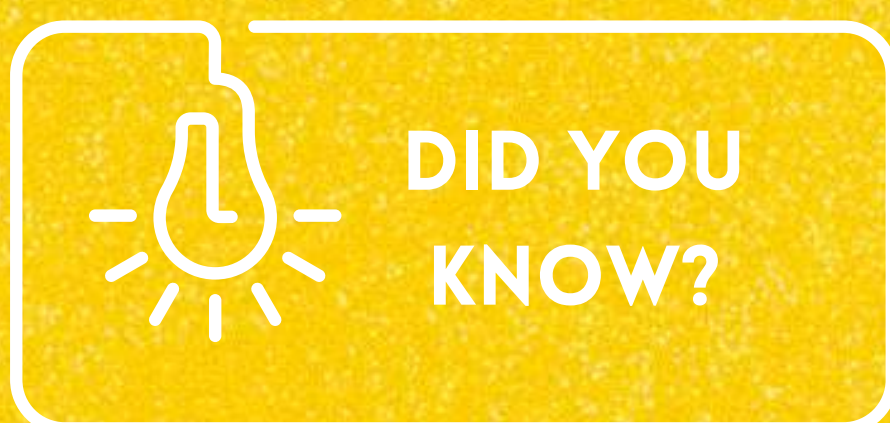
Oslo's Public Library uses space effectively with its distinctive cantilevered top floor, and channels natural light with its diagonal voids and central atrium.

They are also this year's IFLA's Public Library of the Year.

Process

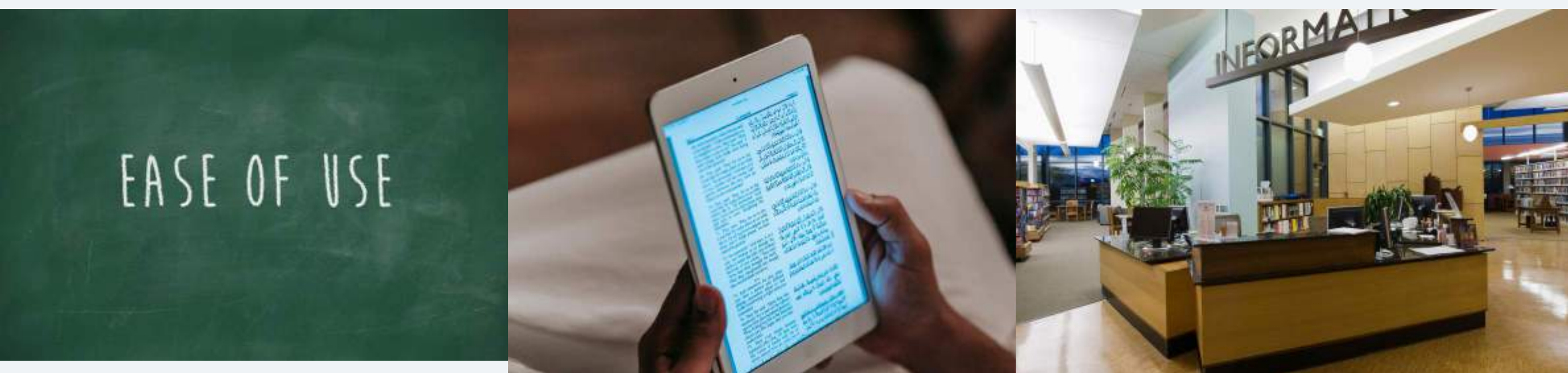


Examples of process include *process standardization, localization, process efficiency, process automation, intellectual property, user generated content and predictive analytics.*

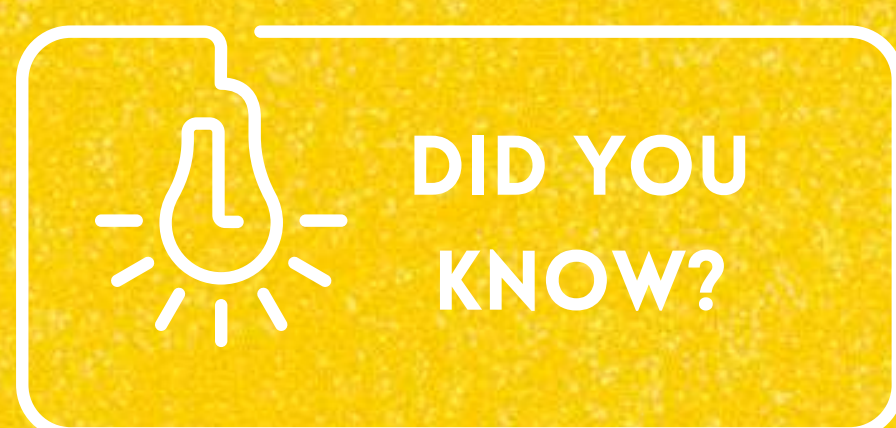


Copyright and numbering system applications are available online at National Library of the Philippines (NLP). A copyright provides for both economic and moral rights over the literary and artistic works of the owner. NLP assigns ISBN, ISSN, ISMN, whether published in print, online or other media.

Service performance



Examples of service performance include *ease of use, engaging functionality, feature aggregation, personalized service, performance simplification, customization, self-service and concierge.*

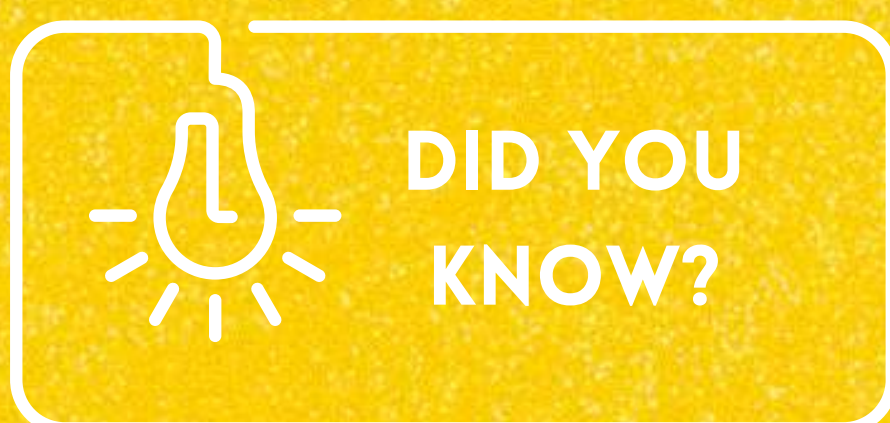


Mobile Library Services provides access to Brunei's DBP Library materials for residents who cannot reach their libraries because of the distance, detention, school hours and other reasons. Library staff members use bookmobiles to visit various locations to provide services to school children, inmates of Jerudong Prison and to Al-Islah in Muara Town.

Channel



Examples of channel include *social media, non-traditional channels, indirect distribution, on-demand, context specific, and experience center*



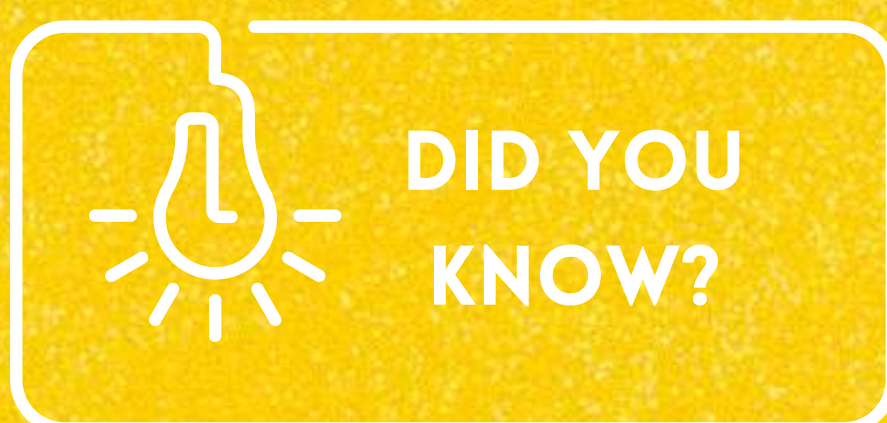
**DID YOU
KNOW?**

The National Library of Indonesia (NLI) subscribes to e-journal and e-books for the public and enables easy access to these materials all over the country. The NLI also developed 25 website templates for libraries to use to provide services outside libraries.

Brand



Examples of brand include *co-branding*, *brand leverage*, *brand extension*, *component branding*, *transparency*, *values alignment* and *certification*.

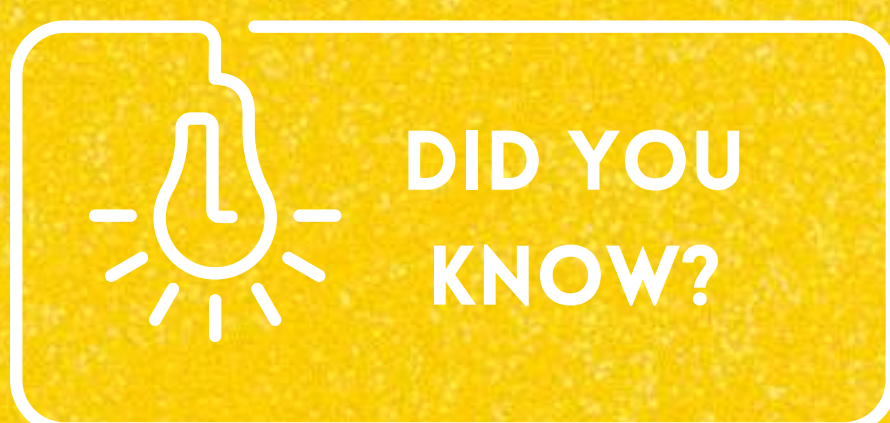


The Public Library Association, a division of the American Library Association shares marketing strategies on how libraries can take advantage of readily available capabilities to beef up its brand and services. One way is to turn blogs or newsletters into a content marketing effort and take advantage of social media platforms especially for organic posts.

Customer engagement



Examples of customer engagement include *process automation, experience simplification, curation, experience enabling, mastery, autonomy and authority, community and belonging, personalization, status and recognition.*

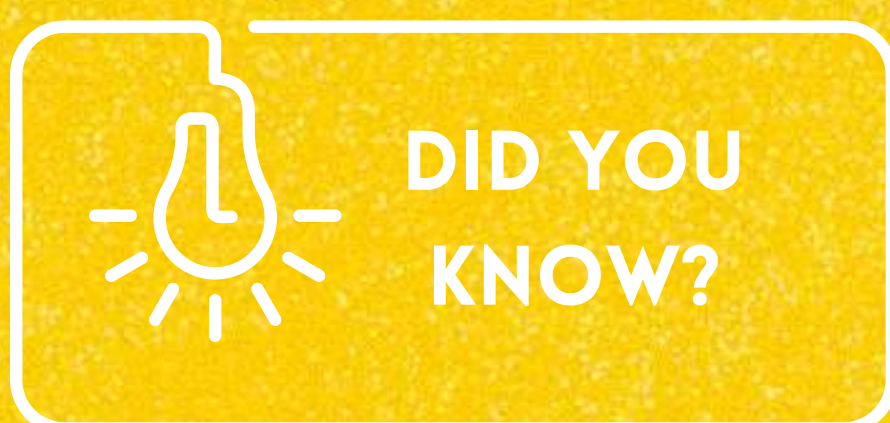


As the pandemic surged globally in 2020, IFLA ensured that its network of global libraries are able to shift to provision of remote or online services by shifting to digital. One example is how the National Library of Spain is promoting its digital content that can be used to support education.

People and culture



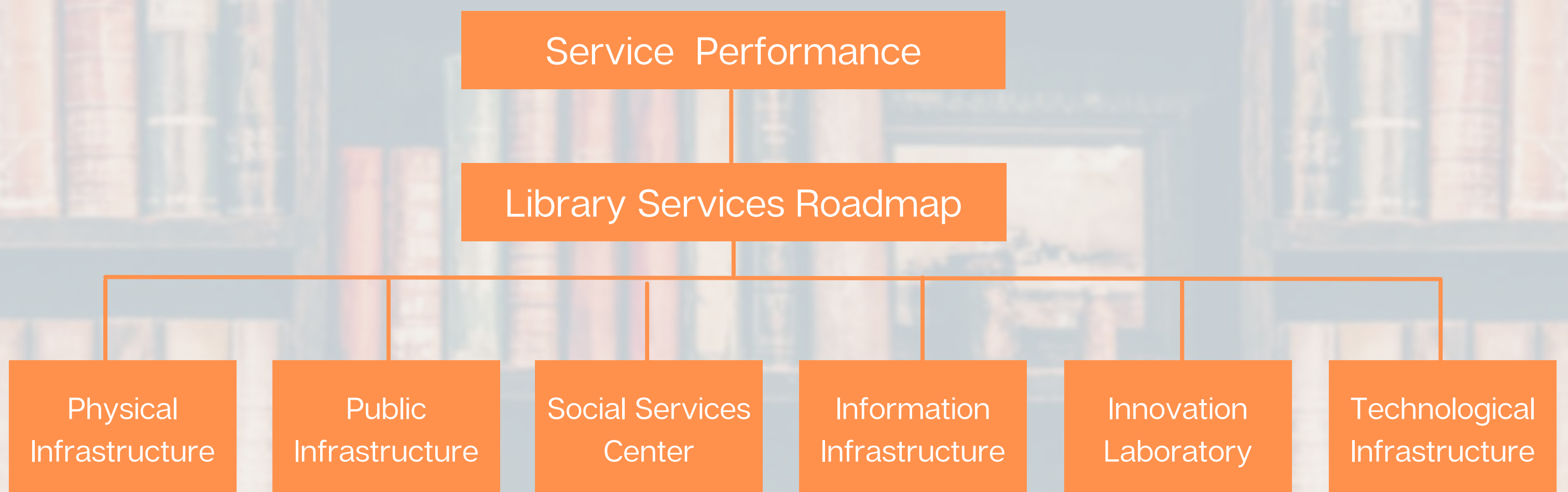
Examples of people and culture include *employee crowdsourcing, job redesign, HR automation, change management, new skills building, culture transformation, and employee engagement.*



**DID YOU
KNOW?**

Training programs for new skills building are being provided for free by the City Library of Butuan in the Philippines as part of its efforts to engage its people especially at this time of pandemic. Some of the programs provided are meant to develop skills in graphic design, virtual work, etc.

Reframing Services



The public library, the local gateway to knowledge, provides a basic condition for lifelong, independent decision-making and cultural development of the individual and society groups.

IFLA/UNESCO Public Manifesto, 1994

Innovating Service Performance

Innovation is a never ending process. In fact, as the saying goes, "change is the only permanent thing in this world." The pandemic showed the world which ones can adapt and which ones have to go. This is why it is imperative for libraries to continue transforming and innovating its services to ensure that the services rendered remain relevant and consistent with the changing times. Library services should be able to continuously address the needs of the people and the pandemic effectively changed the way people consume information.

Physical infrastructure refers to the actual structure of the library and the services that can be provided by such structure; public infrastructure is described as an extension of an existing service; social services center includes provision of social services within the community; information infrastructure address the need for continuous learning; innovation laboratory serves as a sandbox of ideas and other new things that libraries may want to experiment on and finally technological infrastructure aims to provide technology-based services.

Libraries as Physical Infrastructure

Events Place
Exhibition Space
Learning
Resource Centers
Culture Centers
Green Space



Source: Asia/Pacific Cultural Centre for UNESCO (ACCU) Library

Almost all libraries start and venture out as physical infrastructure. With the support of the country's government and supporting agencies, libraries in ASEAN encourage reading as a basic service that is made available through the facilities and collections/materials preserved. It is firstly a learning community, where people, especially children, are encouraged to develop the habit of reading as a step towards enjoying learning.

Traditionally, the libraries are set up as physical infrastructures, and this is the basic structure that enables services to be provided. Thailand has opened its renovated National Library in the wake of Covid-19 and Cambodia is still continuing their rebuilding efforts given its recent history.

Libraries as Public Infrastructure

Mobile Library
Remote Library



Source: World Vision
Indonesia

Libraries are meant to serve the public, and as libraries build on its physical infrastructure, the better can they serve the public.

Innovations in public infrastructure include not just having the physical structure set up but also capabilities in mobile and remote libraries.

Libraries as Social Services Center

Community Centers
Learning
Communities
Ancillary Services
Outreach Centers



Source: sugbo.ph
Cebu City Public Library
provides WiFi hotspot and is
a 24/7 library

Libraries also provide social services, and this is the next step once physical and public infrastructures have been set up.

Libraries as Information Infrastructure

ASEAN Public
Library Academy
E-learning
Production of
Learning contents
Book & Document
Delivery
Copyright
Accessible Book
Consortium

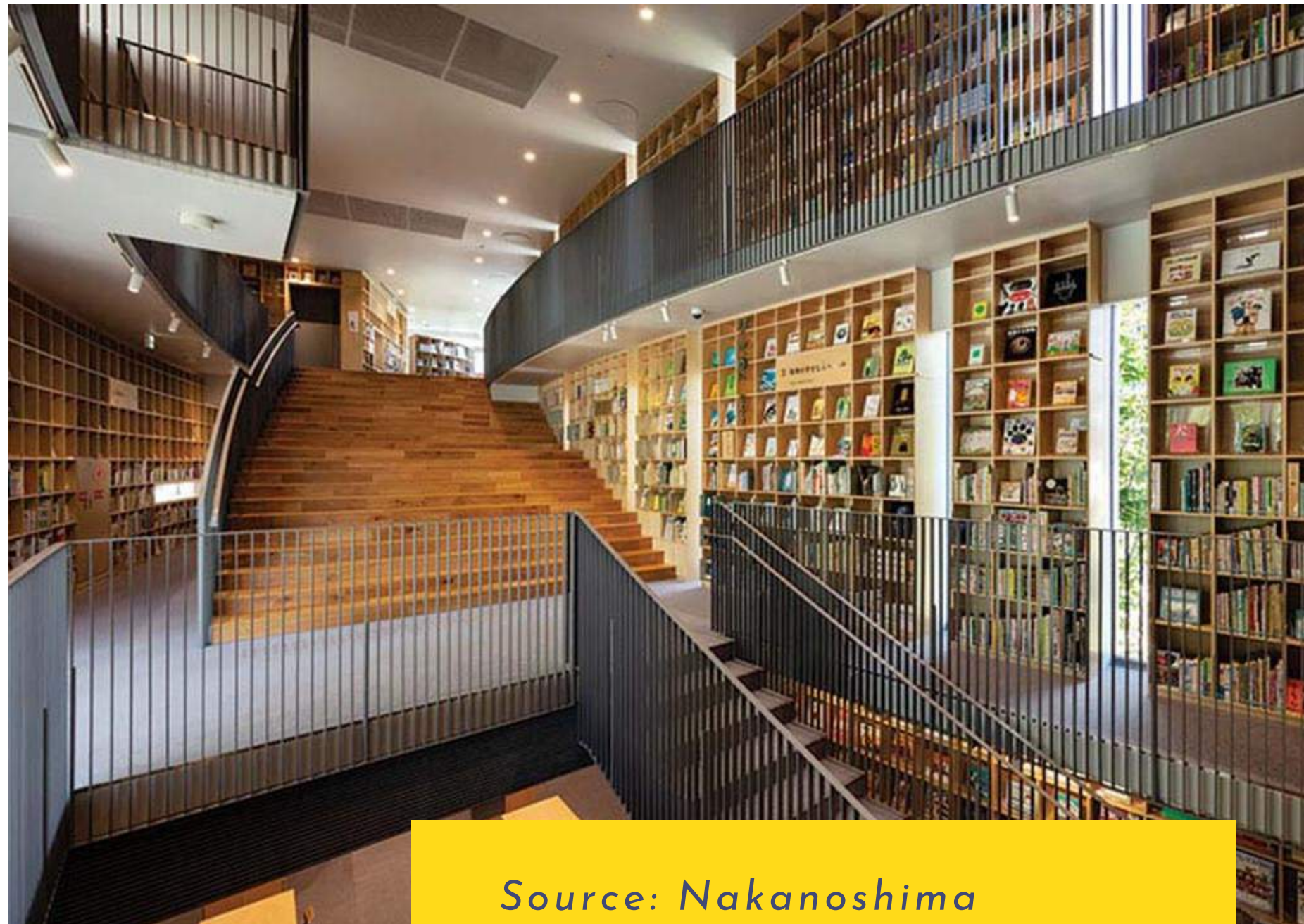


Source: koreabizwire.com
Incheon Library Introduces
24-hour Book Drive-thru
Service

Libraries as Information Infrastructure signify how important equitable access to information is in delivering library services. One innovative way of providing this service is in bringing the information itself to the reader through the various book delivery services or drive-thru made available by libraries. This way, the dissemination of information is made easier.

Libraries as Innovation Laboratory

Community projects
Expertise sharing
Truth-telling



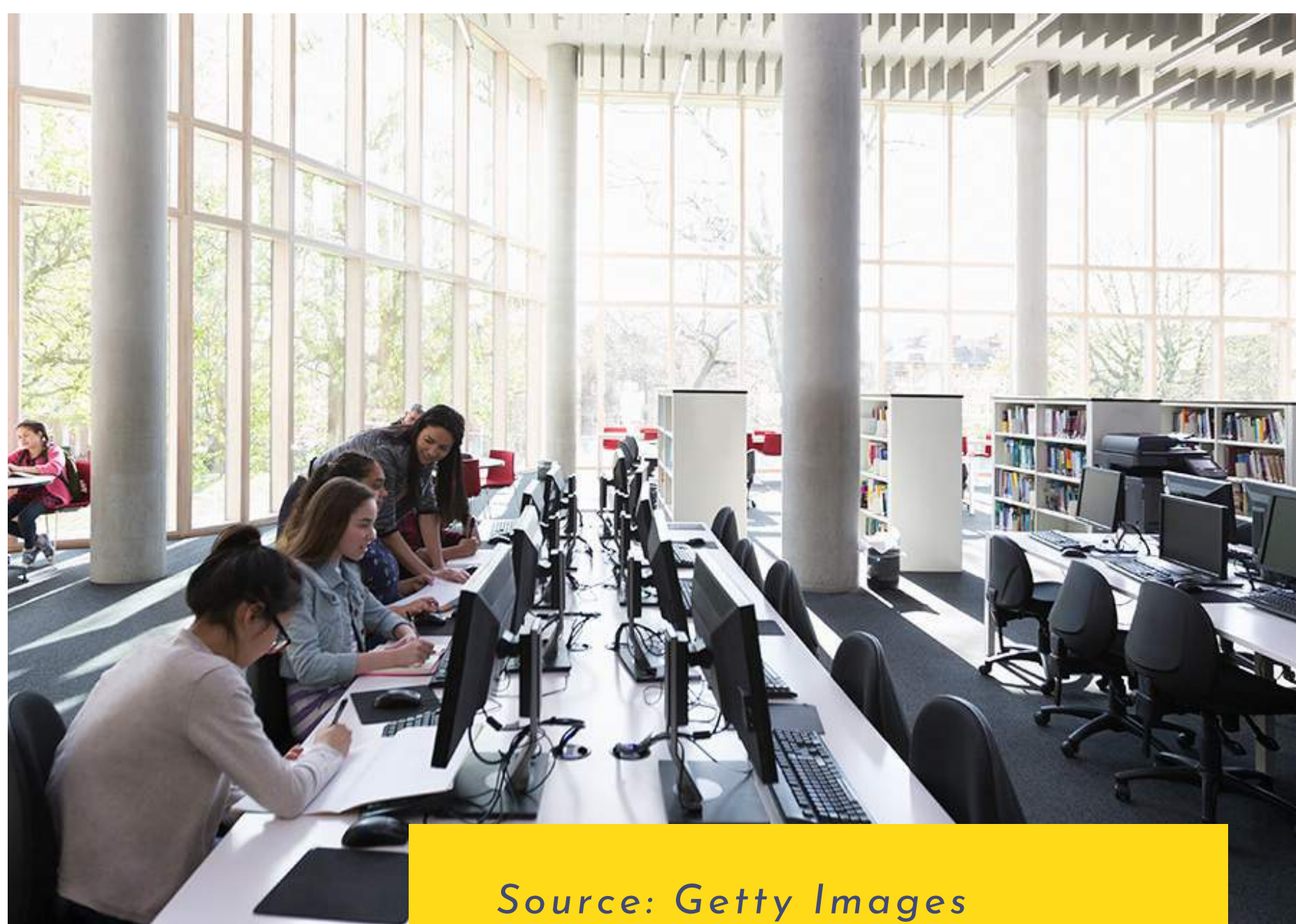
Source: Nakanoshima
Children's Book Forest
in Osaka, Japan

Perhaps the most critical part in disseminating information is in the truth-telling experience. Fake news abound and IFLA provides a plethora of information to ensure that fact checked information remain in place. This has also been reiterated by Vicki McDonald, State Library of Queensland's State Librarian and Chief Executive Officer to which she says, state librarian and *"truth-telling is the foundation of library service that we provide to our members to ensure that information is factual and correct in this day and age of misinformation."*

Various innovative technologies can be applied in the library space by leveraging available capabilities. This also encourages community engagement especially in the services they need as input to the libraries' service offerings.

Libraries as Technological Infrastructure

Online application and payment systems
Internet access points
Digital clinics
Global book service
Virtual exhibitions
Mobile applications, AI
Curation of digital collections/ learning experiences
Omni channel
Online reference services
ASEAN Digital Library
Digital literacy, Webinars and Online training
Digital Legal deposits



Source: Getty Images

In the age of digital, libraries inevitably will provide technological infrastructure services. Whether to aid in learning or as supplement to various studies done, these services are the icing on the cake as this reflects the advancement of library services made available to the majority of our digital savvy audience.

In determining the future library services available from the different national and public libraries in the ASEAN region, various workshops were held for participants to give their insights and perspectives on the current state of respective libraries.

Taking an external view on the factors that may affect the delivery of library services has also been done, together with hearing from experts in the region. In particular, Vicky McDonald, State Librarian and Chief Executive Officer of State Library of Queensland in Australia and Emma Rey, President of the Philippine Librarians Association, Inc. in the Philippines shared their insights on the importance of truth-telling and in reframing services to remain relevant, respectively.

The outputs generated from the workshops yielded plenty of information on the needs, challenges and opportunities, to name a few, for the future of the library services in the region.

Here's an example of the ASEAN Library Services Framework taking into account the inputs provided by the ASEAN Member States (AMS) participants.



Figure 2. ASEAN Library Services Framework

Leadership Support

Leadership support came out as an integral part in sustaining library operations, primarily as the library leader is expected to help in forging various partnerships and securing funding necessary to augment its resources.

Securing fiscal funding is a key component in manifesting support of the library's leadership and will determine the roadmap of library services that can be provided to the members of the public.



Source: kr-asia.com

Children digital library KaDa Story secured 100 million RMB of Series A+ funding

Strategic Partnership

Strategic partnerships are key in any library organization. In one of the strategies of the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA), its President Barbara Lison highlighted the direction to **strengthen the global voice of the libraries** by **building a strong presence in international organizations and meetings as a valued partner** - organizations such as UNESCO, UNO and World Intellectual Property Organizations to name a few.

Forging strategic partnerships enable libraries to achieve its objectives and goals and augment or expand resources by virtue of these.



*Source: IFLA Asia and Oceania
Facebook*

Staff Volunteers

Volunteerism is a big thing in Southeast Asia and visitors to the region take advantage of doing charitable work by participating as volunteers particularly in libraries.

In addition to providing services, volunteerism highlight even more how communities strengthen the delivery of services of the library. Its people remain as one of its vital resources. Extending this to accommodate volunteers foster collaboration, camaraderie and promote diversity in this age of inclusivity and equitable access to information for all.



*Source: DFA Australia
Australian volunteer in sorting and
cataloging books at the National
Library of Cambodia*

Flexible Working Arrangements

The pandemic paved the way for flexible working arrangements which now became the de-facto way of working. More recently, hybrid work arrangements have also been put in place signifying flexibility of organizations to adapt to the surges and government lockdowns that may be imposed in the process.

As part of its innovative services, libraries adhere to safety protocols by ensuring that its people can quickly and smoothly shift to remote work as needed, minimizing service interruption by utilizing readily available technology capabilities.



Source: IFLA
Work from Home (WfH) Librarian In
Bidang Pengolahan The National
Library Of Indonesia

Service Performance

Gone are the days when library access meant only going to the physical library premises. Access to information is now everywhere and readily available 24x7. For this reason library service performance should remain innovative and adaptable to the changing times, especially to the needs of the members of the public.

Service performance innovation can address many aspects of library services. In understanding potential, new and future library services that can be offered, it is recommended to look into these roadmap of services that may be applicable and relevant to your customer base.



*Source: The Asia Foundation
Let's Read Book Concert*

Community Engagements

Within the global library network lies a lot of engagements and collaboration that are meant for continued and sustained learning and development. IFLA President Barbara Lison reiterated that part of this community engagement is to connect and empower the field to foster literacy, innovation, heritage preservation and access to information to all users.

Last 2020, the Leaders' Conversations happened in Singapore led by IFLA's Asia and Oceania regional office together with Singapore's National Library Board. The Leaders' Conversations is a new digital platform for leaders in the region and beyond to share their insights on major developments in the library world. This engagement within the IFLA community gave new and fresh perspectives to the participants which could also be a template that can be done in the participants' respective countries.



Source: ifla.org
Leaders' Conversations

Public Relations

Visibility can be achieved through excellent and innovative communications. Various platforms can be utilized in order to enhance this, starting particularly in the library's website as the focal source of information. There are ancillary media to be used as well, especially in social media to amplify the dissemination of information such as the use of Facebook as key platform to share information.

Public relations help optimize the presence of the organization.

Ask USIM LIBRARY

LIBRARY OF UNIVERSITI SAINS ISLAM MALAYSIA
Perpustakaan Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia
USIM | Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia

20 years 1998-2018
USIM LIBRARY
f @ USIMLibrary

JOIN OUR GROUP ON
WhatsApp

<http://bit.ly/WAskLib>

MONDAY - FRIDAY
8:00 am - 5:00 pm

For further information please email us at

Source: ifla.org
Ask USIM Library service and similar services allow communication between the libraries and their users

The pandemic truly transformed the way library services are delivered, and more importantly, how people have found new ways of consuming information. The shift to digital has never been this drastic and massive, and organizations need to take advantage of this capability in order to remain relevant and able to fulfill its mandate to the public. Various library services can be reframed in the process.



Mobile library in Myanmar goes to eager readers
Source: Myanmar Times

Challenges raised by the libraries have been converted into opportunities as well. One example is in the lack of fiscal funding in order to have more resources and materials to supplement existing collections. One way to address this is to forge partnerships and collaborations with other libraries in the region to help extend and supplement resource availability for the benefit of the public.

IN SUMMARY

Equitable access to information is an important objective of the library all over the world and the region will find it beneficial to consider putting in place an ASEAN Public Library Academy in order to continue and sustain the lifelong learning intended for members of the public in utilizing library services.

Equitable access to information is an important mandate of libraries
Source: NLP



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Arief Wicaksono

North Borneo
Provincial Public
Library
Yoseva Silaen

LAO PDR

**National Library of
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National Library of
Vietnam
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