

NEWS

IFLA, SEOUL 2006

By Mr Rajendra Munoo, Specialist, NLB Academy, Learning & Development

Images courtesy of Roy Won, Librarian, Public Libraries; Ivan Chew, Manager, Public Libraries



Lights! Sound! Action!

"Libraries: Dynamic Engines for the Knowledge and Information Society", was the theme for the 72nd IFLA General Conference and Council, held at the COEX Convention and Exhibition Centre, in Seoul, Korea from 20 – 24 August 2006. The Asian hosts ensured continental representation as was evident in the programme line-up of papers from the region. The programme commenced with the traditional section meetings and satellite events that were held in China, Japan and Korea. Themes and topics for discussion ranged from reference resource sharing in the digital age, preservation and conservation in Asia, Chinese written and printed cultural heritage to scholarly information on East Asia in the 21st Century. The discussions and presentations celebrated cultural heritage, collaborations, and the digital infrastructure.

OFFICIAL OPENING: DR KIM DAE-JUNG

On Sunday, 20th August, Korea showcased Asian hospitality with a grand opening session, which included prominent local Koreans, amongst others, Dr Kim Dae-Jung, former President of the Republic of Korea who reminisced in his keynote address on the evolution of libraries and the importance of librarians in a knowledge-based society. He noted, "The 21st century is an age of knowledge and information. And this calls for libraries to play a pivotal role in order to realise its ideals...successful libraries will make a successful world. Libraries are the reservoirs for storing knowledge and information. Libraries are locomotives pulling history forward. And you have the vital mission to drive these locomotives. [Read More Here: <http://www.ifla.org/IV/ifla72/papers/068-Kim-en.pdf>].



Dr Kim championed to lay the "foundation for the "ubiquitous library" with a nationwide service system that can be easily accessed by anybody, anywhere, with any type of equipment."

PAPERS PRESENTED

The standard of papers presented were very good where speakers shared using case studies about projects in their respective countries. Most of the speakers shared about the challenges such as the emerging digital library, managing user expectations, resource sharing and collaboration, legal deposit issues, reading and information literacy and trends and developments in their respective countries.

SINGAPORE'S PRESENCE AT IFLA

Five staff from the National Library Board, made presentations as noted below:

Division of Regional Activities

Thinking about capacity building and sustainability of information literacy programmers: re-engineering experiences by the National Library Board, Singapore by Doris Tan and Rajendra Munoo [Read More Here: http://www.ifla.org/IV/ifla72/papers/082-Tan_Munoo-en.pdf]

Metropolitan Section

The library as influencer! – Having a say in what goes on in schools by Ian Yap.

Poster Session

Library Instructional Programme – A spiral approach to library skills taught to primary school students by Raneetha Rajaratnam

IFLA Corner

Regional Office of Asia and Oceania by Tan Keat Fong

Faculty from Nanyang Technological University's School of Information and Communication also presented the following papers below:

Education and Training

Issues in developing a repository of learning objects for LIS Education in Asia by Abdus Sattar Chaudhry and Christopher Khoo. [Read More Here: http://www.ifla.org/IV/ifla72/papers/107-Chaudhry_Khoo-en.pdf]

Library History

Imagining the User in the Raffles Library and Museum, Singapore: 1874 to 1900 by Brendan Luyt. [Read More Here: <http://www.ifla.org/IV/ifla72/papers/119-Luyt-en.pdf>]

EXHIBITION AND POSTER SESSIONS

The National Library Board, Singapore, participated in the exhibition where its products and services were promoted. The



NLB's booth during the exhibition

crowd puller was a proof-of-concept Library Dispenser – a self-standing kiosk that dispenses books similar to a vending machine. About 79 posters were exhibited during the poster sessions. Poster sessions provided an informal opportunity for participants to interact with the presenters who willingly shared their respective projects or ideas.

LIBRARY VISITS: NATIONAL LIBRARY OF KOREA AND NATIONAL LIBRARY OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE



Computer stations in the library

The National Library of Children and Young People

The National Library of Korea, housing 5.94m volumes, was one of the most popular tour destinations. Visitors experienced the creative overlay of technology which provided a seamless traditional library service. The advanced use of RFID technology in checking out multiple library items in one step and its application for browse count was commendable.

The library also has a system in place for closed-access materials where requested materials are dispatched to a locker area for collection. Using an electronic billboard, readers are paged on the availability of their materials.



Readers place items they wish to refer to on the browse count RFID system before proceeding to the table to read them.

In keeping with the theme of access to all, users with disabilities have access to a display cabinet of equipment they can use such as special keyboards with extra large keys and artificial fingers for those with loss of limbs. [Read More Here: http://www.nl.go.kr/nlmulti/index.php?lang_mode=e].

Recently opened in May 2006, is the National Library of Children and Young People whose function is to provide strategic direction, policy and research for children's libraries. Providing a one-stop place for children and young people, this library in addition to local literature, makes materials in other languages available in the "International Section."

FINALLY...

Participants experienced Korean hospitality throughout the week as they enriched themselves with world-class cultural performances, dinners and arranged library tours. An IFLA trip is never complete without shopping on the itinerary. Some went off the beaten track to tour the Demilitarized Zone and others explored the sights and sounds of the night-markets and the palaces.

IFLA, Seoul was a great success that afforded our Asian librarians to acquire new knowledge and network with our regional fellow-librarians and information professionals.

To read more about IFLA, Seoul 2006, please read the entries on Ramblinglibrarian's blog. <http://ramblinglibrarian.blogspot.com/2006/08/off-to-ifla-2006-thoughts-and-stuff.html>

TALK ON INTERPRETING JIHADI WEBSITES

By Ronnie Tan, Reference Librarian,
Publishing and Research Services



The speaker, Mr Bouchaib Silm

A talk entitled "Interpreting Jihadi Websites" was conducted for 40 government research officers on 18 August 2006 at the National Library's premises in Victoria Street. The speaker was Mr Bouchaib Silm, a native Arab speaker with the

Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies (IDSS), Nanyang Technological University. This talk was organised as part of collaborative effort between NLB and IDSS to help educate Singaporeans on terrorism.

In his presentation, Mr Silm discussed how militant groups like Al Qaeda and others in the Middle East have manipulated the Internet to serve their purposes. In addition, groups like these have resorted to the use of Arabic symbols, poetry and Quranic chapters and verses together to attract followers to their cause. Using videos available on the web, Mr Silm demonstrated how it was done.



An attentive audience

The course participants found the talk very informative, interesting and educational. Many have asked to be kept in the loop should similar talks be held.

BHUTAN CROWN PRINCE VISITS THE NATIONAL LIBRARY

The National Library Board played host to the Crown Prince of Bhutan, His Royal Highness, Trongsa Penlop Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck on 23 August 2006 during his official visit to Singapore.



Ms Chow Wun Han, Senior Manager, LKCR (left), briefed the Crown Prince on our collections, while Ms Lim Soo Hoon, Chairman, NLB (right) looks on.

Highlights of the visit included a tour of the Central Lending Library (CLL) and Lee Kong Chian Reference Library (LKCR), the crown jewel of the National Library. The CLL is one of our public libraries under NLB's network of libraries, where the use of technology had brought about many DIY library services, such as the borrowing machines, bookdrop and the Library e-Kiosk. The tour of LKCR focused on one of the key collections – Singapore and Southeast Asia Collections on Level 11, where a selection of books on Bhutan, which highlighted the rich history, majestic landscapes, colourful culture and dynamic progress of the country, was displayed.

During the visit, the Crown Prince shared that he was encouraged to read from a young age and he feels that knowledge and books are very important. He also confessed to being an active user of his school library when he was still pursuing his education.

The library tour ended at The Pod on Level 16, where the Crown Prince enjoyed a panoramic view of the Singapore's skyline.

COLLABORATION AND NETWORKING WITH NTU MSC STUDENTS

By Sharon Teng, Reference Librarian, Lee Kong Chian Reference Library



An overwhelming turnout for the inaugural collaboration and networking session

The Social Sciences and Humanities Collection group hosted an inaugural collaboration and networking session on 19 September 06, with 100 students of the Nanyang Technological University (NTU), who were pursuing their MSc (Information Studies) degree.

The objectives of this session were firstly to introduce and promote the collections and services at the Lee Kong Chian Reference Library (LKCR), primarily our Library and Information Science Collection, and secondly, to network with fellow information professionals to share and exchange ideas in this field.

The session began at 6.30pm with a one-hour lecture on the basic concepts of reference service by Asst. Prof Brendan Luyt, from the Division of Information Studies, School of Communication & Information, NTU.

This was followed by a 20min presentation by Chow Wun Han, Senior Manager, LKCR, who gave a detailed overview of the library and introduced our collections and services.

Sharon Teng, Reference Librarian, LKCR then introduced LKCR's Remote Enquiry Service, covering service standards, policies and workflow procedures, tracking of enquiries and service evaluation. She also shared with the students some examples of reference and research enquiries that had been sent via email and SMS to the Reference Point.

The students and Prof Luyt were then led on a special guided library tour covering Levels 7 and 11, with special emphasis on the Library and Information Science collection housed on Level 7.

After the session, feedback obtained from the students and lecturer was very positive, with many rating the programme as "excellent" and "very good". Many also commented that prior to the visit, they had not known that the library contained such rich and valuable resources. All were impressed with the range and depth of reference services provided and were happy to find out that help was readily available from the Reference Point.



NTU students on their guided tour

PROFESSOR EDWIN THUMBOO DONATES COLLECTION TO NATIONAL LIBRARY

By Eunice Low, Manager, Heritage and Asia



Caption: (from left) Dr N. Varaprasad, Chief Executive, NLB, Ms Ngian Lek Choh, Deputy Chief Executive, NLB and Professor Edwin Thumboo

On 28 September 2006, the National Library Board (NLB) entered into a Memorandum Of Understanding (MOU) with Professor Edwin Thumboo for the donation of his personal collection. The collection comprises, approximately, 3000 items that span across the fields of poetry, literary criticism, religion, nationalism and history. Professor Thumboo, an Emeritus Professor at the Department of English Language and Literature, National University of Singapore is an academic, poet and critic. In the 2006 National Day Awards, he was awarded the Meritorious Service Medal in capacity as Distinguished Poet and Literary Scholar. He is also one of the National Library (NL) Distinguished Readers appointed this year. The NL Distinguished Readers initiative pays tribute to local experts and prominent personalities in Singapore for their outstanding achievements and service to the nation. Prof Thumboo's collection will be housed in the Lee Kong Chian Reference Library (LKCR). To complement the display of the physical materials, NLB also plans to digitise some of his manuscripts to enable better access to researchers.

COVER STORY – RETHINKING CULTURE

By Isaac Teo, Executive, Invent

The theme of the Singapore Biennale 2006 addressed the subject of "Belief": its many facets, the different things we believe in, and what we do or do not do about these beliefs.

In this month's "cover story" programmes, we would like to pose the same challenge to our patrons with respect to Culture. The 'Culture (of) Loss' public forum (7 October) – part of a mixed media installation for the Singapore Biennale – seeks to change our mindsets about cultural loss in Singapore. Rather than fading away as a result of modernisation, some of our cultural artefacts have actually been relocated overseas.

In a similar vein, the 'Breaking Down Cultural Barriers' public lecture (14 October) by Dr Derald Wing Sue – renowned for his pioneering work on multicultural research and writing in psychology and education – seeks a rethink on the way we perceive mental wellness across cultures.

With such stimulating topics and interesting speakers, there is no need to think and rethink about attending these programmes; just come. Did we mention that admission is FREE?