

NL Asia-Pacific Proposal

Purpose of this document

The purpose of this document is to provide an update on the plans for launching the NL Asia-Pacific (NL-AP) service.

Background

At CONSAL held in May 2012, the National Library Board (NLB) Singapore proposed the launch of a regional initiative to connect together collections across the Asia Pacific region. An invitation was extended to other countries to join the pilot. The National Libraries of Philippines, Indonesia, Brunei and Malaysia expressed interest.

Known as the “NL Global Initiative”, the project aims to have ASEAN National Libraries be part of a prototype platform that provides users with a seamless way to search for, and to gain access to, the wealth of digitized library held by them. A one-search approach will provide convenience to users as well as encourage greater use and awareness of regional content, thus fostering higher levels of regional unity.

Moving forward, the NL Global Initiative will be renamed “NL Asia Pacific” to focus on connecting content in the region. This is as the project will also include the National Library of China (NLC) as the lead for getting countries like Korea and Japan on board and the National Library of New Zealand (NLNZ), which has agreed to support the aggregation service by reusing existing technology it has developed.

Since the CONSAL meeting, pilot data from NLB has been successfully imported in the NLNZ system.

In addition, NLB had put up a funding request to the ASEAN Cultural Fund in June 2012. The funding of US\$40k in funding for the first year was approved and will be available from April 2013.

Scope

The scope of this initial work has been proposed to enable a service to be launched as quickly as possible. Characteristics of the pilot include:

1. **National Library collections**—Initial priority would be for partners from National Libraries
2. **ASEAN countries**—Initial priority will be given to 1- 2 members of ASEAN based on the funding that has been provided by ASEAN
3. **Digital image collections**—Initial priority will be digital images from partner organisations. Images have been suggested as a priority because they can provide a very visual demonstration of the benefits for both partners and the general public
4. **Flexible content licence**—The copyright licence for the objects (e.g. an image) will be chosen by the contributing partner
5. **Open metadata licence**—The metadata that describes the objects must be made available so that it can be shared and sub-licensed to others
6. **Online materials only**—It is expected that content as part of this service would already be online somewhere. Material must be easily accessible on a website, and not be behind password access

The initial scope above will help provide some early focus, but it is worth noting that the full scope includes the other characteristics. These additional characteristics will also be supported:

1. **Any collecting organisation**—Although this is an initiative of National Libraries, the connection does not need to only include material from libraries. The experience of similar initiatives around the world such as Europeana, the Digital Public Library of America, and DigitalNZ indicates the value in connecting materials from across the Library, Archive, and Museum worlds
2. **All Asia-Pacific countries**—Institutions from all countries within the Asia-Pacific region will be welcome to partner with the service. Of particular interest is also helping to connect up knowledge from other parts of Asia and the Pacific.
3. **All digital collections**—Any type of digital object will be relevant for inclusion e.g. images, documents, text-based web pages, audio, and video

How does the service work?

This service is based on the successful aggregation models developed and used in other parts of the world. The service works as follows:

1. To become a partner, the source digital material you wish to contribute needs to be already online somewhere. An example would be images from NLB Singapore online at <http://pictures.nl.sg/>
2. NL-AP will use aggregation technology to collect the metadata about digital objects from your website or repository. For example we can collect data such as the [title, description, rights information, and subject](#) from an item's web page. We can also [collect a URL directly to the image](#).
3. If for example the NLB Singapore wished to become a partner of this new service they would need to agree to the sharing of the Picture SG descriptive metadata. This agreement is being modelled on the [agreement used by the NLNZ's DigitalNZ service](#).
4. Once the agreement is confirmed, the metadata from your source website or repository is copied into the NL-AP search index. This search index will contain copies of all metadata contributed by the partners. The service does not take a copy of the digital objects, and therefore does not violate copyright. With your permission it simply takes a copy of the metadata and keeps track of URLs to point people back to the [source web page](#)
5. As part of the NL-AP service, an API (Applications Programming Interface) will provide a data gateway for software developers, so that they can build new discovery services. This API will allow the collected metadata to be queried in a consistent way, for example here what a [data query of the Picture SG might look like](#). In becoming a partner you would agree to the idea that these materials could be displayed in different applications so long as they are attributed. [Developer terms of use will be modelled on those developed by the NLNZ's DigitalNZ service](#).
6. You can then use the shared metadata to build services unique to your country, or build experience that span countries. Here is a simple example of the [Picture SG data presented on a web page](#). To get a better idea of the interfaces that are possible to build you can see the www.digitalnz.org and www.natlib.govt.nz websites which are based on the technology we are using for NL-AP. This technology has also been used to build touchscreen interactives and iPhone apps, and will present the countries of Asia Pacific many opportunities for connecting up our collections
7. The NL-AP service is planning to launch a simple website to demonstrate the access to the shared collections of partners

What are the benefits of joining?

There are several reasons why you might consider becoming a content partner for the NL-AP service:

- Help create a unified search of Asia-Pacific collections, and provide more access to your material
- Showcase your countries material to people of other countries, to improve knowledge exchange and cultural understanding
- Use this platform to publish your metadata in a friendly way (via the Application Programming Interface) for software developers. This means that new uses of your collection can be encouraged
- Build relationships between digital teams across the Asia-Pacific region

How to participate

If you are interested in participating the first step is to contact the project co-ordinator Ms KHOR Su Min (Su_Min_KHOR@nlb.gov.sg) and Ms LEE Mei Chen(MEI_CHEN_LEE@NLB.GOV.SG) at NLB Singapore.

The process you will work through includes:

1. Confirm which online content sources you wish to put forward
2. Discuss and confirm the partnership agreement
3. Supplying metadata to the aggregation service. Multiple options are possible including providing data in MARCXML, RSS, OAI-PMH, or copying directly from a website.

Schedule

Item	Date
Regional NLGI Country Representative Signing The official signing ceremony of the collaboration will be on 17 August 2013, at the ASEAN Caucus event. This is part of the IFLA WLIC that will be held in Singapore in August 2013.	Aug 2013
Server Installation	Aug – Oct 2013
Training and Troubleshooting by NLNZ, NLB	Oct - Dec 2013
Regional NLGI Country Representation Meeting cum Training of Phase 1 National Libraries	Jan – Mar 2014
Phase 1 Data loads and Tests	Jan – Mar 2014

Drafted by:

Andy Neale Manager, DigitalNZ
National Library of New Zealand

Khor Su Min Assistant Director, NLHQ
National Library Board, Singapore

With inputs from:

Haliza Jailani Assistant Director, Resource Discovery
National Library Board, Singapore

Kia Siang Hock Assistant Director, Architecture & Applns Infrastructure
National Library Board, Singapore

Approved by:

Gene Tan Director
National Library
National Library Board, Singapore