

NATIONAL LIBRARY BOARD OF SINGAPORE COUNTRY REPORT

For the 24th Conference of Directors of National Libraries in Asia and Oceania

8 Jan 2016

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1. RELATIONSHIP TO GOVERNMENT

1.1 Review of the National Library Board Act

The National Library Board Act establishes and incorporates the National Library Board (NLB) as a statutory board and transfers to it the National Library (NL) and all matters connected therewith. The NLB Act also sets out the functions and powers of the NLB. Currently, NLB's Legal Deposit function is limited to the collection of print and audio-visual materials. NLB is reviewing the Bill to expand this function to include digital and web resources as well, so as to enhance its relevance in the digital age.

1.2 Special Libraries

The National Library currently provides professional library services to manage a total of 12 Special Libraries for government agencies, such as Parliament, Supreme Court and State Courts.

1.3 Research Services

The National Library provides professional and customised research services to government ministries and statutory boards. The National Library's team of researchers reports on latest market trends and new developments in topical areas of interest to the organisation. The team currently provides customised research services to nine government agencies, including Ministry of Communications and Information, Ministry of Manpower and Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth.

2. FACTS AND FIGURES

No	Figures	FY15 (1 Apr to 31 Dec 2015)
1	Size of Singapore Collection (Physical)	298,100
2	Physical Visitorship	1,407,273
3	Digital Visitorship (Singapore Content)	4,284,283
4	Digital Pageviews (Singapore Content)	17,233,836
5	No. of Physical Loans	2,811
6	Compliment to Complaint Ratio	185 :1
7	Total Annual Operating Budget	1,374,484
8	Total Staff (FTE)	163

3. A BRIEF GENERAL OVERVIEW OF RECENT MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS

3.1 Public Access to the Legal Deposit Collection

For the first time, the National Library is providing public access to its Legal Deposit collection. From 20 November 2015, the public can easily search and locate Singapore's published heritage from a new online catalogue called PublicationSG, and consult the materials on-site at the National Library Building. The Legal Deposit collection comprises of over 1 million items published or produced in Singapore, made available for sale or public distribution. They have been deposited by publishers over the years and preserved for posterity by NLB.

3.2 Tamil Digital Heritage Collaboration

Started in 2013 Q4, the Tamil Digital Heritage Project (TDHP) is a community driven project that aims to create a digital collection of Singapore Tamil literary works published between 1965 to 2015. The collection was presented as the Indian community's gift to the nation on Singapore's 50th anniversary this year. NLB, as the lead government agency, undertook the technical and professional aspects of digitisation.

The digital archive is hosted by NLB and displayed in NLB's digital print portal – BookSG. More than 350 Tamil books have been scanned and OCR-ed. There was also strong volunteer support made up largely of teachers who helped with the annotation of the works and proofreading the text.

3.3 National Info-Literacy Programme (NILP)

The National Information Literacy Programme (NILP) aims to raise public awareness of information literacy (IL) skills in today's complex information landscape. In FY2015, a series of Super SURE Show Live featuring social influencers and guest speakers sharing insights on new media, technology, pop culture & parenting were organised.

The inaugural Historical Scene Investigation Challenge 2015 which promoted historical inquiry and National Library resources were held. More than 300 students from 43

schools participated in the event. NILP has also trained 9,111 students, teachers and working adults on IL and research skills and actively engaged online users via Facebook posts and visually attractive infographics.

Cumulative KPI	
FY12-FY15 (as of 31 Dec 2015)	2,845,097 online interactions (SURE portal page views and Facebook interactions) 1,142,467 physical interactions (training, events and interactions with SURE content)
Total	3,987,564 interactions

3.4 National Library Prominent Speaker Series

NL Prominent Speaker Series was started in 2014 to bring in notable speakers across different fields. This is part of the National Library's direction to be a premier public knowledge institution to support the nation's and citizens' knowledge aspirations.

Since the Prominent Speaker's Series was launched in March 2014, all the sessions by the following speakers had very positive turnouts:

- Dame Lynn Brindley (former British Library CEO);
- Nicolas Barker (Author and Renowned Book Collector);
- John van Wyhe (NUS Researcher and Expert on Darwin);
- Siew Hock Meng (Major Singaporean Artist);
- Dayne Cowan. Dayne is a Director of Film VFX at VHQ Post and has worked on blockbusters such as Batman Begins, 10,000 BC, The Bourne Ultimatum and Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix;
- Al Taylor (ex-RAF Airman who survived WW2)'
- David Parry (Soil Scientist, Environmental Development Consultant and Curator);
- Leo Suryadinata (Sinologist and ISEAS Senior Research Fellow);
- Nigel Taylor (Director, Singapore Botanic Garden); &
- Peter Overy (Creative Director, IDEO).

These talks were shared in social media through photos and videos (including interview sessions) to spread the awareness of our programmes. Speakers were also asked to contribute content in the form of articles which will be featured in the National Library's BiblioAsia journal.



3.5 NLB20

2015 celebrated the National Library Board 20th anniversary. As part of the celebration a suite of activities were organised. The list of sell out programmes organised by the National Library were :

- Rare gallery and library tour, where for the first time, members of the public were able to see the rare materials of the National Library.
- Sounds and Moving Images talk by the National Archives of Singapore where treasures from the audio-visual archives were shown to the audience.
- Panel discussion on tuition vs reading moderated by Professor Tommy Koh, Ambassador-at-large.
- *Escape from Reverie* where participants were tasked to solve various challenges within the National Library using the collections and resources as clues.

4. NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN BUILDING AND MANAGING COLLECTIONS

4.1 Singapore Memory Project (SMP)

There has been an increasing emphasis to create a sense of identity and nationhood among residents of Singapore. Singapore's maturity as a city-state in the global context has also given rise to a need in ensuring that the Singapore Story is collected, preserved and discovered to prevent the permanent loss of the nation's heritage and roots.

The Singapore Memory Project (SMP), started in 2011, is a whole-of-nation movement which aims to capture and document memories related to Singapore from individuals, organizations and communities. In particular, SMP aims to collect memories of first and second-generation Singaporeans before their experiences are permanently lost. At present, a total of **6,246** quality memories have been collected and documented.

4.1.1 Digital Engagement

Total Size of Digital Community (Jan – Dec 2015)	
Facebook Fans, Twitter Followers, Instagram Followers, Pinterest Followers, ISSUU Followers, YouTube subscribers	253,705
Total Reach of SMP's Digital Outreach (Jan – Dec 2015)	
	67,141,151

In 2015, SMP continues to engage purposefully with the online community through the use of engaging content, sharing a series of blog posts and regularly posting infographics on digital media channels.

The online community grows larger with more fans contributing their memories through sharing, messaging and commenting on our channels, generating an avalanche of submissions to the project. Those memories about Singapore are often triggered by the content that SMP has gathered, researched and posted on the page. Content created for other social media accounts (Twitter, Instagram, YouTube) has also garnered an increasing number of followers and interactions with the respective communities.

4.1.2 SMP Initiatives in 2015

In 2015, a number of SMP public engagement activities and campaigns were carried out.

a. Past Forward

In celebration of SG50, SMP presented 'Past Forward', a monthly showcase of Singapore's past by forward-thinking artists, funded by the irememberSG Fund. Close to 70 projects were featured through various mediums – films, exhibitions, documentaries, installations and publications. Between March to August 2015, a total of 17 exhibitions, a Film Festival, 13 film screenings, 39 programmes, 25 publications were held and these attracted 107,174 participants.

The themes for the monthly Past Forward showcases are:

- Home (April 2015)
A series of works exploring the theme of home finds inspiration right where the heart is.
- Rewind/Remind – Film Festival (May 2015)
Films produced by local film makers were screened at the Rewind/Remind Film Festival organized by the SMP in May 2015. Collectively, the films provide a poignant reminder of how times have changed and the need to document the precious moments before they disappear.
- The Young, The Brave (June 2015)
From the warmest childhood memories to the inspirational stories of courage, no stones were left unturned in this series of recollections.
- Tapestry of Lives (July 2015)
A woven quilt of homespun tales that define Singapore, where threads of lives are spun together reflecting our communal ties.
- Hearts & Craft (August 2015)
Led by the desire to give shape to our favourite past-times of yesteryear, these forward-thinking minds spared no effort in turning past inventions into today's creations.

Besides the above, there were other projects, like Island Nation and Singapore (Very Old Tree), presented under the theme "The Past is Another Land".

b. The Greatest Gift of a Generation: Life Stories

SMP's 'Greatest Gift of a Generation: Life Stories' exhibition featured stories, anecdotes and memories of 39 Singapore pioneers who experienced the pre-independence and nation building years. Touching on the universal themes of love, loss, separation and hope, their life stories were told through first-person narratives and featured on panels and displays located across the Woodlands Regional Library, complemented by portraiture shots captured by students from the Nanyang Technological University's School of Arts, Design and Media. The exhibition is held at the Woodlands Regional Library from June 2015 until May 2016.

c. KopiTimes – Shared Stories from our Coffeeshops

In November 2014, SMP launched a series of weekly roadshows held at coffeeshops across the island aimed at expanding the collection of stories and memories, especially from older Singaporeans. Out of the stories collected, 30 compelling ones were selected and produced as videos and shared on the irememberSG Youtube channel. This video series was publicised through the irememberSG Facebook and Youtube platforms from July to October 2015. In total, they garnered over 1,293,520 views, 11,000 'likes' and 3,000 'shares'.

d. Memory Makers video series II

The second series of the Memory Makers video commissioned by SMP featured 10 pioneers who shared their life stories. The 10 stories were released on a weekly basis between late October 2015 to early January 2016.

e. SMP@JRL

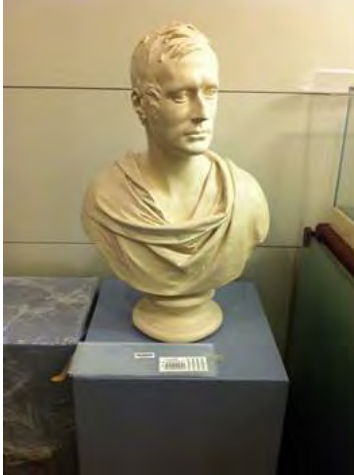
The SMP Library at Jurong Regional Library continued to showcase SMP publications, commissioned works, personal projects and partner initiatives. The SMP partners' exhibition gallery also featured the memory collections contributed by the SMP partners.

4.2 Heritage Collections

NL recently acquired the Raffles & Singapore/Southeast Asia collection from the private library of Dr John Bastin based in United Kingdom. The collection has been collected, carefully curated and maintained for over several decades by Dr John Bastin, a post-war pioneer of Southeast Asian studies and a leading authority on Raffles.

The collection totals over 6,000 books, periodicals, reports, papers, maps, photographs and holographic letters, including those from Raffles and his contemporaries. These materials provide a wealth of insight into Singapore's modern founding by Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles, as well as the development and portrayals of Southeast Asia in the early 19th century. The collection also contains several unique and early materials about Singapore and the Malay Archipelago during the colonial period.

Dr Bastin's Collection has great research potential as it will give the National Library access to a highly important group of Raffles materials on this region. Acquiring Dr Bastin's extensive collection will not only help to fill NLB's gaps and enhance its Singapore and Southeast Asian collections, but will also boost its image as a premier cultural heritage institution within the region and promote new research and appreciation of Singapore's history.



Raffles bust



Raffles Bookplate



Naval code of signals printed in Madras 1811 used during the British conquest of Java

Significant Donations in 2015

Notable donations received included Koh Seow Chuan's collection of legal documents which comprised powers of attorney, writ of summons, and other documents such as receipts. From these documents one can glean the legal and business history of Singapore from the mid to the late 19th century. A significant highlight from this collection is a hand coloured/drawn plan of Tanjong Pagar Dock Company, dated 1878.

Other organisations which donated during the year were the OTC Institute of the National Trade Union Congress and the Lembaga Biasiswa Kenangan Maulud. OTC Institute donated a set of heir newsletters, "Perjuangan" published since 1964 while LBKM donated materials from their archives which traced the organisation's corporate history and social development since its establishment in the 1960s.

5. NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN PROVIDING ACCESS TO COLLECTIONS

5.1 NL Exhibitions & Programmes

The National Library has organised a host of exhibitions in 2015 including the "Geo|Graphic Maps Festival" (January to July 2015) featuring the library's collection of early European maps of Southeast Asia and the world. The exhibition festival included art installations by three Singaporean artists thematically related to maps and mapping,

as well as an exhibition showcasing the National Archive's collection of Maps of Singapore.

Other exhibitions held include "Poetry on Platforms" featuring Singapore poetry across the four official languages. 82 poems by Singapore poets were showcased on the platform doors of a Mass Rapid Transit station from August to September 2015.

Additionally, the National Library presented a revamp of an existing exhibition, "Hands: Gift of a Generation", at the Woodlands Regional Library titled "Life Stories" which features 38 stories from members of Singapore's Pioneer Generation as they recount their memories of struggles in their lives, and the overcoming of hardship. The exhibition was presented in collaboration with photography students from the School of Art, Design and Media, Nanyang Technological University, whose photography of the pioneers is featured in the exhibition.

5.2 Publications

In 2015, the National Library published 5 books and 4 issues of the *BiblioAsia* journal. The book titles included:

- *Visualising Space: Historical Map Collections of National Library and National Archives of Singapore,*
- *SingaPoetry: an Anthology of Singapore poems*
- *Through the Lens of Lee Kip Lin: Photographs of Singapore 1965-1995*
- *Living the Singapore Story: Celebrating our 50 years 1965 – 2015*
- Chapters on Asia (second instalment) published in e-book format.

These publications aim to increase the awareness of the National Library collections as well as to encourage discovery and research into Singapore content. Two of the books, *SingaPoetry* and *Visualising Space*, were published in conjunction with exhibitions organized by the library to generate greater interest in the respective subjects as well as to draw more people to visit the exhibitions. *Living the Singapore Story* was produced specially to mark Singapore's 50th anniversary. It features the personal stories of Singaporeans from various walks of lives, of their life experiences and how they have overcome the odds to build a nation. *BiblioAsia*, published quarterly, is distributed to local and international libraries, academic institutions, government agencies and the general public.

Besides books and journals, the National Library also publish articles on Singapore Infopedia and HistorySG, two of NLB's online databases that aim to provide authoritative resources on Singapore and Singapore's history respectively. To-date, Infopedia has over 2,000 articles and covers a wide range of topics ranging from arts and culture to the government. In 2015, Infopedia had been visited 1.9 mil times, with 3.9 mil page views. Launched in 2014, HistorySG has 589 articles to date and has garnered 304,642 visits and 596,880 pageviews this year. New articles written by librarians and other writers are constantly being added to the two databases.

6. NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN OTHER SERVICES

- 6.1 Upcoming exhibitions in 2016 include a marquee exhibition titled "From the Stacks: Highlights of the National Library" in January, showcasing the National Library's collection of rare materials, and an exhibition in October exploring the early

development of theatre and dramatic arts in Singapore through materials from the collection, video interviews of playwrights, directors, producers and actors.

6.2 George Lyndon Hicks Fellowship for Southeast Asian Collections

In June 2014, Mr George Hicks agreed to sponsor a Fellowship Programme for a period of 5 years at a total sum of \$640,000 for an estimated 15 local and international Fellows. This new Fellowship aims to enhance the National Library's Singapore and Southeast Asian special collections and to raise the research standards of librarians through mentorship by the Fellows. The Fellowship commenced this year, and two fellows have been awarded, to aid the library in growing its rare books and maps collections, as well as improve its overarching collecting strategy for all special collections.

7. NOTES ON COLLABORATION WITH OTHER LIBRARIES, ARCHIVES AND MUSEUMS

7.1 Through the OneSearch online portal, NLB provided users an integrated service to search across the resources residing in the National Library Board's libraries, the National Archives, as well as the National Heritage Board (NHB)'s museum repository of artefacts and artworks. The online content has been grouped into nine categories for easy navigation:

Audio-visuals	Audiovisual and sound recordings and oral history interviews from the libraries, archives and museums can be found here. Highlights include public service broadcasts, Singapore related music, dialect Rediffusion broadcasts, home movies and audio-visual materials from the public libraries.
Books	Physical books, e-Books and digitized copies of rare Singapore and Southeast Asia's print material can be searched here.
eJournals	A selection of databases subscribed by NLB will be searched here.
Images	Pictures, paintings, posters, maps and building plans from the libraries, archives and museums databases can be located here.
Magazines & Articles	Electronic articles about Singapore, publicly submitted personal narratives and physical copies of magazines from the NLB can be found here.
Newspapers	Digitized copies of Singapore newspapers published between 1831 and 2009 can be located here.
Records & Papers	Past government records, speeches and press releases and Straits Settlements, overseas and private records can be searched here.
Physical	Digitized artefacts and artworks from the museums can be found

Objects	here. Some highlights include Perankan wedding slippers, dragon robe from Kangxi period, etc.
Websites	Archived copies of Singapore related websites that NLB received permission to make a copy of can be found here.

7.2 As part of the SG50 celebrations, NLB collaborated with the National Museum of Singapore to inject personal memories curated by the Singapore Memory Project into the narrative of the revamped Singapore History Gallery which reopened in September 2015. The memories were presented in videos, sound bites, and multimedia interactive.

7.3 National Union Catalogue (NUC)

The National Union Catalogue (NUC) is a comprehensive record of the collective holdings of 48 libraries in Singapore and is a useful tool for resource-sharing locally and internationally. NLS plays a leadership role as it collaborates with members to consolidate and connect the heritage collections and resources of Singapore.

8. NOTES ON INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION

8.1 ASEAN Digital Library

The ASEAN Digital Library (ADL), (previously the National Libraries Asia Pacific), a project partly sponsored by ASEAN Committee on Culture and Information (COCI), is a platform that provides users with a seamless way to search for and to gain access to the wealth of digital materials held by the National Libraries in ASEAN. So far, seven National Libraries (i.e. NL Cambodia, NL Laos, NL Malaysia, NL Philippines, NLB Singapore, NL Thailand and NL Vietnam) have contributed metadata records to ADL.

The pilot website containing the records of these seven National Libraries was launched on 30 Nov 2015. The 2nd ADL regional meeting, a 3-day event will be held in Singapore in May 2016. Two representatives from each of the nine ASEAN National Libraries will be invited to attend. The project team plans to mark the launch of the ASEAN Digital Library website during the regional meeting.

8.2 Singapore 50 (SG50) Gifts of Books

This project showcased Singapore books through the international library network and built goodwill with NLB's international partnering libraries. Over 40 libraries participated in the event and each library received up to 300 books. The books showcased Singapore's achievements and history to international audiences as well as topics on culture, art, biodiversity, and heritage.

8.3 Book Donation to Myanmar Libraries

NLB, the Library Association of Singapore, the National Library of Myanmar and the Library Association of Myanmar worked together to bring 50,000 used library books from Singapore libraries to libraries in Myanmar. The book donation ceremony was held at the National Museum of Myanmar in Yangon on 4 April 2015. The project received strong support from the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) which has been working closely with the Myanmar libraries in building capacity and training library leaders.

8.4 Preservation and Conservation Course for the Libraries in Myanmar

NLB conducted a 5-day Preservation and Conservation Course for the Libraries in Myanmar. The workshop was held on 14 to 18 September 2015 at the Children's Library of the National Library branch in the premises of the National Museum of Myanmar.

21 Myanmar librarians participated in the paper conservation training workshop. The phase two of the Preservation Conservation training is an attachment with the National Archive Singapore in January 2016 for five librarians. The focus of phase two would be to deepen their knowledge of conservation practices. MFA will provide support for the attachment to the NAS under the Singapore-Myanmar Technical Cooperation Programme (SMTCP).

8.5 19th Conference and General Assembly of the South East Asia-Pacific Audio Visual Archive Association (SEAPAVAA 19)

NLB's subsidiary, the Asian Film Archives (AFA) was the host of this conference and General Assembly on 22 to 28 April 2015. The conference theme was "Advocate, Connect, Engage".

It was attended by 188 audio-visual professionals from over 28 countries comprising Audio-visual professionals from archives, universities, libraries, broadcasters, cinemathèques from Asia, the Pacific, the Middle East, Europe and North America, some of whom were visiting Singapore and attending SEAPAVAA for the first time.

The 2-day symposium saw 43 paper presentations, six poster presentations and the screening of 14 archival clips. There were also nine presentations on various restoration issues during the Resource Acquisition Is Initialization (RAII).

Other events like the welcome and farewell dinners, archival gems screening, Restoration Asia (RA) II, concurrent workshops on advocacy and succession planning, general assembly, institutional visits, and excursion were organised.

8.6 Joint Technical Symposium, Singapore

The Joint Technical Symposium (JTS) 2016 is organised under the auspices of UNESCO by the Co-ordinating Council of Audio-visual Archives Associations (CCAAA) and its members' Technical Committees.

The event is hosted by the South East Asia-Pacific Audio Visual Archive Association (SEAPAVAA) and the National Archives Singapore (NAS) in Singapore on 7 to 9 March 2016. The theme of JTS 2016 is "Sustainable Audio-visual Collection through Collaboration".

The papers to be presented will cover the ongoing technological viability of audio-visual collections both as individual items and holistically, as well as every aspect of audio-visual media preservation and access such as conservation and restoration, harvesting and accessing collection information – including metadata and intellectual property.

8.7 International Network of Library Innovators (INELI) ASEAN Second Convening

The International Network of Emerging Library Innovators-Association of Southeast Asian Nations (INELI-ASEAN) Project, a regional initiative funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF), aims to create a regional network of emerging library innovators to foster collaboration, strengthen capacities and partnerships among stakeholders in Southeast Asia. The lead organization for INELI ASEAN is the National Library of Philippines (NLP). The National Library Board of Singapore as the institutional partner of NLP will be the co-host of the second convening to be held in Singapore in Sep 2016. The 2nd convening will be attended by around 65 librarians from the various public and national libraries in the region.

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