



# A Knowledge Hub

By Ambika Raghavan, Senior Reference Librarian,  
Lee Kong Chian Reference Library

Hailed as the “people’s library for the knowledge age,” the new National Library is designed as a unique and modern library to meet the challenges of the 21st century. Standing 16 Levels above ground at Victoria Street, the focus of the Library will be on providing access to a comprehensive range of reference and research collection, services and facilities to promote lifelong learning for all communities and enable knowledge acquisition to create lasting social and economic impact for Singapore. It is worth noting that the Library is situated in the heart of the Arts, Culture, Learning and Entertainment belt thus making it the one-stop point for information and research needs amongst researchers, professionals, scholars and students.

Compared to the old National Library building at Stamford Road, the new one is five times bigger with a gross floor area of 58,500 sq m. The building comprises two blocks with distinctive characteristics. One showcases the Library’s contemplative side in the rectilinear block housing the bulk of the Library’s collections. The curvilinear block manifests the Library’s dynamic side with most of the programmes and events held there.

## Lee Kong Chian Reference Library

The Reference Library had its humble beginnings in 1951 at the Raffles Library and Museum. On 12 November 1960, the National Library moved to its new premises at 91 Stamford Road. The Reference Department was renamed as Reference Division in 1963 and later renamed again as Reference Services Division (RSD) in 1970. It remained as RSD until January 1998 when the National Reference Library was formed with the establishment of the National Library Board. The old National Library was a landmark and was closed on 1 Apr 2004.

The reference library at the new National Library is named the Lee Kong Chian Reference Library to commemorate a philanthropist and founder of the Lee Foundation, the late Dr Lee Kong Chian, who had made valuable contributions in the fields of public library service. He had donated S\$375,000 in 1953 for the development of the former National Library. Fifty years on, his son donated another S\$60 million towards the new Library. This donation was the largest ever made to any public organisation in Singapore from a corporate sector benefactor.

The Lee Kong Chian Reference Library spans seven floors from levels seven to thirteen. It has over half a million items in its collections on various disciplines.

### Level 7:

#### Social Science & Humanities and Science & Technology Collections

The former includes works on education, government, social policy and culture while the latter features information on life sciences, biotechnology, material sciences and engineering.

### Level 8:

#### The Arts and Business Collections

Art lovers will be treated to works on visual arts, architecture and creative design. The National Library hopes to contribute to the cultural capital and the development of a vibrant creative arts industry in Singapore. Also housed on this floor is the Business Collection comprising selected market research, specialised country and annual reports, business and trade directories as well as guidebooks.

### Level 9:

#### Chinese, Malay and Tamil Collections

The Chinese, Malay and Tamil Collections are developed to support the library as a centre of excellence for research on Chinese, Malay and Tamil Studies. The Chinese collection covers materials on arts, business, education, history and geography with special focus on resources on China, traditional Chinese medicine and healthcare as well as Chinese overseas. The Malay collection covers all aspects of community life in the Malay Archipelago, including socio-economy, politics, culture, religion, language and literature. The Tamil collection focuses on religion, language, arts and literature.

## Level 10: The Donors' Collections

Private collections of individuals, organisations and societies that provide valuable sources of information on Singapore's history, social and cultural heritage are kept on this floor. Some of these include the Ya Yin Kwan collection donated by Tan Yeok Seong and collections donated by Tan Swie Hian.

## Level 10: Asian Children's Collection

The Asian Children's Collection covers literary and research materials related to children's literature in the four official languages. This is an ideal resource for educationalists, illustrators and anyone interested in the use and production of children's reading and writing materials from an Asian perspective.

## Level 11: Singapore and Southeast Asian Collections

These form the core collection of the Lee Kong Chian Reference Library with over 200,000 items, including items inherited from predecessor libraries such as the Raffles Library. Special formats in the form of microfilms, maps, audio-visual materials, ephemera and posters are housed in this location.

## Level 13: Rare Materials Collection

Includes extremely valuable and rare publications, mostly from the 19th and early 20th centuries, many of which were issued by Singapore's earliest printing presses. This collection contains some of the important treasures of Singapore's history and literary heritage such as Jawi manuscripts, Malay and Southeast Asian language dictionaries, directories, almanacs, scholarly journals and casual and serious accounts of travels in the Malay Archipelago and Southeast Asia.

## Basement 1: Central Lending Library

Located at Basement 1, the Central Lending Library focuses on offering visual, creative and literary art, business and management collections and award winning literature to its patrons, mainly the arts and business community in the area. Compared to the Reference Library, it fans out to a much broader group of users such as children, youths and adults.

In short, the National Library of Singapore promises to be a fusion pod for learning, discovering and application of knowledge through its many activities, programmes and wealth of information.

Come visit us. You will be enthralled by the quality of information service and our knowledgeable reference specialists.

## Services

Onsite and remote information services are provided by the Lee Kong Chian Reference Library. Patrons can get access to information through counters at levels 7, 8, 9 and 11. They can also submit their enquiries through telephone, email, fax as well as postal mail. A Fiction Advisory Service, which offers advice to users on the type of fiction titles to read will be provided at the Central Lending Library.

In addition, self-help services are always available at Library e-Kiosks placed at strategic locations in the library for directional, circulation and other enquiries.

## Digital and Electronic Resources

The Library hopes to push more digital content through the NLB Digital Library at [www.nlb.gov.sg](http://www.nlb.gov.sg). These include a greater selection of databases, images, unpublished works of local authors, digitised rare materials and thematic articles on Singapore heritage and other materials from partner libraries like the British Library.

Members of the public can access an array of some 40 online databases to support the specialised collections at the Library. *Factiva*, *Proquest*, *REALIS (URA Real Estate Information System)*, *GMID (Global Market Information Database)*, *Kompass*, *Bibliography of Asian Studies* and *Grove Art Online* are some of the databases, which will be made available online at the multimedia stations at a nominal fee.

## Exhibitions

Library patrons can also enrich their learning experience about the history of the Library's heritage as well as thematic events through exhibitions and public programmes. Two exhibitions are currently in development:

- *Zheng He* and *Maritime Asia* exhibition, which celebrates the 600th anniversary of the maiden voyage of Admiral Zheng He, is scheduled to display from 13 August 2005 to 10 February 2006.
- *History of the National Library of Singapore* exhibition, which will be a permanent feature describes the Library's heritage from the 1800s.

## Programmes

The Library will also host a variety of programmes and performances for its various audiences. In addition, visitors to the Library can get an overview of the Library's services, collections, architecture and exhibitions by joining the Library's public guided tours. They can also sign up for special collection tours.

# Services at the Lee Kong Chian Reference Library

By Chow Wun Han, Manager, Lee Kong Chian Reference Library

## Reference & Information Services

The Lee Kong Chian Reference Library provides advisory services for research assignments, business ventures and personal interest. Our reference librarians can provide answers to queries, suggest useful search strategies and guide you to relevant and useful resources available at the Library. Researchers from academic to business fields may also make an appointment with qualified reference librarians specialising in the subject area to help clarify and locate what you need.

## Reference Point

In addition to the on-site reference and information services, Reference Point also satisfies your reference needs from the comfort of your home. You can email, mail, fax or call Reference Point whenever you have an enquiry.

## Audio-visual Services

A wide range of audio-visual materials on many topics ranging from business and management to the arts may be viewed within the Lee Kong Chian Reference Library. Our audio-visual materials include videotapes, laser discs, digital videodiscs (DVD), video compact discs (VCD) and compact discs. Customers may browse our catalogue to check for titles before applying to view them.

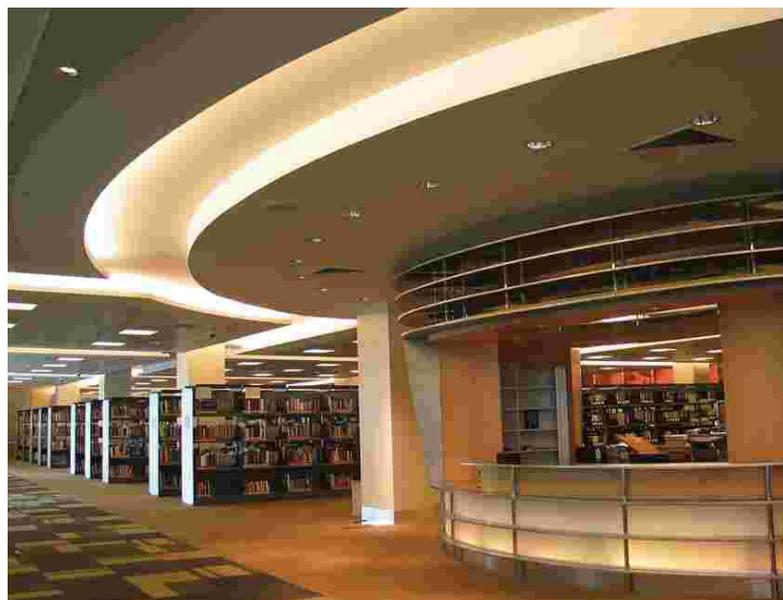
## Interlibrary Loan and Document Delivery

Interlibrary loan is available for libraries and government organisations that wish to borrow items from NLB libraries or overseas libraries. This service allows institutional members convenient access to the vast materials from our network of libraries.

The Document Delivery Service supplies documents from NLB's print and microfilm collections as well as databases of selected overseas libraries for individuals, government organisations, corporate members, NLB's institutional members and overseas libraries, subjected to the copyright law. Customers may request for details from the Reference Counters at the Lee Kong Chian Reference Library.

## Repository Used Collection (RUR)

The Lee Kong Chian Reference Library also provides for consultation access to the older Repository Used Reference (RUR) materials stored outside the Library's premises. Customers can place a reservation for a RUR



book at \$1.55 per item; once the book arrives at the library, customers will be notified by post and will be able to consult the RUR item within the Library only.

## Printing, Photocopy and Reprographic Services

Customers can print downloaded documents from websites and databases at the multimedia stations, available on levels 7, 8, 9 and 11 at \$0.30 per A4 copy. For our customer's convenience, black and white photocopying services at \$0.05 per A4 copy are also available on levels 7, 8, 9 and 11, while quality colour photocopying services are available on levels 8 and 11 at \$0.50 per A4 copy.

Customers can also obtain black and white photocopies from microfilms at the photocopying service on level 11. For better quality printouts from microfilms, customers can place a reprographic order at the Reference Counter.

## Digital Content

An increasing amount of e-content, whether digitised from our local collections or acquired from our partners and commercial providers, is available through the digital library portal at [www.nlb.gov.sg](http://www.nlb.gov.sg). The digital library portal contains 40 online databases and electronic journals that support researchers by its convenient search and access. Digital content covers Business information, Art, Social Sciences, Science and Chinese databases. Highlights of our databases include *Britannica Online*, *Grove Art Online*, *Forrester Research*, *GMID (Global Market Information Database)*, *Euromonitor*, *REALIS (URA Real Estate Information System)*, *China Infobank* and *Singapore Pages*.