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The Library Online

By Wong Tack Wai, Senior Manager, Digital Library Services

The revamped National Library Board's Digital Library (NLB DL) at www.nlb.gov.sg was soft launched on 22 July 2005, the same day that the new National Library Building was opened to the public. NLB DL complements the strengths of the physical collections with its online and digital resources.

Previously, library users had to access separate web portals to search for corporate information and carry out library transactions. Now, there is one seamless interface for all their information needs. The revamped website is more userfriendly and provides a wider plethora of electronic resources for the information seeker. These include a greater selection of unpublished local works, digitised rare materials on Singapore content, as well as an expanded list of databases.

This development of hosting both corporate information and digital library can also be found at the British Library's website (www.bl.uk) as well as the National Library of Australia's (www.nla.gov.au) website.

Ease Of Navigation

At the home page, the top horizontal navigation facilitates easy access to different areas of interest, such as "About NLB", "Catalogue", "Public Libraries", "Reference Libraries", "National Library", "Services", and "News and Events".

The left vertical navigation bar is context sensitive and the links will change as the user navigates through the site to reveal related links.

The following examples highlight some of the contents that can be found in various parts of NLB DL.

Home

The Home page of NLB DL gives an update on the latest happenings both in the physical library as well as the digital library. Together with the "What's New" and "New Arrivals" on the right of the webpage, the attractive banners in the centre are designed to capture users' attention. For example, when the Zheng He Exhibition was launched on 13 Aug 2005, a banner was a put up to raise awareness of, and also to guide the user to the online Zheng He Virtual Exhibition.



About NLB

The highlight here is the Library 2010 Report, which sets out the National Library Board's strategic direction for the next 5 years.

In this next phase of our development, the National Library Board aims "to bring the world's knowledge to Singapore to create a positive social and economic impact". The Library 2010 Report addresses the key challenges for the Singapore society and economy, and provides a strategic response. Read all about it at www.nlb.gov.sg/L2010/L2010.pdf

Public Libraries

If you think that all public libraries do is to open their doors for library patrons to borrow materials, you will be amazed to learn a lot more about public library services in this section. As you navigate through the links, you will encounter a whole slew of activities and programmes tailored to suit the needs of library patrons from all ages with various interests. The links contained in the section will give you a clue to what you can learn about public libraries. The links are:

- Advisory & Enquiry
- Library Enrichment Activities
- Outreach Activities
- Storytelling
- Verging All Teens
- Reading Groups
- Programmes
- Community Partnership & Outreach

For the details, go online and start surfing!





Reference Libraries



The Reference Libraries section is a treasure trove of information! The navigation bar as shown above lists and describes the various collection held at the Lee Kong Chian Reference Library.

Within the Singapore and Southeast Asia section, unpublished artistic works can be found in *NORA* (NLB Online Repository for Artistic Works) and digitised collections of rare materials in *Singapore Pages*. Information on other interesting collections such as the Gibson-Hill Collection and the Rare Materials Collection can be accessed from the left vertical navigation bar as shown below.



If you are looking for reliable and authoritative information, do access the many databases that the National Library Board has subscribed for public consumption. These databases are provided by Grolier, EBSCOhost, Factiva, and xreferplus, just to name a few. In all, there are 78 databases for library patrons to search for information. To make it convenient for our customers, these databases are group by subject as shown.

The NLB DL is available seven days a week, 24 hours a day. New contents, features and services are constantly added to the site. Be you a child, a student, a concerned parent, an educator, an avid reader, or a researcher, there will definitely be some useful information you can take away from NLB DL. The user-friendly interface will make your visit to NLB DL informative, interesting and worthwhile. Go ahead and start exploring www.nlb.gov.sg today!



