

Legal Deposit Showcase Heightens Public Awareness



by SHARMINI CHELLAPANDI

Senior Librarian
National Library Office
National Library Board

The National Library Board (NLB) is the deposit library for all publications printed and published in Singapore. This practice started from as early as 1835 with the Indian Act XI, followed by the Book Registration Ordinance of 1885, the Raffles National Library Ordinance in April 1958 and the Printers and Publishers Act of 1970. From 1995, legal deposit has been mandated under the National Library Board Act.

Through legal deposit by publishers, the Library collects and safeguards the documentary heritage of Singapore, and makes it forever accessible to readers, researchers and agencies interested in these works.

LEGAL DEPOSIT

Under the NLB Act of 1995, two copies of all print and non-print library materials that are "produced and released in Singapore for sale or public distribution" must be deposited with NLB.

Legal deposit applies to all individuals and organisations such as commercial publishers, corporations, government departments and agencies, educational and academic institutions, associations, societies, clubs and religious bodies which publish their materials in Singapore and make them available for sale or public distribution.

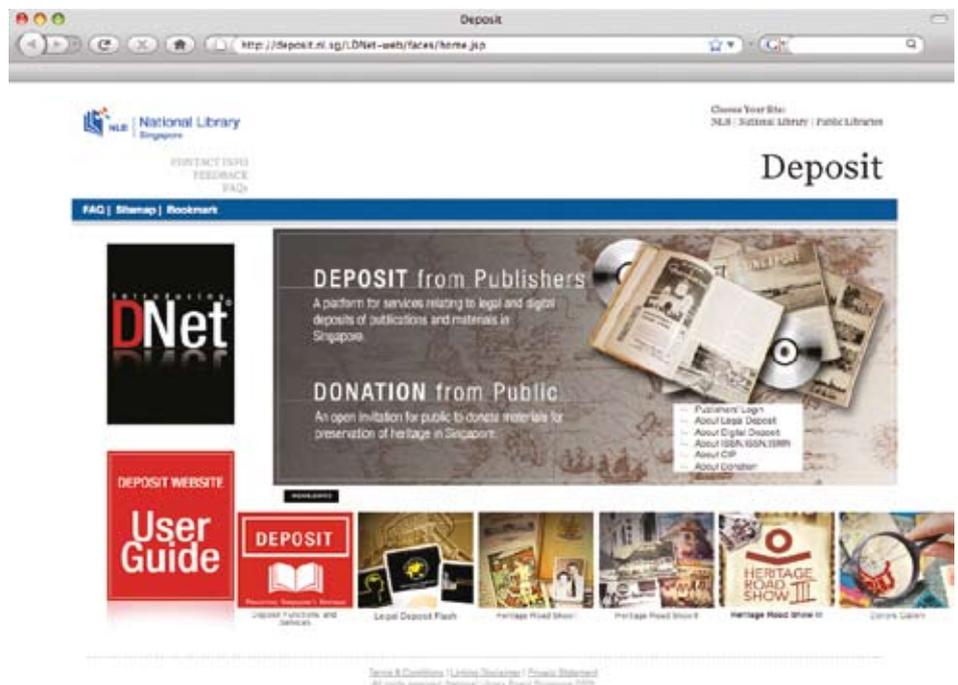
One of the strategies to develop a more comprehensive national collection of locally published materials is to create awareness particularly among the publishing community about legal deposit, which is quite diverse and represents varied formats. In addition, with new technology and new media, there is a growing trend towards self-publishing and many in this new group of ad-hoc publishers are unaware of their legal deposit obligations.

THE LEGAL DEPOSIT SHOWCASE – CREATING AWARENESS ABOUT LEGAL DEPOSIT

i. Deposit Web

In November 2007, a one-stop and user-friendly online portal, *Deposit Web*, was launched to encourage publishers to apply for book, music and serial International Standard Numbers (ISBN, ISMN and ISSN), apply for Cataloguing-in-Publication (CIP) data, submit legal deposit materials online and voluntarily deposit electronic materials.

One of the main objectives of this portal is to create awareness on voluntary deposit. NLB has organised several seminars for government agencies, private organisations and commercial



Snapshot of Deposit Web (<http://deposit.nl.sg>)

publishers to discuss the importance and framework of a voluntary deposit scheme for electronic publications prior to changes in legislation. Although there is no legal obligation on Singapore publishers to comply with the scheme, they are encouraged to support this objective of preserving Singapore's digital heritage. The Deposit Web thus provides an outlet for the National Library to adopt an interim measure to collect such publications.

Benefits of Deposit Web:

- Controlled and secured network;
- Personalised account for every Singapore publisher;
- One-stop portal to meet the needs of publishers;
- Consolidated listing of applications and publications for each publisher; and
- Information on latest updates and developments.



ii. DNet©

Publishers who actively deposit or donate their materials to the National Library will qualify for and get to enjoy the privileges offered as part of the Deposit Network, or DNet©.

DNet© is a network that acknowledges publishers, organisations, donors and

content developers (such as authors, music composers and self-publishers) that actively deposit and donate their materials with the National Library Singapore.

To enjoy the benefits of DNet©, publishers need only to be active

in depositing or donating their materials to the National Library.

- DNet© benefits include:
 - Professional preservation care and conservation services
- for their donated materials;
 - Rental discounts for the use of the National Library's facilities
- for events;
- Special invitations to exclusive library and networking events; and
- Opportunities for materials to be showcased in the National Library's physical or virtual exhibitions.

DNet© was launched in August 2008 at the first Legal Deposit Showcase in conjunction with the launch of the ISMN and was well attended by music producers and publishers. In its inaugural year, a total of 54 publishers, agencies and content producers joined DNet©.

Following the inaugural Legal Deposit Showcase in August 2008, a second seminar was held on 30 March 2009 at the Pod, National Library Singapore. The session elaborated on the scheme and benefits of Deposit Web and DNet© and also highlighted the legal and other regulatory services under the National Library Singapore.

Both the Deposit Web portal and DNet© are examples of online collaborative platforms that have facilitated NLB's efforts in meeting its legal obligations. More information about the Deposit Web and DNet© can be found at <http://deposit.nl.sg>.

In carrying out the statutory function of legal deposit, NLB, like most national libraries, faces many challenges, not least being the proliferation of online electronic publications, which have drastically changed the nature of publishing. As it works towards improving its legal deposit process and the voluntary deposit of digital materials, the National Library acknowledges and looks forward to the continued support of publishers whose participation in building the nation's literary heritage for posterity is critical.



Participants at the Legal Deposit Showcase held on 30 March 2009