UP! Your Reference Quotient at the National Library of Singapore

Reference & Info Services Section
Presenter: Janice Loo
National Library of Singapore (NLS)
NLS Reference Services
Where Are We Today?

Access to nation’s heritage
+ ref collections

Fulfil research needs of
local + global users

Houses materials on or about
Singapore + region

Four levels of info counters
onsite + remote ref service
What is a 21st Century Reference Librarian?

Human Search Engine or Partner in Knowledge Creation?
B R I D G I N G
Human Search Engine +
Partner in Knowledge Creation

NLS Reference Services
Professional Development Strategy
UP!
Your Reference Quotient

NLS Reference Services Professional Development Strategy
**OBJECTIVES**

- Enhance + refresh staff capabilities
- Develop better competency in ref + research work
- Equip staff in talent building + deployment
- Gain good understanding of ref services policies
- Ensure operational efficiency
- Re(ignite) passion for library profession

UP! Your Reference Quotient
Launched January 2013
Foundational knowledge

Familiarity with professional role

TRAINING

• Duties of ref librarians
• Customer service standards
• NLS classification of enquiries
• Escalation process for difficult enquiries
• Info packaging for fee-based products
• On-the-job training + mentoring
Enhance knowledge capacity
Augment subject expertise
Raise research capability
Nurture research scholarship

TRAINING
• Singapore heritage sources
• Genealogy talk
• Behind-the-scenes curators’ tour of the “Roots: Tracing Family Histories Exhibition”
• Peranakan research sources
SKILLS APPLICATION
NLS Client Research Services Attachment Programme

• Launched September 2013
• Summarise articles + reports
• Ongoing

Enhance proficiency in annotated citations

Keep abreast of developments in selected knowledge domains
SKILLS APPLICATION

*BiblioAsia* News Journal

- Promotes NLS collection
TRAINING

- Selection policies
- NLS collections: Rare materials, Maps, Newspapers, Ephemera, Arts portal, Reference Closed Access, Donors’ Gallery
- Electronic databases

Deepen knowledge of print, digital + donor collections

Good understanding of collection policies for purchased + non-purchased items
SKILLS APPLICATION
• Provide higher quality ref advisory services
• Develop high value info products
COLLECTION DISPLAYS
In the family: Family history resources in the National Library

Barry Tan

When tracing our family history, we embark on a meandering voyage to an unknown destination, each step often painfully slow because of the seemingly impossible mountains of resources to sift through or the dead-end facets of researching. Decision making is a challenge in this vast and complex world of discovery. To our delight, there are various avenues of discovery, none more fascinating than looking through the archives of old newspapers available through the National Library Board. As far as family history goes, newspaper records, especially those that are well-indexed, are a goldmine. Reports of births, deaths and marriages, or any announcements related to families, all can be key to understanding the history of your family.

As the first article of this series, I suggest a look into the Singaporean newspaper archives kept within the National Library. The archives are classified in both English and Chinese languages and are available through the National Library Board’s website. The newspapers available either online or offline, provide a rich source of information, especially for those with no leads on where else to look.

Family history is not just about the past, but also about the present and future. The stories of your ancestors, their lives, their struggles and achievements, can be passed down to the next generation. It is a way to keep traditions alive, to connect with your roots and to honor the sacrifices made by those who came before you.

In this article, I will be discussing the availability of the archives and how to access them. I will also share some tips on how to start your family history research using the National Library’s resources.

SUNBANGSHI MAS:
AN EXHIBITION ON MUHAMMAD ARIFF AHMAD

The exhibition, titled “SUNBANGSHI MAS: An Exhibition on Muhammad Ariff Ahmad”, is currently on display at the National Library. The exhibition showcases the works of this renowned Singaporean artist, including paintings, drawings, and prints. It provides a unique opportunity to explore the world of art and culture in Singapore.

Sago Lane: “Street of the Dead”

This article discusses the history and significance of Sago Lane, a street in Singapore that is associated with death and the afterlife. It delves into the cultural and historical context of the street, and highlights its importance in local folklore and traditions.

MGS memories of 11 Mount Sophia

This section features memories from the Mount Sophia area, specifically from the 11 Mount Sophia location. Readers can relive the past through the stories and photos shared by former residents and alumni of the school.

“MRS BEETON” MALAYA

This article explores the influence of Mrs. Beeton on Malay cuisine. It highlights the adaptations and innovations that have been made to traditional recipes, reflecting the diverse culinary landscape in Malaysia.

ON THE DINING TABLE: CHANGING PALATES THROUGH THE DECADES

This section examines how our eating habits have evolved over time, influenced by cultural changes, globalization, and advancements in technology.

TEMPERA SUITA: THE KOREAN JEWEL OF THE JAPANESE ARCHITECTURE

This article discusses the unique architectural style of Tempura Suta, a Korean restaurant in Japan, focusing on its design and the cultural significance of its location.

BIBLIOASIA JOURNAL

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EXHIBITIONS
ONLINE RESOURCES
Training

• Write and communicate in social media
• Harnessing the potential of new media communications
• Increasing traffic to your website – Use of SEO and Search Engine Marketing

Acquire know-how to connect with user communities in their preferred spaces
SKILLS APPLICATION

- NLS Facebook + Pinterest to promote Singapore-related content + NLS collections
- Learn by doing
OUTCOMES

Excellent

Relevant
Useful

Good refreshers

Great platforms to learn from one another

UP! Your Reference Quotient
Impact on Librarians’ Professional Development
26 Workshops. Average 15 - 20 Attendees
OUTCOMES

You are clearly a very dedicated, diligent + thorough researcher

I would like to thank the librarian for spending time to provide comprehensive answers

Excellent, prompt + accurate references

Extremely professional, more than what I could have expected

REFERENCE SERVICES
OUTCOMES

a wonderful issue

Well done & congrats!
Keep up the high standards
Keep improving the photos

the journal is getting better & better
... more relevant & interesting

BIBLIOASIA JOURNAL
OUTCOMES

I am most fascinated with this excellent exhibition.

I loved seeing the family heirlooms, precious items full of love & affection.

Well done, the exhibition helps increase the awareness of family history.
OUTCOMES

A body of works by a talented pioneer. The Khoo Seok Wan exhibition had wonderful translations of Chinese & English text.

This exhibition provides me with a fuller, more complete understanding of Khoo Seok Wan ... enables me to enjoy his poems & know more about his literary pursuits.

Such literary pioneer should be lauded. I am heartened that such an exhibition is finally given such prominence here in Singapore. Thank you NLB for such an effort & insight.
PHASE 2

- More in-depth training
- Hands-on opportunities
- Invite external industry speakers
- Convert modules for NLB e-learning portal

UP! Your Reference Quotient Moving On
NLS UP! YOUR REFERENCE QUOTIENT

21st Century Reference Librarian
What is a 21st Century Reference Librarian?

MORE THAN

Human Search Engine
Partner in Knowledge Creation
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THANK YOU

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