MALAYSIA: HEALTH & DOCUMENTATION SERVICES
A COUNTRY REPORT*

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ABSTRACT

Penulis memberi laporan mengenai dokumentasi bahan-bahan kesihatan serta perkhidmatan penerbitan di Pusat-pusat Kesihatan di Malaysia. Penekanan dibuat ke atas penggunaan masa kini dan masalah yang dihadapi untuk mendapat maklumat mengenai perubatan melalui internet.

INTRODUCTION

In Malaysia, 1990 is the era that mirrors the beginning of automation programmes in all major medical libraries. In 1994 the Malaysian Library Networking called Jaringan Ilmu (Knowledge Network) was formed.

A total number of 62 libraries consisted of 14 state libraries, 10 academic libraries, 6 research institutions and 31 libraries from ministries and government departments have participated in this project. It was a collaboration project between the National Library of Malaysia and the Malaysian Institute of Microelectronic System (MIMOS), an institute that provides telecommunication facilities for internet in Malaysia.

THE OVERVIEW OF MEDICAL LIBRARIES

There are over 30 medical and health-related libraries in Malaysia. These include libraries in higher institutions, government and private. The three major university medical libraries are:

- Universiti Malaya (UM) Library - established in 1963
- Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) Library - 1974, and
- Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) Library - 1982

In the 1990s more new medical libraries serving the medical faculty were set up namely:

- Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS) Library - established in 1994
- Institut Teknologi Mara (ITM) Library - 1996
- Hospital Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (HUKM) Library - 1997
- Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) Library - 1998

These universities are governed by the Ministry of Education. Other private medical libraries are International Islamic University (IIU), International Medical University (IMU) and National Heart Institute, commonly known as IJN (Institut Jantung Negara).

Under the Ministry of Health (MOH) Malaysia, there are 36 medical and health related libraries including the hospital libraries. The major ones are:

- Institute for Medical Research (IMR) – (1901)
- Ministry of Health Malaysia (MOH)
- Public Health Institute (PHI) – (1966)
- Health Education Division (HED) – (1993)
- Hospital Kuala Lumpur (HKL) – (1976)

There are about 18 hospital libraries in the states and districts all over Malaysia. The largest is Kuala Lumpur Hospital (HKL) library, which is managed by a librarian with 4 support staff. The library assistants run the other hospital libraries.

** Librarian, Kuala Lumpur Hospital.
SEAMIC ACTIVITIES ON HEALTH AND DOCUMENTATION

SEAMIC programmes and activities especially in the provision of free photocopy service, donations of CD-ROM to six hospital libraries in Malaysia in 1998 and the contributions of twenty copies of ICD 10 to hospitals in 1999 are laudable. Although it has been stopped due to economic slowdown, it had greatly assisted the smaller libraries in giving better services and fulfilling the needs of the library’s clientele and the hospital.

Other SEAMIC programmes such as Travel Research Fellowship (TRF) should be an on-going programme for it could foster the relationships with other medical library institutions from other SEAMIC member countries especially for library networking and resource sharing.

The Union List of Medical Periodicals (2nd edition, 1997) in Malaysia has been compiled by IMR library. We look forward to SEAMIC to publish the Union List of Medical Periodicals in Southeast Asia in electronic version as discussed and suggested during the 9th SEAMIC Technical Meeting in 1996.

INTERNET TECHNOLOGY

The present scenario sees the advent of internet or information superhighway and database on-line gaining more popularity in the library services. Most medical libraries in Malaysia are equipped with internet facilities.

Internet Services in Academic and Private Medical Libraries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Library</th>
<th>E-mail</th>
<th>Web Address (http://)</th>
<th>PC/Printer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UM</td>
<td><a href="mailto:a4tunku@cc.um.edu.my">a4tunku@cc.um.edu.my</a></td>
<td><a href="http://www.um.edu.my">www.um.edu.my</a></td>
<td>6/-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UKM</td>
<td><a href="mailto:kpcp@medic.ukm.my">kpcp@medic.ukm.my</a></td>
<td>medlib.ukm.my</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>HUKM</td>
<td><a href="mailto:mai@hukm.ukm.my">mai@hukm.ukm.my</a></td>
<td>hukm.ukm.my</td>
<td>40/2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USM</td>
<td><a href="mailto:medlib@kb.usm.my">medlib@kb.usm.my</a></td>
<td><a href="http://www.lib.usm.my/medlib">www.lib.usm.my/medlib</a></td>
<td>2/1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UPM</td>
<td><a href="mailto:lib@lib.upm.edu.my">lib@lib.upm.edu.my</a></td>
<td><a href="http://www.lib.upm.edu.my">www.lib.upm.edu.my</a></td>
<td>3/-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNIMAS</td>
<td><a href="mailto:cais@unimas.my">cais@unimas.my</a></td>
<td><a href="http://www.unimas.my">www.unimas.my</a></td>
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</tr>
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<td>IMU</td>
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<td><a href="http://www.imu.my">www.imu.my</a></td>
<td>4/2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IJN</td>
<td><a href="mailto:ijn@po.jaring.my">ijn@po.jaring.my</a></td>
<td><a href="http://www.ijn.com.my/ijn">www.ijn.com.my/ijn</a></td>
<td>2/1</td>
</tr>
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<td>ITM</td>
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<td><a href="http://www.itm.edu.my">www.itm.edu.my</a></td>
<td>1/1</td>
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<tr>
<td>IIU</td>
<td><a href="mailto:sayadek@iiu.edu.my">sayadek@iiu.edu.my</a></td>
<td><a href="http://www.iiu.edu.my/medic/medical">www.iiu.edu.my/medic/medical</a></td>
<td>19/1</td>
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</table>

Internet Services in Medical Libraries under MOH

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Library</th>
<th>E-mail</th>
<th>Web Address</th>
<th>PC/Printer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IMR</td>
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<td><a href="http://imr.gov.my/~lib">http://imr.gov.my/~lib</a></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOH</td>
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<td><a href="http://imr.gov.my/~lib">http://imr.gov.my/~lib</a></td>
<td>1/1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHI</td>
<td><a href="mailto:izan@iku.gov.my">izan@iku.gov.my</a></td>
<td><a href="http://imr.gov.my/~lib">http://imr.gov.my/~lib</a></td>
<td>2/2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HED</td>
<td><a href="mailto:ariza_abakar@hotmail.com">ariza_abakar@hotmail.com</a></td>
<td><a href="http://dph.gov.my">http://dph.gov.my</a></td>
<td>1/-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HKL</td>
<td><a href="mailto:hklilib1@po.jaring.my">hklilib1@po.jaring.my</a></td>
<td><a href="http://spl.pnm.my/~hkl">http://spl.pnm.my/~hkl</a></td>
<td>6/1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The recent survey done by HKL library indicates all major medical libraries have provided information on electronic resources available on the net.

The following tables show the electronic mail, web addresses, and number of computers and printers for internet services of the major libraries.

Out of 18 hospital libraries, only 5 have internet facilities in the library. Other hospitals have access to the internet but only at certain locations. As for HKL, all department heads are provided with internet access. Most academic or university libraries charge 20 cents per printout while under MOH, the library either charges 10 cents or no charge.

CURRENT UTILIZATION AND PROBLEMS OF OBTAINING MEDICAL INFORMATION

HKL library has distributed questionnaires to 50 internet users at the library. The result based on ranking 1 to 7 (one as first priority), found that users normally access internet for the following reasons:

1st - to access MEDLINE on the internet.
2nd - to look for general information for general knowledge.
3rd - to keep abreast with current medical information.
4th - for e-journal available free on the net.
5th - to search through medical databases subscribed by HKL library.
6th - to view government and commercial websites.
7th - to browse libraries' collection through OPAC (Open Public Access Catalogue).

The reason why medical databases subscribed by HKL library is unpopular is due to limited user license obtained by the library. As for ranking no.6, internet users only seek information from the government or commercial web sites only when they require some information pertaining to that particular department or organization. Last but not least, since HKL library is not yet computerised, therefore internet users are either not familiar with OPAC or not interested with browsing other libraries collection.

Based on the questionnaires, about 72% of internet users including the librarians said that they do not encounter any problem while 28% complained the following:

(i) difficulty in getting full text journal on certain subject field.
(ii) at times net is slow due to network congestion, thus downloading of information is slow.
(iii) lack of local medical resources on the net.
(iv) problems of knowing the right keywords and validity of information.
(v) some documents are in portable document format (pdf); therefore certain program is required to view the information.

FUTURE PROSPECTS OF MEDICAL LIBRARY

The major medical libraries consisting of 15 libraries including IMR and HKL have recently planned for a consortium with Ovid Technologies from Australia. The first meeting will be scheduled by end of August 1999.

The Ministry of Health Malaysia is the leading agent to implement Telemedicine Project, which is one of the seven flagship applications under the Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC). Under telemedicine project, the Continuing Medical Education (CME) will undertake to implement the nation-based programme that is virtual library.

The year 2000 sees the emergence of hospital libraries especially with the setting up of the Selayang Hospital (the first virtual hospital), Hospital Sungai Buluh and Hospital Putrajaya.

CONCLUSION

The rapid advances in information technology and telecommunication in the era of globalization have an impact on the libraries and the librarians as information centers and information professionals. These are the challengers in the third millennium. Therefore, cooperative project and networking such as SEAMIC Library Networking as one stop information centre should be formed. This kind of project will facilitate resource sharing thus contribute towards the improvement and development of medical libraries in Southeast Asian countries.