

The National Library of Malaysia saw a 38 per cent increase in the registration of new members last year, including from Generation Y.

## A new era for age-old habit

**MOVING FORWARD:** The National Library, mindful that technology may be heralding a new age of digital reading, is finding ways to ensure Malaysians continue to read

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**E**ASY access to web-based information has not affected library membership, with the National Library enjoying a significant increase in the registration of new members last year.

National Library of Malaysia director-general Datuk Raslin Abu Bakar told the *New Sunday Times* that there was a 38 per cent increase in the registration of new library members last year.

"Last year, 78,272 people registered as members compared with the 56,676 people in 2010," he said in an interview.

He said in terms of book borrowing, there was also a 33.2 per cent increase in the number of books borrowed last year, where 1,034,517 books were borrowed compared to 776,347 in 2010.

"By the end of December last year, the National Library reached its millionth membership with a total of 1,000,278 members."

However, the National Library has taken cognisance of the proliferation of tablet computers, and smartphones, and acknowledges that the penetration of netbooks due to cheap pricing and e-readers like Kindle may be heralding a new

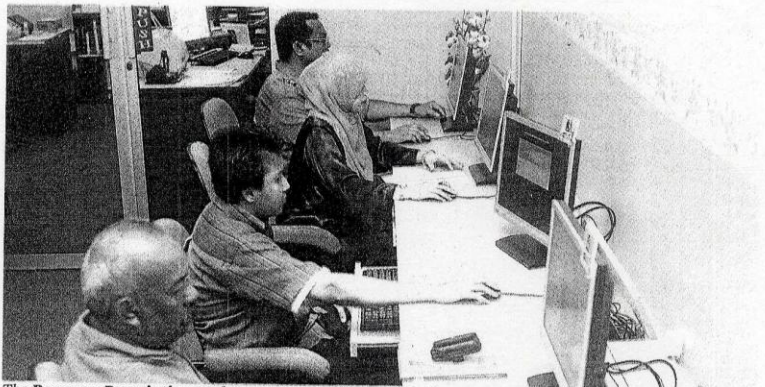


*Dr Barbara Tillett says the new Resource Description and Access system will keep libraries relevant in the era of the Internet*

age of digital reading.

"Bearing this in mind, the National Library will now not only offer books and resources in all genres, but also in the electronic medium, where people can access information outside the library, anywhere and anytime with the help of their notebook computers, iPhones, BlackBerry's and iPads.

"This means library users could save on travelling time to the li-



The Resource Description and Access system is set to provide easy access to Web-based information.

brary and instead spend more time reading in the comfort of their own home.

"Members of Generation Y nowadays like to read and get information through electronic gadgets such as iPads, telecommunication devices and the Internet. Online libraries and news publications are redefining reading habits, too, since people slot different hours during the day to catch up on news reading, unlike old times when the newspaper was religiously read with the morning cup of tea."

To keep abreast with the Internet era, the National Library is implementing a revolutionary new documentation system based on digital and new media to document all materials in its collection including e-books, e-resources and e-journals.

Raslin said the switch to this new

system, known by its acronym RDA (Resource Description and Access), is intended to benefit library users by providing a guide to all types of sources including digital and online web-based sources.

The new documentation system replaces the old AACR2 (Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules) which the National Library has been using since it opened and has been used by libraries throughout the world since 1967.

Dr Barbara Tillett, chair of the joint steering committee for developing the RDA, who was in Kuala Lumpur recently to introduce the new cataloging system at a seminar, said the new RDA system will keep libraries relevant in the era of the Internet.

"The AACR2 was not sufficient to cater to new e-formats. We have been working since 1997 to develop

an international content standard for describing all kinds of resources in every kind of format not only for libraries, but also archives and museums for describing materials in their collections, and also for preparing for the future where we can all be interconnected on the Internet," added Tillett, who is also the chief, policy & standards division of the Library of Congress in Washington DC.

She said the RDA system will be fully implemented in the Library of Congress in March 2013 and that Malaysia was the first Southeast Asian country to adopt the cataloging system.

**What do you think?**  
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