Collaboration, Consolidation, and Innovation:
Asian Institute of Management -
Knowledge Resource Center
Experience

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ABSTRACT

Many libraries, information centers, archives, museums, etc., are finding ways and
means to reinvent themselves through innovation, collaboration with other institutions and
organizations, and through consolidation of various information services and resources. This
particular need is brought about by increasing demands and expectations from stakeholders.

Asian Institute of Management (AIM), the pioneer international school of business
and management in Asia, was established in 1968 by Harvard Business School professors,
scholars, academicians and businessmen in the Asia-Pacific region. The Knowledge Resource
Center (KRC), as the central node of information for the Institute, has made steps to consol-
date various information resources acquired, received, and created by the Institute and its
various stakeholders. Various innovations in services and collections were also implemented
in order for the KRC to remain relevant in today’s rapidly changing, information world. The
KRC also collaborates with institutions not only in the Philippines, but also in the ASEAN
region, specifically in the area of resource sharing activities.

This paper will present various evidences to document the activities by the KRC
related to library collaboration, consolidation, and innovation (i.e. records management and
archives, marketing, social media technology, cloud computing, resource sharing, etc.).
Hopefully, these developments would serve as examples on how libraries and information
centers evolve from being a simple repository of information into a dynamic information hub
where people look for, use, create, and disseminate various types of information.

Keywords: Library collaboration, consolidation, library innovation, library
services, records management, archives

1. INTRODUCTION

There is a growing interest in reinventing libraries worldwide through collaboration,
consolidation, and innovation. This interest comes at a time when both libraries and librarians
face “value deficit” in terms of the perception and acknowledgment of their intrinsic worth
compared to other sources of information as well as gathering places where that information
is used” (Germano, 2011). One of the most common strategies utilized by library leaders is to
integrate library, archives, and records center services of their parent institutions. This “evolution” so to speak, comes naturally especially when the situation calls for a proactive, economically conscious, innovative, efficient, and effective library which, an institution or organization can depend on as far as managing and enabling access to information are concerned. This is a very practical approach especially in times when organizations face financial challenges, although, implementation is almost always difficult, especially for libraries characterized by inadequate budget, staff, and technical know-how or technical expertise on records management and archives.

Figure 1: Asian Institute of Management, Makati City, Philippines

This paper will highlight recent activities and developments of the KRC at AIM. These activities are offered to serve as examples on how a library could meet varied demands and expectations from its stakeholders.

The KRC has been supporting AIM’s mission, vision, and goals for several decades already. Currently, it is headed by an Associate Director. Under the incumbent associate director, four (4) professional librarians perform various library, records management, and archival activities. The KRC operates 113 hours every week.

Various initiatives were introduced in the 90’s and early 2000 in order to make the KRC as the central hub for all knowledge management activities by the various personnel of the Institute. However, such initiatives would eventually lose steam. Services and collections for a very long time have remained the same. The lack of creativity and innovation has prompted the Institute’s administration to look for a new KRC leader with the mission of improving the KRC’s services and collections.

2. HISTORY AND BACKGROUND OF AIM AND KRC

AIM, established in 1968 with the Harvard Business School, is the Asian pioneer in international management. Its programs were designed primarily to develop practicing managers in Asia’s emerging markets. With 40,000 alumni, AIM has clientele and alumni worldwide and meets the global accreditation standards of the US-based Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB). The institute is also well known for open enrollment and custom executive programs for business and non-business organizations (Source: http://www.aim.edu/the-aim-advantage/about-aim).
Currently, the KRC supports the teaching and learning needs of approximately 140 graduate students, 100 core adjunct faculty members and more than 200 staff of the Institute. Students enrolled in several short-term courses offered by AIM, are served as well.

The Institute consists of three schools:

a.) W. SyCip Graduate School of Business (WSGSB). It currently offers the Master of Business Administration (MBA) program.

b.) Stephen Zuellig Graduate School of Development Management (SZGSDM). This school offers the Master in Development Management (MDM) and certificate programs which seek to produce development catalysts who are capable of implementing programs with the largest impact on the poorest and focused on building strong institutions for sustainability.

c.) Executive Education and Lifelong Learning Center (EXCELL). EXCELL is AIM’s executive development arm. AIM executive education first launched its general management programs in the 1970s, signaling the birth of other programs categorized as open enrollment programs, and in-house or custom programs (Source: http://www.aim.edu/schools-programs).

Aside from the three schools, the Institute also has the following research centers:

1. AIM Policy Center
2. TeaM Energy Center for Bridging Leadership
3. Ramon V. del Rosario, Sr. Center for Corporate Social Responsibility
4. Ramon V. del Rosario, Sr. C.V. Starr Center for Corporate Governance
5. Dr. Stephen Zuellig Center for Business Transformation
7. Dr. Andrew L. Tan Center for Tourism

3. COLLABORATION, CONSOLIDATION, AND INNOVATION

AIM has been in the forefront of discussions and dialogues for the ASEAN 2015 integration as evidenced by various activities and projects conducted by the Institute’s various
Centers and faculty members. The following activities were conducted by the KRC in various areas:

3.1 Collaboration

AIM has been collaborating with international government and non-governmental organizations like the World Health Organization, International Labor Organization, Asian Development Bank, and the World Bank. The KRC has been designated as a repository of the publications by these organizations. Currently, the KRC is part of the World Bank’s Global Distance Learning Network and Knowledge Resource Network. The KRC also houses the Knowledge for Development Center (KDC) of the World Bank. At the moment, AIM is also collaborating with the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Business Advisory Council (ABAC), specifically in the area of generating case studies and on managing various electronic records of ABAC member economies.

Figure 3: KDC

In line with the projects and initiatives of the Institute for the ASEAN 2015 Integration, the KRC has started its ASEAN collaborative activity. Currently, it has a standing partnership with the Universiti Malaya, Sabah. This partnership started with publication exchange. One of the future plans of the KRC is to have a partner library in every ASEAN member state by 2016. Activities that will be explored would be staff training and skills enhancement, technical expertise and information exchange, etc.

In the local front, the KRC is a member of the Graduate Business Library Cooperative Program. Its main objective is to coordinate and support the provision of information service requirements of all member libraries, specifically, AIM-KRC, Ateneo de Manila University-Professional Schools Library, University of the Philippines, Diliman- University Library, and De La Salle University Libraries.

Most of the activities through this program include:
1. Interlibrary loan
2. Document delivery service
3. Free access to member libraries’ stakeholders
3.2 Consolidation

The year 2014 was a very interesting and dynamic period for the KRC. With the changing library leadership, KRC personnel were re-energized to think of better-ways of servicing the KRC’s stakeholders. Several meetings and dialogues were conducted with the various stakeholders of the Institute (i.e. Student Association officers, Alumni Association President, AIM faculty members, students, and staff). The purpose of these meetings is eliciting feedback on how the KRC is doing in terms of providing information services; staff behavior and performance; and library collections and facilities).

The results of these dialogues were used in crafting the KRC’s 3 year strategic plan. The over-arching theme of the strategic plan is to modernize the KRC and to consolidate old and new services of the KRC in order to serve the various needs of all its stakeholders. Some of the key result areas (KRAs) and programs are indicated in Table 1.

Table 1 KRC’s KRAs and Programs for 2014-2017

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<tr>
<th>KRAs</th>
<th>Programs</th>
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<td>Community Center</td>
<td>KRC renovation</td>
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<td>Collection Development</td>
<td>Asian/ASEAN collection improvement</td>
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<td>KRC E-Library creation</td>
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<td>Services</td>
<td>Institutional repository creation</td>
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<td>Online Public Access Catalog (OPAC) improvement</td>
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<td>Information literacy program implementation</td>
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<td>Persons with disabilities support</td>
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<td>Marketing and promotion activities implementa</td>
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<td>Quality Assurance</td>
<td>Customer satisfaction survey implementation</td>
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<td>Linkages</td>
<td>Library consortia participation</td>
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<td>Outreach program implementation</td>
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<td>Records Management and</td>
<td>Records and archives management program creation and implementation</td>
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<td>Archives</td>
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The KRC spearheads the records management program of AIM. Last June 5, 2014, the KRC Associate Director conducted a one day basic records management seminar workshop to selected AIM staff. One of the objectives of this activity is to come up with a records’ retention and disposition schedule (RRDS) based on the identified records of the different units of the Institute.

Ultimately, the RRDS, together with the records inventory list of all office will be accessible through Microsoft’s SharePoint. These, together with the digital assets and electronic records of the Institute will be stored and accessed through SharePoint. All of these are done in order to increase the Institute’s value as Blythe and Chachra (2005) pointed out: “The value to the institution comes from the collocation, the interconnection, the archiving, and the preservation of the intellectual output of the institution.”
3.3 Innovation

Library managers and administrators must constantly find ways of increasing the relevance and the value of their unit in relation to other units in their institution. We must always focus in increasing the library’s value proposition to its customers. Huwe (2012) clearly identified some of the phenomena that have brought about this necessity:

“information professionals live on the front lines of disruptive technology, they are subject to the force of digital convergence, which is forever pushing knowledge workers closer together and challenging them to rethink what they do. The sheer cascade of new technologies throughout the workplace, the entertainment sphere, and society in general requires constant review of our top goals, how we frame them to our users, and what “deliverables” we rely upon to build an evidence-based record of our relevance.”

The following innovations were done in order to address new demands and necessities brought about by changing user and institutional demands. Some of these innovations and activities include:

A. Digitization of the KRC’s collections as well as materials/information received and created by members of the Institute. Initially, digitization of management research reports (MRRs) or graduate theses of AIM students, covering the period 1995-2009, was conducted by an external service provider. Electronic copies of the MRRs were stored and made available to users in CD-ROMs. Aside from MRRs, AIM case materials were also digitized, but this time, it was done in house because of its manageable volume. As of the moment, various units of the Institute do their own scanning and digitization. A new project that would enable the digitization of MRRs from 2009- to the present will be conducted. This will be done through a grant from the AIM Alumni Association. The project, which is spearheaded by the KRC in collaboration with the ICT and FBA units, is scheduled to be started this year.

The researcher has observed that since most of the Institute’s units perform their digitization activities, there is danger of lack of standards and consistencies in the output of each unit. It is therefore imperative to create standards and policies in order to ensure consistency and quality outputs. It is also impractical for each unit to conduct their own digitization given the relatively small size of the Institute. The KRC therefore recommended a centralized approach to digitization in the Institute which is also aligned to the AIM’s general records and archives management program.

B. Programs and activities that were conducted in line with popular events and holidays like Halloween Trick or Treat, Christmas, Free movie tickets, etc. were done in order to strengthen the KRC’s relationship with its stakeholders while at the same time, gather feedbacks from its users. These activities would require participating library users to give feedbacks and comments through email, comment box located at the access services counter, or through the Facebook page of the KRC. Free books were given to patrons who would like and rate the KRC using Facebook. These books were duplicates and unwanted donations that do not fit into the Institute’s curricular programs and offerings.
C. Social media and networking sites were also used in order to keep in touch with the KRC’s users. As Kho (2011) puts it: “social media engagement can be an excellent way to reach a broader audience that is connected through the digital universe.” This also provides an opportunity to deliver off-campus information support like answering reference inquiries, links to electronic resources, and in making the
announcements like news, events, etc. Such announcements were historically done through posters and email blasts only.

D. The AIM Archives was officially opened last March 6, 2015. This facility, located inside the KRC, is the main repository of the institute’s knowledge assets. Some of the materials preserved in the archives include photographs, minutes of the meetings, annual reports, books, periodicals, trophies, and other memorabilia of AIM. This facility is also used as venue for institutional events like Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) signing ceremonies, etc.
4. CONCLUSION

In order for any library, archives, and records centers to remain relevant in this ever-changing world, it must constantly seek partnerships through collaboration; save resources and increase its value within the organization through consolidation; and re-invent itself through continuous innovation. Librarians, specifically, are challenged to expand their horizons in order for them to lead their libraries in this endeavor. The activities stated above are but some of the things that they could do in their respective organizations since maintaining the “status-quo” is no longer an option. As Germano (2011) posited “establishing and confirming value that is reflective of user needs, benefits and priorities is key” in ensuring the library’s relevance and worth within an organization.

REFERENCES