THE CHANGING FACE OF INFORMATION LITERACY: PACKAGING AND PRESENTING LIBRARY INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMMES

Roy Won and **Felicia Chan**
Public Library Services,
National Library Board, Singapore
e-mail: roy_won@nlb.gov.sg; felicia_chan@nlb.gov.sg

ABSTRACT

In this paper, we will explore how public libraries in Singapore have restructured their information literacy (henceforth IL) packages to keep up with a young generation whose attention is split in many different ways. The key idea here is to interest and engage as opposed to simply delivering the tools required for someone to be rendered "information literate". This requires a change in strategy. Firstly, librarians are geared to be more outward looking, seeking opportunities to present IL at schools and holding innovative workshops through the libraries. National Library Board, Singapore (NLB) has developed a holistic library information literacy courseware to be used in the elementary classroom. Secondly it is to incorporate the idea of "fun" into learning. Through interactive, games-based workshops - facilitated by the librarian – students aged 13 - 19 years learn valuable life skills like evaluating websites and using trusted information resources the library offers. For younger children, class presentation slides and materials, like the library children's newsletter, are brought to schools. Bite-size information coupled with treasure hunts make their encounter with IL more memorable and hence more effective. Thirdly, it is to bring IL back to the library, keeping the students engaged and continuously learning. Interesting enquiries are also posted on the public library blog and physical library spaces – which point to relevant resources and referenced answers. The teens also have an opportunity to represent their schools by taking part in National Contests like "Prove it!" where they hunt answers to reference questions. Teaching IL, through these methods, becomes a two-way process and is no longer the traditional one-way delivery on the part of the librarian.

Keywords: Information literacy instructions; Library instructional programmes; Library service promotion; Public libraries; National Library Board Singapore

INTRODUCTION

Since the term "information literacy" was first coined in 1974 by Zurkowski, its definition has been constantly evolving. From a definition that largely involves having a set of skills to locate and use information, it now includes knowledge of use for multiple formats beyond the printed world. Information and knowledge, once the exclusive properties of books, have now seen an explosion through the World Wide Web where overwhelming amounts of information are easily available. While such a proliferation of knowledge is excellent, it also spells a new era where teaching information literacy is concerned. This paper aims to explain how public libraries in Singapore have repackaged their library instructional programmes to include the dimension of a world that is saturated with information as well as programmes for younger children whose attention span is getting shorter due to the influence from a fast-changing digital world.

WHY MUST WE DO THIS?

THE Internet is to youngsters today what television was to their older siblings. Around seven in 10 households in Singapore had access to the World Wide Web at home in 2006, up from five in 10 in 2000. Over eight in 10 students aged 10 to 14 uses the Internet to communicate, play and learn, according to a survey by the Infocomm Development Authority (Straits Times June 2007). The Internet is a treasure-laden world of information and entertainment - one where falsehoods and the truth co-exist, with

few clear signposts to tell them apart. Students may not be trained to evaluate these sites effectively or even bother to seek alternative sources of information.

Research has shown that an over-reliance on the Internet as a source of information could explain why teens are weak at judging whether information is trustworthy. One recent example was highlighted in The Straits Times (a broadsheet paper in Singapore). They conducted a media literacy test with 35 Singapore teens and showed them a bogus website http://zapatopi.net/treeoctopus which claimed that a certain species of octopus in the Pacific north-west lives in a tree. 34 out of 35 Singapore students who read the bogus website believed such a creature actually exists. The students, aged 13 to 19, were unable to distinguish fact from fiction in the Straits Times test of media literacy among youth.

The Straits Times' survey found that half the teens tested were fooled by the expert opinions cited on the site and 15 were taken in by the factual way in which information on the site was written.

The spoof site, set up as an online hoax in 1998 but now used by institutions to test Internet literacy, fooled nearly all the 35 local students into thinking the tree octopus story was 'well-supported by scientific research' and 'factual'.

The website yielded similar results among youngsters in Connecticut, in the United States, when it was used by University of Connecticut's Neag School of Education to test levels of online literacy (Straits Times, 1 Sep 08).

In addition, a study by the British library on the Google Generation, revealed interesting findings (formal title, "Information Behavior of the Researcher of the Future: A Cyber Briefing Paper, 11 Jan 2008").

The researchers looked at studies done about young people from the 1980s to the present to see if there were differences between Generation X, Y, and the current "Google" generation. The studies were categorized by quality so that the confidence levels in their conclusions range from very high to high, medium, or low. They also took into account adult information behaviour as it compares to the young and the impact this whole new world has upon libraries and librarians.

Their conclusions include (Teacher Librarian 2008):

- Digital formats have gained wide acceptance over traditional formats.

- Skills in social networking and Web 2.0 are widespread

- The Google generation uses "bouncing" behaviours, they scan across information sources with seeming disregard for authority. They spend little time on a particular source and may not read anything in depth.

- Libraries seem to be bypassed by users who use Google and other social networking tools to find information instantly and at any time.

- Just because students can use the various Internet tools does not mean they are sophisticated users.

- It is more and more difficult in the age of self-publishing to judge expertise from amateur content.

- As adults learn the new technologies, they behave much like the young do in information space.

- Information literacy skills of students entering college are not nearly as high as they should be.

This is where information literacy at the public libraries and the librarians come in to help the students. Through our innovative and fun library workshops, as well as our ASK! Service offered by National Library Board (NLB) public libraries, we hope to educate students on how to use the 'trusted' sources in the library for their research.

MOVING TOWARDS AN OUTWARD LOOKING STRUCTURE

Reorganization of library operations
The Public Library Services Group of NLB implemented a major reorganization on 1 Apr 2005 to gear our library services to be able to better deliver our services, particularly how we outreached to schools. We wanted to be even more proactive in targeting schools for IL training.

Under the new structure, we made clearer distinction in the scope for the Children's Librarian (targeting the age group of 0 to 12 years of age) and Adult & Young People's Librarians (targeting all those aged 13 years and above).

The Public Libraries are divided into two main sections: Library Management, which took care of the day to day operations of the libraries, and Service Management, which takes care of promoting library services (like class visits, outreaches, enquiries, book talks) (Figure 1).

This re-organization freed the librarians from the traditional branch-based structure to actively go out and engage the community. As a result, librarians become more outward looking and started to reach out to the surrounding schools and organizations for collaborations. This resulted in a direct increase in the number of library workshops and related class visits for:

Primary schools (7 years to 12 years of age)
FY 05 (Apr 2005 to Mar 2006)   -1,031 Class Visits with 40,060 students
FY 06 (Apr 2006 to Mar 2007)   -1,046 Class Visits with 45,907 students
FY 07 (Apr 2007 to Mar 2008)   - 875 Class Visits with 38,937 students

Total   -   2,952 Class Visits with 124,904 students

Secondary schools (13 years old to 16 years old)
FY 05 (Apr 2005 to Mar 2006)   -225 Class Visits with 7,291 students
FY 06 (Apr 2006 to Mar 2007)   -277 Class Visits with 7,398 students
FY 07 (Apr 2007 to Mar 2008)   -235 Class visits with 7,023 students

Total   -   737 Class Visits with 21,712 students

```
                        ┌─────────────────────┐
                        │   Public Libraries  │
                        └──────────┬──────────┘
              ┌────────────────────┴──────────────────────┐
      ┌───────────────┐                          ┌──────────────────┐
      │   Services    │                          │     Library      │
      │  Management   │                          │    Management    │
      └───────┬───────┘                          └────────┬─────────┘
         ┌────┴─────┐              ┌──────────┬────────────┼──────────┐
  ┌────────────┐ ┌──────────┐  ┌────────┐ ┌────────┐ ┌────────┐ ┌──────────┐
  │ Adult/Young│ │Children's│  │ Central│ │ Western│ │ Eastern│ │ Northern │
  │People Svc. │ │ Services │  │ Region │ │ Region │ │ Region │ │  Region  │
  └────────────┘ └──────────┘  └────────┘ └────────┘ └────────┘ └──────────┘
```

Service Team Leaders and Librarians

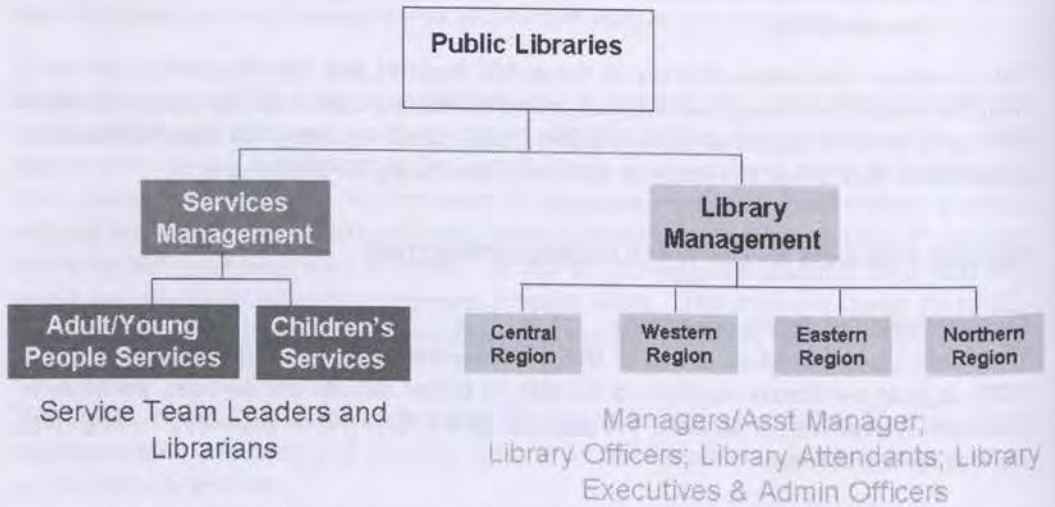Managers/Asst Manager; Library Officers; Library Attendants; Library Executives & Admin Officers

Figure 1: Public Library Services Group of NLB Organizational Structure

Under the new structure, there is a deliberate targeting of schools where we have set a target for each individual librarian to reach out to the schools and work with them. All the schools in Singapore are divided among the librarians and each librarian is an account manager for 6-7 schools. They must actively source opportunities to work with the schools that they are in charge of and promote information literacy and other services to the teachers and students.

To promote information literacy, we actively targeted the schools and proactively courted the teachers to engage our library services. This can be seen in the huge increase in collaborations with schools. In the last three years since the formation of the Service Management group in 2005, NLB has conducted a total of 3,689 sessions of Information Literacy workshops that reached out to 146,616 students in both primary and secondary schools. This outward orientation has thus been successful in reaching out to the schools.

In order to cope with increase in demand for IL and other services, we had increased our recruitment of professional librarians. Also, to keep up technologically with the web-savvy teens, we enhanced our librarians' professional knowledge by conducting New Media Training for all new recruits to keep them updated of the latest trends in New Media. Some of the courses are:

New Media 101 – Discover Blogs and Blogging
New Media 102 – Discover Wikis and its Uses
New Media 103 – Discover News Aggregators and RSS
New Media 104 – Discover POD and VOD casting

The teens of today (generally those born after 1982) are "Digital Natives" who grew up with computers. According to Marc Prensky, an author and CEO of Games2train in New York, who coined the term, today's teens speak the digital language of computers, video games and the Internet (San Antonio Express-News Feb 2008). On the other hand, the librarians, largely belonging to the older generation, are generally "digital immigrants" adapting to new technology. With this new media training, the librarians will be better

equipped to understand and relate to the technologically savvy teens and find ways to appeal to their short attention span.

Recognising changing needs and trends

One of the reasons for this upsurge in demand for information literacy is the change in the school curriculum. Schools are moving away from the old system of rote learning to encourage more critical and creative thinking and learning. Previously, many education institutions place emphasis on the acquisition and retention of prescribed content and encourage students to work individually to achieve those ends. Unfortunately, this type of learning doesn't always prepare students to transfer and apply knowledge. Many "A" students fail miserably when applying their knowledge to real problems once they are outside the classroom. Through a restructuring process, educators are now placing emphasis on lifelong learning, on process as well as content, and on cooperative learning" (Eisenberg 2004).

For Junior College students, project work (where teamwork and critical thinking are important) accounts for 10% of their admission criteria to university. Thus, students have a stronger motivation to learn project management and research skills (Straits Times 15 Nov 2004).

Public library workshops offered by NLB focus on training in electronic databases, project methods, presentation skills – all of which are applicable for students in their project work. As a result of meeting the real needs of the students, the library becomes a relevant place for students. When students are trained to use library resources, they become more informed users of knowledge and information and are more likely to make use of the library to help them in their projects.

Also, the primary and secondary schools in Singapore may not be able to afford the high rates of subscribing to the electronic databases. Katz (2002) stated that a good electronic resource like the *Lexis-Nexis* index can run to well over US$100,000 per year for large institutions. NLB, on the other hand, has over a hundred electronic databases ranging from Aberdeen Access to World's Who's Who that is available onsite at libraries (for a low cost of 3 cents per minute). NLB is also increasingly making more of these electronic databases available to users remotely at home. So instead of 'Googling' on the Internet, why not "Google" on the trusted and authoritative electronic databases that the NLB digital library offers?

Need an article? Just log in to the digital library and retrieve the article. It is available off site and not just at the physical library itself, twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, making the databases available on only in the libraries but on the patron's desktop as well (Fountain 2000). This convenience of access and 24/7 availability of electronic databases are very important to the Google generation.

In addition, we also introduce them to ASK! Enquiry & Advisory Services at the Regional Libraries, where they can approach the librarians stationed at advisory counters for help in their project work. Katz (2002) believes that having a librarian on-hand to guide you in your search is helpful. The librarian saves valuable time by finding specific data in the sea of ocean of information and garbage. Users can walk in to any of our three regional libraries from 1pm to 9pm daily to get their reference questions answered.

Reach out and ASK!

ASK! is the public library's enquiry service which started in April 2006. It is a service that allows people to ask questions from the comfort of his home, a phone-in hotline and an enquiry email address. They can e-mail their reference questions to our librarians via ask@nlb.gov.sg or call our hotline at 6332-3255 from 8am to 9pm daily.

NLB librarians will use electronic databases and printed reference materials as sources for their answers. Direct questions such as 'In which year was the first presidential election?' will get ready answers. For more open-ended questions, inquirers are directed to relevant books and articles for more in depth research. (Straits Times May 2006)

Some interesting questions that we have received: Do snakes urinate? How did the expression "touch wood" originate? Where is Sir Stamford Raffles (founder of Singapore) buried?

Why use this ASK! Service? To quote Molly Faust, director of the Ulysses Philomathic Library: "The rise of the Internet actually makes librarians more necessary...So much information is out there, you need a broker for it and librarians are brokers of an enormous amount of information, especially for kids (Ithaca Journal 26 July 2008)

When we answer the teens' questions, we are pointing to them the authoritative sources like Reference books, Newspaper articles, Journals and electronic databases in the library. The librarian also quotes a range of reference sources (Printed, electronic databases, websites) to support their answers and it is hoped that the teens will learn from the way the librarians answer questions (using varied sources) instead of relying solely on the Internet as the source of information for their homework.

ASK Blog gets hit on

When our librarians complete an enquiry, they will record their enquiries into a PLS (Public Library Service) Enquiry Database. This database provides a rich source of answers to questions asked by the general public. But this database is restricted to NLB staff only.

Rather than keep it hidden from view, a team of librarians selects the best questions and publishes it online at http://blogs.nlb.gov.sg/ask/about-this-site. On average, the ASK blog achieves about 450 hits per day. Sample of questions are like "Do fish urinate?" "When was the Internet invented?"

Using this blog platform (which appeals to the youth and is available 24 hours a day), we can educate our users on how the librarians use credible sources like Encyclopedias, Almanacs and electronic databases to answer their questions.

Marketing, marketing, marketing

Useful services need to be utilized; otherwise, they cease to become useful. Through multiple collaborations, NLB is able to tap on the network of different groups. One such important stakeholder is the Ministry of Education (MOE). Using MOE (which is the schools' parent ministry) to reach out to the different schools is sometimes more effective than cold-calling the various schools in the different parts of Singapore.

On 28 May 2007, NLB co-organized a Learn @ the Library contest with MOE, where Primary and Secondary school students had to complete a series of tasks in order to win

the contest. They were given 60 quick reference questions to answer (in multiple choice format) and they had to use the libraries printed resources to answer them. They were guided in the choice of reference materials to use and had to circle the correct answer. A sample is provided below:

Use the Singapore Encyclopedia to find the correct answer and page number to answer the question.

No.	Question	Answer 1	Answer 2
WORLD OF SINGAPORE: SINGAPORE ENCYCLOPEDIA CALL NUMBER 959.57003 SIN (HIS)			
	When was the Causeway (linking Malaysia) opened? Which page in the Encyclopedia is the answer located?	Jul 1913 Jul 1923 Jul 1933 Jul 1943	Page 64 Page 72 Page 85 Page 104

Minister of State for Education – Mr Gan Kim Yong - launched the event at Woodlands Regional Library and a total of 750 students took part in this activity. This contest garnered much publicity for the library as it was advertised to all primary and secondary schools via the official MOE channels. Teachers and students had enjoyable time learning about the library resources in a fun and interactive manner via the contest.

In addition, a website was created which was the central repository of contest information, photos and results. The MOE website for Learn @ Libraries is: http://www1.moe.edu.sg/learn@/library/index.htm.

Another important partner is the local newspaper, Straits Times. The Straits Times had launched a new multimedia website portal called Stomp (Straits Times Online Mobile Print) to reach out to the Internet generation in July 2006. Readers who have burning questions can send their queries to Stomp's free online information service, Ask ST. Readers can SMS to 75557 or e-mail their queries to 75557@stomp.com.sg.

Working with NLB as a partner, the Straits Times Stomp team will send the questions to our ASK email address, where our librarians will use the authoritative sources in the library to answer the questions. The answers will be posted on the Stomp website within 1 day. Stomp receives about 100 enquiries per week (Straits Times, 26 July 2006). Samples of questions can be found at http://www.stomp.com.sg/askst/

The Public Library Services benefits as we ride on the Straits Times Stomp website to reach out to an even wider audience to showcase our Advisory Services, especially to the non-library users. This is free advertising for our Advisory Services.

We also organize networking sessions with Primary and Secondary school teachers on the products and services that NLB offers. We invite the teachers down to the libraries for a briefing. This is a chance for the teachers to hear our librarians speak on the varied services that we offer to schools. These sessions are very useful to teachers, as they now know who to contact for information literacy training and other library related services. This networking session also offers a personal touch as teachers are able to meet face to face and discuss with the librarian who is the account manager of the school.

LIBRARY WORKSHOPS AND ACTIVITIES WITH FUN INCLUDED

Understanding the importance of information literacy can be understood by the age-old adage where if you give a man a fish, you feed him for a day but if you teach a man to fish, you feed him for a lifetime. The "how to" in retrieving content is as important, if not more, than the content itself. It is about life-long learning that can be achieved by utilizing multiple resources to capture the attention of a new generation of learners.

With the Google generation and a generation of young people and children whose attention span are getting shorter by the day, putting together an Information Literacy package has reached another level of "challenging". Computer and video games, television and other newer forms of entertainment have pushed the library, with its perceived old-school preoccupation with books, to a back seat where preferred activities are concerned. How then do we convince the youth and children that the library is still important and relevant and that there are skills the library can provide them with?

It is no secret that the clue to reaching out to someone is to first understand the person. In other words, in order to give the youth and children what we want them to know, we have to give it out in a way that they understand and believe is of interest to them.

Teaching IL at primary school level

Before students can understand the research process, learn to evaluate web sites, search Google, prepare a PowerPoint presentation, or any of the other myriads of tasks that prepare them to be information-literate individuals, they must acquire one very basic skill: They must learn to read, and they must learn to read for understanding (Emergency Librarian 01 Jun 2006).

NLB uses a variety of methods to teach IL to primary school going kids. In Singapore, primary school education starts at 7 years old and runs for 6 years through to the year when the child turns 12. Workshops are conducted for classes based on preset class visit packages created by and for the team of children's librarians. Primary schools often send groups of school librarians or classes to the various public libraries to be inducted into library services. At the end of such a workshop, these students, usually between 9 – 12 years, would be able to

   a) Identify the services of a library
   b) Recognize the way books are categorized
   c) Select a relevant book and search for information they need
   d) Apply what they have learnt in the form of a quiz or scavenger hunt

However, beyond the instructional facets, there is also a strong emphasis on novelty and fun. Oftentimes, class visits start with a story to set the mood and ends with a library tour and scavenger hunt. The storytelling helps the children get rid of the classroom lesson mode and the game and the promise of prizes (even if the prize is simple) inspires the students to listen carefully.

Likewise, when librarians go to primary schools to delivery assembly talks, storytelling is often part of the programme and especially so for the lower primary students. Due to the nature of assembly talks where at any one point of time, there can be 1000 or more students, the talks are limited to learning how to
   a) Identify the services of the library
   b) Recognize basic and appropriate behaviors in the library

At the same time, IL presentations, whether in the library or at schools, are kept flexible to ensure that they are always relevant. For example, if the school is holding a Roald Dahl week, librarians will tweak the existing presentation to factor in facts about Roald Dahl and his books. As the presentation is now in-line with the school's thematic "schedule", students are already cued in and know what to expect. The familiarity coupled with the new makes it more digestible for the students and as a result, they are much more open to new ideas and concepts as they are able to see how it relates to them.

Keeping a dimension of flexibility results in greater support and buy-in from the schools as they realise that the library is more than just a place to borrow books. This works out well because the library is able to educate the children in the areas of IL and the school is able to tie in the topics with their curriculum. In FY 07 alone, NLB reached out to 111 out of 181 primary schools in Singapore, conducting a grand total of 279 value-added activities (assembly talks, workshops at schools, storytelling etc.), and reached out to 89,314 primary school going children.

Teaching IL to children in a public space

The strength of a public library is its status as a community point. Beyond the school media center, which focuses on serving and educating the school community alone, the public library has an independent space out of school. This gives the public library a chance to play up the recreational angle—storytelling, puppet shows, movie screenings, art and craft and so on, something that school libraries may not be able to do on a regular basis. Beyond the formality of a classroom lesson, the library is able to use fun activities to teach IL without overtly saying that they are teaching the children a lesson.

NLB has come up with a set of Children's Specials – hour-long fun programmes that are held during school holidays. Each of these programmes introduces children to a specific topic like the witty stories and trickster tales, life cycles of animals, chemistry in the kitchen and so on. Within each of this package, we teach the topic through playing games and then cueing the children in to where and how to find the books on the related topic. After each session, children go away learning something and the memory of it is not a classroom session but a "fun-time" spent at the library.

Children's Specials are for walk-in members of the public and are not sustained with the same group of children coming in time and again. As a result, the full spectrum of IL tools cannot be completely taught. To balance this, two regional libraries, Woodlands and Tampines, hold a Children's Reading Club during the long school holidays twice a year.

The Children's Reading Club runs once a week for six weeks, lasting two hours per session. A typical breakdown of topics covered would be as follows:

> Week 1: Introduction to Information Literacy
> Week 2: Exploring the World of Fantasy and Fairytales
> Week 3: Insights into the World of Mystery
> Week 4: Bending Backwards with Humour
> Week 5: Scaring Each Other Silly with Horror
> Week 6: Let's Write Some Poetry

The sessions are free for members of the public but children have to commit to attending all 6 weeks and spaces are limited on a first-come-first-serve basis, as long as

they meet the age criteria, which is 9-12 years. The Reading Clubs are extremely effective though the reach is only to a small group of children at any one point of time. Most children go away with comments that they think 6 weeks is too short.

IL through publications for children
Reading Clubs and Children's Specials require the presence of a librarian and can be manpower intensive. They only reach out to limited groups of people. In April 2007, NLB released a new quarterly Children's Newsletter titled HOT (an abbreviation for Hooked on Tales – See Appendix 1). HOT introduces children to new authors, books, interesting information from enquires received, features an expressions section for children and some special highlights at libraries.

A total of 100 copies of the HOT newsletter are sent out to each of the 181 primary schools in Singapore and a few hundreds are available for at public libraries. HOT has been very well received and usually runs out way before the next issue is out.

HOT is externally designed and is bright and colourful. There are cut-out sections where children can drop off their enquiries at libraries or leave their comments and feedback. The various public libraries have seen a generous return of these cut-outs, which show that the newsletter has managed to engage children around Singapore. Below is a compliment from a teacher:

> "I would like to congratulate you on the publication of NLB's children's newsletter, 'Hooked on Tales'. It was very well received by my class pupils with whom I shared some articles with. My Primary 2s really enjoyed the cover page article on April Fool's Day. It was an eye-opener for them. The accompanying websites and related books proved to be very useful to them. They were also thrilled to participate in "Recommend a story" and of course to receive a token.

Some avid readers filled up the details the very next day. Below is a feedback from a teacher at Greenwood Primary"

> "Personally, I liked the inclusion and presentation of H.O.T. author in a creative way. I was able to recommend a new author to my pupils and her writing genre. An excellent beginning and I appreciate the effort put in to promote reading amongst our children."

Teaching IL to teens through structured library workshops
In face of the changing needs and trends in this information age, a team was formed to look into the delivery of the instructional programs, renamed Mind Explorers (ME) in the libraries. The objective was to enrich the library visit experience and to move the instructional program away from the lecture and PowerPoint presentations format. The idea was to execute the program through experiential learning facilitated by librarians while leveraging on the content found in existing instructional resource kit.

There are four modules in the resource kit namely:

    Module 1 - Overview of Library Services & Facilities
    Module 2 – Print Resources
    Module 3 – Electronic Resources
    Module 4 – Project Management

Each module came with a resource file containing PowerPoint slides, quizzes, activity sheets, handouts and trainers' notes. These library workshops were meant to be creative, games based, interactive programs that were designed to help students learn about library resources in a fun, relaxed atmosphere (Suet Fen 2006).

What is Library Workshop? Let us start with what our Library Workshop is NOT. It is not a traditional class visit where students are given a tour of the library and given a briefing on library rules and policies.

Rather it is a game based, interactive program that involves the students. The quote by Gandhi is an apt description. "Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day, teach him to fish and you feed him for life"

Rather than the librarian giving the students the answers, the students have to find out the answers for themselves. For example, the librarian can give a short briefing on DDC (Dewy Decimal Classification) and then let the students go explore on their own and use a 'treasure map' to get the 10 popular subject categories of the library (e.g. Computer books, Business books, Sciences). Each team will get a point for getting each of the popular subject categories.

Thus, the students have to use their own initiative to figure out where the popular subject categories are located. They can explore on their own, consult the library staff or check out the library directory. Using a game based activity gets the students involved and the competitive element gets them excited. They learn about the library better and enjoy the lessons more.

The librarian will also get the students to form teams where they will debate about issues like "Is the Internet a good resource for project work? Give examples of the pros and cons of the Internet". The students will brainstorm and do a presentation of their findings to their fellow students (this builds in them presentation skills, confidence in public speaking, thinking on their feet when their friends ask them tough questions).

After the students' presentations, the librarian will then introduce them to credible library resources like printed books (e.g. Encyclopedia Britannica) and Electronic databases (e.g. Factiva). The librarian acts as a facilitator, time-keeper and referee - he no longer dominates the discussion but lets the students discover the answer for themselves. Feedbacks from students who have participated in library workshops are positive. They enjoy the games immensely and learn better in a fun, relaxed atmosphere.

These workshops are customizable, depending on the requirements of the teacher. For example, some teachers have asked us to stress on copyright and plagiarism while others would like us to focus on the reliability of Wikipedia as a source of research to the students (See Appendix 2 – IL poster).

BRINGING IT BACK: APPLICATION AND CONTINUOUS LEARNING
After the reorganization, the number and scope of offered services from public libraries have been increased dramatically. Given this, NLB has to continuously take stock of what it is offering and continue what is successful while refining or altering what is not.

PROVE IT Contest – An information literacy competition for youths

Having trained the students in the theory of information literacy in a library workshop, the next step is for them to apply it. We have organized a National Contest called "Prove It!" to test the students proficiency in information literacy.

Prove it! is an inter-school competition that aimed to make learning fun and challenge students' ability to seek information and develop a strong aptitude for research (using library print and electronic resources).

A total of 52 teams from 30 schools took part in the event for a total of 156 participants. Benefits and value of this nation wide information literacy competition are among others:

a) Recognize a variety of reference tools, print and online resources;
b) Enhance search skills, info-seeking skills and evaluation of information;
c) Augment information literacy skills;
d) Acknowledge that the Library as a trusted and reliable source of information;
e) Understand the importance of checking & verifying answers

Game Mechanics

We held training sessions for schools before the contest from 15 Sep 2007 to 28 Oct 2007. The students are required to attend training in information literacy, where they are taught how to access and use the library's printed and electronic databases. This is an excellent way to promote the library's resources to the teens. After the workshop training, we had a regional contest at 3 library branches, where the top three winners from each region would take part in the National Contest.

Each school could send up to two teams with three members in the team. They will get a set of 10 questions, which they will try to answer and cross-verify sources using any two of the following options within 2 hours:

a)   Internet
b)   Print material
c)   Electronic databases

Example question: When is Minister Mentor Lee Kuan Yew's birthday?

Answer: 16 Sep 1923

Source   1:   Website   -   http://www.channelnewsasia.com/cna/sm-special/tribute.htm
Source 2: Printed Book - The Singapore story : memoirs of Lee Kuan Yew. SING English 959.57 LEE -[HIS]

By using the Internet, print and e-databases, they will then know which is the fastest, most reliable, accurate tool to use. To raise the level of excitement of the competition, bonus points were awarded for the top 5 teams who turn up the fastest, correct answers for each set of question.

Unlike Learn @ Libraries, where the students were given Multiple-Choice Questions and the specific reference sources to use, the students in Prove it! had to find their own answers and support it. Thus, the difficulty level of Prove it! was much higher as the students had to depend on their own search skills and knowledge to find the answers independently.

The top 3 teams that answered the questions correctly and in the fastest time won the contest. The winning team received a $500 cash voucher and a trophy from our Chief Executive at an Awards ceremony.

POSITIVE FEEDBACK

Using a 1-page program feedback (which is anonymous), we polled the students at Woodlands Regional Library and received 69 feedback forms (see Appendix 3). On a 5-point scale (with 5 being the highest and 1 being the lowest), we received very high ratings for the Prove it! Contest.

Out of 69 students surveyed, 66 students (or 95.6%) indicated that their "Knowledge was enhanced" after the contest. The overall satisfaction with the contest was a high 82.6% while 84.1% of the students would recommend the contest to their friends.

Feedbacks from the students indicated that is a very successful project that involves the secondary schools and the Library. To quote one student, Cheng Shao Meng of St Patrick's School:

> *"This is the first time I took part in a National Library Board's competition and it proved to be both fun and useful. The challenges, the joy of teaming with your friends, the knowledge that I gained and the experiences are only a small part of this unforgettable experience. It is not often that we school librarians get to do something together so the Prove It! Contest allowed us to bond even closer, both as a CCA and as a team. Because this contest does not solely gear towards those who are smart but instead on a variety of skills - it made the contest more fun and challenging. Homework is one of the things that you have to do to get an edge on the contest and that also train up on my researching skills"*

Prove It! is now an annual event and used as a marketing tool to promote information literacy to schools through a Nation wide contest.

CONCLUSION

Through the reorganization of the librarians into outward looking grouping, actively targeting schools for information literacy workshops, it will reduce the 'information illiteracy' numbers in schools. Rather than 'do a Google', students and the general public will come to the library and use the electronic databases and printed reference materials for validated information. Our objectives would be met as and when students think of research, they will think of libraries as their first choice to get current information.

REFERENCES

Chui, Suet Fen. 2006. Revamping instructional programmes for students at public libraries in Singapore." Unpublished report, National Library Board

Coatney, Sharon. 2006. Basic information literacy. *Emergency Librarian,* Vol. 33: 60.

Eisenberg, Michael B. 2004. *Information Literacy: Essential Skills for the Information Age.* 2nd. Westport, Connecticut: Libraries Unlimited

Fountain, L., M. 2000. *World Libraries on the information superhighway: Preparing for the challenges of the new millennium.* Hershey, USA: Idea Group.

Ho, Ai Li. 2004. Project Work lets students research topic in depth. *Straits Times* 15 Nov 2004

Katz, William. 2002. *Introduction to reference work*. New York, USA: McGraw-Hill.

Katz, William. 2002. *Introduction to Reference Work: Reference Services and Reference Processes*. 8th. New York, USA: McGraw-Hill.

Lawyer, Liz. 2008. Library use expands beyond books. *Ithaca Journal* July.

Lee, Hui Chieh. 2006. Questions on health? Check out Stomp first. *Straits Times* 26 July 2006

Lee, Lynn. 2007. Navigating the Net: How to tell the good from the bad and the ugly. *Straits Times* 23 June 2007:

Lim, Jessica. 2006. Hello, library? I've got a question. *Straits Times* 9 May 2006

Lim, Pow Hong. 2008. Teen surfers prey to Web of deception. *Straits Times* 01 Sep 2008:

Loertscher, David. 2008. What works with the Google generation? *Teacher Librarian* Vol. 35: 42.

Lorek, L.A. 2008. Digital Natives versus digital immigrants; Bridging the divide. *San Antonio Express-News* 24 Feb 2008

Tan, Tania. 2006. Burning query? Ask Stomp. *Straits Times* 07 July 2006.

Sample of Hooked on Tales
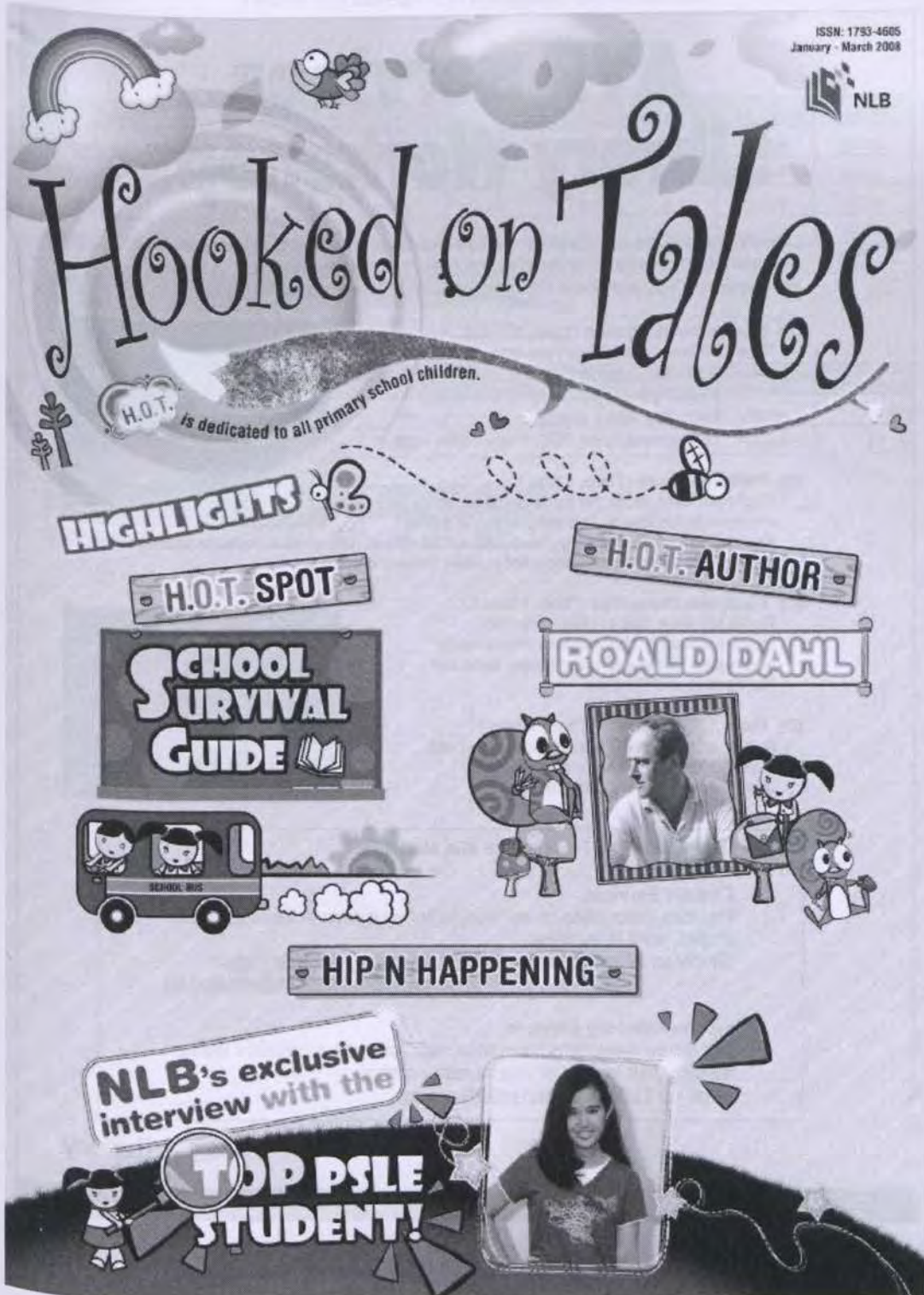
Poster to Promote Information Literacy to Schools

AYP Services
Library Workshops

Library workshops are creative, games based, interactive programs that are designed to help students learn about library resources in a fun, relaxed atmosphere. You may pick the module that interests you.

(A) Library Familiarization (Time: 1 hour)
Pupils will learn about library services, facilities and policies This includes:
- Knowing the physical layout of a library
- Using the library catalogue
- Understanding the DDC classification system

(B) Print Resources (Time: 1 hour)
Pupils will learn about the types of collection available in the library. This programme is theme based (Eg. Greek Mythology) so pupils will be able to gain more knowledge related to the theme. This programme is especially useful for idea expansion.

(C) Electronic Resources (Time: 1 hour)
Pupils will learn how to obtain credible online resources. This includes searching for information online and using library database like Factiva and Proquest.

(D) Project Management (Time: 1 hour)
Pupils will learn about the processes involved in project work and how to present the information they have gathered.

Other Useful Services for teachers and students:

- **Enquiry Services**
  Provides information on any subject for your general interest, school project, work or business.
  Simply email your questions to: **AdultServices@nlb.gov.sg** or
  YoungPeopleServices@nlb.gov.sg

- **Fiction Advisory Services**
  Get recommendations on what to read based on a particular theme/ subject, your interest or your favourite author.
  Email us: **FictionAdvisory@nlb.gov.sg**

Library
www.nlb.gov.sg

Knowledge-Imagination-Possibility

PROVE IT! Contest – 69 Feedback Forms Received

	5	4	3	2	1	5 & 4 rate	Percent
Content	18	41	10	0	0	59/69	85.5%
Speaker	19	38	12	0	0	57/69	82.6%
Facilities	18	37	12	0	0	55/69	79.7%
Overall Satisfaction	21	36	12	0	0	57/69	82.6%

	YES	NO	Percent
Knowledge enhanced	66	3	95.6%

	5	4	3	2	1	5 & 4 rate	Percent
Enjoyed yourself	18	30	20	1	0	48/69	69.6%
Staff In charge	28	30	10	0	0	58/69	84.1%

	YES	NO	Percent
Recommend friends	58	11	84.1%