Preface

The Asia-Pacific Conference on Library & Information Education & Practice being held in Singapore in April 2006 is an exciting development in the history of library and information science (LIS) in the region. The conference reflects a growing awareness of the need for more networking, dialogue and collaboration among LIS educators and researchers in the Asia-Pacific region. There was an enthusiastic response to the Call-for-Papers, and 125 proposals were received. After a peer review process, 45 full papers, 45 short papers and 10 poster papers were accepted, and are published in these proceedings.

The papers cover a wide variety of topics and perspectives, including global and regional trends in LIS education and practice, quality and innovation in information services, professional development strategies, digital libraries and repositories, digital information services, information literacy, and many others. Together, they represent a wide range of issues that LIS researchers and professionals in the region are grappling with. The authors too exhibit great variety, coming from 20 countries, and ranging from senior professors and chief librarians to mid-career researchers/professionals to graduate students who are probably presenting their first international paper, all sharing their ideas and experiences from across the region. Though the focus is on Asia-Pacific, papers from the US, UK and Germany provide a global and intercultural perspective.

The LIS profession in Asia-Pacific has often looked to the West for ideas and leadership. LIS educators and professionals in the region are often unaware of valuable developments, innovations and expertise in neighboring countries. Each country in Asia-Pacific has its own history of LIS education and research, shaped by socio-economic, political and cultural factors. As a result, LIS education and research in Asia-Pacific exhibit a wide variety of characters, flavors and areas of strength. There is much we can learn from one another. This conference will allow each country to tell its story of LIS, and facilitate dialogue and knowledge sharing. The essence of their accounts is captured in these proceedings.

We hope that the conference will prove to be a landmark event that will stimulate even greater collaboration and cooperation among LIS educators and researchers in the Asia-Pacific region as well as globally. To promote resource sharing among LIS educators and researchers after the conference, a Web portal for LIS education called LISEA (Library & Information Science Education in Asia), accessible at http://www.ntu.edu.sg/sci/lisea, is being developed jointly by the Division of Information Studies, Nanyang Technological University, and the Department of Information Science, University of Malaya.

An international conference such as this needs the support of many people across the world. We take this opportunity to thank the program committee members who worked hard to publicize the conference and review the papers, and to the authors who put in their best effort to write interesting and good-quality papers. We would also like to thank the many sponsors. To the following exhibitors, thank you for your support: National Library Board, Cyberian Ventures and their partners; CCH Asia Pte Ltd; Civica/Spydus; Elsevier; Emerald Group Publishing; IGroup; LexisNexis; ProQuest; SirsiDynix; Swets Information Services; and Thomson Learning. We are also appreciative to Kinokuniya and World Scientific for their contributions of gifts to the participants, and to the Goethe-Institut Singapur for sponsoring two speakers.

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## Session 1. Keynote Papers

1. Knowledge Mobilization: The Challenge for Information Professionals ..........................1  
   *Peter G.W. Keen*

2. Singapore's Vision of the 21st Century Library Service ...........................................10  
   *N. Varaprasad*

## Session 2. Global Trends in LIS Education & Practice

3. Leadership Roles for Information Professionals ......................................................11  
   *Michael Koenig*

4. Trends and Issues of LIS Education in Asia ............................................................18  
   *Makiko Miwa*

5. New Age Competencies for Information Professionals ..............................................27  
   *Sajjad ur Rehman*

## Session 3A. Regional Trends in LIS Education I

6. Preparing Library and Information Professionals for the 21st Century: Issues and Challenges for Library and Information Science Educators in India .........................35  
   *Pravakar Rath*

7. Trends in LIS Education in Australia ...........................................................................41  
   *Gillian Hallam*

## Session 3B. Quality & Innovation in Information Services

8. Stability of Library Service Quality Benchmarking Norms Across Time and Cohorts: A LibQUAL+™ Study .........................................................................................52  
   *Bruce Thompson, Colleen Cook & Martha Kyrillidou*

9. Performance Measurement of Quality Services in Academic and Research Libraries in India .....................................................................................................................60  
   *Amruth Sherikar, Suresh Jange & S.L. Sangam*

10. Displays and Exhibitions in University Libraries .......................................................67  
    *Su-Huei Lu & Ling-Fang Wei*

## Session 3C. Advances in Digital Library Research I

    *Shiyan Ou, Christopher Khoo & Dion Goh*

12. A Sentiment-Based Meta Search Engine .....................................................................82  
    *Jin-Cheon Na, Christopher Khoo & Syin Chan*

13. Towards Integrating Research on Retrieval- and Communication-Oriented Studies in Library and Information Science .......................................................89  
    *Sung-Chien Lin*
### Session 4A. Regional Trends in LIS Education II

14. The Refocusing of LIS Education ............................................................... 96  
   Chen Su-May Sheih & Foster Zhang

15. Globalisation and Education for the Information Management Professions:  
   Challenges for Small Countries ................................................................. 104  
   Gillian Oliver

16. Library & Information Studies (LIS), Information & Communications (ICS), and  
   to Join the College of Information: To Lead or To Follow? ............................ 110  
   Chih-Feng Lin

17. Educating Future Knowledge-Literate Library and Information Science Professionals ........ 114  
   Mayam Sarrafzadeh, Afsaneh Hazeri & Bill Martin

### Session 4B. Digital Information Services

18. Digital Reference Services in Selected Public Academic Libraries in Malaysia:  
   A Case Study ................................................................. 121  
   Wan A. Kadir Wan Dollah

19. NUS Libraries in a Virtual Learning Environment ..................................... 135  
   Kah-Wei Wong

   (QFD) Approach ................................................................. 140  
   Ahmed Taha

### Session 4C. Advances in Digital Library Research II

21. Digital Libraries in Thailand ................................................................. 147  
   Tasana Saladyanant

   Wen-Chung Shih, Chao-Tung Yang & Shian-Shyong Tseng

23. ReLOMS: Designing for Effective Use and Reuse of Learning Objects for E-Learning  
   Systems ................................................................. 159  
   Yin-Leng Theng, Dian Saputra, Dion Goh, Schubert Foo, Abdus Sattar Chaudhry,  
   Jin-Cheon Na, Christopher Khoo, Margaret Tan, Paul Wu, Abdul Halim & Likeng Lek

24. Using Query-Based Concept Structures to Improve Subject Access to Digital Libraries ......... 163  
   Chulin Meng

25. Nutraceuticals Gateway: A Value-Added Electronic Information Service ........................ 167  
   R. Samyuktha

### Session 5A. National Perspectives in LIS Education I

26. Political Reformation and Its Impact on Library and Information Science Education and  
   Practice: A Case Study of Indonesia During and Post-President-Soeharto Administration ........ 171  
   L. Sulistyо-Basuki
27. The Education Needs of Information Professionals for South East Asia in the Digital Era, with Special Attention to the Needs of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region: Preliminary Results of a Delphi Study ................................................................. 179
   Lawrence Wai-Hong Tam & John Mills

28. Challenges of Preparing LIS Professionals for Leadership Roles in Pakistan: An Analysis of the Status ................................................................. 185
   Kanwal Ameen

Session 5B. Innovations in Information Literacy Education

29. Building Information Literacy Through Project Work: A Case Study in Singapore ............ 197
   May Hwee Mian Tan & Yin-Leng Theng

30. Information Literacy Education in the Context of Project Work: Application of Multiple Intelligences and Mediated Learning .................................................... 206
   Intan Azura Mokhtar & Shaheen Majid

31. Developing Information Literacy Measures for Higher Education ................................. 218
   Szarina Abdullah, Norliya Ahmad Kassim, Mohd Sharif Mohd Saad, Nor Rashimahwati Tarmuchi & Rasimah Aripin

32. Enhancing Students’ Learning and Research with NTU Library’s Innovative Information Literacy Programme .............................................................. 228
   Akbar Hakim Haji Harun & Jean Koh Ping Hoon

Session 5C. Professional Development Strategies

33. Comparative Study of Staff Development in Academic Libraries of Mainland China and Hong Kong ................................................................. 229
   Mei Wa Esther Woo

34. Continuing Education Programmes of Library & Information Science (LIS) Professionals in the Universities of West Bengal (India) with Special Reference to the University of Calcutta ...... 238
   Arjun Dasgupta & Jatindra Nath Satpathi

35. Individual Learning and Organizational Learning in Academic Libraries ....................... 246
   Sherry Shiuan Su

36. In-Service Training of Librarians Under the Network Environment .............................. 251
   Zhang Xiya & Zhou Jingen

37. University of Wollongong Library Preparing Recent Graduates for a Professional Career in Librarianship ................................................................. 256
   Lynne Wright & Jo-Anne Lombardi

38. Stress & Burnout in Libraries and Information Centers ................................................ 262
   Hasan Siamian, Afsaneh Shahrabi, M. Vahedi, Abdul Majid Abbas Rad & Jamshid Yazdani Cherati
Session 6A. National Perspectives in LIS Education II

39. Survey on Faculty of Library and Information Science Education in Japan .......................... 268
  Keita Tsuji, Yuko Yoshida, Makiko Miwa, Hiroya Takeuchi, Tomohide Muranushi & Masami Shibata

40. LIS Education in Macau: Big Challenges for a Small Territory ........................................ 278
  Paul W.T. Poon

41. Collaboration and Resource Sharing Among LIS Schools in China ................................. 283
  Fan Fan

Session 6B. Development of Digital Repositories & Archives

42. Study on Digital Archives Standard for Library Automation System ............................... 287
  Shien-Chiang Yu

43. A Study of Indexing in Digitized News Archives of Chinese Newspapers in Taiwan ....... 293
  Ming-Shu Yuan & Chih-Feng Lin

44. Is Web Archives a Misnomer—How Web Archives Can Become Digital Archives? .......... 297
  Paul Horng Jyh Wu & Adrian Kay Heng Heok

Session 6C. Cooperation and Resource Sharing in LIS

45. The Establishment and Development of Chinese Cataloging Standards in Taiwan
  since 1980 ...................................................................................................................... 305
  Heng-Hsiung Cheng

46. Cultural Aspects of Library Networks in a Global Changing World: JIBIS & Humaniora
  and Pustaka Bersama .................................................................................................. 311
  Laksmi

Session 7A. Aligning LIS Curriculum with Industry Needs

47. Body of Professional Knowledge Required for Academic Librarians in Japan ................. 315
  Haruki Nagata, Shin’ichi Toda, Hiroshi Itsunura, Kenji Koyama, Yasunori Saito, Masanori Suzuki & Noboru Takahashi

48. Curricula of LIS Programs in the USA: A Content Analysis ........................................... 327
  Heting Chu

49. Educating 21st Century LIS Professionals—The Needs and Expectations: A Survey of
  Indian LIS Professionals and Alumni ........................................................................... 337
  R.S.R. Varalakshmi

Session 7B. National Perspectives in LIS Education III

50. Profound Management Focus—Mandatory Necessity ...................................................... 346
  B.M. Meera

51. Library and Information Education at Islamic Universities in Indonesia: Obstacles and
  Opportunities .............................................................................................................. 352
  Ida Farida & Pungki Purnomo
52. Library and Information Science Education System in Bangladesh: An Overall Situation ….. 357
   Md. Shiful Islam & Mohammed Abu Khaled Chowdhury

53. Status Quo and Problem Discussion on Chinese Postgraduate Education in the Field of
   Library and Information Science ……………………………………………………………….. 363
   Fred Y. Ye

**Session 7C. Facets of User Information Behavior**

54. Modeling Community Information Behaviour in Rural Sri Lanka: A Citizen-Centred
   Perspective ……………………………………………………………………………………… 368
   Wathmanel Seneviratne, G.C. Gunawardene & K.A.P. Siddhisena

   Switching Behavior …………………………………………………………………………….. 381
   Guang-Hwa Chiu & Yuh-Shihng Chang

56. The Internet as an Information Source vs. Level of Satisfaction: Users’ Learning Styles,
   Perceptions, Emotions and Regression Model at National Institutes of Technology in India … 394
   Suresh Jange, Lalitha K.Sami, Mallikarjun Angdi & Jeetender R. Aeri

57. Techno Savvy or Techno Oriented: Who are the Net Generation? …………………………….. 401
   Barbara Combes

**Session 8A. The Information Job Market**

58. Has the Market Place for Information Professionals Changed? …………………………………409
   K.S. Raghavan & Nupur Agrawal

59. An Assessment of the Perception of Licensed Librarians About Their Academic
   Preparation and Satisfaction in their Job as Librarians …………………………………………. 416
   Lourdes T. David & Dante R. Perez

60. Library and Information Career in Malaysia: Aspirations of Educators and the
   Reality of the Industry ………………………………………………………………………….. 423
   Adnan Jamaludin, Norhayati Hussin & Wan Nor Haliza Wan Mokhtar

61. Quality Assurance and Accreditation of LIS Education in Indian Universities: Issues
   and Perspectives ………………………………………………………………………………… 427
   Juran Krishna Sarkhel

62. Quality Assurance of Information Science Program: Chiang Mai University ………………….. 432
   Tasana Saladyanant

**Session 8B. Educating School & Special Librarians**

63. School Library Challenge in Japan - LIPER-SL: Library and Information Professions
   and Education Renewal, School Library Research Group Report ……………………………… 436
   Yumiko Kasai

64. Money and Leadership: A Study of Theses on Public School Libraries Submitted to the
   University of the Philippines’ Institute of Library and Information Science …………………… 445
   Vernon R. Totanes

65. Librarians as Leaders in Educational Resource Management: A Perspective from the Ground …452
   Sarbene bin Jantan & Azrina Mohd Salleh
   Chu Keong Lee

Session 8C. Diverse User Information Needs

67. How is Knowledge About the Consumer of Information Being Applied in the Design and Delivery of Information Products and Services? ................................................................. 461
   Mark Hepworth

68. Information Needs of International Students at a Malaysian University ..................... 479
   Hajar Safahieh & Diljit Singh

69. The Use of Electronic Information Resources Among the Users of Penang Public Library Corporation ................................................................. 486
   Hashimah Mohd. Yusoff

70. Shifting Gears: Dimensions of Research and Communication Behavior in the Sphere of Academic Freedom ................................................................. 496
   Lleuvelyn A. Cacha

Session 9A. Internationalization of LIS Education Programs & Intercultural Issues

71. Characteristics of German Library Science: Sharing Lessons Learnt with the International Community ................................................................. 503
   Wolfgang Ratzek

72. A Survey of Internationalization Activities in Asia Pacific Library and Information Science Schools ................................................................. 513
   Susan E. Higgins

73. Intercultural Issues in LIS Education ............................................................................. 516
   Ismail Abdullahi

Session 9B. Information Services for Special Communities

74. The Challenging and Critical Role of Information Professionals in Combating AIDS in India ... 517
   Maitrayee Ghosh & Jay Bhatt

75. User-Centred Design, E-Research, and Adaptive Capacity in Cultural Institutions: The Case of the Women on Farms Gathering Collection ................................................................. 526
   Natalie Lee-San Pang, Donald Schauder, Marian Quartly & Liza Dale-Hallett

76. Bibliometric Analysis as a New Business Area in Libraries: Theory and Practice .......... 536
   Rafael Ball

77. Education and Training in Electronic Records Management (ERM): The Need for Partnership Building ................................................................. 541
   Rusnah Johare

78. Knowledge Management: Challenges for the Special Librarian ................................... 550
   Shivanthi Weerasinghe

Session 9C. Bibliometric Studies

79. Authorship from the Asia and Pacific Region in Top Library and Information Science Journals .................................................................................. 555
   Taemin Kim Park
80. Journal Article Publication Patterns and Authorship of Librarians in Taiwan and China: A Comparative Study ................................................................. 565
   Wen-Yau Cathy Lin

81. The Development of Library and Information Science Through Books Published in Indonesia, 1952-2005 ............................................................... 574
   Laksmi

82. Identification of Technology Trend on Indonesian Patent Documents and Research Reports on Chemistry and Metallurgy Fields ........................................ 581
   Endang Sri Rusmiyati Rahayu & Zainal A. Hasibuan

Session 10A. Leveraging E-Learning Technologies

83. Supporting First Year E-Learners in Courses for the Information Professions ............ 587
   Barbara Combes & Karen Anderson

84. Managing Discussion Group Dynamics in E-Learning Environments ...................... 598
   Christine Richardson & Maggie Exon

85. E-Learning in LIS Education in India ............................................................... 605
   P.S. Kawatra & Neeraj Kumar Singh

Session 10B. Impact of Research on Information Service

86. Is There a Role for Professional Associations in Fostering Research? ....................... 612
   Kerry Smith & Ross Harvey

87. Knowing Our Users and Responding to Their Needs—The Impact of Research on Services in Two University Libraries .................................................. 620
   Ling Zhang, Wang Cong & Austin McCarthy

Session 10C. Leadership and Entrepreneurship

88. In Search of Giants: Fostering Leadership Education in LIS ................................ 628
   Brendan Luyt & Alton Chua

Posters

89. LIS Education in India: Emerging Paradigms, Challenges and Propositions in the Digital Era ................................................................. 634
   Gayatri Mahapatra

90. Reinventing the Wheel of LIS Education in India for Managing Knowledge in the Knowledge Era .................................................. 638
   Shivarama Rao

91. Digital Librarians: The Challenges Ahead ....................................................... 640
   Aparajita Suman

92. Role of Library and Information Professionals as Teachers and Trainers in Agricultural Education: An Experience of the Kerala Agricultural University, Indi. .................... 642
   A.T. Francis, C. Abdul Razak & Humayoon Kabir
93. LIS Professionals as Teachers and Trainers: User Education and Information Literacy for Life-Long Learning ................................................................. 645
   Vinita Jain

94. A Model of Information Use Behavior by Scientist........................................649
   K.S. Chudamani & H.C. Nagarathna

95. The Role of LIS Professionals in Indonesian Book Publishing: Its Dynamics and Growth in the Case of Islamic Translation Books Since 199................................. 651
   Ike Iswary Lawanda

96. The Construction of a Universal Digital Resources Management System ................ 655
   Zhang Shouhong

Author Index ...........................................................................................................657