



CREATING THE LIBRARIES AND ARCHIVES OF TOMORROW 2021-2025



Introduction

Libraries and archives function as gateways to knowledge and culture, playing a fundamental role in society by supporting learning, literacy and education. They help shape new ideas and allow creativity to thrive in a knowledge-driven society.

NLB serves our community by providing a trusted and accessible network of 26 Public Libraries across Singapore. Together with the National Library and the National Archives of Singapore, these are community spaces for friends and family to gather in their pursuit of knowledge and love of reading. NLB also nurtures a deeper appreciation and awareness of Singapore's history through programmes and collections.

Over the past twenty years, NLB has constantly evolved to meet the changing needs of our patrons and partners. Our three previous master plans have seen NLB embark on a range of new initiatives, from developing new collections, fostering important partnerships to putting in place a digital infrastructure to support Singapore's knowledge ecosystem.

We are now working on a fresh blueprint, titled the Libraries and Archives Plan 2021-2025, that will allow us to prepare and plan for the future needs of our stakeholders. We started formulating the ideas in this document before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in Singapore and around the world. The temporary closing of our libraries and archives during the circuit breaker period called for a rethink of our service delivery methods. It prompted us to accelerate the piloting of ideas that we were developing in order for us to continue engaging with our patrons and providing them with easy access to resources. For example, we organised online programmes, seeded digital learning communities and curated learning resources for adults.

Globally, libraries and archives are finding new ways to respond to the pandemic and its longer-term implications. The full implications of COVID-19 on libraries and archives are not entirely clear, but we believe that the emphasis on preparing citizens for a digital future and the need for learning will remain. We will continue to evolve and adapt the Libraries and Archives Plan 2021-2025 in a post COVID-19 world.

However, the Libraries and Archives Plan 2021-2025 is not complete without the views and feedback of our most important stakeholder - the Singapore public. Your views will help shape our plans, allow us to serve your needs better and enable us to create the libraries and archives of tomorrow.

This consultation paper will set out the key ideas of the Libraries and Archives Plan 2021-2025. These will form the core of our strategy and we hope you can share your thoughts on what we have planned.





Our Objectives

The Libraries and Archives Plan 2021-2025 is about understanding the future of NLB's customer needs and developing a plan to meet them in a changing world. As such, we have engaged various internal and external stakeholders to solicit their views. Through these channels, we created four strategic thrusts that will help us achieve our vision.

STRATEGIC THRUST 1

Inspire Learning Communities

We create opportunities for people to learn and discover together, at different stages of their lives, igniting the joy of learning among our people, and thus creating a vibrant and informed society.

STRATEGIC THRUST 2

Connect with History and Culture

We collect our experiences today to become memories for tomorrow. Through different platforms, we hope to display our shared history and culture in a vibrant manner.

STRATEGIC THRUST 3

Deliver Customised and Personalised Services

We want to deliver personalised and seamless services both physically and digitally to our users to cultivate learning and knowledge discovery through usage of technology.

STRATEGIC THRUST 4

Expand and Empower through Partnerships

We will foster partnerships at the individual and institutional level to scale up our services and meet the needs of different users.

These initiatives take into account the external and internal considerations to support NLB's plans. They are fundamental mindset shifts both in the way we aspire to deliver better services to patrons and in enabling our people to be discerning, well-equipped and agile.

Strategic Thrust

1

Inspire learning communities.

Learning is both a personal and social activity. NLB has supported knowledge sharing across different groups to create an ecosystem for lifelong learning and we will continue to do more in better ways. These learning communities - where people share what they learn with each other - are critical to develop Singapore into a more vibrant and informed society. To achieve this, there are three broad areas NLB will work on.





Curate knowledge and services for adults and seniors

To help adults access curated content and to assist seniors in fulfilling their learning needs, we will:

- ◆ Develop learning pathways.
- ◆ Build our collection on topics such as digital and information literacy, critical and inventive thinking, among others.



Create spaces for learning communities to grow

To spread the joy of learning and aid people in their pursuit of knowledge, we will:

- ◆ Design conducive spaces to facilitate active learning activities and the exchange of ideas on diverse issues.
- ◆ Provide opportunities for volunteers to share their knowledge and expertise with others through informal conversations on specific interests or topics such as literacy and Mother Tongue languages.



Re-think the delivery of content and programmes

While books remain a core part of our service, we will look to continue delivering bite-sized content on trends and emerging issues such as the environment, health, and arts and culture. This way, Singaporeans can access content anywhere.



Questions



How do you think we can curate our content and services better for adults and seniors?



How can we create communities to further spread the joy of learning?

Strategic Thrust

2

Connect with history and culture.

History is a critical part of nation building, forming collective memories that bind us to each other. As the guardians of Singapore's shared history, we have a critical role in storing, curating and sharing our past with current and future generations. We are constantly exploring new and different platforms to engage citizens on Singapore's history and culture. At the same time, we aim to develop interactive experiences which allow people to vividly experience the past. Through more innovative approaches, and tapping into partnerships and the latest technologies, NLB aims to better connect our citizens to our treasured past.





Collect today for tomorrow

We will adopt a prospective approach to ensure an optimal archival process. This involves deciding whether or not materials should be archived before they are published. It allows:

- ◆ Time-sensitive materials to be collected in a timelier manner - for example, archiving online content that might disappear after a certain period.
- ◆ NLB to build its capability and capacity for archiving digital material.



Create meaningful experiences

Our existing efforts to engage the public such as holding exhibitions and talks in schools continue to be important but will be insufficient as active engagement mediums. Beyond that, we want to connect to larger audiences by bringing stories to life in different formats such as:

- ◆ Interactive storytelling
- ◆ Gamification
- ◆ Digital curation

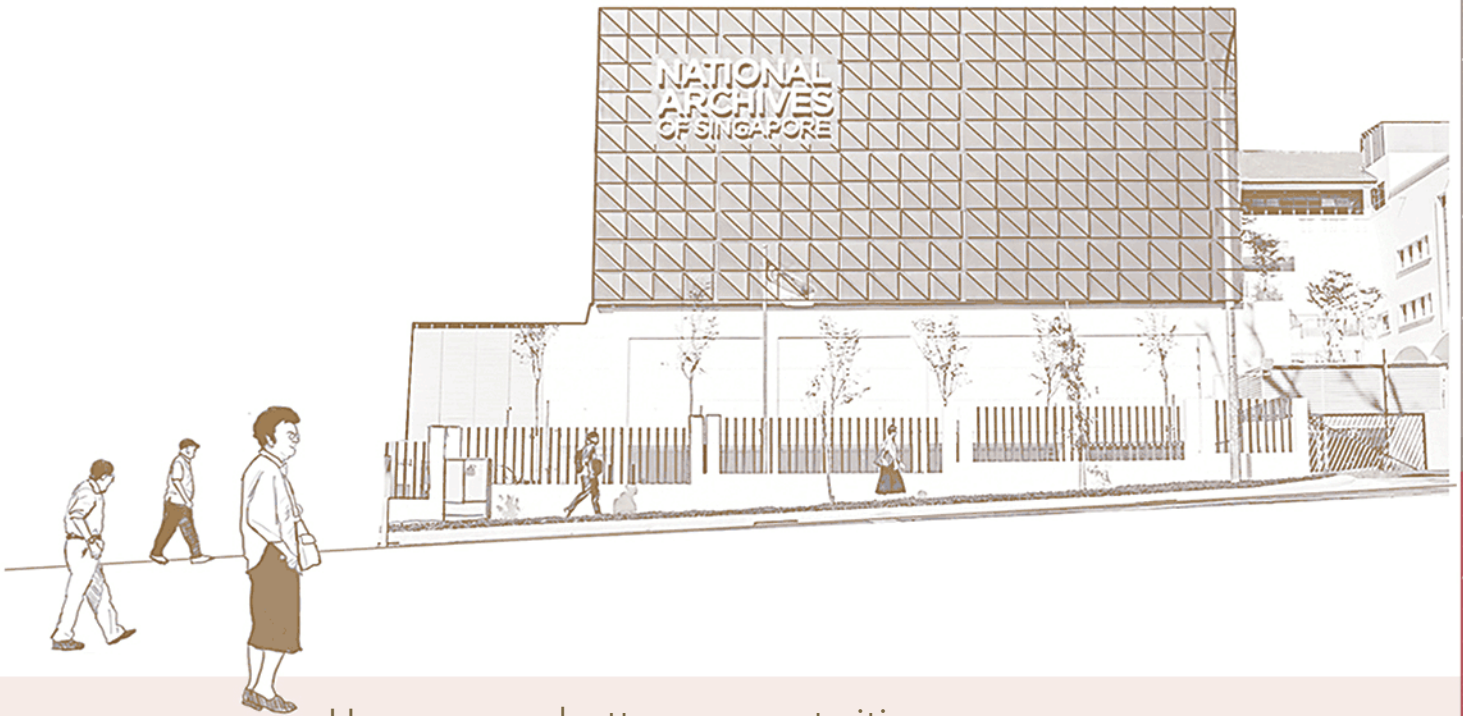


Celebrate collective memories

We want to tap our community to repackage our history and celebrate it with everyone. We will look to seniors and relevant institutions for enriching memories of Singapore and Asia to facilitate a fuller appreciation of our history.



Questions



How can we better connect citizens to our history and archives?

Strategic Thrust 3

Deliver customised and personalised services.

We want to deliver personalised and seamless services that put the interests and needs of our patrons first. This means giving them access to what they need in the most convenient manner. We will achieve this by using technology, innovative thinking, the latest in user-experience design and constant engagement with our patrons who use our services most.

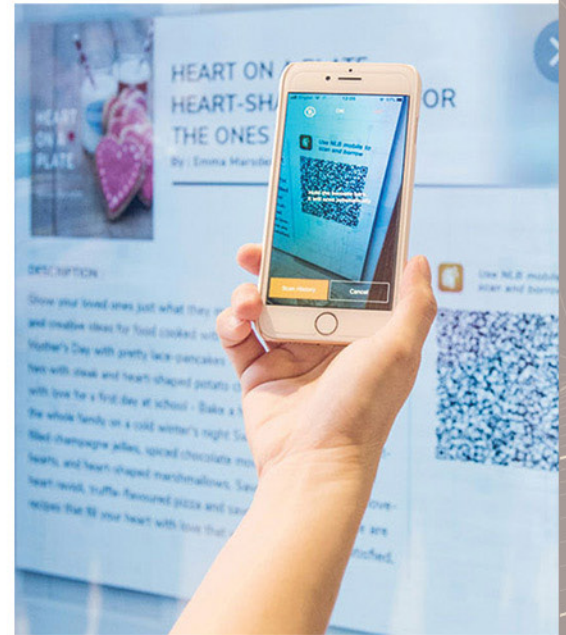




Enhance digital experiences

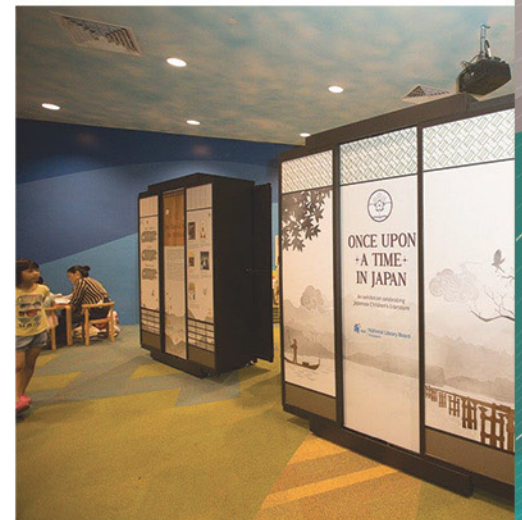
In line with Singapore's "Smart Nation" ambition, the NLB will adopt a digital-ready strategy, which will be driven on multiple fronts:

- ◆ We will enhance our website and mobile app to improve user experiences in learning, partnerships and volunteering.
- ◆ We will improve the search-and-discovery function of our library and archives resources to ensure the public can access the full range of information at their disposal.
- ◆ We will collect and analyse customer behaviour to meet new needs on a real-time basis.



Develop an omni-channel service delivery strategy

In libraries of the future, both physical locations and digital touchpoints are integrated to make it easy and convenient for users to discover relevant content and services. We want to create better opportunities to reach the audience by sharing our range of content and services in learning, literacy and heritage programmes across all platforms, from our app and website to our physical branches.



Increase the access to services for underserved segments

By partnering private and public sector parties, we will develop services tailored to the needs of our workforce and businesses, and improve access and convenience for them.

This is to help adults:

- ◆ Remain employable and internationally competitive.
- ◆ Be equipped with transferable hard and soft skills to navigate the digital economy.



Questions



How can we better help families, working professionals, seniors and/or other individuals who require more support in learning?



How can we improve your digital experience with us?

Strategic Thrust

4





Broaden and deepen partnership opportunities with a recognition framework

NLB has hundreds of volunteers championing lifelong learning today. We are constantly looking for ways to validate the important work that our volunteers are doing in serving the community. To that end, we hope to design a more structured system for NLB to recognise its partners and volunteers across the organisation and motivate them to continue their contributions.



Develop a structured approach towards corporate partnerships and identify collaboration priorities

Corporations play a critical role in helping their staff improve knowledge and skills that are relevant to their work. We aim to further collaboration on this front through a range of activities, from events to setting up mini-libraries in shared spaces. This will be an opportunity for employers to encourage staff to conduct self-learning wherever possible.



Develop an international relations strategy to manage cross-border partnerships

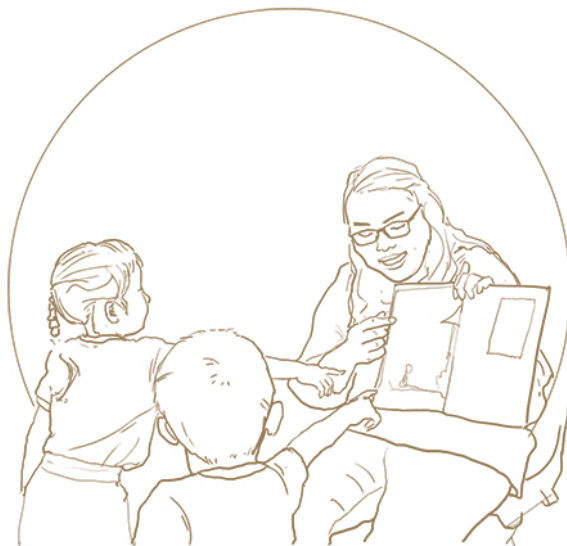
We will look to scale up international partnerships with other libraries, archives and institutions so that we can develop our content, research and activity-based efforts. This will promote the understanding of and knowledge on topics such as culture, history and the arts.



Questions



What kind of volunteering opportunities would you like to have?



How can we better recognise our volunteers?

YOUR VIEWS MATTER

Libraries and archives are important parts of our lives. As focal points for learning in the community, libraries and archives help to create an educated and informed society while inculcating a lifelong passion for learning. With your help, we can shape our libraries and archives to better fit your needs.

BE PART OF THE CONVERSATION

Fill in your views [here](#), or scan the QR Code below.

