

Library Update Online

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1. **Electronic Resources**

The Library has provided Web access to the following databases:

- a. Biological Abstracts (Jan 1996-present) via WebSPIRS
- b. MLA International Bibliography (1963-present) via WebSPIRS
- c. Linguistics and Language Behaviour Abstracts (1973-present) via WebSPIRS
- d. The Philosopher's Index (1940-Present) via WebSPIRS
- e. Singapore Malaysia Collection via WebSPIRS
- f. Contemporary Authors via GaleNet

The Library has 4 new additions to its Electronic Journal Collection:

- a. American Journal of Physics (Vol.67, no.1 (Jan. 1999)-Present)
QC1 AJP
- b. Discover (July 1998-Present)
Q1 D
- c. International Journal of Science Education (Vol.21, no.1, Jan 1999-Present)
Q181 EJSE
- d. Journal of Analytical Atomic Spectrometry (Vol.12, no.1 (1997)-Present)
QD96 JAAS
- e. Journal of Chemical Education (Vol.73, no.9, Sept 1996-Present)
QD40 JCE
- f. Literature and History (Vol.8, No.1, Spring 1999-Present)
PN50 LH
- g. Modern English Teacher (Vol.8, no.1 (Jan. 1999)-Present)
PE1065 MET
- h. Research in Education (Vol.61, May 1999-Present)
LB1028 RE

The Library currently subscribes to 17 CD-ROM databases, 20 Web-based databases and 94 electronic journals.

2. **Barcoding Project**

With effect from Jun 98, barcodes have been reassigned and pasted onto old books to ensure that all barcodes are placed at specific locations in the books so as to facilitate self-checkout of books by library users. All Lending books from classes A to Z were re-barcoded in Dec, 1999. The project came to an end in Jun, 2000, with the completion of the repositioning of barcode labels for the Bound Periodical Collection.

3. **Library Book Sale (By Mrs Lee Meow Hui)**

Since last year, the Library has been vigorously weeding its collection in preparation for the big move to Yunnan Garden Campus. In our bid to help "save the trees", we decided to hold a book sale to recycle some of the weeded books. Besides, we believe that our discards could be someone's treasures. As an added bonus, revenue earned from the sale would be credited into the Library's vote for the purchase of new library materials.

So, on 14 April 2000, some of the Library staff turned booksellers for the day. The walkway outside the Library was bustling with activity as it was the venue of the Library's first Book Sale. Although the sale was scheduled to start at 10 am, staff and students started to gather as soon as the trolleys were pushed out at about 9.30 am. These were the early birds who hoped to have the best pick. The good turnout was probably a result of the publicity posters that had been put up at strategic locations around the campus. The sale was also announced to staff through the e-mail system.

The assorted books for children and teenagers were the centre of attraction as they were cheaply priced at \$1.00 for any 5 books. The Big Books and picture cards were equally popular as they could serve as teaching aids. Two sets of general encyclopaedia were quickly snapped up. There was a steady stream of buyers throughout the sale period, with prices of individual books ranging from \$0.50 to \$5.00. In fact, many students were still busy browsing/selecting books even at 4 pm, the scheduled closing time. We did not have the heart to ask them to leave, so we waited till there was no one at each trolley before we pushed it back into the Library. The last trolley was pushed in at about 4.30 pm.

The enthusiastic response to our first Book Sale was certainly very encouraging. As a result, we have decided to make the Book Sale a regular Library event. We will have at least one Book Sale a year. We look forward to your continuing support in our future book sales.

4. **The Wonderful World of Online Shopping (By Ms Yvonne Yin)**

One is sometimes amused to read articles on online shopping in the Straits Times where the writers mention that it takes about 6-8 weeks for delivery of items. That is because these people invariably concentrate on web sites in the United States and give one the impression that they are totally unaware of the availability of online shopping anywhere else.

To redress the balance, may I direct you to <http://www.britishmailorder.com> where I can assure you that, contrary to the fears of some British booksellers, Royal Mail can actually deliver most items in two weeks' flat (and sometimes one week is all it takes).

When you login, you'll be greeted by two cheerily-waving Union Jacks, which rather make you feel like waving right back. There are searchable sections for everything from books to wine. As it is the books section that is the most relevant, some examples are listed below:

<http://www.alphabetstreet.infront.co.uk>

<http://www.amazon.co.uk>

<http://www.abebooks.com>

<http://www.blackwell.co.uk>

<http://www.johnsmith.co.uk>

<http://s1.waterstones.co.uk/cgi-bin/wat01prd.storefront/>

<http://www.saxons.co.uk>

There are many others, including specialist bookshops, and browsing is strongly recommended. Postal rates also differ, but I suspect they are lower or no higher than the American equivalent.

If you're looking for out-of-print or academic titles, [abebooks.com](http://www.abebooks.com) (Advanced Book Exchange) offers access to millions of titles in thousands of bookshops world-wide. Key in the title you're looking for, and a list of bookshops that hold it will be displayed. The condition of the book will also be indicated. Click on your choice, and you can either order straightaway or email the bookseller first if you have any enquiries. Should you have a choice between a British and Australian bookseller, it is preferable to opt for the former, as Australian postal charges are much higher and there is no surface mail to Singapore.

What if you're sceptical of online ordering? I used to stick doggedly to the send-a-cheque method myself (I had a UK account left over from student days), but after running into problems such as the calculation of postage and rapid depletion of account, I finally gave online ordering a try and found it was generally quite all right.

It does have quite a few advantages:

1. If all goes well, your order is received immediately (a fairly common glitch is that it is not received at all, but this also happens with orders sent by post)
2. A well-set up web site will be able to deduct VAT (Value Added Tax) and calculate postage once you key in your destination
3. As you're paying by credit card, you don't have to worry about cheques or bank drafts. Reputable shopping sites will have secure ordering
4. To encourage online ordering, many sites now have offers not available in the printed catalogues.

Obviously, there is not much point in ordering from overseas if the items are readily available in Singapore. For books, I would recommend checking mphonline.com or other local equivalent first. For other items, it would probably depend on how much legwork you're willing to put in. I have bought items only to find them later at about half the price in Funan Centre.

All said and done, the Internet should prove a rewarding and time-saving and (hopefully) glitch-free shopping experience. Just click with care!

**5. NIE Library WITs Team Clinches Gold Award
(By Mrs Loo Wah Enn)**

This was what NIE Library WITs team (PAGES) achieved at this year's National QC Convention II held in July 2000, after also winning a gold award at the NIE in-house WITs Convention held in March 2000.

The team's project "*Reducing Time Spent on Physical Processing of Books*" was to examine the time and work involved in physical processing of books. This also included improvement on the uniformity of spine labels pasted. The team had set a target of 27% and managed to achieve 28% overall improvement with some modifications to the original solutions.

The solutions have resulted in an annual total time saving of 283 hours and a cost saving of \$2,866 per year. Almost 38% more books could be processed annually. The intangible benefits included an improvement in the appearance of the book spine and a reduction in the fatigue level of staff. New staff using the book holder could achieve an acceptable quantity and quality of books processed, thus raising staff morale. User's needs were also better satisfied since new books were getting to the shelves faster.

With library management's approval, the team constructed a workstation in-house to further improve the efficiency of staff in book processing. The team also managed to engage a commercial company to custom-make the book holder.

This was a successful project which has been made possible by the commitment of the team members and library management. Thanks also to all those who have rendered assistance to PAGES in one way or another.

Cheers!