

Rencana-Rencana/Articles

REVIEW OF 1990-1991

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Abstrak: PUM telah mara ke hadapan di dalam beberapa bidang pada tempoh 1990-1991. Sebagai tambahan kepada pernyataan rancangan-rancangan pengkomputeran, beberapa jenis peralatan besar dan kecil seperti kamera-kamera mikrofilem dan unit-unit hawa dingin, peralatan untuk pelajar-pelajar buta, sebuah van dan sebuah peti sejuk, telah diperolehi atau telah diluluskan perolehannya. Perubahan-perubahan kepada bangunan perpustakaan seperti foyer untuk Perpustakaan Utama, tangga dalam untuk menghubungkan tiga paras di Perpustakaan Majalah dan sebuah pondok untuk simpanan van Perpustakaan sedang dibina. Sokongan Universiti atas penubuhan dua buah unit kerja baru; belanjawan buku yang lebih besar; dan perjawatan Perpustakaan yang lebih besar amat menggalakkan. Sesi ini akan berakhir dengan Perpustakaan menyelaraskan sebuah bengkel serantau mengenai pemetaan anjuran IFLA.

Abstract: The period 1990-1991 has seen UML progress on many fronts. In addition to realizing plans for computerization, equipment big and small such as microfilming and air-conditioning units, equipment for the blind, a library van and a refrigerator, have been acquired or approved. Physical improvements to library buildings such as the Main Library foyer, an internal staircase linking three floors of the Periodicals Library and a van shelter are being built. University support for establishing two new functional units, a bigger book budget; and a bigger library establishment, has been most encouraging. The session will end with the Library coordinating an IFLA-sponsored regional workshop on mapping.

The Session 1990/91 has been such a significant one for the Library that perhaps it should not go without comment. In matters big and small progress has been made, and for many years to come, users and staff alike will benefit from the achievements of this period.

Computerization. The most significant event is computerization of the Library. After a twenty-year struggle, the University finally signed the Agreement on 26 December 1990 with Singapore Computer Services Pte. Ltd. (SCS) and Digital Equipment (Malaysia) Sdn. Bhd. to install the ATLAS package onto the 6410 to computerize on an integrated basis, all aspects of the Library's operations. The event is likely to result in many months of hard work, headaches and expected trial and tribulation. It will, of course, also eventually result in propelling the Library to greater efficiency and give it the ability to offer a wider range of services to its users. To mark this event, this issue of the *Kekal* is devoted to documenting various aspects of the project. For making this possible, we have to thank the Ministry of Education for its understanding, foresight and generosity; the University administrators for their support; and not least of all the Library's Sub-Committee on

Library Computerization, which worked extremely hard and competently on behalf of the Library to bring the exercise to a satisfactory conclusion.

Airconditioning. Perhaps as significant, but certainly one which will bring more physical comfort to all who use the Main Library, is the decision of University authorities to change the 30-year old air conditioning plant, which in latter days has been more down than working. In actual fact, the University Council had already agreed in 1989 to purchase a new unit to replace the ancient system, and this was to have been effected in the long vacation of the 1989/90 session. It would appear that someone decided unilaterally that this sum could be 'saved' and the exercise was stopped midway. Subsequently, the expected breakdowns to the air conditioning system, especially during the examination period, forced one and all to take note of the Library's appeals. The relevant files were exhumed and the situation reviewed. In February 1991, Council reaffirmed its past decision, to the relief of all. We thank the current Bursary administration for resuscitating the project and supporting the Library's appeals; and the University Council for their constancy of purpose, even though this delay has probably pushed costs

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up by half a million ringgit from the original sum approved a couple of years ago.

Microform unit. Like most equipment in the Library, UML's microfilming and microfiche equipment dated back to the 1970s. By the late 1980s, frequent breakdowns were experienced, causing inexcusably long delays in UML's supplies of microforms to sister institutions and users. The University authorities generously approved \$117,400 in 1989 for a total system. The equipment, which arrived in May 1990, consisted of a microfilm camera, a microfiche camera, a processor and various basic accessories. The system has so far given endless problems, associated mainly with the ignorance of all concerned in the proper methodology of using it. In April 1991, the vendors brought in German expertise; and with the promised replacement of the faulty parts in the processor, the system should be able to perform to expectations.

Arkenstone Reading System. This is a computer learning system which makes it possible for the blind to 'read' the text of articles and books. The system comprises scanning and reading software and a braille embosser. As a page of text is scanned in, the image is digitised and stored. It can be displayed on the monitor or mechanically read out with a very high degree of accuracy. The Embosser is able to print the text in braille format. Thanks to the generosity of Malayan Banking Sdn. Bhd., the Library will be given the total system before the new session begins. The total gift will cost Maybank M\$60,000. The Library and its blind users have cause to be grateful indeed.

Library van. As with any library system of the size of UML, an enormous amount of fetching and carrying, despatching and collecting, has to be attended to daily. The means of transport is crucial to these activities. In its 30 years of existence, the Library has been given two vans. The first was a tiny Bedford Harimau (WD8392) which succeeded the Library's first vehicle, a three-wheeler. In 1982, an 'almost-new' Combi van, WAD112, which had been used for about a year by the Estate Office, was given to the Library to replace WD8392, which by then was both inadequate and dangerous to use. By the late 1980s, signs of wear and tear were more frequently shown, and the van was only able to keep going due to constant repairs and maintenance being carried out, and much care and attention being lavished upon it by the driver. Thanks to the support given to the Library by the Estate Office, the current Bursary administration

and Finance Committee, WAD112 was replaced in 1991 by a new Toyota Liteace (WCF 1087), a four-seater with adequate storage space, and which is fairly robust. In April 1991, Library requests for a shelter to be built for the Library van were also heeded and approved by the Estate Office.

Refrigerator. In March 1991, to help the Library staff face the long hot summer before the air conditioning plant is installed, the Estate Office made available an almost new fridge. This has been gratefully installed in the Conference Room.

Foyer. In conjunction with computerization, the library foyer, particularly the present clumsy and bulky counter area, had to be redesigned. The Library's proposals and plans have been approved and works will be carried out in mid-1991. For this, we should record our gratitude to the University administration, the Bursary and the Estate Office.

Internal staircase. For years now, the Library has been suggesting that an internal staircase be constructed to link the lower three floors of the Periodicals Library. This staircase would be convenient to both users and staff, and will alleviate the current problem of staff shortages, as it is now only necessary to man one counter instead of three. This was finally approved in early October 1990; work began soon after; and the staircase will be ready for use by the new session.

New units. The Automation Unit which was officially established in October 1989, consolidated its operations in 1990/91 with the loan of a Systems Analyst from the Computer Centre; a Technician (from Audio-Video Division); and a Typist (from Acquisitions Division), who is now well-versed in desktop publishing.

In May 1991, the Official Publications Section will be officially established and will move to permanent quarters on Level II of the Library's Phase IV Building. Simultaneously, the Malaysian Periodicals section will be created, housed on the same floor. The University Archives with the Library's existing stocks of UM documents will also move to the same area established. However, due to staff shortages, it is unlikely to see many leaps forward for a little while to come.

Binding backlog. For years now the Library has been plagued by a backlog in the binding of its periodicals which has proved a nuisance to library users. By 1990, the Medical Library also faced a

6,000 volume backlog; the rest of the system, some 13,000 volumes. By dint of appeals, threats and reorganization of work processes, the decade-old backlog in Medical Library has been vanquished. A 'solution' of half-binding the main periodicals collection in such a way as to keep issues together within soft covers means that by July 1991, the rest of the backlog will also be overcome. The only backlog has been that mutilated copies from open stacks could not be properly repaired. However, Circulation staff showed tremendous enterprise in attending to this problem, and during the long vacations have repaired thousands of volumes.

Cataloguing backlog. Those of us who are a little more ancient will remember the horrendous cataloguing backlogs of the late 1960s and 1970s. The special project undertaken in 1976 to rid the Library of its recorded 35,000 volume backlog succeeded in clearing 27,000 volumes over four months. But the problem was never completely solved. In 1991, with a combination of factors such as better technology, systematic work processes (and yes, alas, smaller book votes) the backlog was finally totally cleared up. We congratulate the Cataloguing Division for a job well done. Such is their confidence that no backlogs will recur again that book shelves lining the walls and standing in the middle of the division have been entirely dismantled!

The book budget. Although the 1991/92 budget is only marginally better than the 1990/91 budget, the \$500,000 increase will permit some books to be bought to support teaching and new courses. The main thing to be grateful for is the obvious feeling of support for the Library especially by Chairman and Members of the Library Committee. It is apparent that if funding is available, the Library will strongly be supported to obtain some of it. The Library hopes to request additional funding later in the year. In the meantime, for the first time in years, requests for new journals are being entertained for possible subscription.

Posts. For close on to ten years now, the Library has seen no significant increases in posts despite the considerable expansion to the library system and the many enhancements in services within it. In April 1991, the University administration agreed to support Library requests for 34 new posts in all categories for its system of 10 libraries in the 1992 budget. We realize that this is subject to all manner of approvals from funding government agencies. The crux of the matter is that, the Library remains

grateful that within its own University, its problems are being recognized. Thus even if not a single new post is given, we would continue to give of our best, knowing that if this is not the best that the user deserves, at least the causes are known and recognized by the top-most rungs of the University administration. It is an encouragement indeed.

Additional library space. Positive results can be recorded for library efforts to (a) regain the use of space lent to other users; and (b) obtain additional, new space. (a) In early 1991, an excellent beginning was made by the newly established Academy for Malay Studies, which cooperated very closely with the Library in planning the use of the Muzium Etnografi Melayu. For the first time in two decades the area will be used jointly by the two departments for exhibitions, to house research collections and for other academic activities. In addition, from discussions with the Chairman and Board members of the Kedaibuku Koperatif Universiti Malaya it would appear that KKUM is prepared to move out from the Library building into their own building which will be planned for 1992. (b) The Library made a request, once more, in 1990 for a new building, as the request made under the Fifth Malaysia Plan was not entertained. The Library has been assured that the University will consider this as one of the priority items once allocations under the Sixth Malaysia Plan have been made known. This will be planned for 1992.

IFLA Workshop. The academic year will end with the Library coordinating an IFLA-sponsored regional Workshop on Maps, Spatial Data and Conservation, scheduled for 17-21 June 1991. The Workshop will see a panel of international and Malaysian Resource Persons and participants from all over Southeast Asia meet over a hectic five days to learn from and interact with each other. The Workshop will be opened by YB Dr. Fong Chan Onn, Deputy Minister for Education; it will be closed by Dr. Haji Taib Osman, Vice-Chancellor, University of Malaya.

Conclusion. All these activities and projects have been possible only with the goodwill and assistance of many. With the continuing support of Library Committee, faculty, and administrative sections, the Library can more confidently take on the new tasks that the new session will bring. On behalf of the Library, I should wish to most gratefully record our thanks to all who have so generously contributed their time, attention, efforts and expertise to our development.