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# KICT NEWSLETTER SPECIAL ISSUES

DEPARTMENT OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE,  
KULLIYAH OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

## CONNEXION@DLIS; THE DLIS 30TH ANNIVERSARY

### TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Message from the HOD: Dr. Zahidah Zulkifli	1
2. Message from the CONNEXION@DLIS Chairman: Dr. Nurleyani Nilam Putri Junurham	2
3. Message from LISSA President: Fawdatuzzihan binti Mohamad Suandi	3
4. Activity 1: DLIS Industrial Talks by Dr. Nur Leyni Nilam Putri Junurham	4
5. Activity 2: Interesting Facts about DLIS	7
6. Activity 3: Games	10
7. Activity 4: Forum & Hi Tea by Dr Sharifah Nur Amirah Sarif Abdullah & Dr Nor Saadah Md Nor	11
8. Activity 5: Visit to National Archives Malaysia	13
9. Compilation of Pictures	15

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# Activity 4:

## Forum & Hi Tea

Newsletter for 30th DLIS Anniversary

Forum: Library in the Digital Age

In conjunction with the 30th DLIS anniversary celebration, the department has successfully conducted a forum deliberating on the topic of 'Library in the Digital Age'. With 30 years of dedication to nurturing the LIS community, the department has invited three experts who have great contributions in their respective domains to share their wisdom and experiences. The panellists were Prof Dr Abd Rahman Ahlan (Dean of KICT), an expert in the Information System; Dr Hj Wan Ali Wan Mamat (Senior Academic Fellow, International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization - ISTAC-IIUM) an expert in Malay Manuscripts; and Mr Shaharizad Adnan (Senior Librarian, Perpustakaan Kuala Lumpur) public library practitioner. This forum was trying to look into different approaches to enhance the current library services to serve the patrons better in the future.

With the recent advancements in digital technology, the nature of libraries has changed dramatically. As more information has become available to the public through a wide range of technological tools, the traditional concept of the library is being redefined. The library now houses content using the most advanced technologies, including digital collections, social media, and multimedia resources. In addition, the digital age has significantly increased the amount of information produced daily, which is heavily impacting how we store and preserve information. However, this transformation has brought a challenge in the library and information services field of dealing with the ever-increasing complexity of information and upholding the rising needs and expectations of the users. Among others, the forum discussed the roles of the library in the digital age, especially in the Malaysian context.

Initially, libraries are spaces or destinations to think, collaborate, learn, discover, and create knowledge. As Dr Hj Wan Ali mentioned, to become better librarians, the LIS students should enhance their communication skills and learn how to effectively engage with the users. Students are encouraged to take charge of any library community-based programs as a part of their research activities so that they could gain experience on how to deal with different types of users and their needs. He also touched on the significance of Manuscript digitization projects to researchers and the community. The manuscript research boundaries have expanded, and researchers are into the digital copy of the manuscripts since restrictions are imposed to preserve the value of the original manuscripts. Furthermore, an initiative to develop Malay manuscript corpora is crucial to assist experts in manuscripts, linguistics, and computer science for future research.

According to Mr Shaharizad, being a public library in the busiest city in Malaysia, the Kuala Lumpur library has meticulously measured its users' needs. During the outbreak of Covid-19 in the past two years, heavy reliance on various online platforms and digital resources in the library was captured. Hence, the library provides various initiatives to cope with the latest technological advancement, for instance, user profiling has been initiated in supporting the formal and informal teaching and learning activities for the students and the researchers. This has indirectly given an impact on the library collections and requires a continuous enhancement of the collection development process. The library enriches digital collections in an effort to fulfil the needs of the technology-savvy users among young generations today. The library has optimized the use of social media platforms to promote its collections and activities to the public. Positive feedback was received throughout the pandemic where users actively participated in various libraries' online activities.

Additionally, Digital Humanities is a new trend in the LIS domain, focusing on humanities-related research by using technology and different types of computational tools to inspire new forms of interaction and create innovations in teaching and learning. Prof Dr Abdul Rahman Ahlan highlighted technological contributions to the special needs users, such as magnified digital books to assist visually impaired users, and multimedia materials to support the hearing-impaired users to understand the sign language to name a few. He also stated that many potential research areas could be explored in the open science domain such as creating new library services in publishing various research datasets, methodologies, and instruments, by integrating the digital data into the library's scholarly work. In response to the recent high demand for digital resources, the development of a new model of library operational cost, capturing the various operational costs of hardware and software, cloud storage, server maintenance, and training is deemed necessary. Besides, Prof also proposed cutting-edge initiatives for blockchain technology as a potential approach to assist in preserving the data security of digitized copies of our invaluable Malay manuscripts.

There's no doubt it's going to be a blast watching more advanced technological development and services in libraries reach the masses. We predict that not only students will try new services, but also the community. The digital transformation can make everyone enjoy seeking information and knowledge in libraries. The discussion outputs are great to help researchers to pave the way for understanding the new role of the library in the digital age. Of course, there are still a lot of cutting-edge developments out there that are just as good as what we have today. It is the time to showcase our support and contribute back to the library information science community.

Have a nice day!

by Asst. Prof. Dr. Sharifah Nur Amirah Sarif Abdullah & Asst. Prof. Dr. Nor Saadah Md Nor