



02.11.2018

Submitted on:

*Satellite Meeting: Africa Section
Libraries as Centers of Community Engagements for Development
22-23 August 2018
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia*

InfoLibNews: BERNAMA as the catalyst to the development of the country

Hasnita, Ibrahim

Information Manager, BERNAMA

hasnita@bernama.com



Copyright © 2018 by Marie Paiva. This work is made available under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License: <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0>

Abstract

The Malaysian National News Agency or BERNAMA was established in 1967 and now has over 700 employees including 400 journalists, editors, photojournalists and video cameramen. BERNAMA produces and disseminates news and information through Newswire by paid subscribers and this include newspapers, broadcast stations and websites. The News Library & Information Centre (InfoLibNews) of BERNAMA is a library specializing in news and information about Malaysia. The users of InfoLibNews are mainly the BERNAMA staff and the BERNAMA Library and InfoLink Service (BLIS) clients from the various government and private organization libraries.

The two main collections are reading materials via ILMU, the library system; and more than 5 million news and information about Malaysia. BERNAMA News comprises of news, reports, articles, special reports, news focus/analysis in the following categories, namely, General News, Economic News, Features/Special Reports, Press Releases, Infographic and Advertorial. For reference and more choices of news, InfoLibNews archives news from local newspapers which are accessible through the Archival News Module. Information consists of the Who's Who Module, a compilation of the profiles of important Malaysian personalities from various fields. Databank is a compilation of information that provide facts on diverse issues and events. Both modules extract information from Malaysian newspapers, BERNAMA's wire reports and other authentic reading materials and websites. Our team's role is to process and archive news and information about Malaysia and these modules can be accessed speedily by users and clients via BLIS.

A digitalization project involving more than one million news is being undertaken to preserve our written national heritage. On top of the news and information provided, the Information Package Unit repackages the news and information by compiling information according to the needs on a daily basis. Three of the researchers are also attached with various editorial desks on a rotational basis. By

providing these services, InfoLibNews is playing the necessary role of assisting the Editorial Department to produce quality news material for the benefit of the nation.

Keywords: InfoLibNews, Information Centre, Library, Editorial, News, Databank, Who's Who, Archives, Digitalization.

1.0 INTRODUCTION - BERNAMA

The Malaysian National News Agency or BERNAMA is a statutory body under the auspices of the Ministry of Communications and Multimedia. Set up under the Act of Parliament in 1967, BERNAMA was established on 30 August 1967 and began operations on 20 May 1968. BERNAMA is headed by a Chief Executive Officer who is assisted by a Management Committee that implements all programmes and activities as well as decisions of the Board of Governors. BERNAMA has over 700 employees including more than 400 journalists, editors, photojournalists and video cameramen at its headquarters at the BERNAMA building and bureau in all the states in Malaysia. BERNAMA also has correspondents in Singapore, Jakarta, Bangkok and stringers or retainers in the United States of America, Nepal and Europe. Thus, a worldwide presence will ensure BERNAMA covers all Malaysian news events of local, regional and global importance.

BERNAMA's role as a source of reliable and current news is well known among the local and international media. BERNAMA produces and disseminates news and information through the BERNAMA Newswire. The paying subscribers include the published newspaper, broadcast stations, websites, electronic media and international news agencies, universities as well as government agencies and private companies in Malaysia. The Internet has opened up new opportunities for BERNAMA in disseminating news and information services directly to the public. This is done through its own web sites and through other web sites. BERNAMA is also offering value-added news packages for Internet entrepreneurs maintaining their own websites.

BERNAMA is continuously conducting research to upgrade the quality of its products and services which include real-time financial information, real-time news, an electronic library, dissemination of press releases, event management, photo and video footage. Other products produced by BERNAMA are Portal services (bernama.com); Newswires; Images; BLIS (BERNAMA Library and Infolink Service); Media Relations & Event Management; BERNAMA News Channel (Astro channel 502); BERNAMA Radio at 93.9 fm & 107.5 fm; and products by UXERA (IT Systems and Solutions). All these can be viewed at <http://www.bernama.com>

1.1 EDITORIAL DEPARTMENT

Editorial Department is the core business of BERNAMA. The role of journalists are instrumental in the development of a country through their accurate reporting. Media invitations and or press releases will be received by various desk in Editorial through email and fax. The Editors will assign writer/ journalist accordingly for coverage and article write-up.

Editorial Department is the core and biggest department in BERNAMA. The journalists are playing their role as an instrumental in the development of a country through their accurate

reporting. The desks will usually receive media invitation or press release through email, fax, sms and phone call. Then editors will choose the suitable event to be covered by the journalist. For certain event (prominent event), the editors will first discuss with other editors from another desk for coverage coordination and follow with the coverage schedule. Journalist will get their task based on the schedule provided and will discuss with the editors for future instruction/explanation. Before proceeding to field task, journalist will do their homework and coverage preparation by referring to the BLIS. (BERNAMA Library and Infolink Service) and from various reliable sources.

The journalist will proceed with the field work and come out with their articles/news. However, the article will not be published immediately, instead will be sent to editors for sensitivity checking and approval. If the content are sensitive, the editors will decide whether to spike or use the article. Race, religions, economy, politics, kings, diplomatic relationship or slander are the example of sensitive news.

The approve article/news will go to the editing desk for “news worthy “checking. If there are no news value or news worthy, the article/news will be “spiked” and not to be publish. But if the article/news are accepted, the editorial desk will channel the neat, complete, precise, fair and balance news to client through BEST system and will get the news in BLIS system. This is how the working flow of journalist that contribute to the better nation.

2.0 INTRODUCTION - INFOLIBNEWS

The News Library & Information Centre’s (InfoLibNews) main task is specializing in news (BERNAMA news and newspaper clippings) and information about Malaysia. It was established in 1968 in conjunction with BERNAMA’s official establishment. In line with BERNAMA’s objective of generating as well as disseminating news and information, InfoLibNews has been entrusted with storing, processing as well as archiving news for reference purposes. This service is not only accessible internally but also externally by the public since April 1986.

The users of InfoLibNews are mainly BERNAMA’s staff including journalists at the headquarters and bureaus all over Malaysia as well as our international correspondents. InfoLibNews comprises of the Reference, Digital, Personality Database, Subject Database and Information Packaging Units.

The services available are BLIS; InfoLibNews Portal, Social Media such as FB/Blog//Instagram, Reference & Information, Borrowing of Materials, Inter-Library Loans, “Le Tour de InfoLib”, and Hotline “202”. The facilities available are Cliental Café, Cyber Station, Carrel Station, Self Check Station, Book Drop Station, Digital Information, Information Walk, Multipurpose Cube, Inspired Cube, Photostation, Brain Game Corner, Stationary Corner, Quality Corner and Digital Cube.

Various activities are held throughout the year in order to engage ourselves with the users. These activities are Mini Carnival, “Le Tour de InfoLibNews”, Reading Day, BLIS/InfoLibNews Portal Training, meetings with journalists, exhibitions within and outside BERNAMA, visits to book fairs, Library Best Practices Visits, Café Activities, Friendly Card, Bulletin, BERNAMA Kids’ 1Malaysia Club (BK1MC), 3B Campaign, Ramadan Bazaar and year end celebration.

3.0 INFOLIBNEWS COLLECTIONS

The collections of the hybrid library include books on mass media, journalism, broadcasting, politics, economy, biography and various other fields, magazines, training notes that are accessible via Integrated Library Management Utility or ILMU, which is web enabled via the InfoLibNews Portal. News and information pertaining to Malaysia can be accessed via BLIS.

3.1 COLLECTION: INFOLIBNEWS PORTAL

The InfoLibNews Portal which was launched on 22 April 2008 is the access to a collection of reading materials, information, announcements, promotions of services/activities and developments of InfoLibNews. This portal helps users to review the content, book covers and abstracts (if any) of the required books (Webopac); selected articles from magazine (Webinfoline); bound volumes of BERNAMA News (e-book); research topics conducted by BERNAMA (Research); links to selected sites (Links); bulletin (InfoLibNews Alert); gateway to BLIS/BERNAMA/Images/Blog; information about BERNAMA/InfoLibNews; and Newspaper headlines. This can be viewed at <http://infolibnews.bernama.com>.



Figure 1: InfoLibNews Portal Main Page

3.2 COLLECTION: BLIS (BERNAMA LIBRARY & INFOLINK SERVICE)

At the beginning of its formation, InfoLibNews was only made available to government and private organizations as well as students depending on their demand with minimal fee. However, after realizing the value of the collection for Malaysians, InfoLibNews began providing access to its information via InfoLink from April 1986. More subscribers were obtained through BLIS when it began its operation in October 2001, upgraded in May 2008 and upgraded again in July 2017. Among the subscribers are media practitioners, researchers, academicians, embassies, government agencies and corporate companies throughout Malaysia.

BLIS operates as an electronic library with easy global access and this makes it an ideal source for news and information about Malaysia. It is jointly owned by InfoLibNews which focuses on the internal users and the Database and Corporate Information Division which focuses on promoting and selling the packaged products to the clients. The contents of the modules are provided by the respective providers and are also gathered internally from the mainstream newspapers such as Berita Harian, New Straits Times, Utusan Malaysia, The Star, and BERNAMA news. Information are double checked with other sources such as magazines, the Internet, official websites of government/private/related agencies and other regional news agencies, social network, annual reports and other alternative sources of information. As at December 2017, it has 5,902,223 articles. BLIS consists of 12 modules namely BERNAMA News, Archival News, Mandarin News, Foreign News, Info Providers, Who's Who, Speeches, Sectoral Reports, Databank, Facts & Figures, Directory, and Calendar of Events.

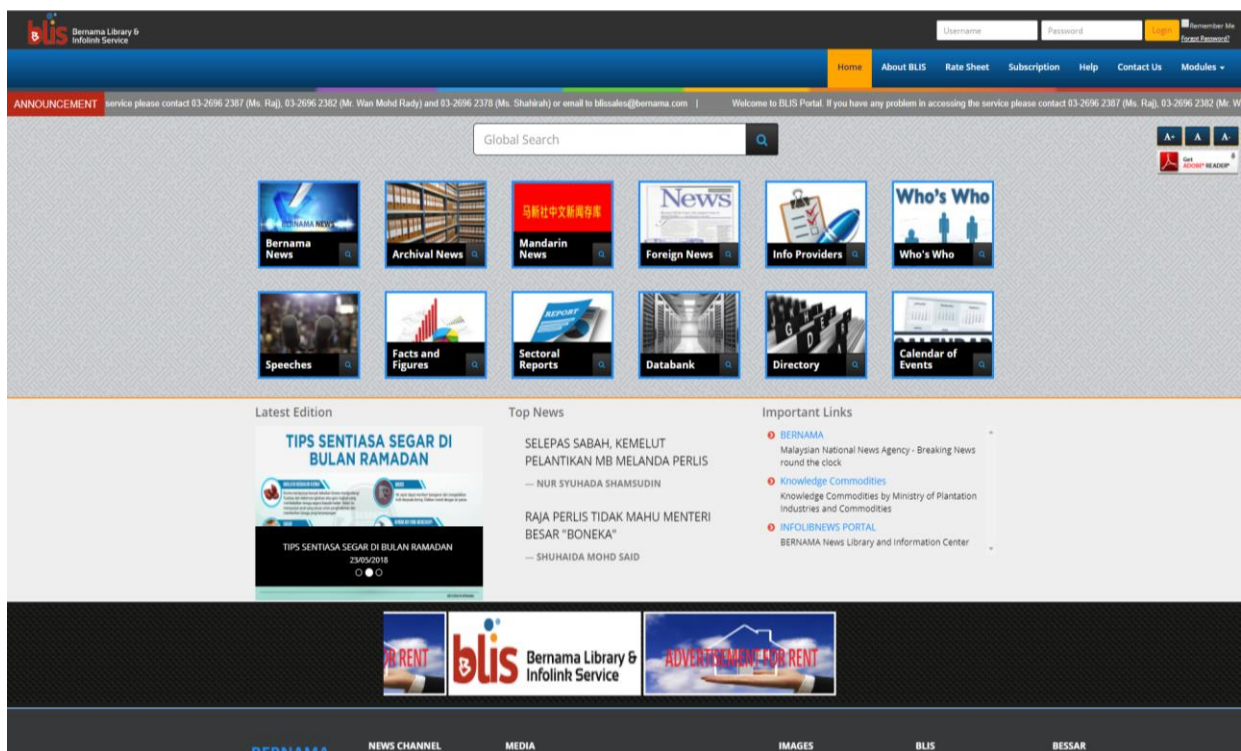


Figure 2: Main Page of BLIS

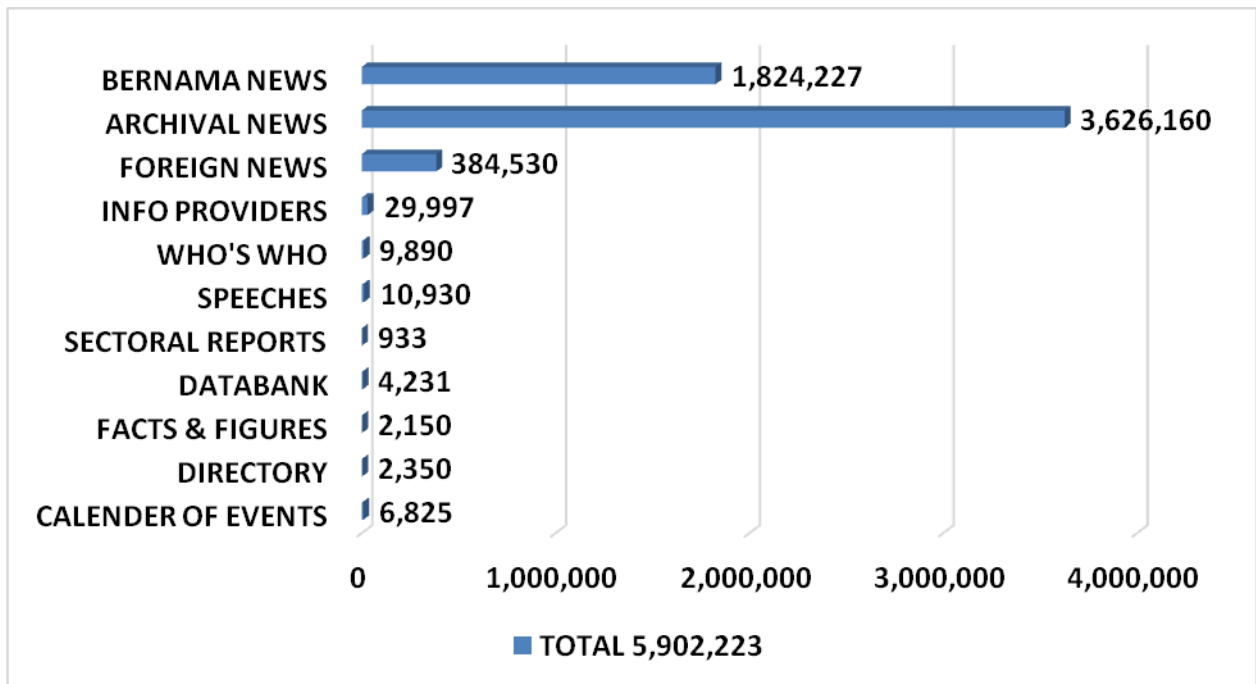


Figure 3: Contents in BLIS Statistics as at December 2017

3.2.1 BERNAMA NEWS MODULE

This collection began in 1968 until now and is also available in bound volumes and folder files. The Editorial Department produces news, reports, articles, special reports, news focus/analysis in the various divisions. These are **General News** (social, crime, court, diplomatic, accidents, politics, election, arts, education, reading, tourism, government policies, parliament reports, development, international relationship, culture, sports, security, health, environment, science & technology, defense, disasters and other current issues), **Economic News** (corporate development, economic reports, company financial developments, policies, Bank Negara announcements, rate currencies, market and commodity reports, and other economic news), **Features/Special Reports** (features news, focus and news analysis pertaining to the current news or selected issues in various fields), **Press Release** (written statements consisting of information, explanation, formal announcement from the individuals, government, private sector and society which have news value) and **Infographics** (images on selected malaysia issues and events). The BERNAMA news are written in Malay, English, Mandarin and Arabic using the basic element in reporting of the 5Ws and 1H (What, When, Why, Who, Where and How).

3.2.2 ARCHIVAL NEWS MODULE

This has several decades of newspaper clippings in text format from various locally published newspapers and magazines such as The New Straits Times, Utusan Malaysia, The Edge, The Sun, Harian Metro and others major newspapers. Initially it was compiled manually - selecting articles using in-house guidelines and based on needs of the journalists, indexing by date and subject, cutting, pasting/stapling on A4 size paper and filing by subject.

3.2.3. MANDARIN NEWS MODULE

This is a repository of news from the Mandarin Desk, Editorial Department.

3.2.4 FOREIGN NEWS MODULE

A vast repository of news from news agencies around the world such as news from the Non-Align Movement News Agency (NNN) and The Organization of Asia Pacific News Agency.

3.2.5 INFO PROVIDERS MODULE

BLIS contains details of publications and reports from the Department of Statistics, Malaysian Institute of Economic Research, Malaysian Economic Planning Unit and Malaysia Productivity Corporation.

3.2.6 WHO'S WHO MODULE

This holds 9,891 profiles of prominent Malaysians (as at December 2017) from various fields. They include politicians, heads of country/states, royalties, top federal/state government officers members of Parliament, judiciary, academicians, economists, businessmen, officers from defense socialites, professionals, sports personalities, diplomats, celebrities and others. Their profiles are listed alphabetically and updated daily. It contains details on a person's background including current post, date and place of birth, race, religion, addresses, telephone numbers, children's' names, educational background, career, awards, membership and patronage to clubs, societies and associations.

3.2.7 SPEECHES MODUL

This is a compilation of full text of speeches delivered by the Sultans, Prime Ministers, Ministers and other important political figures in Malaysia spanning over several decades and is in both the English and Malay languages.

3.2.8 SECTORAL REPORTS MODULE

This is a rich collection of analytical reports on Malaysia's key industries. This includes industrial reports from the Malaysian Industry Government Group for High Technology (MIGHT), National Property Information Centre (NAPIC), Malaysian Investment Development Authority (MIDA) and Malaysian Insurance Institute (MII).

3.2.9 DATABANK MODULE

This is a compilation of information which provides facts on diverse issues and events extracted from Malaysian newspapers and BERNAMA's wire reports. The information available includes current and archival information on various topics of special interest in Malaysia such as key personnel in the government and political arena, defense, education, election, judiciary, sports and others.

3.2.10 FACTS & FIGURES MODULE

This contains details about Malaysia such as tax laws, people's right as well as public holidays. It also includes as State Profiles and Commodity Reports. It is available in both the English and Malay languages. Bahasa Melayu.

3.2.11 DIRECTORY MODULE

The Module contains Malaysia's financial and company directory and covers financial institutions like banks, brokers, insurance companies, discount houses and exchanges.

3.2.12 CALENDAR OF EVENTS MODULE

It provides details of events like venue, time, organizer and contact numbers for the diary listings of Educational Events, Sports, Corporate Diary, Seminar Diary, Conferences and Exhibition Diary and others.

4.0 DIGITALIZATION PROJECT

Digital project begun in 1996 and until now reaching 6 million data stored in BLIS. Prior to that the news and information were compiled and referred manually. By end of 2001, digital archiving system was up-graded via web based. With the advancement of the applications and infrastructure within the digital environment, the digital archival system has been launched in April 2008 and upgraded in 2015.

The present practice is to digitize the article, from selecting, cutting, scanning, indexing (title, subject, author, date, newspaper category and product) and is accessible via BLIS. Since this process is time and space consuming, BERNAMA is getting the news daily via FTP from The News Straits Times and Utusan Malaysia (1997 – to current) in text format. With this facility arrangement, BERNAMA can focus on digitizing the millions of news cutting which are compiled by subject files and the copyright issue does not arise.

Digitalizing collections will enhance accessibility and improve preservation so to preserve our written national heritage. Digitalization initiatives also will allow users to search collections speedily, rapidly and comprehensively from anywhere at any time.

It was a great challenge for InfoLibNews, being the custodian of integrity and authenticity of our collections which is the BERNAMA News and the news from main published newspaper which is physically located at our premises, to make it virtually accessible. We are now managing and organizing the nations' digital heritage for the current generation and many more generations to come.

5.0 INFORMATION PACKAGE UNIT

InfoLibNews has taken proactive steps to assist the Editorial Department on daily basis to produce more valuable news. On top of the news and information provided, the Information Unit repackages the news and information by compiling information according to the needs of journalist. This activities are run based on a daily basis based on what journalists are tasked for. Basically, information provided to the journalist are background information like chronology of the event, details evidence of data and creating some new/ additional information for public awareness.

Other than that, with the new government set up some prominent faces are not yet familiar with; thus here is the responsibility of researchers to search and hunting for profiles background of prominent people recently. Based on all information provided, journalist are able to come out with neat, complete, precise, fair and balance news. The researchers provided and as to apply the concept of "step on the ground", where they are also been attached with various editorial desks to serve the journalist face to face on a rotational basis. The example of editorial desk are; general desk, economic desk, sport desk, multimedia desk, court desk, international desk and also features and current issue desk.

This unit also has published topics about selected issues in Malaysia namely Affordable housing in urban area in Malaysia; Gun Smuggling; Threat of Rats; Human Trafficking; and Herbal Medicine.

6.0 ENGAGEMENT WITH THE USERS

There are numerous activities and events organized throughout the year as a mean of engaging InfoLibNews with their internal users. These are:

- a. BLIS training
- b. Mini carnivals
- c. Le Tour de InfoLibNews
- d. Reading activity
- e. Chat with the journalists
- f. Exhibitions
- g. Visits to book fairs
- h. Café' activities
- i. Publications
- j. BERNAMA Kids' 1Malaysia Club (BK1MC) activities
- k. 3B Campaign – Reading with BERNAMA
- l. Year end celebration

7.0 CONCLUSION

Most importantly by reading materials provided; good services/facilities provided; synergizing with the users especially the Editorial Department staff; and by providing accurate, reliable, authentic and factual news and information via BLIS as a reference and backgrounder, will result in the production of quality news material which will be beneficial to BERNAMA staff and the nation as a whole.

REFERENCES

- BERNAMA. Library and Information Centre. Library Excellence Award, Librarian Associations of Malaysia. (2009). (1st volume – Chapter A and 2nd Volume – Chapter B).
- BLIS Portal. (2018) Retrieved from <http://blis.bernama.com>
- Hasnita, Ibrahim. (2008). Encouraging Users at BERNAMA Library & Information Centre via Organized Activities. Paper presented at the Conference on Customer-Focused Culture, 10 June 2008, The Zone Regency Hotel, Johore. Organized by PSZ, University Technology of Malaysia.
- Hasnita, Ibrahim. (2013). Best Practices at InfoLib, BERNAMA. Poster presented at the “Seminar Kebangsaan Pustakawan Malaysia” (SKPM) 2013, 25 – 27 August 2013, Mahkota Hotel, Melaka. Organized by Academic Library Committee, Librarians Association of Malaysia
- Hasnita, Ibrahim and Masfaliza Masmuda. (2010). Sustaining and Maintaining of News and Information by Digitalization on “Malaysiana” collections. Paper presented at the “Seminar Kebangsaan Sumber Elektronik”, 20 - 21 December 2010, Penang Bayview Beach Resort, Pulau Pinang. Organize by UniMap Library, Malaysian Online E-Resources and Librarians Association of Malaysia (North).

Hasnita, Ibrahim, Rozlen Mustapa and Lalitha Nadarajah. (2014). Profiling Prominent Malaysians in BLIS's Who's Who. Paper presented at the International Conference on Information: Exploring the Future, 10 & 11 September 2014, KSL Hotel & Resort, Johor Bahru. Organize by Information Management Faculty (Johore), University Technology Mara and Librarians Association of Malaysia.

News Library and Information Centre Portal. (2018) Retrieved from <http://infolibnews.bernama.com>

Whopedia BERNAMA Group. (2011). "Pelanggan Kad Profil Tokoh Rendah". Participated at the 3rd Malaysia Library ICC Convention 2011, 9 – 11 June 2011, Langkawi, Kedah. Organized by Board Director of Public Library Malaysia and Librarians Association of Malaysia.



Hasnita is managing InfoLibNews (Information Centre & News Library, BERNAMA (Malaysian National News Agency). Professional experiences include in coordinating the Library System; Websites; CD ROM projects; develop BLIS (BERNAMA Library and Infolink Service); conducted training (information literacy), facilitator; handling exhibitions; heading the ICC (Innovative and Creative Circle) projects; preparing the quality documents/job description; written articles in the Library Bulletin; reading campaign activities and written articles in two books. Vice President I, Chairman of the Training Committee and the past Chairman of the Special Libraries Committee (SLC) of the Librarians Association of Malaysia.