

Libraries Leading the Changes and Development of Our life: Focused on the National Library Policy and Practice by the 2nd Comprehensive Library Development Plan

Sook Won Shin

Presidential Committee on Library and Information Policy of Korea, Seoul, Republic of Korea.

sookwonshin@gmail.com



Copyright © 2016 by **Sook Won Shin**. 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 Library Act of Korea, fully revised in 2006, prescribes both the social responsibility of libraries and the matters necessary for libraries to perform their roles of protecting the Korean people's right of information access and the right to know. Korea has formed a Presidential Committee on Library and Information Policy of Korea to establish, review and adjust the key points on library policy. The Committee, launched in 2007, successfully finished the First Comprehensive Library Development Plan (2009-2013) and now is accomplishing the Second Comprehensive Library Development Plan (2014-2018). This paper focuses on the Second Library Plan relating to the library information policies and practices in the aspect of sustainable development goals of the UN. It also aims to introduce representative library services in Korea which will prompt national and community development along with the changing roles of libraries and the direction of the 5th Library Committee that focuses on the policy of public access to information. Through such library policies and practices, the Committee will strengthen the capabilities of libraries in the creative knowledge-based society of the 21st century and perform the role of further facilitating the provision of information services to the people in Korea.

Keywords: Committee on Library and Information Policy of Korea, the Comprehensive Library Development Plan, Information access, National public domain, Big data

1. Introduction

The Library Act of Korea, fully amended in 2006, prescribes both the social responsibility of libraries and the matters necessary for libraries to perform their roles of protecting the Korean people's right of information access and the right to know. It also puts the Presidential Committee on Library and Information Policy of Korea (hereafter referred to as the Library Committee) to establish, review and adjust the key points on the library policies and other related matters. The Library Committee establishes a comprehensive library development plan every five years, and evaluates the performance every year to facilitate library development.

The Library Committee, launched in 2007, successfully finished the First Comprehensive Library Development Plan (2009-2013) and now is accomplishing the Second Plan (2014-2018). Specifically, the vision of the First Library Plan was 'The library leading to the first-class nation' and the plan presented the 8 areas of driving strategies, with 29 major strategic tasks and 71 specific implementation tasks. The Second Library Plan has the vision of 'The library creating a happy life and future' and it sets up three objectives: 'fulfilling public's happiness with the knowledge and information services', 'strengthening creative competency through learning, research and knowledge eco-system' and 'realizing the cultural power of Korea'. In addition, the 7 areas of driving strategies, 20 strategic tasks, and 92 specific implementation tasks are set up and they are being conducted in nationwide libraries (Choi 2015).

The policies of public access to information that the Library Committee promotes are as follows; (1) laying the groundwork for transforming the national public domains into the creative resources (2) expanding the future-oriented U(Ubiquitous)-library services, (3) increasing the alternative materials and strengthening the customized services for the disabled and the disadvantaged, (4) strengthening the capacities of the National Library of Korea (hereafter referred to as the NLK) as Korea's representative national library, and (5) developing the library services to enforce new value. For these purposes, the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism (hereafter referred to as the MCST) and the NLK have been implementing various policies such as Open Access Korea (hereafter referred to as OAK) Project, Chaekium service (a single library membership card for all public libraries), the development of alternative materials and the enhancement of the services for the disabled and the disadvantaged, the national electronic library services in conjunction with the domestic digital libraries, and the development of the personalized services based upon the big data as the sustainable services of public libraries.

This paper examines the major policies of the Second Library Plan related to the public library policy of the MCST and the NLK in the aspect of the sustainable development of the United Nations. It also aims to introduce representative library services in Korea which will bring further national and community development along with the changing roles of libraries and to present the direction of the 5th Library Committee that focuses on the policy of public access to information.

2. The changing roles and the status of libraries in Korea

Korea was hit by an acute economic crisis in the face of the Korean War (1950-1953) and the government has made great efforts to build an infrastructure for the education and industry to overcome this economic situation. Unending enthusiasm for the education which was believed to provide the way to good jobs and success had emphasized the educational function of the library as an extension of schooling and a quiet place to read and study for practical purposes.

The improvement of the economic level gradually prompted the library to change its function such as providing better information services with the expansion of the collection and other related programs and services as a cultural institution. The direct election system of the head of the local governments by local people started in 1995 greatly affected the local governments to provide administrative services to promote the citizen's participation. Elected government officials tried to meet the needs of local residents on the library and its services and accordingly began to pay attention to build the library with the governmental support,

and support various cultural and lifelong learning programs of the library. In 2000, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism began to support the installation of digital information centers at nationwide public libraries to provide free access to digital content for local residents. And also, the opening hour of public libraries was extended until 10 p.m. for users who cannot use the library during the day. According to Korean library statistics (<http://www.libsta.go.kr/portal/libschMng.do>) in June of 2016, over 13,000 libraries (composed of 5 national libraries, 984 public libraries, 613 academic libraries, 10,879 school libraries, and 602 special libraries) are providing the various services.

In recent years, due to the social changes such as an increase of the aged, one-member family and nuclear family, the regional variations and the polarization among societal groups are growing, and the library is deeply concerned to find the ways to contribute to the national and regional development. Since the super-aged society is coming soon, the Library Committee actively responds to the changing environment of the library and tries to strengthen its role as a place of lifelong learning environment and a space for sprouting creativity through the dissemination and development of the customized educational and cultural programs matched with a life-long cycle.

In a new age of social media and the networks, the present government, launched in 2013, professed 'Government 3.0' to operate a paradigm of the government. This policy lets each government agency release and actively share the public information in order to support the customized services for the people. The government particularly focuses on the creative economy which will lead to economic development including job creation.

In Korea, library policies are divided into several ministries, depending on the type of the library. Public library policies belong to the responsibility of the MCST, the university library policies and the school library policies to the Ministry of Education, and the special library policies to the various ministries related. Therefore, the members of the Library Committee are composed of the library-related ministers and experts of the various fields of society including the professionals in the library and information field. (Choi, 2015).

3. The Library for sustainable development of the nation and regions

3.1. Transforming the national public domains into the creative resources

The Library Committee promotes to secure public domains and provide its service to the libraries as a major policy in order to lay the groundwork to transform domestic public domains into the creative resources. For this task, the NLK has been continuously implementing OAK that enables to expand and open its domestic public domains to the private sector.

OAK (<http://www.oak.go.kr>), started in 2009, retrieves and supports the 'OA scholarly journals', and has been implemented in OAK Portal and OAK Central as sharing projects after data archiving. OAK Portal is an integrated search service provided by the 'Korean style Institutional Repositories (IR)'. And, according to the type of institutions and the formats of information, the collected metadata from participating IR are provided in various ways.

OAK Central is a repository operated by the NLK in charge of archiving services of the domestic open access journals since 2009. The listed papers were built on XML-based full-texts by JATS 1.0 DTD and it is possible to search structured data, such as central body (text), images, tables, and references in specific ways. Through a global distribution and

expansion of citations of domestic open access journals, it contributes to enlist them in international citation databases.

Open access repositories are located in 30 institutions and 527,481 metadata and 9,795 papers of the 86 kinds of open access journals in XML are available through the OAK Portal with resource sharing agreements of the Korea Research Foundation (KRF) and the Korea Institute of Science and Technology Information (KISTI). OA journals are provided through OAK Central and plan to vitalize information sharing and enforce collaborative research environments with a future expansion of cooperation among universities, research institutes, public institutions, businesses enterprises and OAK.

The metadata and papers produced by OAK as national public domains will be shared and spread a wide range of knowledge and information with open access to domestic and international world. And it will enhance the awareness of researchers, and will contribute to improve international cooperation and strengthen the competitiveness of national information power. And finally, it will bring a successful implementation of the "Information 3.0" with further sharing, communication and cooperation.

3.2. Expanding the future-oriented ubiquitous library services

Ubiquitous (U) - library service is to provide an easy and comfortable reading environment for busy people who cannot use the library due to the lack of time. As this service enables people to receive library books directly from subway stations or big supermarkets by building 24-hour automated check-in and -out service and constructing an integrated book loan system using smart devices, it came into the spotlight instantly. The government supported to build RFID systems at 107 libraries by 2015 and has been providing the service linked to smart devices. The expected benefits of this service are to improve the accessibility of the library materials, to increase the circulation of the materials more than 15%, and to reduce the processing time through the automated operation.

In addition, there is 'Chaekium' (literally, 'connecting book') service which is an integrated Public Library Book Service System which grants users to borrow books from and return them to any library at any time with one library membership ID card. This service will surely contribute to increase the public accessibility of information and user-friendly services. The expected benefits of Chaekium service are as follows: resource sharing through interlibrary loans among participating libraries, increasing the library use of adjacent areas, enforcing the reading habits of citizens through the free use of library, reducing the costs of issuing membership cards, and strengthening library cooperation. Providing the library user with additional customized services such as adding a nationwide transportation card function to the library membership card and developing smart phone app to disseminate the service for Chaekium service members only will be a great help to activate the service.

As the participation of the public libraries in Seoul in Chaekium service in 2015 has greatly elevated the number of Chaekium service users, the representative library of each region as the center of the area is finally linked to the NLK through a connecting system among public libraries in local governments. By 2015, 395 public libraries were connected to the service and it is expected to connect 500 in 2016, and 930 by 2018.

3.3. Expanding the alternative materials for the disabled and reinforcing the customized user services

By the end of 2014, there were approximately 2.5 million people with disabilities (about 4.9% of the total population) in South Korea (Korea Disabled Employment Agency, 2015). The National Library for the Disabled (hereafter referred to as the NLID) has been largely contributing to provide the disabled with an equal access to a wealth of knowledge and information through producing and disseminating the alternative materials (<http://nlid.nl.go.kr>). In particular, regulations for the compulsory deposit system of digital files were established to produce the alternative materials, and the digital files are donated or deposited by publishers and authors. As a result, 24,772 alternative materials were produced and supplied by the end of April of 2016 and about 10% of the annual publications are produced in various accessible formats for the disabled.

Since 2009, the NLID has been promoting projects to install reading aids to improve the public library environment for the disabled. In 2015, the NLID provided 120 nationwide public libraries with the financial support for purchasing the assistive technology devices for those with disabilities. In addition, it launched ‘Reading aids equipment loan program pilot project’ for the disabled to take advantage of reading aid equipment more efficiently since July, 2015 and it will be further expanded throughout the country. Since the middle of the 20th century, building and expanding the systematic and active national policies for the reading environment of the disabled have been a driving force to spread the library services for the disabled throughout the country in a short period.

In addition, ‘Chaeknare’ (literally, ‘book delivery’) service, the home delivery postal service of library materials to promote reading for the disabled started in July, 2011. In 2015, ‘Direct Rapid Easy Accessible Material (DREAM)’ service was built to enable the disabled to do integrated search and to use the alternative materials. 19 libraries for the disabled and 803 public libraries have joined this service and over 410,000 alternative materials can be searched and used easily.

Creating a foundation of the customized user services applicable to different types of disability brings forth vitalization of library use, improvement of cultural accessibility, strengthening of information accessibility, narrowing of knowledge and information gap, self-development through reading, and expanding opportunities of communication between society and the disabled. Therefore, the various services for the disabled contribute to improve the quality of life and construct information society without discrimination for everyone.

3.4. Strengthening the NLK as the representative national library

The NLK (<http://www.nl.go.kr>) under the MCST provides unique services to the general public with comprehensive collection of Korea as the representative national library. The NLK holds more than 10.3 million books, collects and preserves more than 500,000 items annually. The timeless cultural heritage at the NLK, particularly on Korean history and culture located home and abroad, have been collected through exchange programs with other libraries, preserved and will be passed down to future generations. In addition, the NLK leads the standardization of cataloging rules and bibliographic description in digital environment and standardizes the authority control system to complete the creation of national

bibliographies. Furthermore, the NLK tries to build a platform for Linked Open Data (LOD) to develop a service model to use the digital content for the next generation.

The NLK built a digital library in 1997 to respond to social and environmental changes. It has linked major domestic libraries and has improved national information power seeking a balanced regional development. Both expanding a sharing system of national information resources and providing the necessary information through online to the general public strengthen the country's competitiveness in the knowledge-based society of the 21st century. Currently, under the auspices of the NLK, the National Assembly Library, the Supreme Court Library of Korea, the KAIST Library, the Korea Institute of Science and Technology Information, the Korea Education and Research Information Service, the Agricultural Science Library, the Digital Library of Korea and the National Defence University have participated in providing the integrated search of the digital collections and digital full texts to avoid duplication of digitization, with proper divisions and standardizations.

As digital resources are increasingly spread, a digital library with physical space and digital equipments was opened in 2009. Since then, it began to actively collect online publications including those publications issued before 2009. At the end of 2015, according to the revised Library Act of Korea, online publications began to be collected by legal deposit system and accordingly, the collecting competency of digital resources of the NLK has been strengthened. Meanwhile, the NLK has collected a total of 3.92 million online publications and is archiving and preserving 30,000 websites per year, a total of 150,000 websites.

3.5. Adding new value to library services

Since 2014, the MCST has been conducting a Big Data project as a five-year plan to improve the quality of library services by collecting data-related collections, circulation records, and data on the users of the public libraries throughout the country. These services are intended to collect, analyse, preserve library data and promote the scientific advancement of library management and user services. Through big data services, it is expected to provide the supports of the scientific decision-making, the provision of proactive library services to users, building a platform for collecting and preserving the various library data, and a big data research environment about libraries, individuals, researchers, and etc.

The Big data project is composed of three systems as follows:

a) Support System of Decision-Making for librarians

This system supports management of individual libraries based upon the analysis of the members of the public libraries, the evaluation of the usage of the collection, and the comparative analysis of the libraries. It collects and analyses the big data such as collection data held by the libraries, popular books of the libraries in each region and other related kinds of data every day.

b) Customized book recommendation service

This is similar to 'Bookmac' (literally, book curation service), a mobile app providing a personalized book recommendation service by using big data when users borrow books. It provides individual pattern analysis such as rating the average scores for books and selecting preference for each genre although it focuses on SNS sharing capacities rather than its social networking features.

c) Library Data Sharing Center

The purpose of this Center is to support librarians and researchers to develop the new services by opening the collected data of the nationwide public libraries. This is to serve the role of window for opening information which implements the spirit of Government 3.0. Therefore, the Center provides a variety of big data of the libraries including the bibliographic data and circulation records through open API.

4. Conclusion

The library in Korea has been constantly expanding and developing its role in the face of special circumstances since the Korean War. In addition to the rapid quantitative growth, the government and the Library Committee have planned and implemented the library and information policies to actively improve the quality of the citizen's life and culture through various efforts such as securing library professionals, the improvement of the Library Act of Korea and library system, the development and support of library services for the disadvantaged class, and the provision of customized library services to meet the needs of the user.

Today, the library is being greatly challenged by the emergence of changes in information environment, artificial intelligence and the Internet of the Things that we could not have imagined in the past. It cannot be overemphasized that the library is the treasury of human civilization as it is a source of knowledge, information and culture of the past, present and future. Furthermore, the library is a driving force to improve the quality of our lives and to bring the development of society and the nation in a knowledge-based society. Therefore, the library should quickly and properly provide, disseminate and create knowledge, information and culture as a holistic cradle. Thus, it should be an open place as 'a cultural playground' or 'Sarangbang (literally, the guest room) for knowledge, information and culture' where all have free access to these resources and enjoy them.

The Library Committee has developed a wide range of library and information policies that reflect the demands of the times and social needs. By doing so, the Committee strengthens the value and the roles of the library, improves the quality of the citizen's life, and fosters the development of the nation. As part of its efforts, the 5th Library Committee held the 1st Future Library and Information Policy Forum about 'Strengthening the specialty through the improvement of the librarian certification system' on June 2 this year. This newly launched quarterly forum will be a place to deal with critical issues of each area of library information policy, to establish new library policies with the stream of the times, and to make the relevant ministries and agencies implement new policies actively. As a result, it will be a solid foundation to carry the role of facilitating further information services for the citizen and to reinforce the competence of the library in the creative knowledge-based society of the 21st century.

Recently, the library has received a lot of love from people by constantly reinforcing its function to move towards a complex cultural space such as 'Library embracing the Gallery, Gallery of Arts brought into Library'. The library needs to closely examine the change of people's consciousness and needs, and incessantly explore and develop the ways to help library users find any information and materials they need anytime and anywhere. Then, people will come to realize that the library is the center of learning, sharing, doing, playing and creating, and they will surely come to feel that the library is an essential place for their

meaningful and happy life and that the library is the main force to bring the development of the nation.

References

Choi, Eunju (2015) Library Policy in the Republic of Korea: The Second Library Development Strategic Plan Alexandria, 25(3): 3-26

Committee on Library and Information Policy (2015) Activity Report: the 4th Presidential Committee on Library & Information Policy of Korea. Seoul: The Committee.

_____ (2014) The 2nd Library Development Strategic Plan (2014-2018). Seoul: The Committee.

_____ (2016) The 2nd Library Development Strategic Plan (2014-2018): 2016 Implementation Plan. Seoul: The Committee.

Korea Disabled Employment Agency (2015) Statistics at a Glance 2015 Disabled. Seoul: The Agency.