The Philippine eLib Project

by

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Introduction

The Philippine eLib is one of the projects funded under the e-Government Fund of the Information Technology and E-Commerce Council (ITECC), now Commission on Information and Communications Technology (CICT). The eGovt. Fund was specifically created in 2003 to attain the goal of making the “Philippine Government Online” by financing eProjects that are consistent with ICT/development plans, cross-agency, citizen-centric, has multiplier effect, contributes to good governance, enhances service delivery, promotes social benefits, harness the full potential of the Internet, and is sustainable. Under the strategic vision of ITECC, the e-Philippines seeks: “An e-enabled society where citizens have access to technologies that will provide:

- Quality education
- Efficient government service
- Greater source of livelihood, and
- A better way of life.”

It was during an out-of-town planning workshop of the Department of Science and Technology (DOST) Science and Technology Information Network (ScINET) in April 2003, when the Philippine eLib was conceived with the main objective of providing access to the combined collections of several

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government libraries in a single portal similar to what was done with the libraries and information centers under the DOST.

**The Philippine eLib Project**

The DOST collaborated with four government agency libraries on a project proposal for eGovt Funding in middle of 2003 and was approved in December, 2003. These agencies which were chosen on the basis of their existing collections are: The National Library (TNL), the University of the Philippines (UP), the Department of Agriculture (DA), and the Commission on Higher Education (CHED). They represent the various fields of discipline in Philippine materials (the focus of the project because this is our niche), e.g. cultural, arts, historical collections of the National Library, arts and sciences, engineering, life sciences, and the like of the UP System, materials on agriculture from DA, science and technology from the DOST, and on higher education from the CHED.

The project integrates in a single portal all the library and information collections of the participating agencies utilizing the existing infrastructures of the DOST, the PREGINET (Philippine Research, Education and Government Information Network) and the VSAT (Very Small Aperture Terminal) of the National Information Network (NIN) of DA. It is envisioned that by integrating these collections, a critical mass of library and information resources would be made available to the Filipino people from all walks of life, thus leveraging access to these information resources for their lifelong learning, research purposes, and for various purposes. Researchers anywhere in the archipelago could access the vast literature on their subject of study in any Internet café or Phil eLib kiosk in their vicinity or even at the comforts of their homes, as long as they have Internet facilities. In other words, a student from a far flung area of the country would have access to the same information as his counterparts in Manila. Likewise, a farmer in
the remotest barangay would have access to the same online resources which could otherwise be available only to the citizens in the city.

In February 2004, the Memorandum of Agreement among the five agencies was signed. It was agreed upon that the Director of the National Library will serve as the Project Manager and the Data Center would be housed at the National Library. The policymaking body of the project is vested on the Steering Committee composed of a representative from each of the partner agencies and chaired by the DOST representative while the Project Management Team is composed of the team leaders of the six components of the project and headed by the Project Manager. To facilitate the implementation of the project, six components were adopted to handle the following: 1) Network Development, 2) Collection Build-Up, 3) Library Portal System, 4) Digitization, 5) Business Development, and 6) Training. Each of these components is headed by a representative from one of the five partner agencies with component team members also coming from the agencies.

The Network Development component led by the DOST handles the hardware and software requirements of the Project. In order to ensure efficient and reliable access to the Phil eLib Network, technical assistance and support in terms of computing and networking requirements of the Project was also provided by this component. ICT equipment such as kiosk computers, servers, and digitization equipment were acquired and distributed among the partner agencies. The servers were given to those identified as content builders while the kiosk computers are for those identified as access points for the subscribed electronic databases. The content builders and access points are the agencies/units of the DOST and DA, all campuses of the UP System, public libraries and state universities and colleges (SUCs) nationwide.
The Collection Build-Up component, led by the UP University Librarian, determines all the collection requirements of the Project with emphasis on e-resources; formulates its bid technical specifications and also handles the subscription to the foreign electronic databases. A total of 11 foreign electronic databases were subscribed to, the details of which will be given in the latter part of this paper.

The Library Portal System component led by the University of the Philippines developed a portal system that provides the following: 1) access to the collection of the different participating institutions; 2) document delivery services; 3) current content services; 4) mechanism for fee services; and 5) facility for shared subscription to online resources.

The standard formats used in the portal are: US MARC 21 (ISO2709) for record; PDF for text file, and MPEG for multimedia.

The Digitization component led by The National Library determines the holdings to be digitized and formulates the bid specifications for the digitization work. The Philippine materials in the member agencies were digitized especially their in-house publications. The other materials included are theses and dissertations, research reports, rare manuscripts, books, photographs and feasibility studies. The materials were microfilmed prior to scanning and then stored as PDF files in DVDs. More than 24 million pages of documents from the five participating agencies were digitized initially.

To ensure that the project is sustained after the project funds are exhausted, the Business Development component, led also by the UP, came up with the business plan, the guidelines for membership and use of its resources and established the cost and revenue sharing of the Project’s
products and services. It also coordinated with the Library Portal System team for critical requirements that need to be incorporated into the portal system.

The Training component led by the DOST handles the training and promotional requirements of the project. Massive promotion of the project is being undertaken through conduct of orientation workshops nationwide. To date, a total of 17 orientation workshops have been conducted in various parts of the country.

The eLib Project hopes to provide for the information needs of all sectors of society in a convenient, affordable, and efficient way of delivery. Although it has both free and fee-based products and services, the project makes sure that the basic library and information needs of the general public are taken care of.

In 2005, a total of 980,418 bibliographic records, 11,111 full-text Philippine materials and 29,000 full-text journals were made available at the Philippine eLib website at www.elib.gov.ph.

The other resources available include the union catalog and the special collections of the five (5) partners.

**Special Collections**

In addition to their holdings, the special collections of the five partners that were made available in the portal are the following:

**Department Of Science and Technology**

Scientists Database  
S&T Institutions Database  
Micro-Small-Medium Scale Enterprise Database
Biotechnology Database
Tekno Tulong (Technology Assistance) Database
Philippine Journal of Science Index

**National Library**

Local History Index
Index to Rizaliana
Index to Historical Maps

**University of the Philippines**

Index to Philippine Periodicals
Philippine Index Medicus
Book Review Index
Biography Index

**Department of Agriculture**

Index to DA publications (Ang Magsasakang Pinoy, etc.)

The digitized resources that can be downloaded upon request and at cost include the following:

- Theses and Dissertations
- Filipiniana Serials (indexed)
- Rare Books and Historical Maps
- Local History materials and Photographs
- Researches and selected Manuscripts
- Publications of the 5 Agencies
- Official Gazette issues (1902 - )
Subscription to Foreign Electronic Databases

The project also subscribed to 11 foreign electronic databases to enhance the local holdings and databases. They are as follows:

- **ACM Digital Library** by the Association of Computing Machinery
- **ACS** by the American Chemical Society
- **AIP/APS** by the American Institute of Physics/American Physical Society
- **ASTM Standards Database & Index on CD-ROM**
- **Britannica Online**
- **CAB Abstracts** on plant science, animal science, human health, parasitology, ecology, forestry, soil science, food science and products, agricultural economics, biotechnology, etc.
- **Compendex** on broad engineering areas: mechanical, civil, environmental, electrical, electromagnetics, structural, process, etc.
- **IEEE Computer Society Library**
- **Project Euclid** (Cornell University) on applied & theoretical mathematics, statistics, computer science
• *XreferPlus* includes full texts of 150 books from over 30 world class publishers on art, bilinguals, biography, business, dictionaries, encyclopedias, food, geography, history, language, etc.

These electronic databases are available for free to the five partner agencies and their constituents. For the DOST, its 20 agencies and 15 regional offices nationwide were provided with kiosk computers for access to the eLib website and the subscribed databases and servers to some agencies identified as content builders. The DA also provided kiosk computers to their regional field units nationwide and servers to some identified content builders. The TNL took care of providing kiosk computers to the public libraries nationwide while the CHED handled those of the state universities and colleges (SUCs). Nonmembers, however, may also avail of the databases through subscription or through purchase of prepaid cards. The distribution and sale of these prepaid cards are handled by UP.

Currently, a usage evaluation of the eleven (11) databases is being done to determine which of the databases would be renewed and/or replaced.

**Benefits from the Project**

The benefits that could be derived from the project include:

- Access to combined library resources/holdings of the Participating libraries;
- Access to expensive electronic databases at a lower cost; and
- Preservation of Philippine cultural heritage through digitization of Filipiniana materials, photographs, maps, rare materials, etc.
Recent Developments and Immediate Plans

The mirror site of the Date Center located at the UP Diliman Main Library is just awaiting for equipment to be operational. Future orientation workshops are likewise scheduled. Content build-up is continuing with the digitized resources to be uploaded soon. In August 2005, the Project received the 2005 APEC Digital Opportunity Center (ADOC) “Best e-Practices Award” during an APEC event in Chinese Taipei.

For 2006 the Project hopes to double its digitized Philippine materials, complete its mirror site set up, install additional IT equipment to project partners, particularly to public libraries and zonal research centers of the Commission on Higher Education which will serve as access points and install an E1 Link from the National Library to the University of the Philippines and from the National Library to a private Internet Service Provider. The Project also hopes to develop new features and applications for the alert system as well as the electronic payment system; to design a more complex cyber Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI), full text searching/mining and a new user interface.

Future plans include the development of application interfaces with new foreign e-database subscriptions, an open-source version of the Philippine e-Lib portal and an integrated Library System interfaced with the Philippine e-Lib portal to be distributed to all content builders and other project members who wish to contribute content. The synchronization of date and transactions of the Data Center and the Parallel Site are also planned for.
Everyone is invited to visit [www.elib.gov.ph](http://www.elib.gov.ph) to experience the Philippine e-Lib.

**Philippine eLib Project Organizational Chart**

**Steering Committee**
Chairman: Usec F.T. de la Peña

**Project Management Office**
TNL

**Network**
(Project Leader) DOST

**Library Portal System**
(Project Leader) UP

**Collection Build-Up**
(Project Leader) UP

**Digitization**
(Project Leader) TNL

**Business**
(Project Leader) UP

**Training**
(Project Leader) DOST

**CHED**
DA

**UP**

**TNL**

**DOST**

**UP**

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