



AUNILo Pathfinder: An Initiative in Promoting ASEAN Rare Collections

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ABSTRACT

Librarians have been developing pathfinders as guide to resources for researchers to check and acquire various information resources needed to be used in learning, teaching and research. This paper would discuss the initiative taken by AUNILo (Libraries of ASEAN University Network) to create a pathfinder for rare collections and resources related to ASEAN which could be accessed online through AUNILo portal: <http://aunilosec.org>. AUNILo portal as a medium to share information about AUNILo and its activities will be the platform to promote and ensure the pathfinder listed could be accessed and benefitted by students and researchers inside and outside of ASEAN. The pathfinders linked in AUNILo portal are Kaum Peranakan Asia Tenggara (Peranakans), Lanna collection and .Mymanuskrip. Kaum Peranakan Asia Tenggara (Peranakans) consists of materials and documents related to the Peranakan people of Chinese, Jawi, Chetti and Sam-sam descendents developed by USM Library. Lanna collection consisting of materials about the Lanna people, their lifestyle and culture developed by Chiang Mai University Library while .Mymanuskrip developed by Universiti of Malaya has more than 179 titles of manuscripts in the archive. Pathfinders have enjoyed a particular niche and status in reference services and AUNILo is encouraging its members to showcase their online guides and to promote the ASEAN rare materials for research to the world.

Keywords: AUNILO; Pathfinder; Koleksi Kaum Peranakan Asia Tenggara; Lanna Collection; ASEAN Collections; .Mymanuskrip.

1. INTRODUCTION

Pathfinder is a manifestation of how information providers attempt to build a bridge between the wealth of human knowledge and the human need to use the knowledge. In other words, pathfinders are simply about how librarians gather and categorize information, organize it into a functional format and make it easily available for public use.

Pathfinders were first introduced in the 1950s as booklists of recommended readings on a particular topic or of a particular genre (Dunsmore, 2002, p. 138). They are found on most academic library web sites and are usually annotated bibliographies of reference materials, databases, journals, and web sites within a particular discipline. They are meant to be starting points for research in a subject area. They can also be used as curriculum tools for bibliographic instruction (Reeb and Gibbons, 2004, p. 123). Pathfinders are useful tools and can be called by many different names. Basically, library pathfinders are guides to the literature and resources in a particular subject area and they can be used as tools for preparing a user's reference question. A pathfinder was defined as 'a checklist of references to those basic sources representing the variety of forms in which information on a specific topic can be found', which 'enables a user to follow an organized search path' (Canfield, 1972). In 1996, Cox wrote about the benefits of electronic library guides. One obvious advantage is 24/7 access. Users can use electronic guides at their own pace. For some students, electronic pathfinders might be more approachable than a reference desk. Web-based guides are an attractive method of instruction for new generations and providing such guides is good for the image of the library (Cox, 1996, p. 40).

Kapouns (1995) pointed out that pathfinder:

- Is a beginning map to library services and resources.
- Pathfinder is not exhaustive guide to the literature. They are not accession tool. They are not bibliographies. It is designed for beginners who need help finding the fundamental literature of a subject.
- Purpose is to educate about the basic resources for selected topic.
- Its format is simple and direct, not a substitute for human service or instruction.
- Is used to facilitate individual styles of performing research.

Farkas (2007) has been advocating the use of wiki technology in libraries. Wikis are easy to use, do not require any knowledge of HTML and allow all members of a community to add to the web site. In the literature to date it was found that many librarians are attempting to simplify the pathfinder building process with databases or more recently with wiki technology.

Pathfinders have enjoyed a particular niche and status within the references services environs; the web offers both new challenges and new opportunities for the further evolution of these resources.

2. ASEAN RARE MATERIALS

According to Potter & Holley (2010), rare material refers to any item included in a library's special collection because of the age, historical value, craftsmanship, rarity (as in the case of autographs, letters or diaries), and other items of varying significance.

ASEAN rare collections can consist of books, maps, photos, manuscripts, scrolls, slides, audio recordings, artifacts, and others which are from ASEAN country. Rare collections also are a part of special collections. University of Maryland Libraries, United States has defined Special collections have characteristics that set them apart from other types of collections in libraries. These special aspects may include:

- Rarity: books, manuscripts and other materials that is old, scarce or unique.
- Format: photographs, slides, films, audio recordings, maps, artworks, artifacts and other objects that need special handling.
- Comprehensiveness: accumulation of materials that are individually not unique, but collectively make up an important resource because of their relevance to a particular topic or individual.

Zaiton & Tan (1996) mentioned that in the discussion at the Congress of Southeast Asian Librarians in May 1996 (CONSAL X), issues that kept cropping up in working papers and discussions were:

- i) The lack of information about Southeast Asia emanating from Southeast Asia;
- ii) The need to develop regional information networking

With regard to:

- i) Publications from Southeast Asian countries. These are too few and far between, and many that are available are difficult to access;
- ii) Regional information networking. There is a need to develop indigenous knowledge database at the national level as well as regional for information-sharing.

3. AUNILO (Libraries of ASEAN University Network)

ASEAN as regional grouping was founded in Bangkok in 1967. To ensure ASEAN's continued success in 21st century, all countries within ASEAN and all parties/agencies within each country must play their role to the best of their ability and not least, libraries.

ASEAN University Network (AUN) has long been encouraging the use of information and communication technology (ICT) in education through the information networking program. The Information Networking among ASEAN Universities Program emphasizes on the establishment and development of on-line information exchange system in member universities. The launch of the AUN homepage (<http://www.aun-sec.org/>) and the successful seminar on Information Networking and IT Development in March 2000 have enhanced the dissemination of information among AUN members.

In September 2002, De La Salle University, Manila, hosted a "Conference on AUN Inter-Library Online" to strengthen information networking among AUN Member Universities as well as to provide support of academic resources to the development of a virtual university. The Conference gathered librarians and information technology experts from AUN Member Universities (from University Brunei Darussalam (UBD), Royal University of Phnom Penh (RUPP), Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM), Universitas Indonesia (UI), Universiti Malaya (UM), Universiti Sains Malaya (USM), University of Philippines (UP), National University of Singapore (NUS), Nanyang Technological University (NTU), Burapha University (BU), Chulalongkorn University (CU), and Vietnam National University - Hanoi (VNU-H)) to explore the best possible way for the establishment of AUN Inter-Library Online. A resolution to set up an AUNILO Working Committee was adopted at the Conference and submitted to the AUN Board of Trustees in January 2003.

The AUNILO Working Committee held its 1st meeting in April 2004 in Singapore hosted by the NTU Library. The theme for the meeting was “Growing people; training and developing new-age information professionals for academic libraries”. At this meeting, the members reaffirmed to undertake tasks agreed to in support of the Resolution of the Manila Conference (and developed terms of reference for the Working Committee and the Secretariat) which were:

- i) To promote competent human resource development in ASEAN by the strong support of wider access to academic source supplies shared by all ASEAN countries.
- ii) To strengthen existing linkages and support further co-operations among higher education institutions in ASEAN countries through the sharing of academic resources.
- iii) To provide another channel of information sharing among academic communities in ASEAN, utilizing technological advancement and existing resources in the AUN Member Universities.

3.1 The terms of reference of the AUNILO Working Committee

The aim of the AUNILO Working Committee is to help members develop world-class library and information services. This shall be achieved by:

- i) Planning and formulating strategies and monitoring the progress of activities for the mutual benefit of the member libraries;
- ii) Pursuing resource sharing activities among the member libraries;
- iii) Developing and sustaining human resource development programs among the member libraries; and
- iv) Harnessing ICT in the promotion maintenance and enhancement of programs and activities of the AUNILO member libraries.

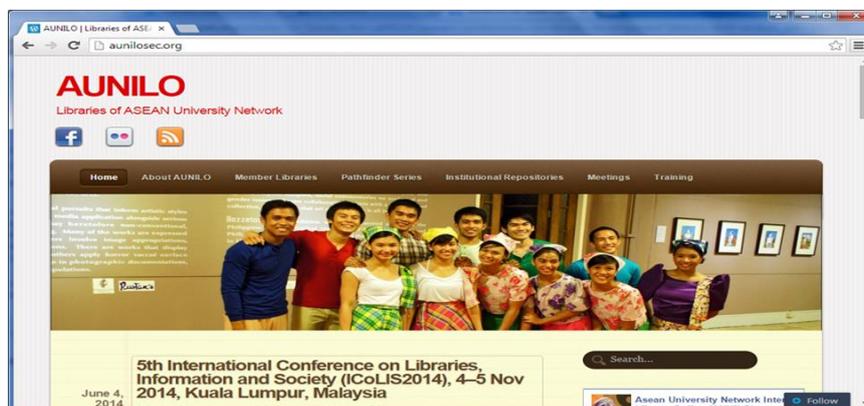


Figure 1: AUNILO Portal

4. AUNILO PATHFINDER DEVELOPMENT

The need for published and unpublished data and materials for various ASEAN programs and projects will be more urgent as ASEAN countries become more developed. The sharing of information among ASEAN countries too will become more vital as education, social, political and cultural integration becomes more tangible. Libraries are in the position to contribute effectively to this multifaceted growth and development of ASEAN and the effectiveness of this role lies in the libraries’ ability to capitalize on what

they do best in essentially three areas which are collection development, bibliographic control and information technology.

As demand for quality information increases, cooperation in terms of resource sharing is seen as one way to satisfy that demand whether in terms of users' wants or their needs. Resource sharing is perhaps the simplest and most traditional type of library cooperation which will be helpful in improving the quality of education at large.

AUNILo in its 6th Meeting which was held on 7-9 April 2010 at Universitas Indonesia (UI), Indonesia with the theme "ASEAN Collections: building portals, bridging nation" had come out with a resolution to create a pathfinder of a niche collection of AUNILo member libraries for knowledge and resource sharing purposes of a subject related to ASEAN knowledge.

USM Library agreed to take up the task and initiate the development of AUNILo pathfinder. The pathfinder would be placed at the AUNILo portal <http://aunilosec.org> which is accessible by the members and researchers all over the world.

There are three AUNILo pathfinders namely Kaum Peranakan Asia Tenggara, Lanna collection and .Mymanuskrip:



Figure 2: AUNILo Pathfinder

4.1 Kaum Peranakan Asia Tenggara pathfinder:

The first pathfinder created is of Kaum Peranakan Asia Tenggara collection by USM Library in 2010. This collection consists of materials that are related to the 4 well known peranakans group in Malaysia which are: Jawi Peranakan, Cina Peranakan, India Peranakan (Chetti) and Siam Peranakan (kaum Melayu Sam-Sam). For centuries, the riches of Southeast Asia have brought foreign traders to the region. While many returned to their homelands, some remained behind, marrying local women. The Malay term 'peranakan' which means 'locally born' or a native-born person of mixed local and foreign ancestry and this could also refer to other communities that developed in Southeast Asia.

The Peranakan Chinese are descendants of Chinese traders who settled in Malacca and around the coastal areas of Java and Sumatra, as early as the 14th century. In the 19th century, the Peranakan Chinese, drawn by commerce, migrated to the bustling ports of Penang and Singapore.

The Chitty Melaka, or Peranakan Indians, descended from unions between South Indian Hindu merchants and local women, from the time of the Malacca Sultanate in the 15th century. Linguistically, the Peranakan Indians speak a type of vernacular Malay which incorporates some Tamil words.

The Jawi Peranakans (or Jawi Pekan) are descendants of intermarriage between South Indian-Muslim traders and women of the local community. The Jawi Peranakans clustered around urban centres, particularly in the trading port of Penang.

The Siam Peranakans (Melayu Sam-Sam) are descendants of intermarriage between Siamese and Malay locals of northern region of Malaysia particularly in the state of Perlis and Kedah.

Due to the uniqueness in the culture assimilation, lifestyle, language, costumes and food of these communities, collection of materials related to them are worth preserving for the future. A working committee was appointed among expert librarians from cataloguing, reference, archive and automation to plan, access the materials and compile the content of pathfinder.



Figure 3: Kaum Peranakan Asia Tenggara collection

4.2 Lanna collection pathfinder

In 2011, during the 7th AUNILo Meeting in Philippines, Chiang Mai University Library agreed to add Lanna collection pathfinder into the portal. Lanna collection is one of the digital heritage collection owned by Chiang Mai University Library. It consists of information about the Lanna people, their food and photographs related to the community.

The word Lanna is actually two words combined: “Lan” ล้าน, meaning a million and “Na” meaning rice field. Thus, Lanna literally translates to a million rice fields – a reference to the rich agriculture of the region encompassing the Golden Triangle area of present day Thailand, Laos, and Myanmar, where the Lanna civilization and kingdom, or A-na-chak Lanna flourished over the centuries both as an autonomous and vassal state to Burmese, Thai, and Lao kingdoms. It was only until the early 20th century that Lanna was finally annexed once and for all by the Kingdom of Siam.

“Lanna” is often associated, referred to and described as “Northern Thai” traditions, customs, folk, art, music, and culture. Though sharing many parallels with the Siamese (Thai), Laotian, and even Burmese cultures, the Lanna civilization has harnessed a truly unique cultural character throughout more than a millennium of existence. Today, remnants of Lanna culture, language, art, and identity are still strongly apparent in the people and way of life in Northern Thailand and northwest Laos, and though Lanna is no longer a powerful and influential kingdom as it once was, its legacy and heritage continues to prosper.

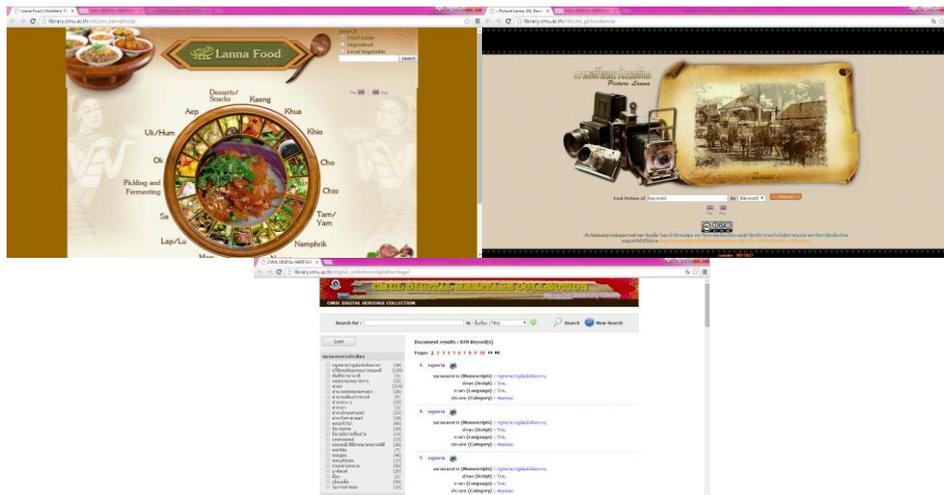


Figure 4: Lanna Collection

4.3 .MyManuskrip pathfinder

In 2014, University of Malaya Library enhances the content by complementing .MyManuskrip to the list of pathfinder.

.MyManuskrip (<http://mymanuskrip.fsktm.um.edu.my/>) is a Digital Library of Malay Manuscript which enables repositories within Malaysia and those outside to participate in building and offering manuscript content as well as outputs of manuscript research such as articles, reports, theses and links to relevant sites. As such, repositories, cultural and national heritage centers, manuscript libraries and museums are invited to share and provide access to their manuscript contents and expert knowledge concerning Malay scriptorium. .MyManuskrip now has 4 collections and more than 179 titles of manuscripts in the archive: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka Manuscripts; University of Malaya Manuscripts; Published Malay Manuscripts; and Other Manuscripts Related Resources.



Figure 5: .MyManuskrip

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to expand and sustain the existing AUNILO pathfinder series, few recommendations are planned and strategized:

1. Digitization of the collection

More materials and resources related to the Peranakans collection and Lanna collection to be digitized by AUNILO member countries in charge of it. This is to in-

crease the size of the collections accessible online and to ensure that each and every pathfinder will have a comprehensive and complete record.

2. Digital library of the ASEAN Rare Collections

It is important for academic libraries to continue to develop special collections because of their mission, vision, and commitment to preservation and accessibility for everyone to these cultural resources. Therefore, libraries with pathfinder will be encouraged to develop a digital library specifically related to the ASEAN rare collection. This is to ensure that a platform is being set for more volumes of materials and resources to be added into it. Contents will be varies including e-books, e-theses, digitized manuscripts, digital maps, audio visuals, etc.

3. Coverage and content expansion

AUNILO member countries in charge of Peranakans collection will collaborate with other libraries around the world in order to gain more content as well as expanding coverage of materials related to Peranakans. Initial cooperation will be made with libraries from ASEAN countries as most of these libraries have some Peranakans resources within their collections.

4. Application of Grants

Application of grant will be made in order to further research on any suitable subject to be added to the AUNILO pathfinder (e.g. the Orang Asli - Aboriginal People of Southeast Asian). Grant provided will be used in research on the subject as well as collection development.

6. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, libraries all over the world have proven to stand the test of time and will always come to term with societal need for enhanced access. By offering a unique resource to the world via Web we can only hope that future generations of librarians and patrons will continue to profit from the decisions made to collect, preserve and describe resources as in AUNILO Pathfinder. Most importantly, the decision to integrate our unique library service with the technological development and to continue to meet the needs of the people we serve will be beneficial for researchers in getting the primary resources related to the ASEAN rare collections. With proper plans and strategies, it will enrich the access and use of digital information as well as preserving manuscripts and documents of the past for the progress of our future. The ASEAN National Libraries have been involved in cooperative projects with their ASEAN counterparts for many years. Now with AUNILO, the regional cooperation among academic libraries could further mobilize the advent of teaching, learning and research in the region. This is an endeavor in which all of us can cooperate and the benefits would be to the advantage of both, developed and developing nation or countries and the global transfer of information.

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