THE ALMOST FORGOTTEN LIBRARY: REVISITING TOXIC SOURCES

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INRODUCTION

Library users are in their best situation as information can now be access from anywhere and anytime. The advent of internet, academic portals, full-text electronic resources from subscribed databases or in-house repository grant them with the possibility to access and utilize the resources at their own spare time.

This feature was not possible until the recent years in 20th century. The phenomenon has resulted in the notion that users are able to complete their coursework or even their studies without utilizing the library physically and has resulted to a conception which challenges the existence of the library itself.

INRODUCTION

The encounters with librarian from public and university libraries sometimes resonates uniform sentiments as if to impress the world that less books and journals, and more digital is the better option. The idea is not to dispute libraries wanting to go digital. But making it inappropriately obtrusive may not be too wise.

Lean vs. Niche

- Future library boasts about being lean to be agile
- The DLF Study reported that “our data also verify what previous research has asserted about the age of scholarly resources: older materials continue to be used and valued by humanities scholars.”
- Nelson (2016) affirms that if the library spends most of their resources and time investing in a broader collection to appeal to larger group of users, they may deprive access to patrons with much more specific and targeted tastes.
- Significances that can be derived from the concept of lean libraries is not necessarily to minimize but to balance between providing popular materials and more specialized one; to follow the trends and yet maintain some of the traditional aspects of the library in terms of collection, services or outlook which might still appeal to some users.

Relevance of Microform Collection

According to Ranganathan 5 Laws of Librarianship, Law no.2, states that 'every book has its reader'. Microform serves its own users and may attract other uses as well.

Generally categorized as microform, it is roll microfilm, microfiche, computer-output microfilm, and all other formats produced by any method of micro-photography and image miniaturization.

Until December 2016, the collection holds over 15, 000 units of titles in microfilm and microfiche. The collection contains 119, 647 reels of microfiches, 11,435 reels of microfilm in the subject of humanities and social sciences. The topics range from education, ethnography, history, Malayan history, socio economic and political studies, folklore and literature, archaeology and linguistics to name a few. Major collection categories include theses, newspaper and magazines collection, ERIC microfiche, periodical articles and book chapters, archival records of the Straits Settlements, Colonial Office files and Indonesian monograph.

Subject

- ERIC Documents
- Colonial Office Files (1844-1951)
- Local Magazines & Newspapers Indexes (1785-2003)
- Straits Settlements Records
- Indonesian Monographs

Relevance of Microform Collection

Initially libraries acquired microform for reasons of space, economy and preservation while it also allowed them to secure large collections of primary source materials. It has helped in reducing larger documents, such as newspapers, save space by having the content on film and provides storage of vast quantities of information on much smaller surface. Micro-technology provides a reliable and economical method for managing data and it has stood the test of time (Naidoo et al., 2009, p.64)

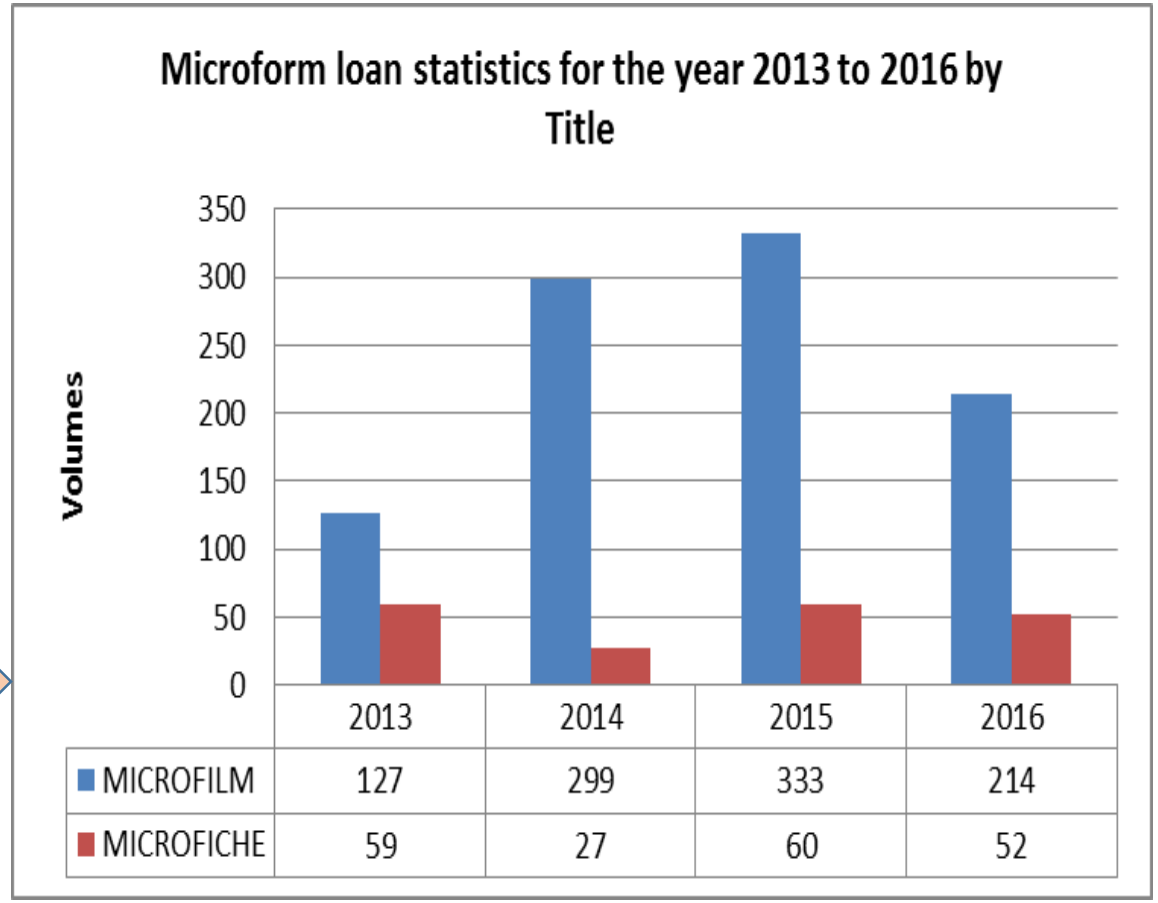
The availability of electronic resources may alter the growth and use of microform collections but this is not yet evident.

Relevance of Microform Collection

Statistical data taken from Malaysiana & Archives Division, USM Library shows a steady usage of the format has been recorded for the last past 4 years. A total of 1,171 microforms were borrowed by the users who are undergraduate and postgraduate students, lecturers and researchers.

This data shows that microform with their preserved content has its own value in fulfilling the researcher's needs and can complement other resources in enriching the content of a study.

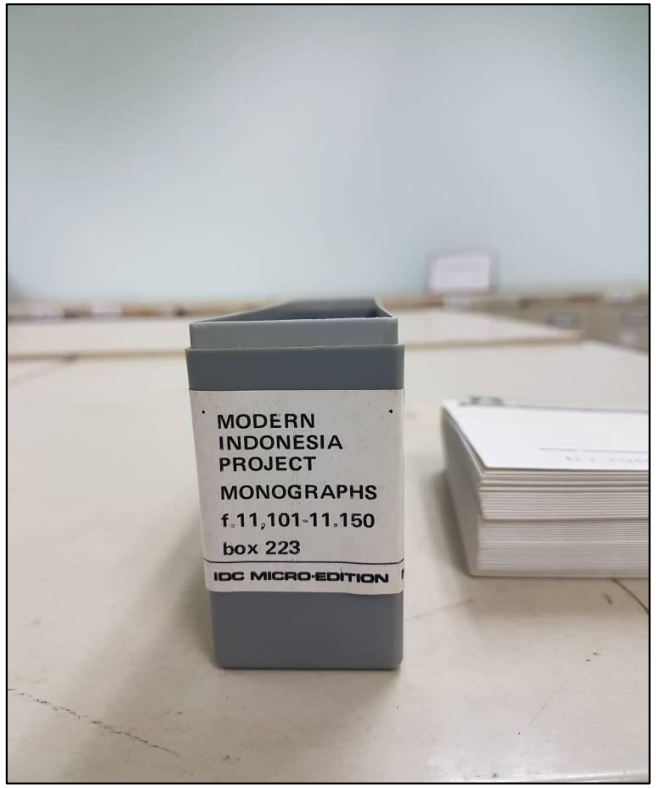
Cheney (2010) who mentioned that microforms collections can continue to play an important role in extending the breadth and depth of many academic library collections and in supporting the research and teaching needs of faculty and students.



Relevance of Microform Collection

Naidoo et al. (2009) surveyed a number of libraries finding that over half of the institutions studied partially or fully replaced microform in favor of electronic access, yet the others prefer to retain newspapers, periodicals, historic documents, and government documents in microform. On another note, Keogh (2012) and Manzo (1997) mentioned that some librarians prefer to retain microform because "too many materials will never be available online." It is also commonly observed issue that sometimes microform is the only version available and cannot be discarded until there is an electronic version (Freeland & Bailey, 2008; Keogh, 2012; Sridhar, 2002)

Microform Collections of USM Library



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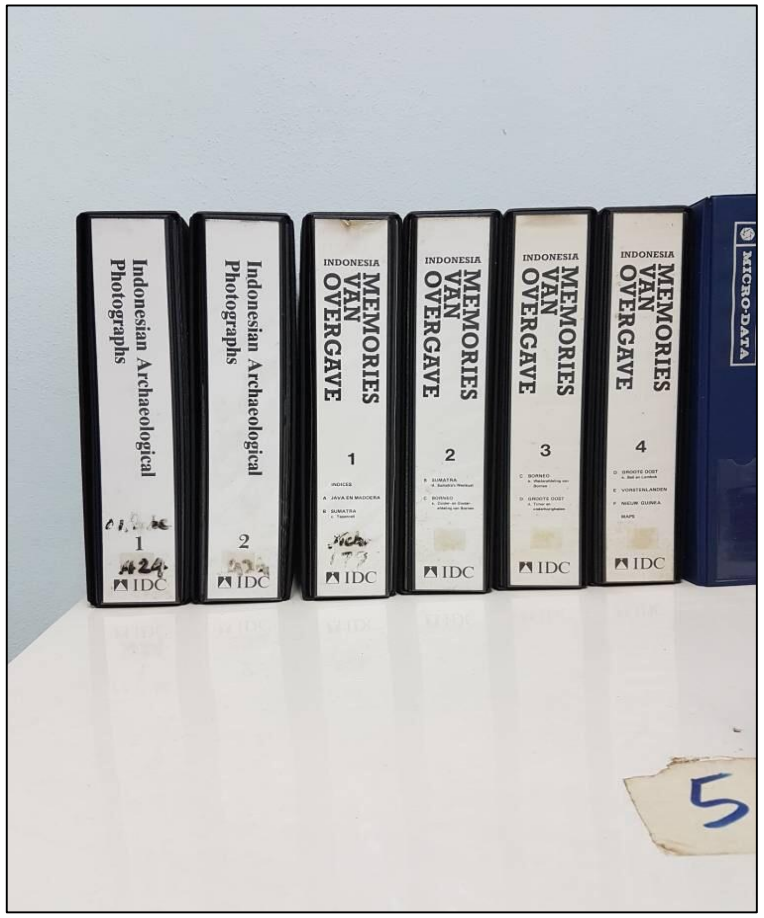


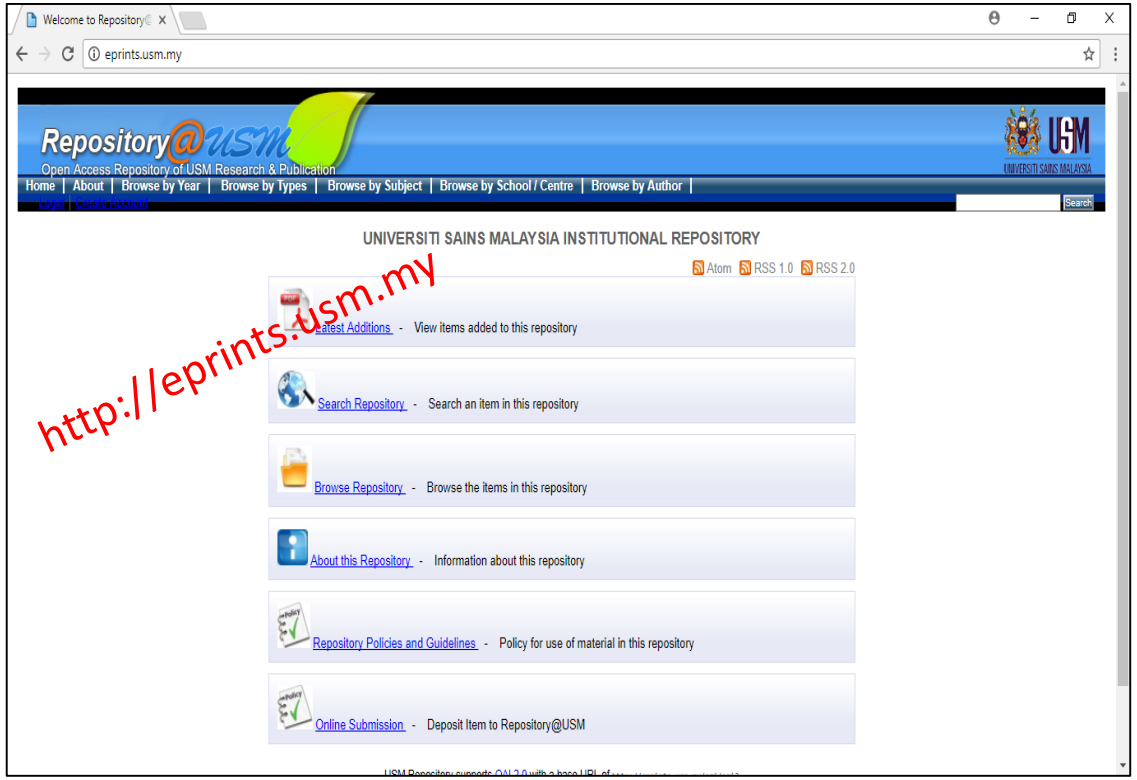
Improved product, improved services

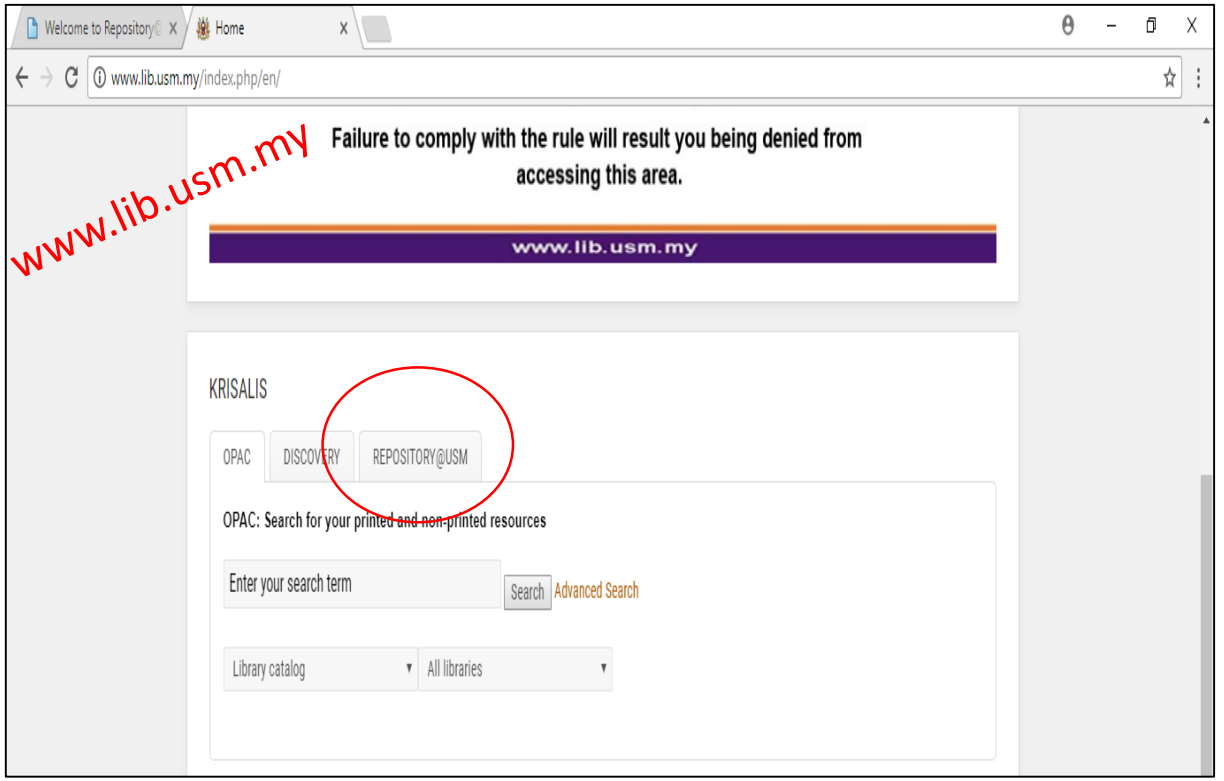
To enhance the visibility of microform collection is by indexing selected titles in Google Scholar through the metadata available in Institutional Repository (Repository@USM).

The titles are available to a larger audience thus improved the use of the collection and the library generally.

It will improve the usage of the collection not only by the internal researcher but also external scholars.

Improved product, improved services





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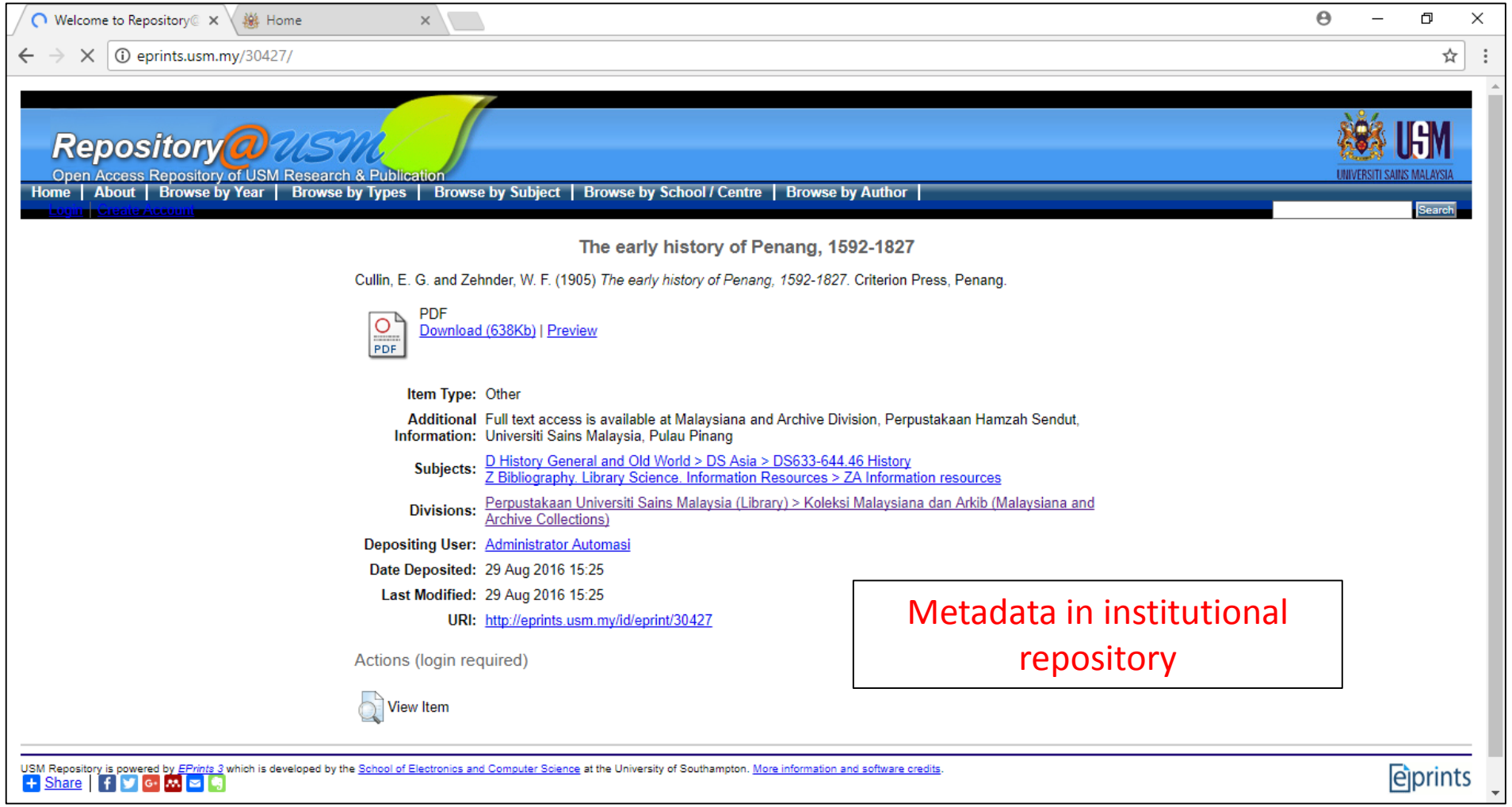

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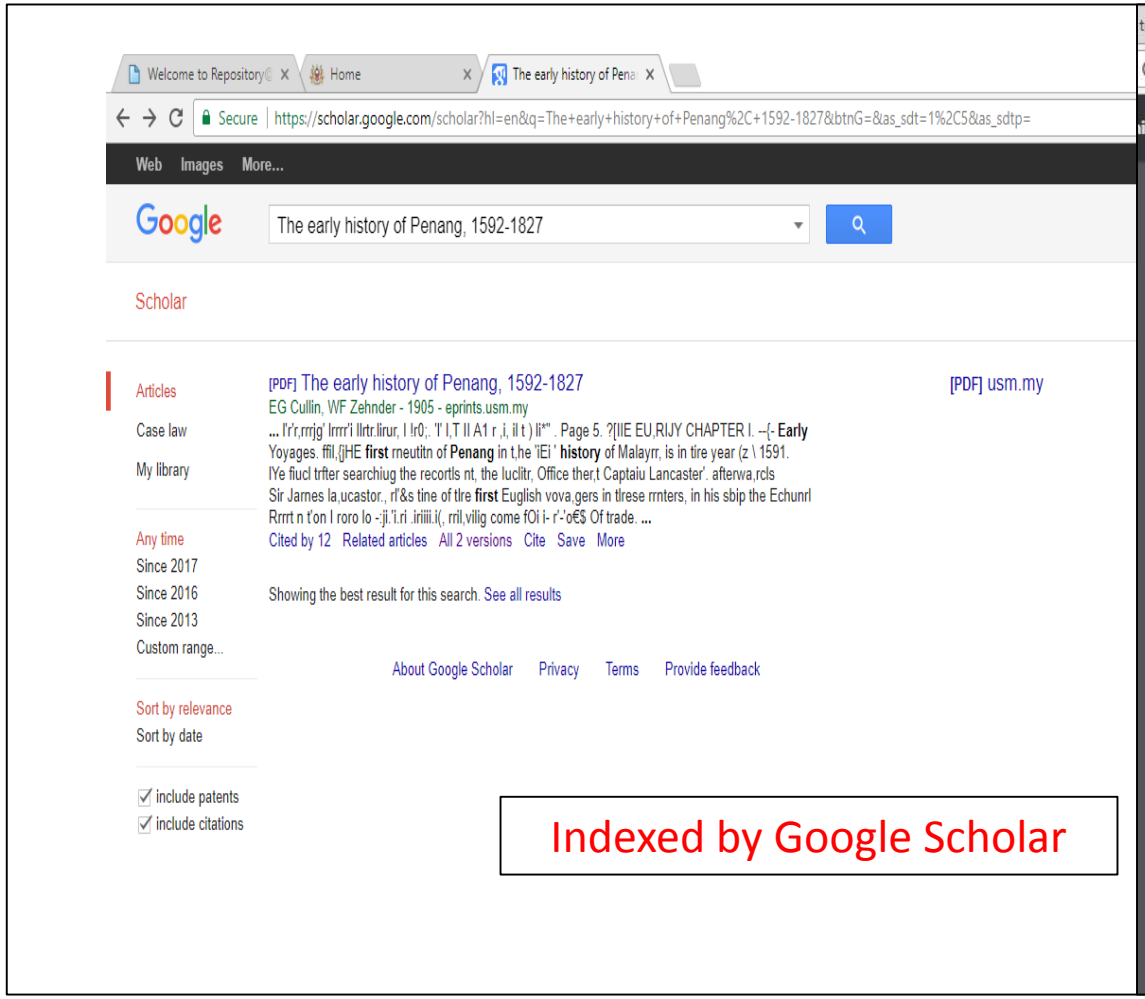

CONCLUSION

History tells us that old media does not replace the new. The digital is not the ultimate.

Thank you