

# **Collection Development Plan of the Hong Kong Public Libraries (2021-22)**

## **Collection Development Policy**

Regarding the collection development of the Hong Kong Public Libraries (HKPL), the HKPL follows the principles laid down in the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization Public Library Manifesto in acquiring library materials for the establishment and continued development of a balanced and diversified library collection to meet the needs of people of different ages and sectors for knowledge, information, self-learning, continuous education and constructive use of leisure time. For information on collection development, please visit <https://www.hkpl.gov.hk/en/about-us/collection-develop/introduction.html>.

## **Collection Overview**

2. As at December 2020, the HKPL system comprises 70 static libraries (one Central Library, six major libraries, 31 district libraries and 32 small libraries), 12 mobile libraries serving 113 mobile library service points, and three self-service library stations, providing services for the 18 districts in Hong Kong. The HKPL collection is inter-connected by an integrated computer system, so that users may easily reserve, borrow or return library materials across libraries through the Library Catalogue and library computer system. As at the end of December 2020, the HKPL had a collection of 15.09 million items of library materials:

- (a) There were a total of 13.3 million items of books and other print materials, accounting for 88.1% of the collection. Among them,
  - the numbers of Chinese books and English books were about 9.34 million (70.2%) and 3.96 million (29.8%) respectively;
  - the numbers of adult books and children books were about 9.2 million (69.2%) and 4.1 million (30.8%) respectively; and
  - the numbers of items in lending collections and reference collections were about 10.8 million (81.2%) and 2.5 million (18.8%) respectively.

- (b) There were about 1.79 million items of non-print materials including audio-visual materials, accounting for 11.9% of the collection.
- (c) In addition to library materials mentioned in items (a) and (b) above, the HKPL also acquired or subscribed to:
  - 11 e-book collections with nearly 380 000 e-books;
  - 79 e-databases; and
  - about 5 000 titles of newspapers and periodicals.

3. The HKPL operates a five-tier planning structure (namely the Hong Kong Central Library, major libraries, district libraries, small libraries and mobile libraries) whereby various libraries provide collections appropriate to their specific aims and positioning. For example, the Hong Kong Central Library is dedicated to developing a comprehensive range of lending and reference collections, providing library materials on different subjects ranging from the undergraduate to graduate levels, and major libraries serving the respective districts have rich library collections ranging from general readings to materials at the undergraduate level.

### **Analysis on the Usage of Library Materials**

4. A critical analysis on the usage of major library materials of the HKPL in 2020 is as follows:

#### (a) e-Books

- In 2020, public libraries had been temporarily closed on and off to align with preventive and control measures against the epidemic, leading to a decline in the usage of printed books, but a notable increase was recorded in the usage of e-books. The overall usage of the seven e-book collections adopting similar statistical elements has increased from 964 000 times in 2019 to 3 398 000 times in 2020, representing a substantial increase of 253%. The usage of e-books from 2018 to 2020 is at **Appendix 1**.
- “SUEP e-Book”, comprising books that are mainly published in Hong Kong, recorded the highest increase in usage among e-book

collections, with a total usage of over 960 000 times in 2020, representing an increase of 354% as compared with that of 2019, which reflects readers' keen demand for locally published e-books. In view of this, the HKPL will continue to acquire more locally published e-books. The most popular categories were children books for paired reading; literature and fiction; comics and picture books; and books on finance and business management.

- In addition, "FunPark" provides interactive Chinese e-books narrated in Putonghua for children. Targeting children aged 3 to 12, it integrates reading and games to enable children to enjoy e-reading in a relaxing atmosphere. Since its launch in April 2018, this e-book collection has been popular among parents and teachers. It recorded a total usage of over 136 000 times in 2020, representing an increase of 350%.
- Although most readers tended to have greater interest in reading Chinese books, the English e-book collection "OverDrive eBooks" recorded a total usage of over 83 000 times in 2020, representing a remarkable increase of 339%. Since its launch in February 2019, this e-book collection has provided over 10 000 items of English e-books including leisure reading materials in various disciplines.
- Nevertheless, the e-book collection that recorded the highest usage in 2020 was "HyRead ebook". This e-book collection has been launched for four years, and its usage has been on the rise, with a total usage of over 2 million times in 2020, representing an increase of 235% as compared with that of 2019. The most popular categories were children books for paired reading; comics and picture books; and books on religion and mental health.
- As regards audio books, "Naxos Spoken Word Library" recorded a total usage of almost 43 000 times in 2020, representing an increase of 48% over 29 000 times in 2019.

(b) e-Databases

- The usage of Chinese and foreign e-databases on newspapers and leisure magazines was generally higher. As regards Chinese e-databases,

“WiseNews” recorded the highest usage with over 765 000 hit counts while “HyRead e-Magazine” recorded the second highest usage with 322 000 browses in 2020; the latter represents a significant increase of nearly 48% compared with 2019. As for English e-databases, “Flipster” which offers a wide range of popular English e-magazines recorded over 74 000 browses in 2020.

- The demand for multi-disciplinary databases which provide on-going support for readers’ self-learning and continuous education was also stable. As regards Chinese e-databases, “China Academic Journals Full-text Database”, “China Doctoral Dissertations Full-text Database” and “China Masters’ Theses Full-text Database” recorded 98 000, 87 000 and 85 000 searches respectively in 2020, indicating a significant increase of 33%, 43% and 43% respectively compared with 2019.
- As for English e-databases, “ProQuest Database Services”, an integrated collection of databases covering various newspapers, periodicals and theses, recorded the highest usage in 2020, with a total usage amounted to 333 000 searches, representing an increase of 42% compared with 2019. English e-databases with the second and third highest usage in 2020 were “Naxos Music Library” of which the number of tracks played was 190 900 and “BookData Online” of which the use count was 81 000 respectively. The former covers a wide range of Chinese and Western music genres, which attracts a considerable number of music lovers, and the latter is an online bibliographic search database which contains English-language titles published in the UK, the US, Australia, New Zealand, etc., including in-print and forthcoming titles as well as out-of-print records for access by readers.
- In view of the development of and supply from the publishing market and the growing popularity of electronic reference materials, the HKPL has gradually reduced the acquisition of printed copies of reference materials and deployed resources to further strengthen the electronic reference collections. The e-database “Britannica Library” acquired in mid-2020 provides the latest information such as articles, images and videos on history, literature, science, geography, arts and so on for learners of all ages and abilities. Daily news headlines from around the world are also available to meet the needs of different readers. It recorded a usage of 15 000 browses.
- The 79 e-databases currently provided by the HKPL are at **Appendix 2**.

(c) Books (please refer to **Appendix 3**)

- Owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, libraries were closed on and off, leading to a decline in the usage of printed books. The overall number of loans in 2020 was 23.07 million items, representing a decrease of 46.9% as compared with that of 2019. There was a decrease in the number of loans of the four major categories (Chinese books for children, English books for children, Chinese books for adults and English books for adults).
- Despite the fact that adult books and children books took up about 69.2% and 30.8% of the collection respectively, the number of loans of children books (56.7%) has exceeded that of adult books (43.3%), indicating that children books were fairly popular among readers. The HKPL will continue to strengthen the collection for children's libraries.
- The most popular category of Chinese books for adults was "Fiction", accounting for about 18.7% of the overall usage of Chinese books for adults, followed by "Language & Literature" and "Applied Science", each accounting for 10%. "Travels, History & Geography; Biography" was the third most popular, accounting for 9.4%.
- The most popular categories of English books for adults were "Fiction" and "Business, Economics & Finance", accounting for about 16.2% and 13.3% respectively of the overall usage of English books for adults.
- As regards children books, the usage of picture books was the highest among both Chinese and English books for children, approximating 36.6% and 33.2% of the usage of Chinese and English books for children respectively. Books under the category of "Language" were also very popular, representing about 16.9% and 21.5% of the usage of Chinese and English books for children respectively. These two categories account for over half of the total number of loans of children books.
- Generally speaking, members of the public tended to have greater interest in reading Chinese books (77.4%: 37.8% for adults; and 39.6% for children), among which the categories of "Fiction", "Language & Literature", "Applied Science", "Travels, History & Geography; Biography" and "Picture Books" were more popular. As regards English books, the categories of "Fiction" and "Business, Economics & Finance" were more popular among adult readers, and children readers tended to borrow picture books and books on language.

## **Salient Points of Acquisition of Library Materials in 2021-22**

5. In setting the quantity of library materials to be acquired in 2021-22, the HKPL has followed the collection development strategies contained in the document on Collection Development of the HKPL and has taken into account various factors in order to determine the budget for acquiring library materials.

6. Salient points of proposed library materials to be acquired in 2021-22 are set out below:

### **(a) Electronic Resources**

- The publishing sector successfully launched a new database of book data under the “Pilot Programme for Promotion of Local Publications and Reading Culture” in April 2020. The sector will continue to enrich the content of the database to provide more detailed information of local publications in the online catalogue of the HKPL, including book cover images and summaries/annotations, to enable readers to select suitable and quality local publications.
- To meet public demand for e-books, the HKPL, in 2021-22, will continually acquire a total of about 30 000 (to 420 000) additional items of Chinese and English e-books of different categories, including more e-books published locally and e-books suitable for children/young adults. Furthermore, the HKPL will procure additional copies of popular titles to meet the demand, depending on the usage of the items.
- At present, local e-books are mainly acquired with a perpetual licence. The HKPL will explore the subscription of more local e-books on an annual basis, in order to enrich local e-book collections.
- Moreover, in view of the development of and supply from the publishing market and the growing popularity of electronic periodicals and reference materials, the HKPL has gradually reduced the acquisition of printed copies of periodicals and reference materials; deployed resources to procure more popular electronic periodicals, especially English magazines; and further enhanced the collection of e-databases, particularly reference materials.
- The HKPL plans to newly acquire three e-databases in the coming year, covering interactive English learning resources suitable for children aged 3 to 6, popular English newspapers and magazines and Chinese

laws, and providing a total of 82 e-databases, of which 36 will be available for access by library card holders through the Internet outside library premises.

(b) **Quantity and Proportion of Newly Acquired Books**

- It is estimated that about 770 000 items of library materials including books, maps and non-print materials will be acquired in 2021-22.
- As regards Chinese and English books, due to greater demand for Chinese books from the majority of readers, the respective numbers of Chinese and English books will be approximately 550 000 (290 000 for adults and 260 000 for children) and 180 000 (70 000 for adults and 110 000 for children), accounting for about 75% and 25% of the newly acquired books respectively.
- Regarding books for adults and children, the number of loans of children books has exceeded that of adult books, indicating that children books are fairly popular among readers. Owing to a higher likelihood of wear and tear of children books, and the aim to support the enhanced promotion of reading and block loan service in kindergartens, the proportion of books for children and young adults to the newly acquired books will be 370 000 copies (about 51%), and the quantity of books for adults is anticipated to be 360 000 copies, accounting for about 49% of the newly acquired books.
- Taking into account both the overall requirement and the requirement of individual libraries, we propose that the quantity of library materials to be acquired in 2021-22 should be generally distributed as follows:

Type of Library / Reading Promotion Scheme	No.	Quantity ('000 items)	Average Quantity per Library ('000 items)
Central Library	1	52	52
Major libraries	6	146	24
District libraries	31	361	12
Small libraries	32	113	4
Mobile libraries (including Self-service Library Stations)	15	27	2
Total number of existing libraries	85	699	
New libraries (building up the basic stock)	3	63	
Reading promotion scheme for kindergartens		8	
<b>Total</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>770</b>	

(c) **Category and Proportion of Newly Acquired Books**

As the information hub of Hong Kong, the HKPL acquires different kinds of library materials to support lifelong learning. The HKPL collection has to cover a comprehensive range of subjects to meet community needs for learning. Library materials of the HKPL are mainly in Chinese and English. Taking into account readers' interests, we will

- continue to enhance acquisition of books under the categories of travels, fiction, history and geography, and language and literature;
- acquire materials on hot social issues such as mental health and inspiration, 5G technology, video teaching, e-commerce, development of applications, graphic design software, STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics), the Greater Bay Area and the culture and history of Hong Kong;
- continue to enhance acquisition of children book collection, including more picture books, children fiction, books on arts and creativity, books



that are suitable for parent-child reading and books in special format to arouse children's interest in reading;

- continue to acquire reading materials which cater for the interest of the elderly under such categories as health maintenance, health care, tips on retirement, wealth management and application of technology in daily life having regard to the ageing trend of population and the reading needs of an ageing society, with a view to promoting learning and reading among senior citizens;
- continue to acquire audio books which provide another form of reading and a different reading experience for readers of different ages and reading needs. To enrich the audio book collection, we will acquire about 1 500 additional sets of audio books covering different topics in 2021-22 for the public to borrow.
- To facilitate students of different races in learning Chinese as their second language, we will acquire books written in simple Chinese, as well as relevant bilingual readers and language learning kits, for them to master the most common local expressions through extra-curricular reading, thus progressively strengthen their abilities in four aspects, namely reading, writing, listening and speaking.
- Proportion of different categories of library materials to be acquired is at **Appendix 4**.

**(d) Newspapers and Periodicals**

- The HKPL subscribes to about 5 000 titles (or about 16 000 copies) of newspapers and periodicals published in different places. In subscribing to the titles and copies of newspapers and periodicals, libraries in various districts will take into account their resources, readers' feedback and usage of the newspapers and periodicals in order to cater for the needs of different users.
- While the newspapers and periodicals are mainly in Chinese and English, the HKPL also subscribes to more than 100 titles of newspapers and periodicals in several other languages, including Nepali, Bahasa Indonesia, Hindi, Urdu, Tagalog and Thai, to provide readers of different races with the latest information on current and economic issues, entertainment and language learning. Such newspapers and periodicals are mostly kept in the Hong Kong Central Library and 10 major or district libraries.

- In view of the market development and supply of English magazines, a number of printed English magazines have ceased publication or switched to electronic form. As electronic periodicals have become increasingly popular, readers' demand for electronic periodicals is on the rise. As such, we will reduce the acquisition of printed copies of English magazines, and deployed resources to procure more popular English electronic periodicals, in order to cater for the different reading interests of readers. If the supply of a printed English magazine stops, the HKPL can select an e-magazine of the same kind as a substitute, so as to further enrich the content of electronic periodicals and enhance the periodical services of the HKPL.

### **Collection Maintenance**

7. The HKPL procured business intelligence software service to retrieve data on library collections and usage from the library system in order to facilitate the maintenance of library collections including making suggestions on book allocation and acquisition of library materials in a more effective manner with the aid of business intelligence on a trial basis, to further enhance collection maintenance of the HKPL and develop library collections that meet community needs. The data obtained and experience gained during the trial will be conducive to the development of relevant features of the Smart Library System.

8. The HKPL develops and maintains collections which provide current and retrospective information to meet readers' needs for continuous education, self-learning and constructive use of leisure time. In this connection, in addition to annual procurement of new publications, regular and systematic weeding is conducted to identify items for withdrawal from library collections when library materials are worn out/damaged or contain outdated information, or when their reference or research value is lost (in the case of reference collections). Moreover, regular reviews are conducted by librarians to rotate less used library materials to stacks to make room for new and updated materials and to ensure the vitality and usefulness of the library collections. In 2021-22, the HKPL will follow the established criteria in withdrawing library items. The number of items to be withdrawn is estimated at about 600 000.

9. Besides, the HKPL will launch a pilot scheme, namely the Books Sharing in the Community Scheme, in collaboration with non-profit-making organisations and community libraries to dispose of withdrawn books that are outdated but still in good condition and suitable for reading through donation for continued circulation of the

books in the community to encourage reading. In acquiring time-limited books, the HKPL will attempt to make reference to the supply of electronic versions and collections to cater for the needs and reading habits of different groups of readers, and thus reduce the possibility of withdrawing “outdated” library materials.