

Collection Development Plan of the Hong Kong Public Libraries (2024-25)

Collection Development Policy

Regarding the collection development of the Hong Kong Public Libraries (HKPL), the HKPL adopts the core values of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization Public Library Manifesto as its guidelines on acquisition of 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. Furthermore, to ensure effective fulfilment of the duty to safeguard national security as required by the Law of the People's Republic of China on Safeguarding National Security in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, the HKPL shall make sure that the library collection is not contrary to the interests of national security. For information on the collection development, please visit <https://www.hkpl.gov.hk/en/about-us/collection-develop/introduction.html>.

Collection Overview

2. As at December 2023, the HKPL system comprised 71 static libraries (one Central Library, six major libraries, 32 district libraries and 32 small libraries), 12 mobile libraries serving 112 mobile library service points, and three self-service library stations, providing services for the 18 districts in Hong Kong. The collection of the HKPL 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 computer system. As at the end of December 2023, the HKPL had a collection of 15.38 million items of library materials:

- (a) There was a total of 13.67 million items of books¹, accounting for 88.9% of the library collection. Among them,
- the numbers of Chinese books and English books were about 9.51 million (69.6%) and 4.16 million (30.4%) respectively;
 - the numbers of adult books and children books were about 9.23 million (67.5%) and 4.44 million (32.5%) respectively; and
 - the numbers of items in lending collections and reference collections were about 11.07 million (81%) and 2.6 million (19%) respectively.

¹ Including other print materials

- (b) There were about 1.71 million items of non-print materials including audio-visual materials, accounting for 11.1% of the collection.
- (c) In addition to library materials mentioned in items (a) and (b) above, the HKPL also acquired or subscribed to:
 - 17 e-book collections, providing more than 510 000 e-books;
 - 82 e-databases; and
 - about 4 300 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, whereas major libraries serving the respective districts have rich library collections ranging from general readings to materials at the undergraduate level.

Analysis of the Usage of Library Materials

4. A critical analysis of the usage of major library materials of the HKPL in 2023 is as follows:

- (a) e-Books
 - With the resumption of normalcy in society and the resumption of normal operation of public libraries, the attendance to libraries and the number of physical books on loan increased gradually while the usage of e-books decreased relatively with over 2.61 million times in 2023. The usage of e-books between 2021 and 2023 is at **Appendix 1**.
 - A new e-book collection entitled “Pop-up e-Book” was launched in 2023, providing locally published e-books on a time-limited basis. Replaced quarterly, the e-books cover a wide range of subjects including literature, fiction, lifestyle, leisure reading materials and collections for children. Readers can read online anytime, anywhere with just one click as they can enjoy unlimited access to the e-books on the webpage without logging into their library accounts.

- Also launched in 2023, the “Nowbook Digital Library” e-Book platform offers access to a number of collections, including the “Jin Yong Martial Arts Novels Audio Collection”, a curated assortment of Jin Yong’s classic martial arts novels; “Hong Kong Renowned Writers”, a collection of famous works by renowned Hong Kong writers, covering novels, comics and reading materials for children; and “SUEP e-Book”, a myriad of books mainly published in Hong Kong, covering children books for paired reading, literature and fiction, as well as books on business and economics, household knowledge. Readers can search, download and read the e-books and audio books in one go.
- “SUEP e-Book”, which is available on the “Nowbook Digital Library” e-Book platform, recorded a total usage of over 620 000 times in 2023, with literature and fiction, children books for paired reading and comics and picture books being the most popular categories.
- The three e-book collections, “JoyReadClub” e-Book, “Scholar World” e-Book and “Total Wellness” e-Book, which feature books mainly from local publishers (including universities), cover a comprehensive range of subjects, including literature and fiction, investment and wealth management, finance and economics, health maintenance, medicine and health, comics and reading materials for children. A total usage of over 48 000 times was recorded in 2023.
- The e-book collection “FunPark”, which integrates reading and games, added a new series “Fun Video” in 2023 to provide audio books narrated in Putonghua for children and recorded a total usage of over 46 000 times.
- As for English e-books, “OverDrive eBooks” recorded a usage of over 80 000 times in 2023. This e-book collection covers various disciplines, among which business and finance, adult fiction and children books were very popular among readers.
- The HKPL proactively conducted analysis on the reservation situation of popular e-books and arranged to acquire additional copies to address the demand, resulting in a reduction of average waiting time for reservation from six to seven months to two to three weeks. In June 2023, some e-book titles with relatively low usage were replaced. Relevant measures will continue to be implemented to replace and acquire more e-book titles.
- After careful consideration of the growth of e-book collections, usage and

the impact of extending the loan period of e-books on the waiting time for requested items, the HKPL extended the loan period of English e-books to 14 days in the fourth quarter of 2023. To align with that of printed books, the loan period of Chinese e-books is also planned to be extended to 14 days in the second quarter of 2024.

(b) e-Databases

- Regarding Chinese e-databases, “WiseNews”, a database of newspapers, recorded the highest usage with over 14.68 million hit counts in 2023, while “China Academic Journals Full-text Database”, which supports self-learning and continuous education, recorded the second highest usage with over 280 000 searches. “China Doctoral Dissertations Full-text Database” and “China Masters’ Theses Full-text Database” also recorded a higher usage with 240 000 searches.
- In response to readers’ demand for Chinese magazines, the HKPL launched “Kono Libraries” in July 2023, which provides a wide variety of best-selling and predominantly Chinese e-magazines on various subjects. This database also provides e-magazines in other languages, including Japanese, Korean, English and French. Both current and back issues are available for online reading or downloading to mobile devices for offline access anytime and anywhere. Since its launch in July to end December 2023, “Kono Libraries” recorded over 40 000 visits.
- As for English e-databases, “ProQuest Database Services”, an integrated collection of databases covering various newspapers, periodicals and theses, recorded the highest usage in 2023, with 180 000 searches. The second and third highest usage went to “Naxos Music Library” and “BookData Online” respectively, with the former recorded over 100 000 tracks played while the latter over 60 000 searches. Covering a wide range of Chinese and Western music genres, “Naxos Music Library” attracts a considerable number of music lovers. For “BookData Online”, it contains English-language titles published in the United Kingdom, the United States, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa, including in-print and forthcoming titles as well as out-of-print records for access by readers.
- Apart from providing a wide variety of popular English e-magazines from around the world, “OverDrive Magazines”, an e-database of the HKPL, also features magazines in foreign languages such as Japanese, French and Spanish for readers to borrow. It recorded over 50 000 checkouts in 2023.

- The 82 e-databases (including the Database on Local Publications) currently provided by the HKPL are at [Appendix 2](#).

(c) [Books](#) (see [Appendix 3](#))

- Public libraries fully resumed normal service in 2023. With the patronage of various libraries bouncing back, the overall number of loans increased by 22.2% as compared with that of 2022. Books for adults recorded an increase in usage of 31.6%, while books for children recorded an increase of 16.6%.
- The most popular category of Chinese books for adults was “Fiction”, accounting for about 18.5% of the overall usage of Chinese books for adults. With many members of the public travelling abroad after the epidemic, there was a substantial increase in the demand for travel books, as the loan rate for books in the categories of Chinese and world history, geography and travels rose from 9.5% in 2022 to 15.6%.
- The most popular categories of English books for adults were “Fiction” and “Business, Economics & Finance”, accounting for about 17.8% and 11.3% of the overall usage of English books for adults respectively. There was also a substantial increase in the usage for the “Geography & Travels” category, with the loan rate rising from the eleventh most popular category in 2022 to the fourth, accounting for 7.2%.
- As regards children books, the top three categories in terms of usage already accounted for 65.2% and 72.5% of the number of loans of Chinese and English books for children respectively. The most popular category of Chinese and English books was “Picture Books”, accounting for 32.4% and 33.1% of the usage of Chinese and English books for children respectively, followed by “Language” and “Fiction”. Taken together, these two categories accounted for about 32.8% and 39.4% of the usage of Chinese and English books for children respectively.
- As greater attention is being paid to the development of various STEAM subjects in society in recent years, the HKPL further enhanced the relevant collections to meet the learning needs of students and provide support to different activities. As a result, there was an increase in the usage of Chinese and English books for children in the “Science”, “Applied Science” and “Arts” categories.

Salient Points of Acquisition of Library Materials in 2024-25

5. When setting the quantity of library materials to be acquired in 2024-25, the HKPL has followed the collection development strategies set out in the document on Collection Development of the HKPL and considered various factors in order to determine the budget for acquiring library materials.

6. Salient points of proposed library materials to be acquired in 2024-25 are set out below:

(a) Electronic Resources

- To meet the public demand for e-books, the HKPL will continue to acquire about 20 000 (to 540 000) additional items of Chinese and English e-books of different categories and more locally published e-books.
- Subject to the usage of e-books, the HKPL will continue to enhance the procurement of additional copies of popular titles to meet the demand.
- In view of the development of and supply from the publishing market and the growing popularity of electronic periodicals and reference materials, the HKPL will further enhance the relevant e-resources.
- A total of 82 e-databases are provided, of which 41 are available for remote access by library card holders via the Internet outside library premises.
- Subject to the consent of the relevant copyright owners, the HKPL will continue the digitisation of library collections related to local history and culture. The digitised materials will be available for access by the public through the Multimedia Information System. The HKPL plans to add about 100 000 digitised pages of images and 250 hours of audio-visual recordings, including old photos of Hong Kong, local e-books, local historical records, manuscripts of literary writers, audio or video recordings of thematic talks of the HKPL and valuable rare books of the Hok Hoi Collection.

(b) Quantity and Proportion of Newly Acquired Library Materials

- It is estimated that about 714 000 items of library materials, including 698 000 books and print materials and 16 000 non-print materials, will be

acquired in 2024-25.

- As regards Chinese and English books, due to greater public demand for Chinese books, the respective numbers of Chinese and English books will be approximately 529 000 (245 000 for adults, 275 000 for children and teenagers and 9 000 reference books) and 169 000 (53 000 for adults, 110 000 for children and teenagers and 6 000 reference books), accounting for about 76% and 24% respectively of the newly acquired books.
- Regarding books for adults and children, given that the number of loans of children books accounts for 60% of the overall number of loans and considering the need to support block loan services, the proportion of books for children and teenagers to the newly acquired books will be about 55% (i.e. 386 000 books), and the quantity of books for adults is anticipated to be 312 000, accounting for about 45% 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 2024-25 should be generally distributed as follows:

Type of Library	No.	Quantity (’000 Items)	Average Quantity per Library (’000 Items)
Central Library	1	42	42
Major libraries	6	130	22
District libraries	32	356	11
Small libraries	32	114	4
Mobile libraries (including Self-service Library Stations)	15	28	2
Total number of existing libraries/ Total quantity of library materials to be acquired	86	670	
New libraries (building up the basic stock)	1	36	
Reading promotion scheme for kindergartens		8	
Total	87	714	

(c) **Category and Proportion of Newly Acquired Library Materials**

As the information hub of Hong Kong, the HKPL acquires a diversified collection of library materials to support lifelong learning. The library collection has to cover a comprehensive range of subjects to meet community needs for learning.

- To tie in with patriotic education and the programmes of the Chinese Culture Promotion Office, the HKPL will enrich the library collection on patriotic education to enable the public to gain further knowledge on the history, culture and rapid development in all aspects of our country. In addition, the HKPL will acquire additional collections on the Chinese constitution, history of the War of Resistance against Japanese aggression, “Greater Bay Area”, “Belt and Road” initiative, traditional Chinese culture and arts and national affairs, with a view to cultivating national identity and a sense of belonging to the country.
- The Olympics Games, held once every four years, will take place in 2024. In view of the anticipated increase in public demand for sports-related collections and information, the HKPL will acquire additional relevant collections.
- In response to popular social issues and the different reading needs of readers, materials on different subjects such as artificial intelligence, ChatGPT, biotechnology, vaccination science and language learning will be acquired. In addition, apart from enhancing the collections on travel, finance, stress management, mental health, childcare and pet care, the HKPL will also acquire various types of reading materials to cater for the interests of the elderly under such categories as retirement wealth management, medicine and home safety.
- As regards books for children and teenagers, the HKPL will enhance the acquisition of books mainly on the following topics: STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics), learning of different languages, Chinese history, world history and geography, picture books and comics.
- Audio books provide another form of reading experience for readers of different ages and reading needs. To enrich the audio book collection, the HKPL plans to acquire about 1 500 additional sets of audio books covering different topics in 2024-25 for the public to borrow.

- To facilitate non-Chinese speaking students in learning Chinese as their second or third language, the HKPL 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 strengthening 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 4 300 titles (or about 15 000 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 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 and entertainment. There are about 70 titles of such newspapers and periodicals, which are mostly kept in the Hong Kong Central Library and 10 major or district libraries.
- In view of the trend of replacing printed copies with electronic copies in the magazine market and the growing demand for electronic periodicals from readers, the HKPL will reduce the acquisition of printed copies of magazines and allocate resources to acquire more popular Chinese and English electronic periodicals, in order to cater for the different reading interests of readers.

Collection Maintenance

7. The HKPL continues to procure business intelligence software service to facilitate the maintenance of its collections with business intelligence, in order to further enhance collection maintenance and to promote and revitalise its collections. Intelligence software service also facilitates the screening of worn-out or outdated library materials for reference of our staff in considering whether withdrawal of such materials is necessary. On the other hand,

the data obtained and experience gained during the use of such service will be conducive to the development of relevant features of the Smart Library System.

8. In addition to annual procurement of new publications, 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 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 2024-25, the HKPL will follow the established criteria in withdrawing library items. The number of items to be withdrawn is estimated at about 610 000.

9. Besides, the HKPL will continue with the “Books Sharing in the Community” Scheme to handle outdated library books to be withdrawn by way of donation, and has invited participation of community libraries enrolled in the “Libraries@neighbourhood – Community Libraries Partnership Scheme” for continued circulation of the books in the community to encourage reading. When acquiring time-limited books, the HKPL will take into account the supply of electronic versions and collections to cater for the needs and reading habits of different groups of readers, thereby reducing the possibility of withdrawing “outdated” library materials.