

Collection Development Plan of the Hong Kong Public Libraries (2025-26)

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 2024, the HKPL system comprised 71 static libraries (1 Central Library, 6 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 2024, the HKPL had a collection of 15.36 million items of library materials:

- (a) There was a total of 13.69 million items of books¹, accounting for 89.1% of the library collection. Among them,
- the numbers of Chinese books and English books were about 9.51 million (69.5%) and 4.18 million (30.5%) respectively;
 - the numbers of adult books and children books were about 9.18 million (67.1%) and 4.51 million (32.9%) respectively; and

¹ Including other print materials

- the numbers of items in lending collections and reference collections were about 11.09 million (81%) and 2.6 million (19%) respectively.
- (b) There were about 1.67 million items of non-print materials including audio-visual materials, accounting for 10.9% of the collection.
- (c) In addition to library materials mentioned in items (a) and (b) above, the HKPL also acquired or subscribed to:
- 19 e-book collections, providing more than 540 000 e-books;
 - 81 e-databases; and
 - about 4 200 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 2024 is as follows:

(a) e-Books

- The usage of e-books reached 2.32 million times in 2024. The usage of e-books between 2022 and 2024 is at **Appendix 1**.
- A new English e-book collection entitled “Boundless (Baker & Taylor)” was launched in January 2024, providing e-books and audio books in various genres for readers of all ages. Readers can check out and read e-books or listen to audio books online. This e-book collection features a personalised page for readers to track the progress and set goals for reading. A total usage of over 3 000 times was recorded in 2024.

- Also launched in December 2024, the “OverDrive Chinese e-Books” offers a variety of popular and sought-after Chinese e-books, covering such topics as literature and fiction (including works of Jin Yong), spiritual support, household knowledge, technology and medicine, investment and wealth management, social sciences, as well as history and biographies. Good reads for children and youths are also included. Apart from online reading with library accounts on personal computers or mobile devices anytime and anywhere, readers may also download e-books for offline reading via the Libby mobile app.
- “Pop-up e-Book”, which provides locally published e-books on a time-limited basis, recorded a total usage of over 156 000 times in 2024, with literature and fiction, household knowledge and collections for children among the most popular categories.
- Available on the “Nowbook Digital Library” e-Book platform, “SUEP e-Book” provides a myriad of books covering children books for paired reading, literature and fiction, books on business and economics and household knowledge, as well as “Hong Kong Renowned Writers”, a collection of famous works by renowned Hong Kong writers. A total usage of over 200 000 times was recorded in 2024, with literature and fiction, children books for paired reading and books on history and culture among the most popular categories.
- The “Jin Yong Martial Arts Novels Audio Collection”, which features a curated assortment of Jin Yong’s classic martial arts novels, recorded a total usage of over 60 000 times, with “The Legend of the Condor Heroes”, “The Return of the Condor Heroes” and “The Heaven Sword and Dragon Sabre” among the most popular titles.
- The three e-book collections, “JoyReadClub” e-Book, “Scholar World” eBook and “Total Wellness” e-Book, which feature books mainly from local publishers, 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 104 000 times was recorded in 2024.
- The e-book collection “FunPark”, which integrates reading and games and provides audio books narrated in Putonghua for children, recorded a total usage of over 42 000 times in 2024.

- As for English e-books, “OverDrive eBooks” recorded a usage of over 97 000 times in 2024. This e-book collection covers various disciplines, among which literature and fiction for adults and children, comics and picture books, as well as business and finance are very popular among readers.
- To align with the lending service of printed books, the loan period of Chinese e-books has been extended to 14 days whereas the loan quota of all e-book collections increased to 10 items starting from the second quarter of 2024.

(b) e-Databases

- Regarding Chinese e-databases, “WiseNews”, a database of newspapers, recorded the highest usage with over 15 million hit counts in 2024, while “China Academic Journals Full-text Database”, which supports self-learning and continuous education, recorded the second highest usage with over 230 000 searches. “China Doctoral Dissertations Full-text Database” and “China Masters’ Theses Full-text Database” also recorded a higher usage with 200 000 searches.
- As for English e-databases, “ProQuest Database Services”, an integrated collection of databases covering various newspapers, periodicals and theses, recorded the highest usage in 2024, with 240 000 searches. The second and third highest usage went to “OverDrive Magazines” and “Naxos Music Library” respectively, with the former recorded over 150 000 checkouts while the latter over 79 000 tracks played. Apart from providing a wide variety of popular English e-magazines from around the world, “OverDrive Magazines” also features magazines in foreign languages such as French, German and Spanish. For “Naxos Music Library”, it covers a wide range of Chinese and Western music genres and attracts a considerable number of music lovers.
- The 81 e-databases (including the Database on Local Publications) currently provided by the HKPL are at **Appendix 2**.

(c) Books (see **Appendix 3**)

- The visitor flow of public libraries continued to rise in 2024, with the overall number of loans increasing by 0.7% as compared with that of 2023. The usage of books for adults increased by 0.2%, while the usage of books for children also increased by 1.1%.

- “Fiction” remained as the most popular category of Chinese books for adults, accounting for about 18% of the overall usage of Chinese books for adults. There was also a continuous rise in the demand for travel books on different places among readers, with the loan rate for books in the categories of Chinese history, geography and travels rising from 2% in 2023 to 4.3% in 2024.
- The most popular categories of English books for adults were “Fiction” and “Business, Economics & Finance”, accounting for about 17.8% and 10.8% of the overall usage of English books for adults respectively.
- As regards children books, the category with the highest usage was “Picture Books” for both Chinese and English books, accounting for 32.4% and 31.7% 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 39.1% of the usage of Chinese and English books for children respectively. As the promotion of Chinese culture has become a focus across the community in recent years, there was an increase in the demand for books on Chinese history, geography, linguistics and literature among students, collectively accounting for 23.5% of the total number of loans of Chinese books for children.

Salient Points of Acquisition of Library Materials in 2025-26

5. When setting the quantity of library materials to be acquired in 2025-26, the HKPL has considered various factors in respect of collection development in order to determine the budget for acquiring library materials.

6. Salient points of proposed library materials to be acquired in 2025-26 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 570 000) 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 80 e-databases are provided, of which 48 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. The HKPL plans to add about 50 000 digitised pages of images and 350 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 711 000 items of library materials, including 697 000 books and print materials and 14 000 non-print materials, will be acquired in 2025-26.
- As regards Chinese and English books, due to a greater public demand for the former, the respective quantity of Chinese and English books to be acquired will be approximately 526 000 and 171 000, accounting for about 75% and 25% 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 for schools, the quantity of books to be acquired for children and teenagers will be approximately 385 000, accounting for about 55% of the newly acquired books, and the quantity of books to be acquired for adults will be approximately 312 000, accounting for about 45% of the newly acquired books.
- Taking into account both the overall requirement and the requirement of individual libraries, the quantity of library materials to be acquired in 2025-26 will 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 | 137 | 23 |
| District libraries | 32 | 359 | 11 |
| Small libraries | 32 | 115 | 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 | 681 | |
| New libraries (building up the basic stock) | 2 | 22 | |
| Reading promotion scheme for kindergartens | | 8 | |
| Total | 88 | 711 | |

(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 and other pursuits.

- To enhance public understanding of Chinese history and culture and support an array of promotional activities on Chinese culture and patriotic education organised by the Chinese Culture Promotion Office under the Leisure and Cultural Services Department, the HKPL will continue to make further acquisition of library materials on Chinese culture and history and increase the number of books on the War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression to tie in with the commemorative activities for the 80th anniversary of the victory of the war.
- In view of the anticipated increase in public demand for books on sports and physical activities as brought about by the 15th National Games co-hosted by Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao and the commissioning of the Kai Tak Sports Park, the HKPL will enhance the acquisition of books on relevant subjects.

- Another notable area of acquisition will be materials on popular social issues such as computer and information technology, artificial intelligence, ChatGPT, cybersecurity, Greater Bay Area, business and wealth management, start-ups, education and home economics, healthcare, electric vehicles, green technology, space programmes and STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts and Mathematics). In addition, apart from enhancing the collections on travel in China, Hong Kong culture and history, language learning, paired reading and early childhood education, the HKPL will also acquire various types of reading materials that appeal to the elderly under such categories as senior healthcare, medicine, retirement wealth management and positive psychology.
- As regards books for children and teenagers, the HKPL will enhance the acquisition of books mainly on the following topics: STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts and Mathematics), academic and career development, language and literature, language learning, Chinese history, world history and geography, comics, arts and recreation, fiction and picture books.
- 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 2025-26 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 4 100 titles 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 about 70 titles of newspapers and periodicals in foreign languages such as 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. The newspapers and periodicals 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, with a view to further enhancing collection maintenance as well as promoting and revitalising its collections. Intelligence software service also facilitates the screening of worn-out or outdated library materials, providing a source of reference for our staff in considering whether withdrawal of such materials is necessary.

8. In addition to annual procurement of new publications, systematic weeding is conducted to identify worn-out/damaged or outdated items and library materials that no longer carry reference or research value (in the case of reference collections) for withdrawal. Regular reviews are also conducted to relocate library materials of lower usage to stacks to make room for new and updated materials, with a view to ensuring the vitality and usefulness of the library collections. The HKPL will follow the established criteria in withdrawing library items, which are estimated at about 620 000 in 2025-26.

9. Besides, the HKPL will continue with the “Books Sharing in the Community” Scheme to donate outdated library books pending withdrawal. To encourage reading, the HKPL will also invite the participation of community libraries enrolled in the “Libraries@neighbourhood – Community Libraries Partnership Scheme” for continued circulation of books in the community. 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 library materials that have become “outdated”.