

Collection Development Plan of the Hong Kong Public Libraries (2026-27)

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 2025, the HKPL system comprised 71 static libraries (one Central Library, six major libraries, 32 district libraries and 32 small libraries), 12 mobile libraries serving 111 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 2025, the HKPL had a collection of 15.43 million items of library materials:

- (a) There was a total of 13.81 million items of books¹, accounting for 89.5% of the library collection. Among them,
- the numbers of Chinese books and English books were about 9.59 million (69.4%) and 4.22 million (30.6%) respectively;
 - the numbers of adult books and children books were about 9.24 million (66.9%) and 4.57 million (33.1%) respectively; and
 - the numbers of items in lending collections and reference collections were about 11.12 million (80.5%) and 2.69 million (19.5%) respectively.

¹ Including other print materials

- (b) There were about 1.62 million items of non-print materials including audio-visual materials, accounting for 10.5% of the collection.
- (c) In addition to library materials mentioned in items (a) and (b) above, the HKPL also acquired or subscribed to:
- 21 e-book collections, providing more than 570 000 e-books;
 - 80 e-databases; and
 - about 4 000 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, 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 2025 is as follows:

(a) e-Books

- The usage of e-books reached 2.13 million times in 2025. Although the figure is slightly lower than that in 2024, the new additions to the collections have led to a higher usage among individual collections and a more diversified content. The usage of e-books between 2023 and 2025 is at **Appendix 1**.
- A new Chinese e-book collection entitled “Popular Good Reads@SUEP” was launched in February 2025, providing a curated collection of popular e-books in traditional Chinese suitable for readers of all ages. The topics covered include literature and fiction, household knowledge, spiritual support, humanities and social science, business and economics, as well as medicines and healthcare.

- Launched at the end of December 2025, the “OverDrive Chinese eBooks (Simplified Chinese)” features popular fictions from Chinese Mainland as well as good reads for children and youths, further expanding Chinese reading choices. While readers may read the e-books online with their library accounts or download them for offline reading via the Libby mobile app, they may also access the OverDrive Chinese eBooks (Traditional Chinese), English e-books and e-magazines on the same platform to enjoy a diverse reading experience.
- The total usage of “Pop-up e-Book” rose to over 211 000 times in 2025, a marked increase from 156 000 times in 2024. Literature and fiction, household knowledge and children books for paired reading remained among the most popular categories, reflecting readers’ growing interest in local e-books.
- Recording a usage of over 200 000 times in 2025, the demand for “SUEP e-Book” and “Hong Kong Renowned Writers” on the “Nowbook Digital Library” e-Book platform remained strong, with literature and fiction, children books for paired reading and household knowledge among the most popular categories.
- The “Jin Yong Martial Arts Novels Audio Collection” continued to be widely popular among readers with a usage of over 57 000 times in 2025, which was comparable to that in 2024 (i.e. 60 000 times). “The Smiling, Proud Wanderer”, “The Return of the Condor Heroes” and “The Demi-Gods and the Semi-Devils” were among the most popular titles.
- The three collections, “JoyReadClub”, “Scholar World” and “Total Wellness”, which feature mainly local publications, recorded a usage of over 161 000 times in 2025, a marked increase from 104 000 times in 2024. This reflects a significant rise in demand for local e-books among readers.
- The e-book platform “FunPark” recorded a usage of over 48 000 times in 2025, an increase from 42 000 times in 2024. This indicates that e-books which integrate reading and games continue to be popular among children and parents.
- As for English e-books, “OverDrive eBooks” recorded a usage of over 132 000 times in 2025, a significant increase from 97 000 times in 2024. Literature and fiction for adults and children, comics and picture books, as well as business and finance remained among the most popular categories, indicating

the growing appeal of English collections.

(b) e-Databases

- Regarding Chinese e-databases, “WiseNews” remained the most popular Chinese e-database, with over 13 million hit counts in 2025. The usage of other major databases was also on the rise. For example, the number of searches on “China Academic Journals Full-text Database”, which supports self-learning and continuous education, rose to over 240 000, an increase from 230 000 searches in 2024. “China Masters’ Theses Full-text Database” and “China Doctoral Dissertations Full-text Database” also recorded a usage with 208 000 and 207 000 searches respectively, which were comparable to that in 2024. This reflects that readers have a continual demand for Chinese academic e-resources.
- As for English e-databases, there was a noticeable growth in usage in 2025. “OverDrive Magazines” jumped to the top of the usage list with over 267 000 checkouts, a significant increase from 150 000 checkouts in 2024. This highlights readers’ demand for international magazines. “ProQuest Database Services” ranked the second highest with 161 000 searches, maintaining its vital role in providing access to a wide range of newspapers, academic journals and theses. The third highest usage went to “Naxos Music Library”, with over 109 000 tracks played in 2025, a significant increase from 79 000 tracks in 2024. This reflects that digital music content is popular among readers.
- The 80 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 the HKPL continued to rise in 2025, with the overall number of loans increasing by 1.3% as compared with that of 2024. The usage of books for children increased by 4.5%.
- “Fiction” remained as the most popular category of Chinese books for adults, accounting for about 17% of the overall usage of Chinese books for adults. There was also a very high demand for travel books on Chinese Mainland and destinations around the world among readers, with a loan rate of about 15%.

- The most popular categories of English books for adults were “Fiction” and “Business, Economics & Finance”, accounting for about 18.7% and 11.5% 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 32.7% and 31.4% of the usage of Chinese and English books for children respectively. In response to the education policy of promoting STEAM, there was also a strong readers’ demand for collections in science, arts, technology and engineering, collectively accounting for about 20% of the usage of English books for children. As the promotion of Chinese culture has become a focus across the community in recent years, the usage of Chinese books for children, including those on Chinese history, geography, linguistics and literature, accounted for 23% of the total number of loans.

Salient Points of Acquisition of Library Materials in 2026-27

5. When setting the quantity of library materials to be acquired in 2026-27, 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 2026-27 are set out below:

(a) Electronic Resources

- To meet the public demand for e-books, the HKPL will continue to acquire about 40 000 (to 610 000) additional items of Chinese and English e-books of different categories and more locally published e-books. The HKPL also plans to add one e-book collection to provide the public with a diverse range of e-books for leisure reading.
- 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. Next year, the HKPL plans to add about 15 000 digitised pages of images and 500 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 725 000 items of library materials, including 713 000 books and print materials and 12 000 non-print materials, will be acquired in 2026-27.
- 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 536 000 and 177 000, 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 395 000, accounting for about 55% of the newly acquired books, and the quantity of books to be acquired for adults will be approximately 318 000, 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 2026-27 will be generally distributed as follows:

Type of Library	No.	Quantity (’000 Items)	Average Quantity per Library (’000 Items)
Central Library	1	41	41
Major libraries	6	137	23
District libraries	32	364	11
Small libraries	32	117	4
Mobile libraries (including Self-service Library Stations)	15	27	2
Total number of existing libraries/ Total quantity of library materials to be acquired	86	686	
New libraries (building up the basic stock)	2	31	
Reading promotion scheme for kindergartens		8	
Total	88	725	

(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 support the Government’s initiative on “National Security Education” and to promote Chinese history and culture, the HKPL will continue to make further acquisition of library materials on topics such as national security, the Chinese Constitution, national affairs, and Chinese culture and history, with a view to deepening the public understanding of our country’s development and cultural heritage.
- Another notable area of acquisition will be materials on popular social issues such as artificial intelligence, low-altitude economy, new quality productive forces, cybersecurity, development in the Greater Bay Area, travel in Chinese Mainland, and culture and history of Hong Kong. The HKPL will also acquire library materials on topics that are relevant to the elderly such as retirement planning, positive psychology, diet and exercise, medicine and

healthcare, and life and death education; as well as leisure reading in categories such as emotional management, personal development, workplace and family management.

- As regards books for children and teenagers, the HKPL will continue to support the Education Bureau's policies of promoting STEAM education and deepening young people's understanding on national affairs by acquiring library materials on STEAM-related topics, Chinese history and culture, as well as popular reading materials for children such as picture books, language learning resources, fiction 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 continue to acquire additional audio books covering different topics in 2026-27 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 3900 titles of newspapers and periodicals published in different places. In determining the titles and number of copies of newspapers and periodicals to subscribe to, 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 affairs, 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, with a view to catering 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 the annual procurement of new publications, the HKPL conducts systematic weeding to identify items that are worn-out/damaged, outdated or no longer carry reference or research value (in the case of reference collections) for withdrawal. Regular reviews are also conducted to relocate books 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. In 2026-27, the HKPL will follow the established criteria in withdrawing library materials, which are estimated at about 620 000.

9. Furthermore, the HKPL will carry on 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”.