

Legislative Council Panel on Home Affairs

**Major Upgrade of Multimedia Information System
for Hong Kong Public Libraries**

Supplementary Information Note

Purpose

As requested by the Legislative Council Panel on Home Affairs at its meeting on 12 December 2008, we set out in this note supplementary information on the proposed major upgrade of the Multimedia Information System (MMIS) for Members' reference.

Details of the proposed upgrade of MMIS

2. The proposal aims at replacing the existing aging MMIS, extending the MMIS services and adding new and enhanced MMIS functions. The details are as follows –

(a) Replacing the aging MMIS –

- (i) replacing the obsolete system hardware and software; and
- (ii) developing a new application system based on the latest technology;

(b) Extending the MMIS services –

- (i) extending the MMIS services from 27 libraries to all 73 static libraries (including 66 existing and 7 new static libraries under planning);
- (ii) enabling provision of the MMIS services via personal mobile devices; and
- (iii) extending the MMIS services via the Internet from 16.5 hours per day to round-the-clock;

(iv) Adding new and enhanced MMIS functions –

- (i) provision of personalised services such as Really Simple

- Syndication (RSS) services to keep patrons abreast of the latest library information;
- (ii) supporting new video streaming formats to enable the provision of copyright cleared video programmes via the Internet;
 - (iii) replacing the outdated disk storage system to allow the continuous growth of the MMIS contents;
 - (iv) allowing electronic payment function in addition to cash for existing charged printing service;
 - (v) facilitating sharing of digitised data with other information archives and digital libraries of academic institutions by adopting international open standards;
 - (vi) enhancing copyright protection by applying digital rights management (DRM) system;
 - (vii) enhancing booking function for MMIS workstations and audio-visual booths;
 - (viii) live broadcast of events held in the Hong Kong Central Library to branch libraries or through the Internet; and
 - (ix) provision of system management tools to facilitate effective system operation.

Promotion strategy to publicise the upgraded MMIS

3. To further promote the usage of the new MMIS, the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) will fully utilise the existing publicity channels including the GovHK (the Government one-stop portal), newsletters, promotional leaflets, posters and brochures to widely publicise the new system to libraries, schools, organisations and the general public. Regular user education sessions, school visits and out-reach programmes for organisations will also be conducted. LCSD has also planned to develop new and enhanced application technology such as automated creation of Contents Highlights and Really Simple Syndication (RSS) in the new MMIS. These new enhancements will not only serve as effective promotional tools to help publicise the new MMIS and its contents, but will also facilitate patrons in navigating the system more effectively.

Usage of the upgraded MMIS

4. In the past 6 years, an average of 16% growth per annum has been recorded for the use of the MMIS. Around 1.5 million patrons used the system to gain access to about 1.8 million items of library materials in 2007. These materials can be broadly classified as audio, video, CD-ROM and digitised documents. The access time of individual items varies depending on their nature and format. For items such as video materials, it may be as long as over 2 hours. The usage of the MMIS items is tabulated below –

Item	No. of Items Used	Estimated Usage Time (hour)
Audio	540,000	201,000
Video	270,000	190,000
CD-ROM	310,000	155,000
Digitised Documents ¹	680,000	27,000
Total	1,800,000	573,000

5. With the provision of new and enhanced functions and extension of the services to round-the-clock, a higher patronage of the upgraded MMIS will be feasible and the annual growth rate of the usage is expected to rise beyond the current rate of 16%.

Measures to enhance the accessibility of the new MMIS

6. To improve the accessibility of the MMIS services is one of the main objectives of the MMIS major upgrade project. The new MMIS will work on the following aspects to achieve this goal –

- (a) The design of the new MMIS will be more user-friendly with contents highlights with specific themes, special topics and new additions of library materials and collections. This will allow patrons, including those who are not familiar with using the computer, to browse the MMIS contents easily. Moreover, we will provide a new and simple search function, similar to popular Internet search functions, which will enable searching of various material types in the Hong Kong

¹ Digitised documents refer to those valuable old Hong Kong newspapers, maps, manuscripts, photos, posters, etc., which are available for public use through the Internet.

Public Libraries with a single click. Other user-friendly features such as “keyword” suggestions in the search box will be included to enhance services provided to patrons.

- (b) Taking into account the fact that more and more people are using personal mobile devices (e.g. mobile phones and Personal Digital Assistants) to access the Internet, the new MMIS will support mobile devices to cater for the needs of this user group. Together with the extended Internet services, patrons will be able to access the new MMIS services anytime, anywhere.

Plan for monitoring and reviewing the MMIS after the upgrade

7. The life cycle of the hardware and software of personal computers (PC) is, under normal circumstances, much shorter than that of server systems. When new PC software and hardware are launched in the market, LCSD will evaluate the benefits and feasibility and, if positive, the hardware and operating system of the MMIS workstations as well as the application system will be upgraded. Moreover, approaching the sixth year after launching the new MMIS, we will upgrade the disk storage by expanding its capacity for storing the digital contents for the next five years. LCSD will also carry out system upgrades to cope with the ever-changing IT security requirements. We will continue to monitor the latest development of IT and its state of the art through various channels such as publications, conferences and exchanges with libraries in other places and carry out necessary enhancements to ensure that the new MMIS will be kept up-to-date and will provide quality library services to the community.

Home Affairs Bureau

January 2009

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