



الجامعة الإسلامية العالمية ماليزيا
INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA
بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

INFORMATION AUDIT AT THE
UNIVERSITY OF MALAYA LIBRARY

BY

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A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL
FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR
THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF LIBRARY & INFORMATION SCIENCE

KULLIYAH OF INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION
TECHNOLOGY
INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY
MALAYSIA

JULY 2005

ABSTRACT

This study was undertaken to identify the information needs and provision, the pattern of use of information sources, the pattern of information creation, documentation and distribution, and the attitude of the staff toward library services and users at the University of Malaya Library. The flow of information among the divisions was mapped to obtain a diagrammatic view of the communication relationships among the divisions for the purpose of obtaining and distributing information. The focus of the study was the staff working in the Main Library which consisted of six divisions and one unit. Questionnaires were administered through the heads of divisions. A total of 75 questionnaires were received for data analysis. Based on the results, it is found that the provision of information in four divisions, namely Resource Development and Management Division, Database Development Division, Information Systems Management Division, Research and Academic Services Division is sufficient whereas the provision of information in Client Services Division and Preservation and Conservation Unit is insufficient. A number of recommendations for further action were given to improve the situation. In the aspect of information resources use, it is concluded that there is no unused or wasted resources in any of the divisions. Staff attitude towards library services and users show that all staff are having positive attitude and they agree that their performance is reflected to the satisfaction of the users. From the map of the information flow, it was found that bottleneck condition occurs at the Information Systems Management Division where reports on the condition of library information system and ICT facilities around the library were sent.

ملخص البحث

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75

APPROVAL PAGE

I certify that I have supervised and read this study and that in my opinion, it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Library & Information Science.

Ahmed Bakeri Abu Bakar
Supervisor

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Library & Information Science.

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted as a whole for any other degrees at IIUM or other institutions.

Zaharah Ramly

Signature

Date

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*In remembrance of my best friend Nor Azizah Mohd Jaman, who passed
away while I was studying – she had strong feelings that we will not see
each other again when I return to work.*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am most grateful and thankful to Allah S.W.T., that with His Grace this thesis is now completed. The completion of this thesis also may not have been possible, without my mother's selfless sacrifice. To my beloved mother, I owe her my deepest gratitude for giving me all the encouragement and support. My deepest appreciation to my supervisor, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ahmed Bakeri Abu Bakar, who has given me useful advice throughout this research. My warmest thanks go to the Head of Department of Library and Information Science, Dr. Nor Shahriza Abdul Karim for her understanding and cooperation. I am deeply indebted to my Head of Division, Mrs. Janaki and my former Head of Division, Mrs Chan for their continuous support, understanding and guidance throughout my study. My greatest thanks to all BPPA staff for cheering my life, and to Kak Z, who has always given me a shoulder to cry on. I would like to thank the Library staff for their cooperation in filling up my questionnaires. Special thanks also to Miss Eman who has helped me with the translation of the abstract. This study is dedicated to my sons, Hazim, Izham and Nazmi, who are my sources of strength, love, joy and laughter. Last but not least utmost gratitude to the University of Malaya for sponsoring my study.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

We are now living in a new era where information has been recognized as one of human's essential needs. In our daily activities, whether it is at the workplace, home, school or anywhere in the world, we need to have information to guide and assist us in performing our duties and work especially when it involves making certain decisions. An adequate provision of relevant information will ensure that our duties are performed well and with quality.

Today, with the support of technology, which has developed tremendously over the last decade; various kinds of information can be obtained everywhere and at any time. Sometimes, there is so much information that it becomes difficult for people to differentiate which information is useful and needed by them, and which is not useful. In such situations, proper management of information, both at the

individual level as well as at the organizational level is very important.

Information has also been accepted as one of the organizational valuable assets or resources. Information resources must be considered as important as the other organizational resources; namely financial, physical and human resources; and its management should be given equal attention as well. The future success of an organization is closely related to its ability to effectively manage the acquisition, creation, storing and dissemination of its information resources. Many organizations depend on or expect the information technology (IT) to manage such resources. However, the computers, databases, digital storage or other storage devices are only the tools. The success of information management actually relies on the people who are the creators, users and organizers of the information (Bradley & Fowler, 2001).

One of the useful management tools, which has been used to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of information resources management is, information audit. It is the process that can be undertaken by an organization to get an overall view of the current situation of the information environment in the organization and to plan for its organizational strategic management.

This study attempts to conduct an information audit at the University of Malaya Library in order to identify the adequacy of information provision to the staff members of the library and also to get an overview of the current management of its information resources. The focus of the study will be at the Main Library where the administration of the library system is centralized.

Background

The University of Malaya Library (UML) was established in the year 1962 in concurrent with the establishment of the first institution of higher learning in Malaysia, University of Malaya. The structure of the library system began with the setting up of the main library at Kuala Lumpur division of the University of Malaya.

Over the years, the Library has expanded by setting up of branch libraries and the absorption of several faculty/departmental libraries located inside and outside the Kuala Lumpur campus area, into the library system. This unique way of UML's formation has resulted in a library system that has a centralized administration but with decentralized units. Today, the UML system has three branch libraries and 12 faculty or special libraries.

The Main Library, which marked the first establishment of the UML system, officiated its settlement at the current building in 1962. It had undergone four phases of expansion with the latest one in 1997. In concurrent with the occupation of the latest extension of the building, the Main Library had undergone major rearrangement of its collections and service points as well as reorganization of its administration structure.

The current structure of the Main Library administration consists of six divisions/unit, namely:

- Client Services Division
- Database Development Division
- Information Systems Management Division
- Research and Academic Services Division
- Resource Development and Management Division
- Preservation and Conservation Unit

It is now manned by 27 professional librarians including the Chief Librarian and 97 non-professional staff. Figure 1.1, in the following page, shows the organizational chart of the University of Malaya Library.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

In addressing the issue of providing information to the people of the society, the library is often looked upon as the organizer and provider of information. Seldom, the library is viewed as an organization by itself, which also needs to consider the information needs of its own staff and the adequacy of the fulfillment of those needs. An inadequate provision or lack of information, which is required by the staff in order to perform their work, may cause job dissatisfaction, stress and low working performance among them (Swash, 1997). Peter Drucker too, said that knowledge workers need to be provided with sufficient information in order to do their job effectively (Drucker, 1993). Consequently, the quality and effectiveness of library services can be affected.

In some organizations that are large and complex, the various departments in the organization manage the information resources independently of one another. These departments may require or use the same information resources. However, due to the independence of their operations and probably ineffective

communication between departments, there may be duplicate acquisition of information resources, acquisition of less important resources and resources that do not get shared or

fully utilized. As a result, there are significant gaps and duplication in information resources within the organization. Swash (1997) had highlighted how such poor or inadequate information management had cost an unnecessarily high expenditure for some organizations.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Information auditing helps organization to learn how information resources are managed at present and how they can be managed better in the future, whether it be as a resource or as an asset. By implementing the audit process, the gap between the information that is needed by the library staff and what is provided to them currently can be identified so that any necessary action to bridge the gap can be undertaken. The inventory of resources acquired or created in each department can provide a useful list of information resources for the reference of staff members in other departments and can highlight the existence of some important information which may be exploited for the enhancement of work performance. It will also create awareness among the staff of information resources available within the organization.

Furthermore, the mapping of the information flow provides a very powerful means of illustrating exactly where critical information resources are positioned (geographically or departmentally), who uses them and who is responsible for them. It enables the management

to locate information resources upon which that organization depends in the running its operations or services.

As no such audit has been conducted in the UML before, the inventory of information resources and the information mapping can be used as a foundation for the regular and continuous practice of information audit in the UML's future.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The focus of the study is to analyze the internal operational situation of the University of Malaya Library in its mission to serve and support the educational and research activities of the academic community of the University of Malaya. The broad purpose is to conduct an information audit, which will analyze the strengths and weaknesses of the information system practiced by the Library.

The objectives of the study are:

- to identify the current information needs of the Library staff and the information resources currently available for the staff.