The 30th year of Thai Private University Library collaboration

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THE 30th YEAR OF THAI PRIVATE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY COLLABORATION

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ABSTRACT

The first informal library collaboration network among Thai private academic institutions was created in 1985. The “Private Higher Education Institution Library Group (PHEL)” was founded by librarians from eleven private academic libraries in Thailand. In 1987, the PHEL group was officially established as one of the Sub-committees under the “Association of Private Higher Education Institutions of Thailand”. Accordingly, its name was changed to be “The Sub-Committee on Private University Library Development” and in 2003, the “Sub-Committee on Private University Library Systems and Network Development” (PUL-Net or ThaiPUL-Net respectively).

Currently, the ThaiPUL-Net is consisting of 65 libraries from private higher education institutions. Its collaborations and activities have been employed by the following strategic objectives: 1) enhance collaboration by knowledge resource sharing and usage; 2) enhance library quality service development; 3) enhance research and best practices in library and information sciences; 4) act as “a knowledge sharing community” between librarians and information professional.

Since then the ThaiPul-Net has developed into an indispensable network for higher education in Thailand and will celebrate its 30 birthday in 2015. The subsequent article will describe the development of ThaiPUL-NET and explore its impact on the strategic and political environment of Thai higher education. The experiences on library service collaborative and digital resource projects are included.

Keywords: Thai Private University Library Network, Academic Libraries, Thai Library Networks, Library Collaboration, ThaiPUL-Net

Background

Association of Private Higher Education Institutions of Thailand (APHEIT) (APHEIT, 2015) established in 1979, is a non-profit association founded by a group of private higher education institutions in Thailand to establish and promote cooperation among private higher education institutions in the country. APHEIT is recognized by Ministry of Education (Thailand) as one of the organizations that plays an important role in Thailand's university administration.

In 1967, six administrators from private colleges established a club in which they met monthly to discuss and exchange views on administrative problems in each institution. On September 25, 1976 the group took the name of private college Administrators Club of Thailand. This club was later renamed to Association of Private Colleges of Thailand on November 18, 1977. On July 23, 1979, it was again renamed to Association of Private Higher Education of Thailand to conform with the Private Higher Education Institution Act of 1979. The Association originated with the following objectives:

1. Promote cooperation between private higher education institutions and others.
2. in cooperation and consultation with the government organization
3. cooperation and coordination academically among members in order to provide the standard of education to students
4. Enhance of research conduct and disseminate research results.
5. Promote the dignity and status of private higher education institutions to provide high levels.
6. Publish activities and movements of private higher education institutions.
7. cooperation, coordination or guidance with school or educational organization or association for the sake of education
8. Provide advice, counseling and assistance to those wishing to establish private higher education institutions.
9. Perform others as necessary to achieve these objectives
10. This association was not involved in politics.

APHEIT Members

In 2015, the Association of Private Higher Education Institutions of Thailand has 65 members consisting of 41 universities, 19 colleges and 5 institutions.

11. Arsom Silp Institute of the Arts
12. Asia-Pacific International University
13. Assumption University (Thailand) (ABAC)
14. Bangkok Suvarnabhumi University
15. Bangkok Thonburi University
16. Bangkok University
17. Chalermkarnchan College
18. Chalermkarnchan Rayong College
19. Chaopraya University
20. Chiangrai College
21. Christian University of Thailand
22. Chulabhorn Graduate Institute
23. College of Asian Scholars
24. Dhurakij Pundit University
25. Dusit Thani College
26. Eastern Asia University
27. Huachiew Chalermprakiet University
28. Hatyai University
29. International Buddhist College
30. Kasem Bundit University
31. Krirk University
32. Lampang Inter-Tech College
33. Lumnamping College
34. Mahanakorn University of Technology
35. Nakhon Ratchasima College
36. Nation University
37. North Bangkok University
38. North Chiang Mai University
39. North Eastern University
40. Panyapiwat Institute of Management
41. Pathumthani University
42. Payap University
43. Phitsanulok University
44. Phanomwan College of Technology
45. Rajapruk University
46. Rangsit University
47. Ratchaphruek College
48. Ratchathani University
49. Rattana Bundit University
50. Saengtham College
51. Saint John's University
52. Saint Louis College
53. Santapol College
54. Shinawatra University
55. Siam Technological College
56. Siam University
57. South-East Asia University
58. Southeast Bangkok College
59. Southern College of Technology
60. Sripatum University
61. Stamford International University
62. Suwannabhumi College
63. Tapee University
64. Thai-Nichi Institute of Technology
65. The Eastern University of Management and Technology
66. The Far Eastern University
67. Theresa International College
68. The University of Central Thailand
69. Thonburi University
70. Thongsuk College
71. University of the Thai Chamber of Commerce
72. Vongchavalitkul University
73. Webster University Thailand
74. Western University
75. Fatoni University

Accordingly, every library of APHEIT Members will be the members of the Thai Private University Library Systems and Network Development or ThaiPUL-Net.

**Thai Private University Library Collaboration**

The library collaboration network among Thai private academic institutions has been long established since 1985. The “Private Higher Education Institution Library Group (PHEL)” was founded
by a group of librarians from eleven private academic libraries in Thailand with the five purposes: 1) to promote the cooperative activities between the private university libraries; 2) To enhance the collaborative library development; 3) to promote the library resource sharing among the private universities; 4) to exchange ideas for professional development; 5) to promote operational research as well as academic work in library and information science.

In 1987, the PHEL group was been leveraged to be one of the Sub-committees under the guidance of Association of Private Higher Education Institutions of Thailand. Accordingly, its name was changed to the Sub-Committee on Private University Library Development, and again renamed in 2003, the Sub-Committee on Private University Library Systems and Network Development or called PUL-Net or ThaiPUL-Net respectively.

Presently, the ThaiPUL-Net is consisting of 65 libraries from private higher education institutions. Its collaborations and activities have been employed by the following strategic objectives: 1) enhance the collaboration on knowledge resource sharing and usage; 2) enhance the library quality service development; 3) enhance the research works and practices in library and information sciences; 4) act as “a knowledge sharing community” between librarians and information professional.

ThaiPul-Net Administrative Structure

The ThaiPul-Net has long time established and become 30 year of its collaboration in the year 2015. The network has administrated by a group of committee. A chairperson whom has been elected will hold the position for two years. The chairperson will form the administrative team by selecting 2 vice-chairs, secretary and treasurer. In order to achieve the implementation of network policies and plans, therefore, the advisory team has been set up. Most of advisors are the administrators from private higher education institutions and / or experts from inside and outside.

ThaiPUL-Net Subcommittee includes 65 library directors/administrators from the member libraries. Additionally, under the guidance of ThaiPUL-Net sub-committee, there are 4 working groups: Acquisition, Cataloguing, User Services and Library Technology. Each working group has a professional librarian leader and working team volunteering from the member libraries. Obviously, the activities from working groups are the important mechanism of the network cooperation.

ThaiPul-Net Activities

ThaiPUL-Net collaborations includes membership meeting, professional conference, training and workshop, electronic resource purchasing negotiation, technical service standards and practices, technologies for library and information practices, member relationship events, etc.

1. Meetings of the Subcommittee/network members

There is a library network meeting every two months, with the rotation to host a meeting among institutional members. This will create the chance to keep the plans and projects on track. In addition, the members can discuss with each other in any issue concerned with the library management and trends. The rotation of meeting place as well creates the opportunity of building relationship among members.

2. The Conference/Seminar

A conference or seminar on Library and Information Science and related fields is held every two years by the seminar. It is considered as the opportunity to enhance the knowledge of library quality management and other trends, especially the use of information technology. The conference is opened for public, not only for members. Lastly, in March 2015, the conference on Library and Education in the 21th century was held in the occasion of 30th year of the private library collaboration.

3. Consortium on electronic resource subscriptions.

The Sub-committee takes responsible of negotiating on the price and agreement of electronic resource purchasing and subscriptions. The electronic resources include online databases, e-book and searching tools. The online databases such as Blackwell Synergy, and Science Direct can be named as such.

4. Participating in Thai Digital Collection
The Thai Digital Collection (ThaiLIS) Project has been launched by the Thailand Commission on Higher Education (CHE), Ministry of Education. Its main purpose is to develop an electronic research documents and thesis database of Thai Universities as a knowledge repository for public access. ThaiPUL-Net joined this project in 2007.

5. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

The CSR activities are actually held twice a year. The activities include school library visits, book and educational material donation, literacy programs and others. Those community service programs are directly beneficial to community and public as well as the member relationship building.

6. ThaiPUL Newsletter

ThaiPUL Newsletter will be published and distributed to members every two month. The coverage is mainly focused on ThaiPUL and other library network activities.

7. Activities of the working groups

At present there are four groups: 1) cataloging group; 2) Acquisition group; 3) User service group; 4) information technology in library. Each group consists of librarians from library members. The joint collaborations and productivity tasks are briefly below.

7.1 The Specific Subject Union Catalog (Thailand – English)
7.2 Guide to the Thai subject heading in information technology
7.3 English vocabulary for information resources
7.4 Union lists of bibliographic reference book, journal and audiovisual
7.5 ThaiPUL Library Service Manual
7.6 ThaiPUL Professional Codes of Conducts
7.7 FQA in libraries (Popular questions bank)
7.8 Exchange the repeat titles of books, journals and audiovisual media
7.9 Specific subject database development using Metadata Dublin Core
7.10 ThaiPUL website development and maintenance (Http://www.thaipul.org/)
7.19 the survey on the use of online databases
7.20 Training on document digital conservation techniques
7.21 The training, knowledge of information technology to its members
7.23 The technical services for community
7.24 Research on "the library users' satisfaction on the lending – borrowing service in Private Universities in Bangkok Metropolitan"
7.25 The ThaiPul interlibrary loan service regulations
7.26 Q & A database development (Web Base Technology)

The ThaiPUL-Net challenges

The Thai Private University library network has developed over 30 years, strengthened by a number of members to 65, of which spread across the country. There is a vast difference in the size of the libraries, geographical locations, of personnel, budget, content of information resources and management policies. The different level of size and budget are indicated as its weaknesses while in turn became a crucial drive-force to cooperation.

One challenge is to create a sense of understanding as partnership. The main objective of the ThaiPUL-Net is to create place for knowledge and experience exchange and discussion. Regarding to location, there are still gaps between its members. The need of alternative communication channel is identified.
The budget for the operation of private libraries is very limited. The allocation is from the institutions where the revenue only comes from the student tuition fee. This brings together the members as a consortium to bargain for the reasonable deal for purchasing the information resources. The other activities included the exchange and share resources and interlibrary loan service are the tasks for the libraries to budget wisely.

In addition, ThaiPUL-Net aims to build good relationship with other library networks both local and international. It will be very beneficial to learn from other good practices in order to develop ThaiPUL-Net continuously in the future.

Reference


Biographical note
Malivan Praditteera earned the degree of Bachelor of Arts in Library and Information Science from Thammasat University, Master of Arts in Library and Information Science from Chulalongkorn University, Thailand, and Doctoral of Education (Administrative Policies and Studies in Higher Education) from University of Pittsburgh, USA. She is a Library Director and lecturer of the Faculty of Information Technology, Rangsit University. Presently, she acts as a chairperson of the Thai Private University Library Systems and Network Development Sub-Committee – ThaiPul-Net.