

Noolaham Foundation

Final Report



Project Title	Noolaham Digital Library Collection Development 2014
Project Number	NF/PG/2014/0002
Project Location	Sri Lanka
Sector	Digital Archive , Collection Development - Ongoing Collection Development
Implementing Agency and contribution	Noolaham Foundation (NF)
Grant Agency and Contribution	Noolaham Foundation
Total Budget	
Start date	1 January 2014
End date	31 December 2014
Responsible Stakeholder/s	Mr Jothilingam, Mr. Paruththiyur Bala Vayiravanathan, Jaffna Public Library, writers and publishers of Sri Lankan Tamil speaking community , Volunteers of Noolaham Foundation

Summary

The **Noolaham Digital Library Collection Development 2014** project was carried out by Noolaham Foundation in 2014 to strengthen the digital library collection by adding various documents related to the Sri Lankan Tamil speaking communities. Documentation, and preservation and dissemination of these documents were also the objectives of the project. An important advantage of digital conversion is increased accessibility to users. It also increases availability of sources to individuals who may not be traditional patrons of a library, due to geographic location or organizational affiliation.

Through this project NF has digitized 1,278 documents and made them available on its digital library at www.noolaham.org. The documents that are available online from the project, date back to 1969. Many of these documents are out of print and could be the last available copies of the same. Noolaham Foundation will continue to expand and diversify its collections by undertaking further collection development projects as well.

Introduction and Background

Research reveals that students, researchers and general public's look online first when they need information because of the speed and convenience of online access. They prefer remote access to electronic resources rather than having to go to a traditional physical library. Most of the peoples often turn to a digital library website or electronic resources when they need information. Students and general people tend to start with popular Internet search engines like Google because these search engines are more convenient and easier to use than libraries. Most of the peoples believe the information they find on the open Internet is good enough to use for their knowledge building. Unfortunately, only about 6% of the surface web content indexed by popular search engines is appropriate for student academic work. The community is concerned that the lack of quality resources on the surface web is having a negative impact on the quality of peoples' virtual learning.

Since 2005, Noolaham Foundation has been digitizing various publications related to Tamil speaking communities and making them available online via its digital library www.noolaham.org. Until December 2013, Noolaham Foundation had digitized 13,175 documents including books, magazines, newspapers and other publications. This library collection includes various small collections such as Muslim Archive and Malayaham Archive. A number of contemporary magazines and newspapers are included in the library.

Any library collection is useful only if it is vigorously updated and maintained. Thus the Noolaham Digital Library Collection Development 2014 project of Noolaham Foundation focused on updating the library collection to maintain the critical mass of collections so that they can be used by students, researchers and general public to fulfill their information needs effectively.

Implementation Methodology

This collection development project has identified 9 collection areas and it was implemented on five collections areas. Those are as follows:

1. Personal Collection Archive: Collections of individuals (researchers, teachers, scholars etc)
2. Personal Archive: Publications of individuals donated by themselves or their heirs.
3. Institutional Archive: Publications of a particular institution.
4. Institutional Collection Archive: Collections of institutions such as libraries and research organizations.
5. Ola-leaf Archive: Ola leaves and other hand written documents held by individuals and institutions.
6. Ithazhaham: Contemporary magazines and journals
7. Vaasihasalai: Contemporary newspapers
8. Malaiyaham Archive: Publications related to up country Tamils
9. Muslim Archive: Documents related to Tamil speaking Muslim communities.

The entire process of digitizing the book consists of various stages such as procuring, scanning, creating Meta data, quality checking and web hosting. Noolaham Foundation has identified different phases of work that can be distributed over different locations. Owing to the magnitude of the project, the digitization process is distributed into different logical steps and among different staffs within various digitization centers.

The digitization process begins with the procurement of documents. A special trained human resource creates the initial metadata for the documents, which is checked for possible duplication against previously digitized documents by NF. NF has built technology and solution to avoid duplication within our center with minimal network resources.

The documents were collected from Mr Sivasubramaniam Annapurana Jothilingam (556 documents), Mr. Rajathurai Ganesarajah (27 documents), Paruththiyur Baalavairavanaathan (18 documents), Jaffna public Library (33 documents), and other writers and publishers (369 documents). 228 issues of contemporary magazines (Ithalaham) and 47 issues of newspapers were also collected.

The digitization process starts with the scanning of documents. To ensure that proper quality is maintained by the digitization center, the archival master files are checked for quality. If any images contain errors, they are re-scanned and/or re-processed. Backup copies are taken and distributed to avoid the loss of digital resources. These documents are hosted on the sever as well.

Objective/s and Achievements or Results:

The overall objective of this project is to develop and strengthen the Noolaham Digital Library collection and provide free and open access, thereby supporting educational, research and development endeavors related to Sri Lankan Tamil speaking communities.

It focused on strengthening of Noolaham Foundation's Digital Library (NDL) collections by digitizing 1278 publications related to Sri Lankan Tamil communities. Rare magazines such as 'kalvi' (கல்வி) which was published during 1969-70 and books such as 'Inuvil saiva Mahajana Ponvilamalar' (இணுவில் சைவ மகாஜனா-பொன்விழா மலர் published in 1980) were digitized. In addition, rare materials, contemporary journals, magazines and newspapers were digitized so that readers can access their latest issues.

As this project provides online access to a wide range of publications including rare books, monographs, magazines and journals, newspapers and other publications, NF believes all the Tamil speaking communities around the world shall benefit from this project. School students, undergraduates, post-graduates, researchers, leaders, entrepreneurs, writers, professionals, publishers, community groups, institutions, social and religious groups, government and non-governmental organizations, and companies will also be benefited. This project also will benefit individuals and institutions who want to digitally archive their

publications. Thus this project will help the communities and institutions to preserve and share their knowledge bases and memory for the long term.

Number of Documents by Category

<i>Collections</i>	<i>Number of documents were digitized by NF</i>
Personal Collection Archive	583
Personal Archive	387
Institutional Collection Archive	33
Ithazhaham	228
Vaasihasalai	47
Total	1,278 Documents

Constrains / Challenges:

- Due to conflict repeated displacement, violence, migration, and globalization processes many important documents were misplaced, scattered, destroyed or burned. Thus the recollection of rare endangered documents was a hard task during this project.
- In some cases, it may not be possible to archive all collected documents for security, intellectual property, legal or other reasons. Several patriotic personalities such as authors and writers too possessed valuable documents, but they did not want to share these documents due to many perceived threats. Likewise, many villagers too kept to themselves social, economic, religious, political, and other important documents, without sharing them with others. This situation has led to a dead-end in the search for wisdom and knowledge as far as the current and future generations.
- Sri Lankan Tamil communities in Sri Lanka and around the world produce many publications and magazines. But they have not been properly recognized, preserved and protected. They will have to come under one digital platform for the use of future generations.
- Lack of sophisticated technologies and advance equipment, and fragile documents reduced the speed of the project. One of the most important tasks when scanning precious bound books and old documents is to ensure they are handled in the correct manner.
- Digital records do have risks such loss of data, security breach and technological obsolescence. Noolaham Foundation will make sure that the quality of digital records meets international standards to enable reproduction of the originals and to support future technologies such as Tamil Optical Character Recognition.
- Noolaham Foundation implemented this project in Jaffna and Colombo. The storage and transfer of the data generated by each center is a major task. Each center generated tens of GBs of data every day. Since network transfer of such large quantities of data is neither feasible nor economical, it has to be physically moved in Hard Drives or DVDs.

Pipelining the data within the various phases of the digitization process is also a serious tactical issue.

Suggestion and Recommendation

- There needs to be a basic system to recollect these misplaced, scattered and hidden materials in addition to a space, where such materials could be made available for researchers and inventors. Noolaham Foundation will also involve in identifying repositories in Sri Lanka and abroad, and attempts will be taken to bring back the documents for digitizing purposes or will make arrangement in the respective locations to digitize.
- Noolaham Foundation will have to provide awareness creation through continuous lobbying to facilitate authors and writers to continuously provide support in the collection of documents, to obtain permission and approvals from respective contributors, and to seek help from all relevant stakeholders such as the publishers to digitize and archive relevant documents
- Through friendship networks and committed members, Noolaham Foundation will provide continuous support in mobilizing and managing resources when needed.
- Scanning technology is been changing dramatically. In the short term, Noolaham Foundation is equipped with digital camera, mobile scanning equipment, A4 and A3 manual scanners and NF will have to use semi-automatic scanners and automatic scanners to achieve greater efficiency while maintaining the quality.
- Noolaham Foundation should develop expertise in scanning precious bound books and old documents so that the valuable books are treated with care and respect.