



ALA President presents the Award

ALA was established in 1876 in Philadelphia and is the oldest, largest, and most influential library association. Currently, it has over 61,000 members from 115 countries. Their annual meeting every June is one of the most important meetings internationally with over 25,000 librarians, educators, authors, and publishers attending.

NCL's EPS was nominated for inclusion in the Poster Session exhibition (120 systems were nominated). The exhibit showed visitors how to use the system to borrow and read books offline on an iPad. Visitors had many questions regarding e-books and expressed much interest in NCL's system.



NCL's booth at Poster Session

The seven main reasons NCL's EPS won an award are 1) it is a trail-blazing innovative system; 2) NCL created a system that can handle e-book deposit, ISBN, copyright management, encryption, and full text upload and circulation; 3) NCL has a visionary desire to become the axis of international e-services for Chinese culture; 4) the system provides users with quicker, better e-book services anywhere anytime; 5) it assists publishers with online deposits; 6) NCL created a system to preserve Taiwan's digital culture and expand e-reading; 7) NCL designed the e-publication platform that addresses both Taiwan's regulations and international standards.

Events

■ *NCL Extends Privileges to High School Students as of July 1*

National Central Library was established in 1933. As it celebrates its 78th anniversary this year, it introduces a new service to the community. Starting on July 1st, 2011 anyone over the age of 16 (or high school students under the age of 16) can now apply for a library card. That morning at 6:30, students were already lined up outside the main doors of the library. Braving the hot summer temperatures, these youth were obviously anticipating their newly afforded privileges. When the doors opened at 9:00, the lobby of the library was filled with a sea of people. Within an hour over 120 new library cards had been issued and the gifts to the first 100 new applicants were gone. Many students came in groups, others with air of a pilgrimage. When their new library card was placed in their hands, it was hard to miss the elation that showed on their faces. They were clearly anticipating making full use of the services NCL offers. To help orient these new patrons, NCL offered five tours of the library that day. A student from Taipei Municipal Zhongshan

Girls High School exclaimed, “Being here at the National Central Library has made me realize that there really is a lot more to know. I need to work harder at my studies.” This is precisely the reason that NCL decided to allow high school students to enter—so that the seeds of research and scholarship could be sown in younger and younger hearts.

In the past, due to NCL’s focus on research and scholarship, target patrons were naturally those with the ability and interest in such pursuits. The minimum age requirement was set at 19 (or younger if enrolled in a university or college). When it was announced that this requirement would be lowered to 16, some reacted with suspicion, worrying that high school students would change the strong research atmosphere in the library. In speaking with high school students who applied for library cards, many expressed their clear understanding of NCL’s purpose and stated that they came to apply for a card because, unlike school or community libraries, NCL has resources and databases that will assist them in their studies and research. NCL has plans to continue adding to its already extensive collections and databases, as well as addressing specific needs of different user age groups. In keeping abreast of developments in other national libraries throughout the world, NCL expects to establish a National Youth Library and a National Children’s Library.

■ *NCL’s Reading Theater Ignites Passion in over 100 Viewers*

In conjunction with the lowering of the minimum age requirement on July 1st, and as a way to encourage more reading by the public, NCL held a special series of events over the summer. From July 9 to August 27, five movies that encourage reading were shown to the public as part of “Books in Movies: Beat the Heat.” Activities began on July 9th by showing the documentary *The Hobart Shakespearians*, with Chu Wen-hui

leading the discussion. Chu first recounted the main points of the documentary, including Mr. Rafe Esquith’s adherence to his educational principles, the variety of ways that can pique kids’ interest in reading, and the benefits of an in-depth reading of world classics. The audience then viewed the documentary and saw how one teacher can create a passion in students. Many were obviously touched by the message. Chu’s offered a few insightful comments after the documentary was over that highlighted the readability of Shakespeare’s works and the importance of reading a variety of genres, which proved to increase everyone’s desire to read more.

The efforts of Mr. Esquith in promoting reading mirror, in part, those outlined the NCL’s Director-general Tseng, who believes that parents and teachers should more proactively encourage children to read, to get in the habit of reading, and to read a variety of books. Also, the length of books read should increase with age, instead of getting stuck on comics. Reading essays, stories, and novels are all excellent ways to improve reading skills. The Director-general also went a step further to encourage people to have a set time for reading—complete and buy at least one book a month. Reading must become an important, indispensable element in our lives.



Chu Wen-hui leads the discussion of “Rafe Esquith and The Hobart Shakespearians”