University Librarians Association
ULA Sri Lanka

NEWSLETTER

University Librarians Association of Sri Lanka

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ULA Events

ULA Training Programme

Empowering Library Staff with Artificial Intelligence (AI): Tools for Efficiency

The third training program, titled "Empowering Library Staff with Artificial Intelligence (AI): Tools for Efficiency," was held on September 5, 2024. This webinar targeted the para-professional library staff. The resource persons, Mr. Kasun Munasinghe (Assistant Librarian, University of Kelaniya) for the Sinhala medium session and Mr. T Ramanan (Senior Assistant Librarian, University of Colombo) for the Tamil medium session, expertly guided the participants through various AI tools to enhance efficiency of library activities.

The program attracted a significant audience, with approximately 200 library assistants and interested individuals attending both programmes. The event proved to be a highly successful and enriching experience for all participants.

ICULA Pre-Conference Workshop

The University Librarians Association (ULA) hosted an engaging Pre-conference workshop on August 28, 2024, in the Auditorium of the Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce, University of Sri Jayewardenepura. The workshop, titled The Power of AI in Libraries, featured Dr. Ranil Sugathadasa, Senior Lecturer at the Faculty of Engineering, University of Moratuwa, as the resource person. Around 30 university library academics participated in the event.

Dr. M.M. Mashroofa, President of ULA, opened the session with a warm welcome and introductory remarks. Mrs. Manjula Rajapaksha, Senior Assistant Librarian at General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University, introduced Dr. Ranil Sugathadasa.

Dr. Sugathadasa shared valuable insights into how AI can enhance library operations and improve user experiences. Topics covered included AI applications in libraries, mindset mastery for adapting to technological changes, and the importance of fostering innovation in library management.

Participants also took part in hands-on sessions, shared success stories, and brainstormed strategies for improving their libraries. The day concluded with participants developing action plans for integrating AI into their respective institutions.

The session was moderated by Mr. Madushan Lankathilake, Assistant Librarian at the University of Colombo. Mrs. Thushara Wanasinghe, Senior Assistant Librarian at Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, closed the event with a vote of thanks, expressing appreciation for the contributions of the resource person and the active participation of the attendees.

This workshop was a significant step towards empowering librarians with the knowledge and tools needed to embrace AI-driven solutions in their libraries, ultimately improving service delivery and operational efficiency.

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ICULA Pre-Conference Webinar Series

Webinar No. 3 – Applying Artificial Intelligence in Libraries: Tools, Applications and Future Trends

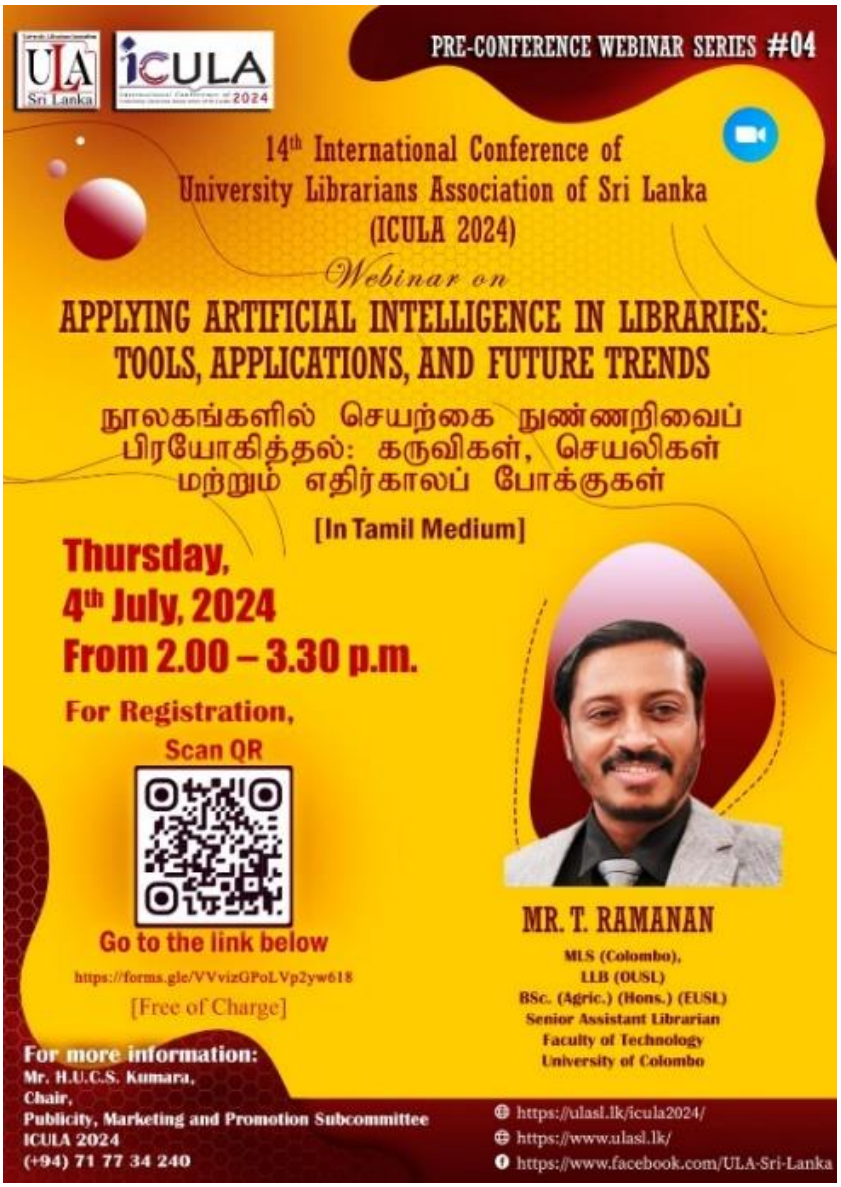
The third pre-conference webinar, "පුස්තකාලවලට කෘතිම බුද්ධියේ ආගමනය: මෙවලම්, යෙදුම්, සහ අනාගත ප්‍රවණතා - Applying Artificial Intelligence in Libraries: Tools, Applications and Future Trends" was held on Thursday, July 4, 2024, from 2.00 to 3.30 p.m. via Zoom in Sinhala Medium.

The resource person was Mr. Kasun Munasinghe, Assistant Librarian, University of Kelaniya. The webinar aimed to explore the opportunities and possibilities AI brings to library activities.

The session was introduced by Dr. (Mrs.) M. M. Mashroofa, the President of the University Librarians Association. Mrs. Suleka Wimalasiri, Assistant Librarian, University of Kelaniya introduced the resource person, Ms. Kusala Sajeewani, Assistant Librarian, Gampaha Wickramaarachchi University of Indigenous Medicine moderated the session, and Ms. Sakunthala Senevirathna, the Co-Secretary, Sub-Committee on Publicity, Marketing, and Promotion of ICULA 2024 proposed the vote of thanks.

More than 100 participants actively participated in the webinar out of 129 listed attendees.

Webinar No. 4 – Applying Artificial Intelligence in Libraries: Tools, Applications and Future Trends



"நூலகங்களில் செயற்கை நுண்ணறிவைப் பிரயோகித்தல் : கருவிகள், செயலிகள் மற்றும் எதிர்காலப் போக்குகள் – "Applying Artificial Intelligence in Libraries: Tools, Applications and Future Trends" was the topic of the fourth pre-conference webinar, which took place on Thursday, July 4, 2024, from 2.00 to 3.30 p.m. via Zoom in Tamil medium. Mr. T. Ramanan, Senior Assistant Librarian, University of Colombo participated as the Resource Person.

The goal of the webinar was to explain working with AI in libraries. The president of the University Librarians Association 2024, Dr. (Mrs.) M. M. Mashroofa, introduced the session. Ms. Lavanya Jagatheesparan, Senior Assistant Librarian, Eastern University of Sri Lanka, moderated the discussion, and Mrs. Thivya Janeen, Senior Assistant Librarian, University of Jaffna, introduced the resource person. Mr. Shan Shanmugathasan, Senior Assistant Librarian, University of Vavuniya, proposed the vote of thanks.

Almost 85 people took part in the webinar in a proactive manner out of 122 registered attendees.

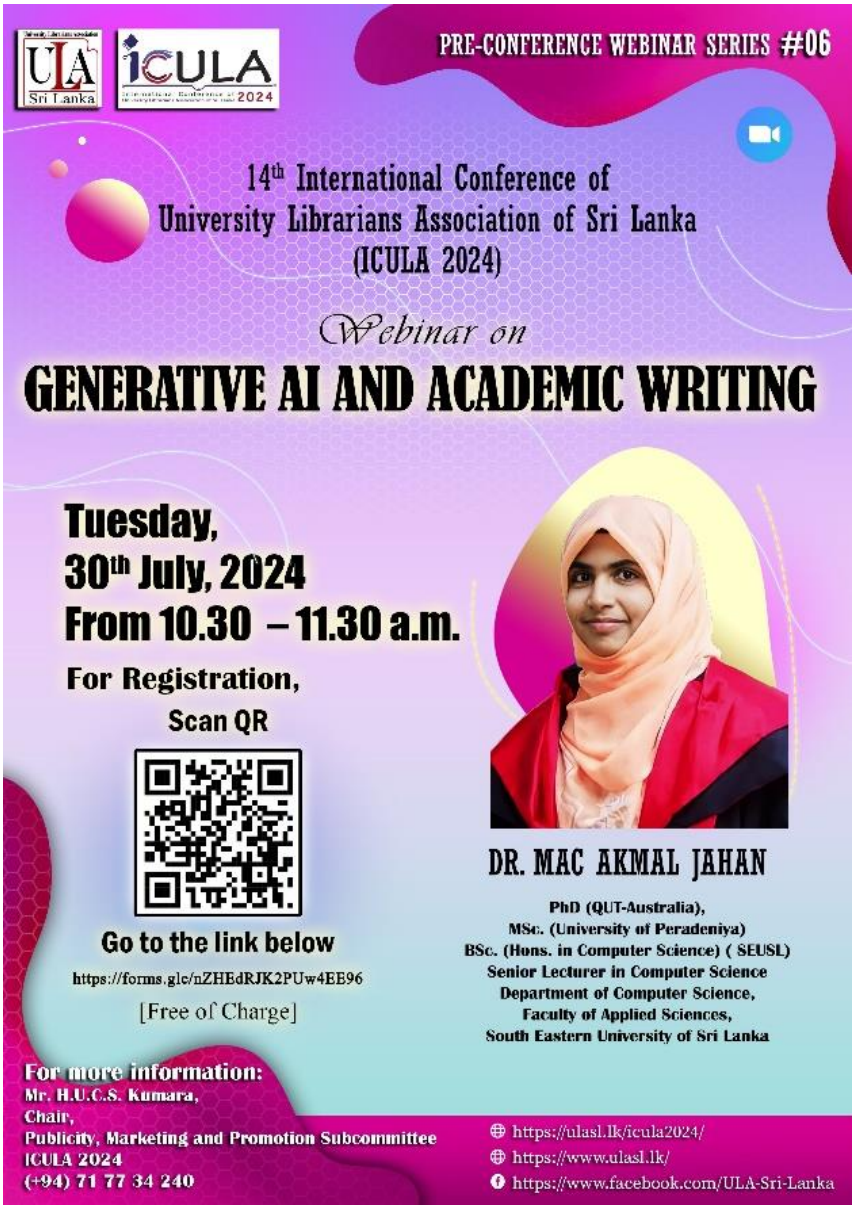
Webinar No. 5 – Crafting Impactful Review Articles: Tips, Pitfalls and Trends

The fifth pre-conference webinar, titled "Crafting Impactful Review Articles: Tips, Pitfalls and Trends," was held on Wednesday, July 17, 2024, from 2:00 to 4.00 p.m. via Zoom. The resource person was Professor Meththika Suharshini Vithanage, Founding Director, Ecosphere Resilience Research Centre, Faculty of Applied Sciences, University of Sri Jayewardenepura. The webinar pointed to discover topics such as what is a literature review, what is review, what is review paper, how to write a review articles.

The session was introduced by Dr. (Mrs.) M. M. Mashroofa, the President of the University Librarians Association. Dr. (Mrs.), N.D. Wijayasundara, Librarian, University of Sri Jayewardenepura, introduced the resource person, Mr. Madhushan Lankathilake, Assistant Librarian, University of Colombo moderated the session, and Mrs. Muditha Ankumbura, Senior Assistant Librarian, University of Visual and Performing Arts proposed the vote of thanks.

232 participants actively linked the webinar out of 371 registered attendees.

Webinar No. 6 – Generative AI and Academic Writing



"Generative AI and Academic writing" was the topic of the sixth pre-conference webinar, which took place via Zoom platform on Tuesday, July 30, 2024, from 10.30 to 12.00 p.m. Dr. (Ms.) M. A. C. Akamal Jahan served as the resource person. Senior lecturer, Dr. (Ms.) Akmal Jahan teach computer science at South Eastern University of Sri Lanka's Faculty of Applied Sciences, where she is affiliated with the department of Computer Science. Webinar examined the possibilities of applying generative AI to academic writing.

The session was presented by Dr. (Mrs.) M. M. Mashroofa, the President of the University Librarians Association. Mr. M.C.M. Azwer, Senior Assistant Librarian, South Eastern University of Sri Lanka, introduced the resource person, Mr. A. M. Nahfees, Senior Assistant Librarian, South Eastern University of Sri Lanka moderated the session, and Mr. Mohammed Sajeer, Senior Assistant Librarian, South Eastern University of Sri Lanka proposed the vote of thanks.

One hundred two participants actively joined the webinar out of 111 showed attendees.

Webinar No. 7 – Implementing AI-Driven Personalization Strategies Enhance Customer Service Quality: Opportunities and Challenges

The seventh pre-conference webinar, "Implementing AI-Driven Personalization Strategies Enhance Customer Service Quality: Opportunities and Challenges" was held on Thursday, August 15, 2024, from 2.00 to 3.30 p.m. via Zoom. The resource person was Prof. Thusitha Gunawardhana, Department of Business Management, Faculty of Management and Finance, University of Ruhuna. He also serves as Director, Career Guidance Unit, University of Ruhuna.

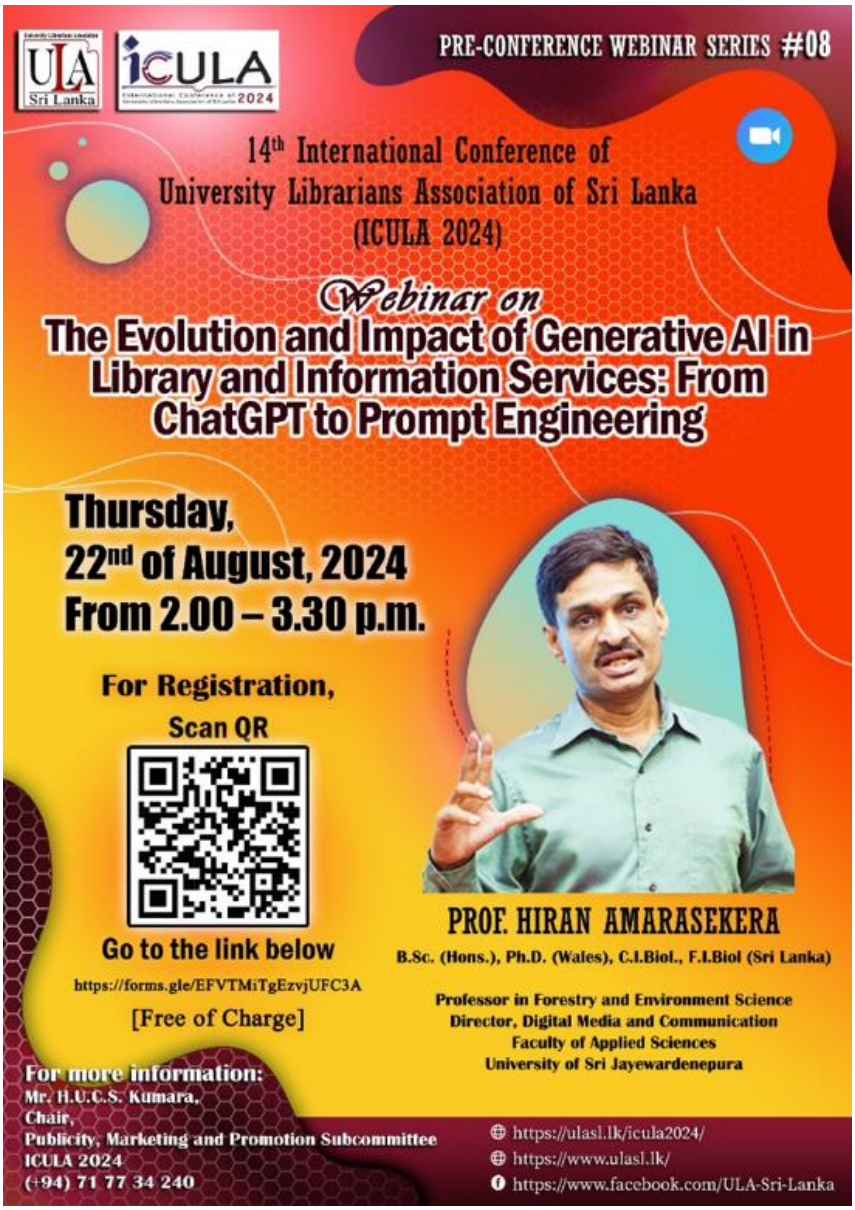
The webinar explored the ways and means of applying AI to improve customer service quality in the library.

The session was introduced by Dr. (Mrs.) M. M. Mashroofa, the President of the University Librarians Association. Mrs. Sakunthala Senevirathna, Senior Assistant Librarian, University of Ruhuna introduced the resource person, Ms. K.A.I.M. Amarasekara, Assistant Librarian, moderated the session, and Dr. Theja Kuruppu Arachchi, Senior Assistant Librarian, proposed the vote of thanks.

Almost 50 participants actively participated in the webinar out of 111 indicated attendees.

Webinar No. 8 – "The Evolution and Impact of Generative AI in Library and Information Services: From ChatGPT to Prompt Engineering"

The eighth pre-conference webinar took place via Zoom platform on Thursday, August 22, 2024, from 2 to 3.30 p.m. and was titled "The Evolution and Impact of Generative AI in Library and Information Services: From ChatGPT to Prompt Engineering."



Prof. Hiran Amarasekara, the director of the University of Sri Jayewardenepura's Faculty of Applied Sciences' Digital Media and Communication, served as the resource person. The goal of the webinar was to examine ChatGPT and AI applications for library services.

The President of University Librarians Association, Dr. (Mrs.) M. M. Mashroofa, opened the session. Mrs. P.G.R. Samaravickrama, Senior Assistant Librarian, University of Sri Jayewardenepura, introduced the resource person. Mrs. Upeksha Kodithuwakku, Senior Assistant Librarian, University of Moratuwa, moderated the session. Mr. Chamika Sanjaya Kumara, the Co-Chair of the Sub-Committee on Publicity, Marketing, and Promotion of ICULA 2024, proposed the vote of thanks.

Out of the 88 indicated attendees, 56 people actively engaged in the webinar.

ICULA Pre-Conference Webinar – 9th and 10th

On Monday, September, 2 2024, two pre-conference webinars were held, focusing on key initiatives from Monash University Library, Australia. The webinars featured expert presentations on Indigenous initiatives and the library's AI taskforce.

Ms. Thrishala Warnasooriya, Assistant Librarian at Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka (SUSL), served as the moderator and welcomed the resource persons from Monash University, Clayton Campus, Australia. The first presentation, by Ms. Mandy Swingle, Library Technologies, Discovery, and Access Manager at Monash University Library, offered valuable insights into Monash University Library's Indigenous Initiatives. The session, introduced by Dr. Kumari Kulathunge, Acting Librarian of the Uwa Wellassa University of Sri Lanka, was followed by an engaging Q&A segment.

Webinar 10 shifted the focus to the future of library services, with Monash University's AI Taskforce taking center stage. Presentations by Dr. Chris Stuart-Andrews, Alma Renewal Program Manager at Monash University Library, and Mr. Murray Coggan, Library Systems Lead, explored the role of artificial intelligence in libraries. The session was introduced by Mr. T. Ramanan from the University of Colombo (UoC) and concluded with a vote of thanks from Dr. Mashroofa Mohamed Majeed, President of the University Librarians Association (ULA).

These webinars provided valuable insights into the innovative approaches being adopted by libraries globally, fostering discussion and exchange among attendees. The event was coordinated by Dr. Menaka Hindagolle, Librarian for Art, Design, Architecture, and Education at Monash University, and the former Senior Assistant Librarian at the University of Peradeniya.

Special Events

ETAKAM - 2024

SYMPOSIUM ON LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE

12 & 13 September 2024

The Symposium on Library and Information Science (Etakam-2024), organized by the Vithiananthan Library of the University of Jaffna, was held on September 12-13, 2024, as part of the Jaffna University International Research Conference (JUICE-2024). It celebrated the university's Golden Jubilee and the centenary of its first Vice-Chancellor, Professor Suppiramaniam Vithiananthan. The event, conducted in a hybrid format, attracted a global audience of scholars, library professionals, and students, who gathered to discuss the evolving role of libraries in knowledge empowerment and community development.

The opening ceremony featured the lighting of an oil lamp, symbolizing the enlightenment of knowledge. Key figures, including Dr. S. Ketheeswaren, the Symposium Convener, and Dr. (Mrs.) K. Chandrasekar, the Symposium Chair, delivered speeches that emphasized the essential role of libraries in advancing academic and social progress. A keynote address by Dr. Sundar Ganesan, Director of Roja Muttaiah Research Library, Chennai, focused on how libraries can adapt to the digital age, integrating technology to maintain relevance, foster lifelong learning, and promote social engagement.

Day 1 included several technical sessions covering topics such as documentation and archiving, library automation, and reading promotion. For instance, Dr. M.M. Mashroofa, President, University Librarians Association of Sri Lanka chaired a session on the preservation of historical documents and digital archives, while other sessions delved into the ethical use of academic tools like Turnitin to maintain integrity in research. Additionally, a book exhibition showcasing multidisciplinary academic collections

provided attendees with opportunities to explore recent publications from renowned local publishers.

On Day 2, the symposium continued with discussions on enhancing library services and community engagement. Another important event was a theme seminar, titled "Libraries for Community Development," which explored four critical themes: documentation and archiving, community engagement, library automation, and reading promotion. These presentations highlighted practical strategies for maintaining libraries' relevance in an increasingly digital world.

The symposium concluded with a valedictory address by Emeritus Professor Pon. Balasundarampillai, followed by a closing ceremony where certificates were awarded to participants. A networking lunch provided further opportunities for discussions and potential collaborations. Overall, the symposium successfully brought together professionals and scholars, fostering dialogue on the future of libraries and underscoring their critical role in empowering communities through knowledge.

Opening of the Ceylon Room and the Video Room at the Library of Sri Palee Campus, University of Colombo

The Library of the Sri Palee Campus, University of Colombo was further strengthening its services by establishing two new sections of Ceylon Room and the Video Room. The Sri Palee library has a very comprehensive DVD and Blu-ray Collection with Stage Drama, Musical and Documentary collections and an award-winning Hollywood and Bollywood Film collection. The establishment of a video room transforms the library into a visual and auditory learning, promoting a more inclusive and effective learning environment. Thesis Collection, Sri Lanka Collection, Sri Lanka Paintings Collection and the Rare Collection are the four collections housed in the newly opened section of the Ceylon Room. The Vice Chancellor of the University of Colombo, Senior Professor H. D. Karunarathne was the Chief Guest of this Opening Ceremony which was held on August, 6 2024. Dr. Prathibha Mahanamahewa, the Rector of the Sri Palee Campus and members of the Academic staff graced the occasion.

Human Library Project – Sri Palee Library, University of Colombo

The first session of the Human Library Project for 2024, organized by the library, Sri Palee Campus was successfully held on September, 10 2024 at 1.00 p.m. at the Arundathie Hall, Sri Palee Campus. The five scholars distinguished scholars from various academic fields participated: Senior Professor Saman Chandra Ranasinghe, University of Sri Jayawardhenepura, Professor (Retired) Kamal Waleboda, University of Colombo, Professor Dharmakeerthi Sri Ranjan, Sri Palee Campus, Dr. Kumesh Prabhashini, Sri Palee Campus and Senior Lecturer Mr. Thumindu Dodanthenna, Sri Palee Campus were participated as human books and shared their knowledge expertise, professional and personal experiences with final year students of Mass Media and Performing Arts. Dr. (Mrs.) C.K. Gamage, the Senior Assistant Librarian of the Sri Palee Campus coordinated the session and Dr. Prathibha Mahanamahewa, the Rector and the members of the Academic staff of the Sri Palee Campus graced and inspired the occasion.

Feature Article

Research Data Management at University Libraries: New roles and Challenges

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Research data sharing is the practice of making research data available for other researchers from anywhere in the world allowing them to access, use and reuse available research data. It helps the researchers to make available their research data to anyone who might want to do further research and analysis. Research data sharing is about organizing data from the stage of data collection through archiving and making it available for dissemination. It is an important research endeavour, as it increases the visibility of research output. Some publishers and funders also urge research data sharing as it supports verifying and validating research work. Though the researchers are not willing to share research data before publishing research, researchers have been compelled to share their research data with external motivation through the data-sharing policies of publishers and funders' demands. Moreover, libraries in developed countries have attended to research data management (RDM) services in a pivotal role (Sheikh, Malik, & Adnan, 2023). According to Cox, Kennan, Lyon, and Pinfield (2017), higher education libraries in selected developed countries have taken leadership in RDM; they have mainly focused on advocacy and policy development to overcome the challenges due to the unwillingness of researchers to share their research data. In this context, Sinha, Sinha, and Subaveerapandiyan (2023) note that a significant percentage of libraries in South Asia (26.5%) cannot provide RDM services, while a smaller percentage of RDM practices were observed in institutions from both South Asia and Southeast Asia..

Universities pioneer in doing research as a core activity. Hence, the global movement of research data sharing could be enhanced by introducing data-sharing policies and guidelines at the university level also and making the researchers aware of data-sharing

practices. Moreover, universities could establish data repositories and make the researchers aware of it and its assurance. The global trend in the RDM is for the libraries to take part in relevant policy making, providing infrastructure for data archiving and sharing, and training the researchers as well as the library staff members (Corrall, 2012; Cox & Pinfield, 2014). University libraries in developed countries have endured this responsibility by taking part in developing institutional research data management policies, and offering support with research data storage repositories and required training and advice (Cox & Pinfield, 2014). This training and advice on data management tools could be covered in information literacy instruction as well as can be included in a webpage.

Most of the roles in RDM are related to librarians' existing roles and competencies (Corrall, 2012). Moreover, librarians may be suitable for this RDM role as they have information management skills, where information technology knowledge is of added support. Libraries practice techniques for information organizing, for example, using online catalogues and developing institutional repositories, which also relate to the practice of research data management for data archiving and sharing. Using this knowledge, librarians can help researchers with data management planning from the start of the research process, data storage facility and guidance, research data preservation, and sharing (Corrall, 2012). Therefore, it is an interesting opportunity to implement RDM in University libraries, as it would define new roles.

RDM is compulsory for research grant applications; librarians have a bigger role in making aware of RDM and in providing with a data repository facilities. Maintaining data repositories. Data management training, and promoting awareness of reusable data sources are the major RDM roles. Another main role is to encourage researchers to share their data.

Challenges of research data management

Challenges faced by library professionals have become the biggest barrier to RDM services. Sinha et al. (2023) identified lack of infrastructure, top administration and university-level support, prioritization, budget, technical experts, limited awareness of RDM services, and limited communication from liaison librarians as managerial challenges in academic libraries of South Asia. Moreover, they found the need for "defined policies and a roadmap for performing RDM services" as important issues that cause all other challenges. Insufficient funding, unethical data practices, and the unwillingness of researchers to share their data are the other challenges to overcome. Another important challenge is the lack of knowledge about RDM among the librarians. Moreover, practicing librarians need training on RDM to develop their capacity to guide the researchers.

Conclusion

The role of librarians is evolving with the developments of information communication and technology developments. While library content is moving towards a digital platform, library professionals are focusing on new approaches to support library users. However, the literature shows that research data management services of libraries in developing countries are just rising. Those libraries that have focused on implementing RDM activities face challenges due to limitations in their capacities to provide such service. Nevertheless, this is a good opportunity for the librarians to help researchers ensure the availability of research data for further appraisal.

Corrall, S. (2012). Roles and responsibilities: Libraries, librarians and data. In G. Pryor (Ed.), *Managing Research Data* (pp. 105-134): Facet.

Cox, A. M., Kennan, M. A., Lyon, L., & Pinfield, S. (2017). Developments in research data management in academic libraries: Towards an understanding of research data service maturity. *Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology*, 68(9), 2182-2200. doi:10.1002/asi.23781

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Brand your Library as a Travel Guide: A Way Forward

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Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka

Nomadic nature of humans

The Human being is a nomadic animal by nature. This human behaviour created an iconic chapter of nomadism in the prehistoric era. Not only the nomads but also navigators turned new pages in world history through their findings of new lands and countries (Kolinko, 2019). This flashback has the signs of today's industry: tourism and hospitality. This fast-growing, and competitive industry has become a popular and direct source of income generation in Sri Lanka for several decades. The top-ranked hotels in Sri Lanka used to target international guests and travellers during the previous years. Due to several reasons such as generation change, globalization, social media, unstable economy, political issues, crises, brain drain and unsecured feelings experienced in the country redeemed from the island mind. Entertainment, cultural and recreation events were introduced to and experienced by Sri Lankans. Therefore, the young generation in the country today, tries to keep a work-life balance by adding entertainment to their routine lifestyles. As a result, local travellers are increasing than international travellers which is a good tendency within the country. This habitual change of Sri Lankans can be targeted by libraries across the country for their branding purposes while addressing and meeting community-changing needs.

Social media influence on travellers

As social media have become an easy and instant way to communicate, the popularity of travel guides, pages and channels is rapidly increasing. The contents shared through these platforms are all experience-based and first-hand data. Some of them are filtered, sorted, and authenticated and some are not. This is where the role of the library fits in tourism settings. Information collection, filtering, organization, display and distribution, access provision and conservation for a sustainable usage can be tailored by the libraries. Then only the reliability of given contents cannot be guaranteed. In addition, the real value and depth of some historical and archaeological sites have not been conveyed to the site visitor or the traveller in most of the places in Sri Lanka. Therefore, the absence of travel guides is challenging, especially for one-day travellers. Moreover, the display

boards and direction boards cannot solely serve the purpose of travel guiding as travel guiding is not merely showing the direction to a certain destination (Roque & Guerreiro, 2021). Therefore, libraries can play a prominent role in this scenario by becoming travel guides.

The libraries hereby can use their social media platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, TikTok, Messenger and Instagram for providing detailed information or instant communications which is indirectly to get more viewers, followers, and online reviews for the library's social media platforms. This drives towards the library branding through a continuous "online presence" of the library.

In Sri Lankan context, different types of libraries have been established throughout the country. Basically, public libraries are common in all key urban areas and university libraries have been established in each province. However, information centres are not very prominent in their performance. Regardless of the library type, the responsibility of every single library is to create its identity and brand while serving the community.

Diversity of Sri Lanka to Brand Libraries

Sri Lanka is rich in diversification in terms of natural resources, wildlife, nature, animals, climates, weather, geology, culture, agriculture, cultivation and many more. The gravity of these values is doubled by the historical and archaeological values in the country. As community service centres all the libraries can utilize the freely available diversity of the country to brand their library with their identity. The growing trend of travellers is a blessing for the libraries to sound as information centres whereby the same library functions are performed but in a modern and attractive way. Unfortunately, a limited facets of tourism such as cultural tourism, hospitality, heritage management, bibliotourism and sustainable tourism with libraries have received the global attention (Olufunke & Oghenekaro, 2020). Aiming at freely available natural resources and other facets of tourism and hospitality will be an efficient survival effort for the evolving libraries.

The libraries can focus on their area which can be the town, or district, or province to collect the information relevant to build their own identity. The information such as places to visit, their values, charges per visit, rules and regulations, transportation services, their schedules and availability, prices, accommodation, changing rooms, restrooms, contact details, social media links, websites, weather forecast, travelling essentials, food and beverages, and security etc. The provision of all this information should be supported by a streamlined and instant communication channel. For example, chat threads in the library's social media channels, and chat box in the library website will be more attractive for today's travellers to prevent them from groping in the dark. Responding to the requests of personnel guides can also be managed by training a

person who is more familiar with the area. That will be an opportunity for the person to develop his public relations, hospitality, and communication skills and increase his income if it was not a non-levying service. At that point, the library can rethink of a service charge. If your library is in a real need of fund generation, "why not?" - your library can officially discuss with the stakeholders and other relevant entities to initiate branding + marketing + fund generation + community services as travel guides.

Conclusion

In the evolving landscape, the library has to struggle with financial, social and technological barriers to meet the changing needs of the community. Unless the library uses innovative approaches to transform the existing library setting, the survival, and acceptance of the library as a community service centre will remain as a question. By using the readily available resources in the area, the libraries can brand themselves while serving as travel guides and promoting enriching library services. This transformative approach ensures the libraries remain relevant, and reinforce the dynamic roles and capacities as travel guides in the journey of knowledge and discovery.

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Appointments and Promotion

Promotions

Dr. Ruwan Gamage Obtains Professorship

Dr. R.C.G. Gamage, Senior Lecturer at the National Institute of Library and Information Sciences (NILIS), University of Colombo, has recently been awarded the Professorship in Library and Information Science. He began his academic career as an Assistant Librarian at the University of Moratuwa in 2000 and has served as a visiting faculty member at both the University of Colombo and the University of Kelaniya since 2003. In 2012, Dr. Gamage moved permanently to NILIS as a Senior Lecturer. Before entering the field of librarianship, he held roles as Editorial Staff at Upali Newspapers, News Editor at Sirasa FM, Communications Officer at the Intermediate Technology Development Group, and Publicity Officer at the National Science Foundation. Dr. Gamage is a Fellow of the Sri Lanka Library Association (SLLA) and has served as its President. Additionally, he was the Chair of the South Asia Chapter of the Association of Information Science and Technology (ASIS&T) during the 2020/2021 term. He received the International Library & Information Group (ILIG) award from the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP), UK for 'making a difference in libraries and information centers outside the UK', in 2009.

Promotion to Senior Assistant Librarian

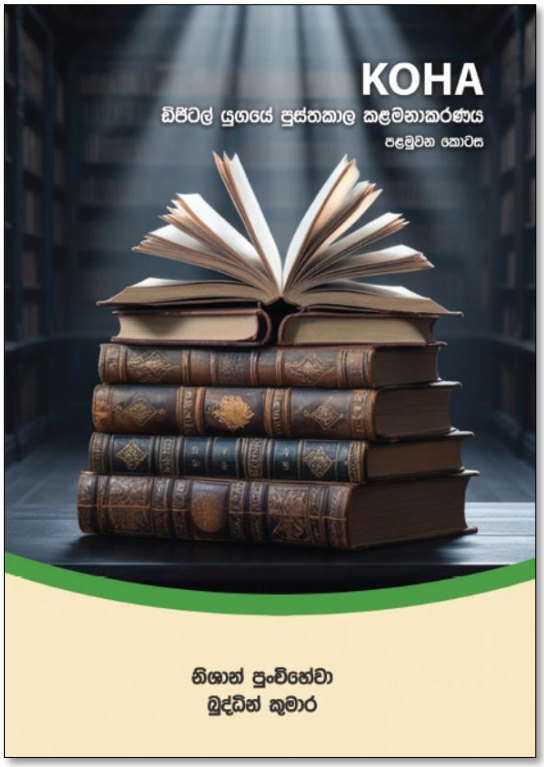
Mr. R.M. Dhammika Rathnayake, Assistant Librarian of the Main Library of the University of Kelaniya, has been promoted to the post of Senior Assistant Librarian (Grade II) effective from the 1st of October 2023.

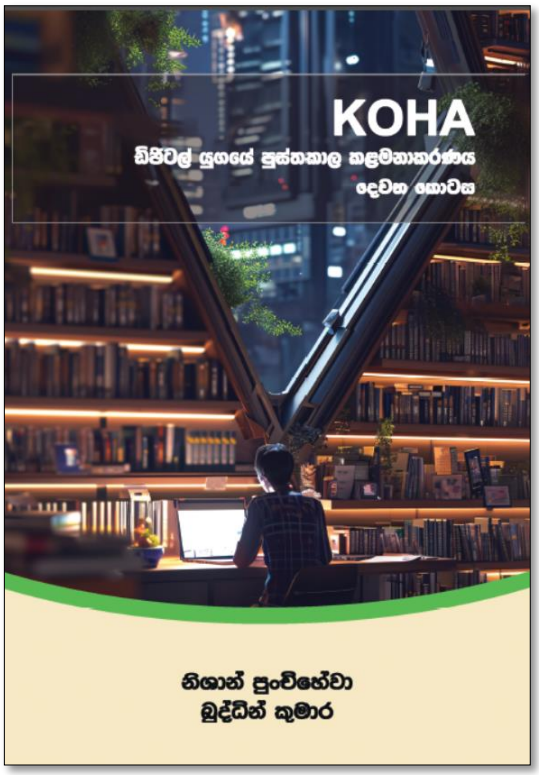
Mrs. B.G. Suleka Pathmini Wimalasiri, Assistant Librarian of the Main Library of the University of Kelaniya, has been promoted to the post of Senior Assistant Librarian (Grade II) effective from the 1st of October 2023.

Achievements and Awards

Books Published to Meet the Growing Demand for Sinhala Language Resources

The two-part series book, “KOHA: ඩිජිටල් යුගයේ පුස්තකාල කළමනාකරණය (KOHA: Library Management in the Digital Age)”, written by Senior Assistant Librarians Mr. Nishan Punchihewa and Mr. Buddhin Kumara from the University of Moratuwa, has been published to address the increasing need for high-quality educational resources on the KOHA Library Management System in Sinhala. This series is a direct response to requests from students who have struggled to find accessible resources on KOHA in the Sinhala language.





The part one and part two of "KOHA: ඩිජිටල් යුගයේ පුස්තකාල කළමනාකරණය (KOHA: Library Management in the Digital Age) have been carefully crafted to serve as comprehensive guides for both novice and experienced users of the KOHA system. These books delve deeply into KOHA's functionalities, providing step-by-step instructions on key features such as acquisitions, cataloguing, circulation, and serials management.

The series aims to ensure that library operations can be optimized by offering detailed explanations of administrative tasks, including system configuration, user permissions, and branch management. Special attention has been given to advanced features like batch processing and label printing, which allow libraries to tailor the system to their specific requirements. In addition, the authors have thoroughly explained how to generate meaningful statistics and custom reports, which are essential for supporting data-driven decisions in library management.

One of the key factors motivating the publication of these books was the recognition that most resources on KOHA are available only in English, creating a gap for students and professionals who prefer or require materials in Sinhala. As educators in the field of Library and Information Science, the authors have witnessed first-hand the demand for such resources and have worked diligently to create a text that is both accessible and practical.

With the publication of these two books, a valuable resource has been provided for Sinhala-speaking students, librarians, and educators, helping to foster a deeper understanding of KOHA and its relevance in the modern, digital era of library management.

Creative Writing Competition

Mr. MGA Thilanka, Assistant Librarian won the first place in the Staff Category- Sinhala Short Story and Sinhala Essay in the Creative Writing Competition organized by the Department of Languages, KDU.

The certificate awarding ceremony took place on September 6, 2024, at the FGS Auditorium.

Shines beyond the Horizon

Presentations in IFLA E-Camp 2024

The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) E-Camp was a trailblazing event that brought together library and information professionals around the world.

IFLA's New Professionals Special Interest Group (NPSIG) invited Ms. Thushari Seneviratne, a Senior Assistant Librarian from the University of Moratuwa to make a presentation on the topic "The Role of Libraries in Promoting Environmental Awareness for a Sustainable Future". Her presentation highlighted the vital role of libraries to foster environmental stewardship and sustainable practices as a catalyst towards positive change among local communities. Further she shared her experience on the project "Environmental Awareness on the Bolgoda Ecosystem", which is a voluntary engagement since 2022 and jointly conducted with Dr. Chulantha Jayawardena, a Senior Lecturer from the Department of Earth Resources Engineering of University of Moratuwa.

Professor R.C.G. Gamage from the National Institute of Library and Information Sciences (NILIS), University of Colombo also presented on "CATMELK: A GPT for Capturing MARC21 Metadata from Book Cover". It was on a Artificial Intelligence (AI) application, customized on the ChatGPT platform, to automate the cataloging process. The participants admired the solution and also gave important recommendations to improve it.

The IFLA E-Camp offered an excellent opportunity to learn new skills, explore creative library initiatives, projects, and campaigns in addition to networking with fellow professionals associating the libraries around the globe. The event was held during 30 & 31 August 2024 and conducted via the 'Gather Town' virtual platform

Academic Contribution

Workshop on 'Information Searching and Online Tools for Dissertation Writing' at University of Colombo

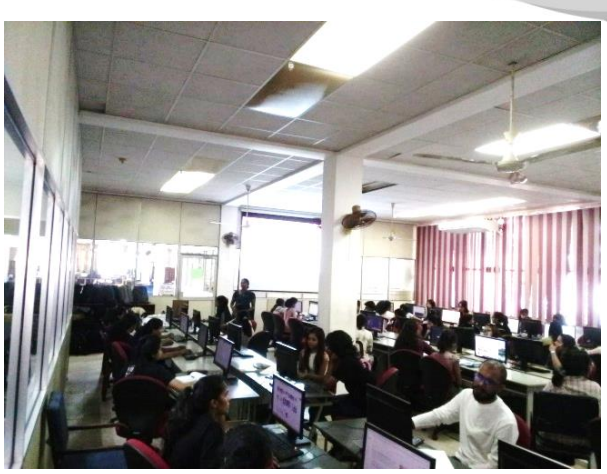
The Faculty of Graduate Studies Library conducted a workshop on Information Searching and Online Tools for Dissertation Writing to enhance the research skills of the Administrative officers, Financial officers and Marshals of the University of Colombo on September 6, 2024. Dr N M Karannagoda, Senior Assistant Librarian Systems and IT contributed as the resource person for this special event.

Workshop on 'Empowering Academic Staff, University of Colombo'

The Staff Development Center, University of Colombo, conducted a full-day workshop on "Enhancing Information Searching and Utilizing Online Tools for Research Paper/Dissertation Writing and Thesis Supervision" on September 05, 2024 and September 12, 2024. The target audience was University academic staff involved in guiding students through the dissertation writing process, including faculty members, research supervisors, teaching assistants, master's students, and PHD students.

Dr. N. M. Karannagoda, Senior Assistant Librarian Systems, and IT, contributed as the resource person for this special event.

Training on Information seeking skills



Senior Assistant Librarians attached to the University of Moratuwa conducted several sessions for undergraduate students to enhance their information-seeking skills. 'Searching for academic scholarly literature' was done by Mrs. Upeksha Kodithuwakku for Level V Textile and Apparel Engineering (TE4200) on 4th July, Level IV Textile and apparel engineering (FD3301) Fashion industry investigative study on 11th & 18th July, Level IV Landscape Architecture on 26th July, Level IV Integrated Design on 27th August 2024 and Level IV Information Technology and Management on September 18, 2024. The positive responses of the students indicated that they were able to gather new knowledge from the sessions conducted by the library.

Referencing with APA

On the September 03, 2024, the Library, University of Moratuwa conducted an informative workshop on "Referencing Using the APA style" for first-year Bachelor of Architecture students. The session was led by Mrs. Thushari M. Seneviratne and Mr. Nishan Punchihewa, Senior Assistant Librarians, who guided the students on proper citation practices. This workshop aimed to provide students with a solid foundation in referencing, an essential skill for their academic journey.

Enhancing Research Impact: Using Journal Metrics and Advanced Research Tools for Comprehensive Literature Analysis

September 06, 2024, the Library of the University of Moratuwa hosted a lecture titled "Enhancing Research Impact: Using Journal Metrics and Advanced Research Tools for Comprehensive Literature Analysis" for final-year students of the Department of Earth Resources Engineering. The session was conducted by Mrs. Thushari Seneviratne, Senior Assistant Librarian, who provided valuable insights into utilizing journal metrics and advanced research tools to elevate the quality and visibility of students' academic work. The workshop aimed to equip students with essential skills for conducting in-depth literature reviews and maximizing the impact of their research.

"Mindful Reading into Research Practice"

Dr. Nayani Gunawardhana, Senior Assistant Librarian University of Moratuwa, conducted a lecture on Mindful Reading into Research Practices: Cultivating Focus and Avoiding Distractions in Research. This session was held at the Library on September 13, 2024 for the final-year students of the Department of Earth Resources Engineering. Introduction to mindfulness, mindful listening, mindfulness reading, understanding distractions in research and practicing breathing exercises, cultivating focus through reading techniques, implementing mindful reading in research practices, reading a research paper, building a mindful research environment, and introducing the "shut-up-and-write" writing strategy was discussed.

Postgraduate, Undergraduate or diploma level LIS programmes, Information Literacy Teaching, Guest & Visiting Lectures

The postgraduate students who follow the Contract law and dispute resolution degree programme of the Faculty of Architecture, University of Moratuwa showed their enthusiasm in finding relevant literature through library resources. Senior Assistant Librarian, Mrs. Upeksha Kodithuwakku accepted the invitation to conduct an online library orientation to guide them to find relevant scholarly sources on September 14, 2024.

Senior Assistant Librarian, Mrs. Upeksha Kodithuwakku assisted the postgraduate students of Water Resource Engineering and Management of the Department of Civil Engineering, Faculty of Engineering to receive sound knowledge on “searching literature for academic purposes” and “finding information through library website through an online session conducted on September 28, 2024. The session on Plagiarism and referencing was conducted by Senior Assistant Librarian, Mr. Nishan Punchihewa on the same day.

Awareness Workshop on User Registration and Authority Control

A two-day workshop on "User Registration and Authority Control' was held on July, 25 and 26 2024 for the library information assistants at the University of Ruhuna Library. Mr. Nimal Hettiarachchi, the Librarian of the University of Ruhuna was the resource person. The workshop was held at the main library.

Awareness Workshop on Database Searching and Installing VPN

A one-day workshop on 'Database Searching and Installing VPN' was held on July, 31 2024 at the main library, University of Ruhuna. The participants were the library information assistants at the University of Ruhuna Library. Dr. Theja Kuruppu Arachchi, Senior Assistant Librarian at the Main Library was the resource person. Participants were acquainted with the accessible e-journal databases accessible from the University network and how to search the accessible content. Moreover, the VPN access option was to support the library users' access the e databases from off campus.

Webinar on 'Time management with Google Calendar

A one-hour webinar was conducted on August 14, 2024 by Dr. Theja Kuruppu Arachchi to introduce how the Google Calendar can be used to manage day-to-day events effectively. The participants for the webinar were the academic staff members at the University of Ruhuna Library.

Workshop on quality for efficiency

A two-day workshop was held at the Main Library, University of Ruhuna on August, 21 and 22 2024. The session 'Quality with Checklists' on August, 21 2024 introduced the checklists and their importance for the efficiency of library functions. That session was for the library information assistants in the University of Ruhuna library, who were then motivated to write checklists for the library functions they were assigned to. On the next day, August, 22, 2024 two sessions were held about quality control in book processing and binding for the library attendants and work aid staff. The resource persons for the two sessions were Mr. U.A. Lal Pannila (Deputy Librarian) and Mrs. Sakunthala Senevirathna (Senior Assistant Librarian) of the University of Ruhuna.

Webinar on “Creating a Researcher Profile”

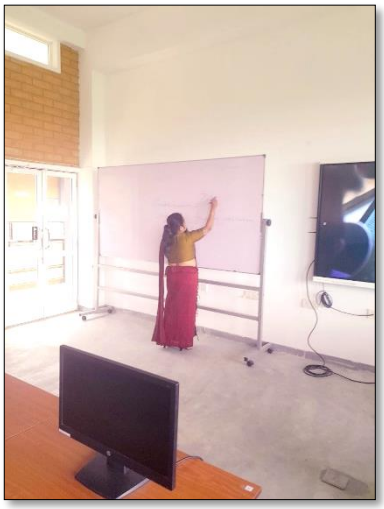
Mr. R. M. Dhammika Rathnayake, Senior Assistant Librarian at the University of Kelaniya, served as a resource person for the webinar series on “Creating a Researcher Profile” (Medium in Sinhala - පර්යේෂක පැතිකඩක් නිර්මාණය කිරීම) organized by Subject Liaison Librarians Services and Interactive Media Unit, University of Kelaniya. This webinar was held on Thursday, September 19, 2024.

Workshop on "Learning to learn skills"

KDU Library Network has organized a workshop on "Learning to learn skills" for Intake 40 – 2nd -year students on July 03, 2024, from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. at the Auditorium, Southern Campus - KDU. Dr. (Mrs.) Seneviratne, Librarian & Mrs. M.P. Rajapaksha, Senior Assistant Librarian (FOM) successfully conducted this workshop.

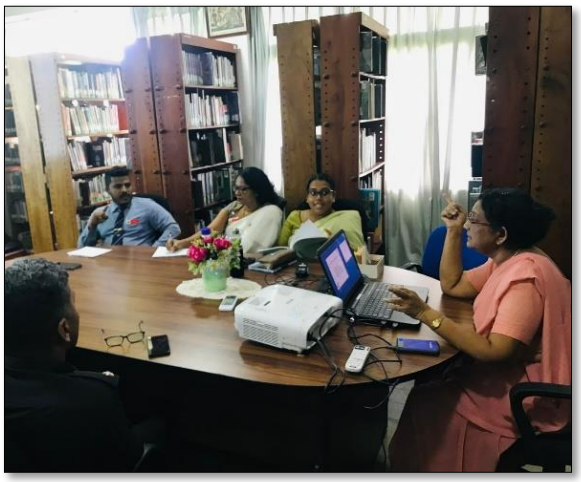
Workshop on "Literature Searching in Electronic Environment"

KDU Library has organized a workshop on "Literature Searching in Electronic Environment" for Intake 38,39 – 3rd and final year students on July 03, 2024, from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. at the main IT lab (FOC Building) Southern Campus - KDU. Mrs. Hiruni Kanchana, Senior Assistant Librarian (FAHS), successfully conducted the workshop.



Workshop on "Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI) Services and the Current Awareness Services (CAS)"

KDU Library network has organized a workshop on "Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI) and Current Awareness Service (CAS)" for library staff on July 17 2024, from 10.00 am -2.00 pm at the Main Library, KDU. Dr. (Mrs) W.Seneviratne (Librarian - KDU) successfully conducted this workshop.



Special Lecture on Managing Academic Profiles on Scientific Social Network

The workshop on "Managing Academic Profiles on Scientific Social Network" organized by the Staff Development Center (SDC) of the BUSL, was successfully held on September 11, 2024 at the Auditorium of the Faculty of Languages and Cultural Studies of the University. The workshop was conducted by the resource person, Dr, S.K. Ilangarathne, the Librarian of the BUSL.

The primary objectives of the workshop were to educate the academic staff on the importance of maintaining an updated and accurate academic profile on scientific networks, to provide practical guidance on creating and managing profiles on popular scientific networks such as ResearchGate, Google Scholar, and ORCID, and to demonstrate best practices for increasing the visibility and impact of academic work through academic social profile management.

National Development / Community Outreach

A motivational speech on reading books

A motivational speech for the scouting students of the Rahula College Matara was held on July 22, 2024. The speech on the value of reading books and library usage was done by Mr. U.A. Lal Pannila (Deputy Librarian) and Mrs. Sakunthala Senevirathna (Senior Assistant Librarian) of the University of Ruhuna.

Library training program for SLLA students

A two-week training program was held from July 29, 2024 to August 09, 2024 at the main library, University of Ruhuna. The participants were diploma in library and information science students from the Sri Lanka Library Association (SLLA). All the library divisions including Acquisition, Cataloging, Classification, and Reader Services, and their functions were introduced. The resource persons were Mr. Nimal Hettiarachchi (Librarian), Mr. U.A. Lal Pannila (Deputy Librarian), Dr. Theja Kuruppu Arachchi (Senior Assistant Librarian) and Mrs. Sakunthala Senevirathna (Senior Assistant Librarian) of the University of Ruhuna.

Educational motivation speech

An educational motivation speech for the Advanced Level Buddhist cultural students of the Matara Educational Zone was held on August 14, 2024 at the Department of Pali and Buddhist University of Ruhuna. The resource person was Mrs. Sakunthala Senevirathna, Senior Assistant Librarian at the University of Ruhuna.

Reading Skill Development Programme

Two reading skill development programs were led by Mr. H.U.C.S. Kumara, Senior Assistant Librarian at the University of Sri Jayewardenepura, for school children. The inaugural event took place in Ashoka's primary school in Rambukkana on July 3, 2024. This programme was attended by about 75 children in Grade 3. The second program took place at Ruwanwella's Central Library on July 26, 2024.

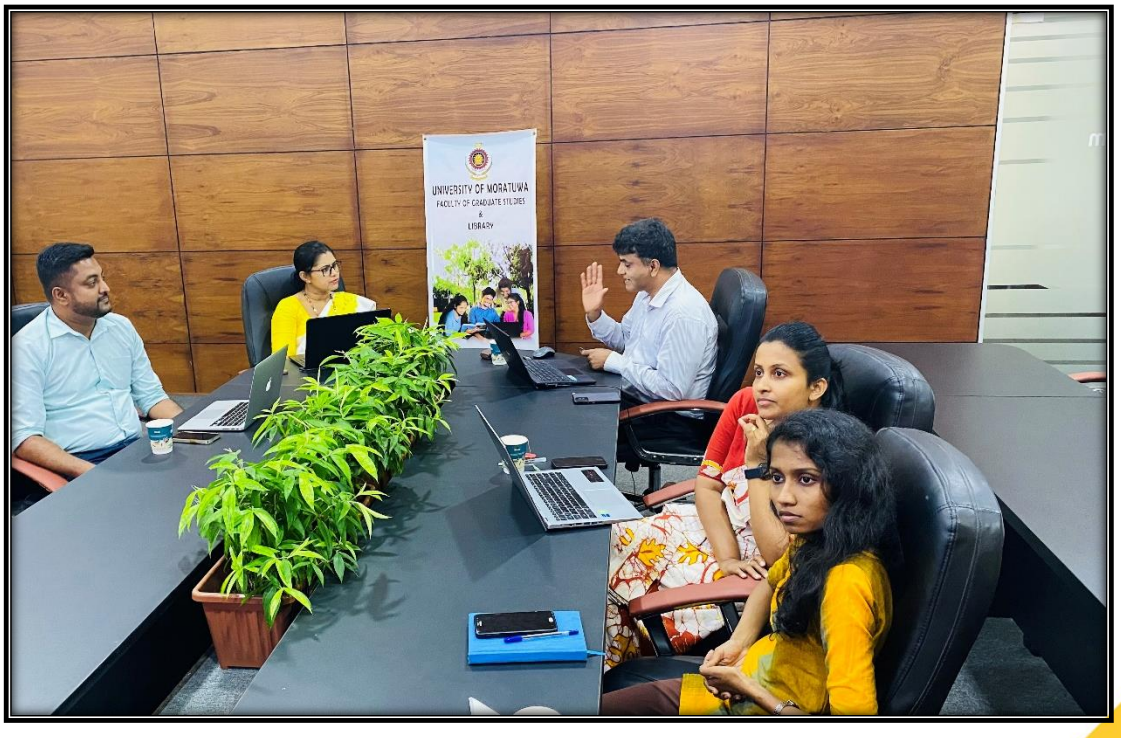
More than forty students from Sri Wickrama School in Ruwanwella, who are in Grades 7, 8, and 9, attended this session at the invitation of the Central Library of Ruwanwella. The teachers-in-charge and officials of the libraries took great interest in attending two programs as guests. The two programs effectively presented the core ideas of reading skill development, provided examples of different reading techniques and approaches, and evaluated a range of assignments and exercises meant to improve reading ability.

Research Contribution

Research Lounge

The 22nd Research Lounge, organized by the Faculty of Graduate Studies with the collaboration of the Library, was held on August 30, 2024 at 2.30 pm in the Board Room of the Faculty of Graduate Studies in hybrid mode. The theme of the Research Lounge was "Bridging Disciplines: Innovating Sustainable Resource Management through Multidisciplinary Collaboration and Team-Based Research". This session explored how bringing together experts from diverse fields can help achieve a broader range of goals, using the mineral industry as a key example.

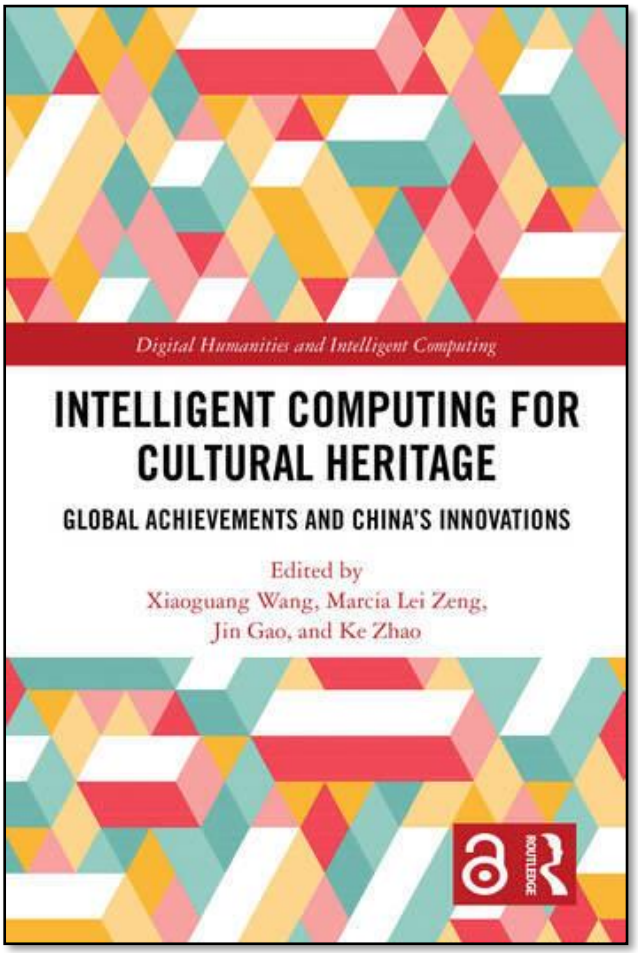
The discussion emphasized the importance of building strong connections between academia and industry, showcasing how these partnerships can lead to more comprehensive and impactful outcomes. The Resource Panelists were Prof. Nalin Ratnayake, Senior Professor in Geology, Department of Earth Resources Engineering, Faculty of Engineering, University of Moratuwa, and Eng. Nimila Dushyantha, Lecturer and Research Scholar, Department of Applied Earth Sciences, Faculty of Applied Sciences, Uva Wellassa University. Dr. Nayani Gunawardhana, Senior Assistant Librarian, University of Moratuwa, moderated the event.



Paper Presentations/ Publications

Book Chapter contribution

Dr. Chiranthi Wijesundara, Senior Assistant Librarian at the University of Colombo, and Professor Shgeo Sugimoto from Japan have collaborated on a book chapter entitled "Data Modeling for Digital Archiving of Intangible and Experiential Entities." The chapter is part of the book "Intelligent Computing for Cultural Heritage," which was published by Routledge in July 2024. The authors' work delves into the complexities of data modelling specifically tailored for the digital archiving of intangible and experiential entities.



This work is pivotal for researchers and practitioners in the field of digital humanities and cultural heritage metadata preservation.

Paper Presentations

Mr. HRN Renushan presented a research paper on "Utilization of institutional repository of Kotelawala Defence University with special reference to undergraduates of the Faculty of Law" on 3rd International Research Conference - 2024 organized by the National Library of Sri Lanka, which was held on September 06, 2024.

NATIONAL LIBRARY & DOCUMENTATION SERVICES BOARD

awards this certificate to

H. R. N. Renushan

for presenting a research paper on

"Utilization of Institutional Repository of Kotelawala Defence University with Special Reference to Undergraduates of the Faculty of Law"

at the

3rd INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH CONFERENCE
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on

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organized by

National Library & Documentation Services Board

on 6th September, 2024

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Ms. UD Hiruni Kanchana, Senior Assistant Librarian attached to the Allied Health Sciences Library has presented a research paper titled "An analysis of user behaviour relating to information query pattern with special reference to Allied Health Sciences Library, Kotelawala Defence University" at the 3rd International research conference of National Library of Sri Lanka on September 06, 2024.

Presentations at Etakam 2024 Theme Seminar

Mr. M. N. Ravikumar, Senior Assistant Librarian at Eastern University, Sri Lanka and Ms. T.M. Seneviretne, Senior Assistant Librarian at University of Moratuwa were invited as speakers at the Symposium on Library & Information Science (Etakam) 2024. The symposium was organized by the Library of the University of Jaffna under the sphere of the Jaffna University International Research Conference (JUICE), held on the 12th and 13th of September 2024 at the University of Jaffna. Mr. Ravikumar delivered a speech on the theme "**Library Automation and Digitization**" and Ms. Seneviretne delivered a speech on the theme "**Community Engagement of Libraries: From Outreach to Citizen Science**". The theme seminar was chaired by Dr. Maheswaran, Librarian, University of Peradeniya.

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