

# Filipiniana Materials and the Philippine eLib: the Philippine Perspective of Digitizing Printed Heritage Materials

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## Abstract

*The Philippine eLib has brought previously inaccessible materials to Filipinos. Printed Filipiniana heritage materials in the Philippines have a higher risk of deterioration due to many factors, some of which are: tropical climate, shortage of properly trained professionals in preservation and conservation, lack of institutional support for their proper care and storage, and general apathy of the public for their dreadful condition and eventual deterioration. On the other hand, because of the growing awareness of the importance of our cultural heritage and the advocacy of concerned individuals and groups in their preservation, Filipinos and Philippine institutions have become supportive in this movement; the Philippine eLib is one such effort to support this venture. The Philippine eLib is the digital resource of five government agencies: The University of the Philippines, the National Library, the Department of Science and Technology, the Department of Agriculture and the Commission of Higher Education. This paper discusses the Philippine eLib and the digitization of Filipiniana Heritage Materials of the University of the Philippines.*

## Introduction

The name *Philippines*, by which this country is known today, was given in 1543 by the Spanish navigator Ruy Lopez de Villalobos, in honor of Prince Philip of Asturias, who later became King Philip II of Spain.

The Philippines is one of the largest island groups in the world, with around 7,100 fragmented islands. It is situated on the eastern rim of the Asiatic Mediterranean, the warm and shallow waters between the Pacific and Indian Oceans and between Australia and the Asian mainland. This strategic position finds the Philippines at the crossroads of international travel lanes.

The Philippines is a tropical country, with a relatively high humidity and little variation in temperature throughout the year. Average humidity is around 77% ± 5%, while temperature range is from 18°C (64°F) during the colder months to 37°C (98°F) during the summer months. There are only two seasons: rainy and dry. Rainfall is scattered throughout the year, but the monsoon season usually begins in May until November. December until May is drier than the other months, but some rainfall during this time is not unusual. Rainfall varies from 900 to 4,000 millimeters (35-160 inches) annually.

The Philippines is a republic served by a President, with three branches of government: Executive, Legislative and Judiciary. The country has survived 350 years of Spanish Rule, 40 years of American Rule and Japanese Occupation during World War II. It has survived a Communist threat in the 1950's, dictatorship and Martial Law from 1972-1981 and two "People Power" revolutions in 1986 and 2001.

## Filipiniana Materials

Filipiniana materials are cultural heritage materials that are unique to the Philippines. It stems from two words: Filipinas for the country and *ana* or *aniana* for "collected items of information, especially anecdotal or bibliographical", e.g. Americana, UPiana, Rizialiana, etc. Simply put, Filipiniana materials are *materials that are for, by and about the Philippines and Filipinos, published in the Philippines, in any Philippine language, regardless of subject and authorship.*

There is a dearth of Filipiniana materials published in the Philippines especially those published before the war. During World War II, the original library of the University of the Philippines (UP) in Manila met the same fate as many buildings in the area at that time. It was bombed, looted and the collection destroyed. Out of the 147,000 volumes, only 3,000 were returned by borrowers after the liberation (Hernandez, 2001). Gabriel Bernardo, the Father of Philippine Librarianship, was instrumental in the rebuilding of the library's collection. Through generous donors, grants, and aid, the library was able to increase the collection again, albeit through a long and harrowing journey.

In order to increase the collection of Filipiniana materials, libraries are therefore encouraged not to restrict themselves to the abovementioned definition of Filipiniana materials, but to examine and adapt these definitions according to institutional objectives.

Aside from relative scarcity, some of the other issues that affect printed Filipiniana heritage materials in the Philippines are its higher risk of deterioration due to the tropical climate, inadequate storage conditions and trained professionals in preservation. The good news is that the Centennial of the Philippine Revolution in 1998 has raised the awareness in the preservation of these heritage materials; there has been an increase in institutional and public support for their preservation and conservation.

## The University of the Philippines

The University of the Philippines is the premiere state university in the country. It was established in 1908 to provide advanced training in the arts and sciences. Throughout its history, UP has played a leading role in responding to the needs of the nation, stressing academic excellence and quality education. This role finds expression in the University's principal functions: instruction, research and community service. It offers a wide variety of courses and has produced renowned experts in various academic fields. Many national leaders graduated from UP. Regarded as the "bastion of academic freedom", it has produced intellectuals whose critical thinking continues to influence all walks of life. It enjoys international recognition for the academic and non-academic achievement of its students and faculty members.

Celebrating its centennial this year, the UP has evolved from a single university in Manila to a “multiversity”: a network of seven autonomous units in ten different campuses in the entire archipelago. Each unit has developed into centers of excellence throughout their existence: UP Diliman (arts and sciences), UP Manila (health sciences), UP Los Baños (agricultural sciences and forestry), UP Visayas (fisheries and aquatic resources), UP Mindanao (environmental management), UP Baguio (arts and sciences) and UP Open University (distance learning). With increasing competence in science and technology, social sciences and interdisciplinary undertakings, UP is pursuing greater international linkages.

### **The University Library ([www.mainlib.upd.edu.ph](http://www.mainlib.upd.edu.ph))**

Each campus has a main library and several college/unit libraries managed by a University Librarian and staffed by professional librarians. UP Diliman, the flagship campus has a main library and 33 college and unit libraries. Its library system is one of the biggest and most comprehensive in the country. The University library is central to the university’s academic thrust, as well as serving as the geographic heart of the university, due to its central location within the campus. The collection is general in nature, as opposed to more specialized collections in the various unit libraries. The library also places great emphasis in the acquisition of Filipiniana materials.

In 2000, it has decided to venture into the digitization of its Filipiniana materials and Special Collections not only to facilitate access to its collection but also as an adjunct to its library preservation policy. The digitization paved the way for the Philippine eLib Project.

### **Filipiniana Special Collections**

The 1998 Philippine Centennial triggered the donation of priceless incunabula and historical records to the University Library by scholars, historians, government officials and writers. As most of these materials were in various stages of deterioration, from warping, brittleness and infestation with fungus and termites for a long time, the library, together with some government agencies with conservation laboratories, had to apply immediate restoration and preservation measures before putting the materials on display to the public in a number of Centennial exhibits.

Because of our turbulent history as a nation, our library collecting policy since the post-war rehabilitation years has given special attention to the Philippine Revolution of 1896, Philippine-American War, World War II, Japanese Occupation, Martial Law, Philippine Revolution of 1986, EDSA I or People power, coup d’etats, impeachments, insurgencies, terrorisms. It focuses on political and economic transitions occurring worldwide, but especially in former and evolving communist countries. Equally important is developing collections that shed light on the political and economic effects of cultural conflicts throughout the world. Our holdings contain a wealth of information on such topics as international affairs, peace negotiations and movements, political ideologies, political upheaval, revolutions, propaganda, underground resistance movements, governments in exile, military history and wartime dislocation and international humanitarian relief. We also have materials on the Korean and Vietnam wars as well as mass movements such as communism and national socialism, labor activities, clandestine operations and opposition movements and international relations.

In format, the Special Collections are rare, unique, out of print, unpublished ephemera or fugitive materials as well as non-textual materials. They serve as an auxiliary to the general collection of the library and offers information on various subjects that are not usually found in the other departments. Most are written either in English or the Philippine languages. There are materials written in Spanish, especially rare books from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century; a small percentage written in Latin, German and other languages.

The Special Collections are classified by format and are as follows: 1) Rare Books, 2) Historical Papers, 3) Vernacular Papers, 4) Theses and Dissertations, 5) Radical Papers, 6) Local History, 7) Harley Harris Bartlett Collection, 8) Harry Whitfield Harnish Collection, 9) Rare Periodicals, 10) Maps, 11) Art works, 12) Biography File, 13) Filipiniana in Foreign Serials, 14) Government Documents, 15) Photograph collection, 16) Poster Collection, 17) Speech File, 18) Archives, especially the UP Presidential Papers and 19) Other Personal Papers. Some of the collections are explained in the subsequent paragraphs.

Filipiniana Rare Books are books and documents published from the 16<sup>th</sup> century to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. This also includes documents and some manuscripts. Books that were not exactly about the Philippines but had some entries regarding the country like the *Hispana Nova* and Ramusio’s *Delle Viaggi et navigationi* series (which contains the first published material on Southeast Asia) are also in the collection.

Historical Papers are mainly composed of the Japanese Occupation Papers, Luther Parker Collections and some materials regarding the Philippine Revolution. The most noted is the Philippine Insurgent Records, which are microfilm reproductions of records confiscated by the United States Army during the Filipino-American War in the years 1896-1901. They were formally turned over to then Philippine President Carlos P. Garcia by virtue of the Smith Act of 3 July 1957.

Vernacular Papers are collection of literary works in the major Philippine Languages. It is divided into six: Tagalog, Ilocano, Pampango, Sugbuanon, Bicolano and Hiligaynon. The bulk of the collection consists of works either in holograph, typescript or photocopies of original manuscripts. Some of them were eventually published.

Harley Harris Bartlett Collection includes studies of ethnographic-historical and linguistic materials on the Philippines and the East Indies, dating from 1760 to 1957. Bartlett was an expert on tropical botany whose specialization is plants from Southeast Asia. Along the way, he wrote observations regarding the ethnographic, linguistic and botanical features of the region. These became the basis for articles and studies he wrote later.

The Luther Parker Collection consists of histories and governments of various provinces in the Philippines, covering towns and barrios with particular emphasis on Pampanga. The materials were gathered by Luther Parker (an American educator and Superintendent of Schools in the Philippines) for over a period of 25 years (ca. 1904-1929).

The Harry Whitfield Harnish Collection consists of more than 500 glass negatives, slide plates, film negatives and prints depicting scenery, peoples and edifices from Northern Luzon to Zamboanga. Taken from 1898 to 1907, these pictures depict significant aspects of Philippine economy and social life. This collection is also available in CD.

The Radical Papers are a collection of documents of student, political and religious organizations advocating political, economic and social changes during the Marcos administration. The bulk of the papers consist of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) propaganda materials. But the collection is actually a hodgepodge of materials, which makes it both valuable and interesting. It includes items ranging from pamphlets of leftist organizations to anti-communist propaganda of former President Marcos. Also included in this collection is the Human Rights Papers of the *Samahan ng Ex-Detainees Laban sa Dentensyon at Para sa Amnestiya (SELDA, Organization of Ex-Detainees Against Dentensyon and for Amnesty)*, which is composed of depositions on torture, detention, disappearance and execution perpetuated during the Martial Law years.

The seventies were marked by waves of mass actions and one week of siege in the UP campus, with the former phenomenon being called the First Quarter Storm and the latter the Diliman Commune. The First Quarter Storm was a series of large student demonstrations which swept Manila throughout the first quarter of 1970; clamoring for non-partisan Constitutional Convention; end to graft and corruption; nationalization of all educational institutions to thwart commercialization and sectarianism; abrogation of all treaties with the United States; dissolution of Special forces; land reform by expropriating big landed estates; promotion of trade and cultural relations with all countries, whatever their political color. The Diliman Commune was an eight-day resistance behind barricades put up by UP student activists at the University's entry and exit points from 1-8 February 1971, which was triggered by oil price hikes.

### **The Philippine eLib (www.elib.gov.ph)**

The eLib is the most comprehensive consortium in the Philippines today. As the first public electronic library in the country, the Philippine eLib is seen to represent the evolving culture and modernity of the Philippines. It is a national information resource-sharing consortium of five different government agencies, namely: the University of the Philippines, the National Library of the Philippines (NLP), the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), Department of Agriculture (DA) and the Department of Science and Technology (DOST). It is a one-of-a-kind collaborative project between one academic institution and four non-academic institutions. A government-funded project approved by the Philippine Legislature through the Committee on Information and Communications Technology in 2003, the resources of the five institutions were pooled together to create the largest and most comprehensive database that contains over a million bibliographic records and more than 11,000 digitized full-text content of Filipiniana cultural heritage materials, indigenous local materials, unique archival materials and other special collections from the different partner institutions.

Primarily, eLib was established to provide Filipinos increased access to information for a wide-range of purposes by providing a portal for Philippine materials like researches, statistical data, theses, dissertations, books, journals, etc. In addition, the eLib's objectives also include enriching local content in digital format for community and global access; building local capabilities and expertise in the creation and generation of digital information sources; providing library and information service network to

academic and government institutions to maximize the use of resources; promoting and accelerating the exchange of knowledge resources among various sectors of society, including regional and international users; providing access to Filipiniana cultural heritage collections and indigenous local materials through archiving and digitized data; and creating another means of preserving Filipiniana cultural heritage collections and indigenous local material by providing surrogate digital sources and safeguarding the original.

Implementation of the eLib was fairly simple since all five institutions have established linkages throughout the country: NLP has 150 provincial and city libraries, the UP has 7 constituent libraries comprising 75 college and research libraries, the DOST and DA have offices in all regions and have existing linkages with various sectors and CHED is the governing body for institutions of higher learning.

It has six components: network, collection build-up, portal system, digitization, business development and training.

The project integrates in a single portal all the library and information collections of the participating agencies utilizing the existing infrastructures of the DOST, the PREGINET (Philippine Research, Education and Government Information Network) and the VSAT (Very Small Aperture Terminal) of the National Information Network (NIN) of DA. It is envisioned that by integrating these collections, a critical mass of library and information resources would be made available to the Filipino people from all walks of life thus leveraging access to these information resources for their lifelong learning, research purposes, and for various purposes. Researches anywhere in the archipelago could access the vast literature on their subject of study in any Internet café or Philippine eLib kiosk in their vicinity or even at the comforts of their homes, as long as they have Internet facilities. In other words, a student from the far flung area of the country would have access to the same information as his counterparts in Manila. Likewise, a farmer in the remotest *barangay* (village) would have access to the same online resources which could otherwise be available only to citizens in the city.

The eLib also offers the following features: current awareness service; selective dissemination of information; full text downloading; literature searches; document delivery; e-Journal subscription; mailing list; and rapid responsive and knowledgeable customer support.

Content-wise, the five institutions contributed materials that are unique to each. The National Library and the UP have plenty of cultural heritage materials; the DOST and the DA have local studies that have scientific research value; while the CHED also has studies and statistics regarding higher education.

Uploaded in the database are the digitized resources of the five agencies, e.g. books, pamphlets and serials, theses and dissertations, rare books, historical maps, local history materials, photographs, researches and selected manuscripts, publications of the five agencies, the Official Gazette issues (from 1902-present, compilation of issuances/laws/executive orders from national government and its instrumentalities), musical compositions, works of art, maps, subject bibliographies and their respective special collections:

1. UP – Index to Philippine Periodicals covering 500 periodical titles from 1946 to date; Philippine Index Medicus, an index

to Philippine journals on medicine, health and pharmacology; Book Review and a Biography Index.

2. NLP – Local History Index covering the 16 regions of the archipelago; Index to Rizaliana, materials on or about the National Hero, Dr. Jose Rizal; and Index to Historical Maps.
3. DOST – Filipino Scientists Database; Biotechnology Resources, Micro-Small-Medium Enterprise Resources, *Tekno-Tulong* (Techno-Help), are materials/manuals/how-tos used by extension specialists/trainers in the field for farmers, fisher-folk and other cottage industry workers; and the Index to Philippine Journal of Science.
4. DA – Index to DA publications e.g. *Ang Magsasakang Pinoy* (The Filipino Farmer); manuals and researches done by their specialists.
5. CHED – theses and dissertations submitted by tertiary-level institutions; surveys conducted by the commission on Philippine education.

Preservation copies of the resources uploaded in the database are both in microfilm and digitized copies in DVDs, housed in controlled environments at the University of the Philippines Library and the National Library of the Philippines. A data center for the project is hosted by the NLP and a replica data center at the UP Library in Diliman Campus.

Original copies of the UP resources, including the Special Collections are also stored in controlled environments at the University Archives and Records Depository and in a special collections room of the University Library.

Access to these digitized resources is free for all members of partner institutions and their constituent units. eLib access points, or computer kiosks were distributed to partner institutions and their constituent units in the different parts of the country.

For offsite access, prepaid (membership) cards are available in various denominations. Individual membership may be accepted upon payment of research fees, on a monthly, semi-annual and annual basis.

Bibliographic search results may be downloaded, printed or sent via email. Access to a full-text or a portion of the text of any materials searched may be made available subject to: a) payment of assessed fees stipulated and in accordance with the provision of the copyright law on use; b) fair use principle (downloading or printing text for criticism, comment, news reporting, teaching, including multiple copies for classroom use, scholarship, research and similar purposes is not an infringement of copyright).

Our usage statistics show that from January to December 2007, a total of 85,708 visits from 139 countries/territories were recorded. For visitors outside the country, the United States has the most number of visits (2,099), followed by Saudi Arabia, Japan, Canada, India, United Kingdom, Singapore and Australia. Visits from the Philippines reflect that the eLib is fulfilling its objectives of serving the needs of its citizens.

Currently, the eLib is focusing on the enhancement of its content and site to facilitate better information retrieval and access. It is also looking into increasing its institutional membership. It continues to evaluate which materials are to be digitized, and hopes to be self-sufficient (without government subsidy) in the near future.

## Conclusion

The Philippine e-Lib has demonstrated a successful integration of current libraries and information sources into a single network system creating a ‘critical mass’ for these resources to rationalize and standardize the services accessible by its intended clientele. The benefits derived were decreased over-all cost through cooperative development and enhancement and sharing of resources. At the access points, integrating the services of the network participants provide an expanded set of choices for the intended clientele. Another benefit is accelerated delivery of services to the citizenry. In essence, the eLib provides increased capacity of the Filipino citizens to make systematic use of information for a wide range of purposes.

The Philippine eLib is a project that was meant to disseminate information to as many Filipino citizens as possible. Unexpectedly, by implementing eLib, we also realized two other concerns: acquisition of more information sources in any format, and most importantly, the preservation and conservation of these heritage materials.

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