

VIETNAMESE LIBRARY ON THE WAY TO INTEGRATE

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According to V.V. Skovortxov, a Russian library science expert, the library science of the world has developed in five stages. The fourth stage was in 20th century – the library science of the world has divided into two systems: Socialism Library Science towards theory and Capitalism Library Science towards practice. Today is in the fifth stage which has associated in building the union science connected closely with information technology.

Vietnamese library, under the influence of the former Soviet Union, used to develop towards Socialism Library Science. Over the last decade, the old value system has formed the inertia which stood in the way of innovation. This has manifested in the library and information science curriculum of the Vietnamese library schools.

Fortunately, in 1998 in the Southern part of Vietnam, the Library Club was formed to group most of Southern academic libraries. Together, these Southern libraries have developed towards standardization of their services under the motto “STANDARDIZATION – INTEGRATION – DEVELOPMENT”. With time, the Library Club activities have exerted a great influence on the development of libraries of the whole country.

The Library Club, consisting of 162 librarian members, has provided the following professional activities on a regular basis:

- Seminars and round-tables meetings in order to popularize the model of the modern library (the Graduate Library of Ho Chi Minh City University) and to encourage building and improving libraries towards Standardization-Integration;
- Hundreds of workshops on the standardization of library services since 1998, which trained thousands of library workers (including librarians).

Thanks to all these activities, the Library Club has helped Southern academic libraries in their efforts to achieve innovation, in particular in their application of internationally-recognized bibliographic standards, such as AACR2, DDC, LCSH, MARC 21, etc. Moreover, the Library Club activities led to the change in the thoughts of the colleagues in the Northern part of Vietnam, and made them more susceptible on Standardization of library services. Finally, the Library Club movement reached out to all Vietnamese librarians.

In other words, the Library Club has created the new value system, which the library schools had failed to create for the Vietnamese library community.

Vietnamese libraries are now more and more highly appreciated. Most libraries have tried to automate and computerize their activities and services. Some have carried out big projects in order to build the large buildings. However, the real situation is:

- The libraries have not developed synchronously. Naturally, they are better in the South because of the active work of former Library Club and the present VILASAL;
- Most buildings are large but not the library buildings;
- Some buildings are library buildings but lacking good librarians to manage them;
- Most of library management softwares are expensive but not standardized; [etc.]

Vietnam was in need of library professionals who know how to manage and organize library activities in order to make the buildings become the study and knowledge centers but the Vietnamese library schools only met the unchanged needs of the old days. Their academic programs did not meet the needs of building modern libraries with the absolute information technology application. Basically, they failed to change of vision of Vietnamese librarians in the present information age. They also failed to shape the necessary new technology thinking in their students' mind as well.

Ten years after the birth of the Library Club, the librarians, who founded the Library Club, assisted the Faculty of Library and Information Science of Saigon University in designing an absolutely innovative academic library and information program. This Library and Information Science curriculum, which not

only met but also changed the needs of the Vietnamese library community, was already approved by the Ministry of Education and Training in 2007.

Being free from any pressure of the old value system, this academic program is currently based on the following fundamentals:

- Library and Information Science should be practical in:
 - o Curriculum;
 - o Textbooks;
 - o Teaching method.
- Standardization of library activities and services
- Librarianship and Information Technology are closely associated

This curriculum in Library and Information Science for Saigon University is being carried out successfully. More exactly, this will be a turning-point not only in the library and information science education but also in the development of Vietnamese libraries towards Integration.

To move the Vietnamese library community towards Integration successfully, we have to innovate the library and information science education as fast as we can. On February 20th, 2009, an international conference on "*The Standardization of Library and Information Science Educating*," attracting 200 international and Vietnamese librarians, was held at Saigon University. The innovative Library and Information Science curriculum of Saigon University was officially introduced in a big way to the librarians present at the conference.

There was such a Library Club in Viet Nam!