



Preserving and Reconstructing Hong Kong's Historical Past: Experiences and Reflections of the **HONG KONG MEMORY PROJECT**

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The Hong Kong Memory Project



- Build a digital repository for the collection, conservation, presentation and dissemination of Hong Kong's historical and cultural heritage
- Collect from different sources materials in textual, graphic, audio-visual forms and present on the web to readers in an interactive and user-friendly way
- Provide free and open access to the general public, students, teachers, and scholars, in Hong Kong and other parts of the world

Agenda

- Hong Kong in brief
- Key players
- Background
- Progress
- Reflections
- What to do next



Hong Kong in Brief



- Situated at the south-eastern tip of China
- A total area of 1,104 square kilometres, comprising Hong Kong Island, Kowloon Peninsular and the New Territories
- A population of about 7 million
- Both Chinese and English are official languages

A Place When East Meets West

- A Special Administrative Region (SAR) of the People's Republic of China on 1 July 1997, after a century and a half of British administration
- Described as a 'barren rock with hardly a house upon it' some 150 years ago
- Hong Kong is now a financial, trading and business centre, and a city of towering buildings



Key Players – The HKSAR Government



- Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD), the government department responsible for enriching life of Hong Kong people by providing quality leisure and cultural services
- It operates the Hong Kong Public Libraries (HKPL) – a network of 76 libraries, 18 museums, civic centres, parks, performing venues, etc.

Hong Kong Jockey Club (HKJC)

- One of the largest racing organizations in the world
- It operates on a not-for-profit business model whereby its surplus goes to charity
- Over the past decade, it has donated an average of HK\$1 billion every year to charities and community projects



Centre of Asian Studies (CAS), HKU



- A research facility established in 1967 to promote interdisciplinary research on Asian topics within the University and to serve as focal point of contact for Asian studies scholars around the world
- Hong Kong Culture and Society programme is one of the three flagship programmes of the Centre

The University of Hong Kong Libraries (HKUL)

- Established in 1912 to provide teaching and research support collections and services to the university community
- Its collection of Hong Kong materials, particularly printed ones, is the largest in Hong Kong
- Partnered with CAS on a number of Hong Kong-related projects





And... researchers, content holders,
members of the general public ...

Background

- Initiated by Dr Patrick Ho, former Secretary for Home Affairs, in 2002
- A response to the “Memory of the World” programme, which was launched by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 1992 to preserve historical records through digitization
- He asked LCSD to work on the “Hong Kong Memory (HKM)” Project in mid-2004



Feasibility Study



- LCSD started with setting up a project team
- Initiated a feasibility study and after a tendering exercise, awarded the contract to a technology company (IT Consultant)
- The IT Consultant took up the technical part
- It also commissioned two researchers from CAS to look into the content infrastructure
- Both IT and content reports submitted by IT Consultant to LCSD in mid-2005

Funding

- HKSAR Government applied funding from HKJC to launch the project in 2005
- HKJC was supportive to the project
- Content development should carry more 'weight'



HKU Team



- CAS approached HKUL to submit a joint proposal to HKJC for creating the HKM website: CAS handling content development and HKUL providing IT support
- Submitted a funding proposal of HK\$53 million (US\$6.8 million) in early 2006
- In August 2006, HKJC approved funding of up to HK\$80 million (US\$10 million) for supporting the HKM Project for the first 5 years

A Joint Project

- HKM is a joint project between HKJC and LCSD
- The HKU team participates in the project, responsible for content development and system setup of the digital repository for the first five years
- HKM Project was listed an item in the 2006/7 Policy Agenda of the HKSAR Government





The Project: Nov 2006 -

Create a Management Framework

- Set up a Company, LCSD or HKU?
- Joint Meeting on the Hong Kong Memory Project, attended by representatives from LCSD, HKJC, CAS and HKUL, coordinated by LCSD
- A venue where issues related to the project are reported, discussed and sometimes agreed upon
- Met five times since 2007



Recruit and Retain a Project Team

- Content development – Project Consultant, Project Coordinator, Research Officer, Assistant Research Officer, Research Assistant, and Designer
- IT setup – Systems Coordinator, IT Officer, Programmer
- 12 full-time staff are now working on the project



Synergy between Librarians and Researchers



- Partnership and understanding amongst team members with different expertise
- CAS responsible for daily administration of the HKM Project - subject to staffing and financial regulations of HKU
- Consult with HKJC on key issues
- Submit quarterly report to HKJC

Engage and Work with Collaborators to Create Contents



- Government departments, e.g., Public Records Office, museums
- Libraries
- Companies, etc. e.g., Swire, Celestial Pictures
- Chambers of Commerce
- Individual content holders
- Researchers

Devise a Mechanism for Proposal Submission and Approval

- Drew up funding guidelines to help prepare proposal and budget
- Assessment process and criteria
- Proposal assessment form with 7 assessment criteria for all funding proposals, regardless of funding sought
- Evaluation and approval by a 6-member evaluation committee



Formulate Copyright Guidelines

- Secured the service of a legal consultant, who is a professor in computer science and a barrister in intellectual property
- Compiled a set of copyright guidelines based on issues raised by project team members
- Designed copyright license agreement
- Provided training to team members
- Attended meetings related to copyright issues



Create a Mock-up HKM Website and Conduct Usability Tests

- Used the Greenstone software to manage contents before acquiring and setting up the HKM platform
- Created a mock-up website earlier this year with the contents created so far
- Conducted usability tests to gauge feedback of teachers and students in May
- Will create another mock-up website early next year



Network with Other Memory Projects



- American Memory (LC)
- Beijing Memory (Capital Library, China)
- Taiwan Memory (National Central Library, Taiwan)
- Macau Memory (Macau Foundation)

Start the HKM Web Portal System Tendering Process

- Issued a tender for the HKM hardware and software in June 2009
- Formed a 5-member tender evaluation committee
- Drew up tender evaluation criteria/weighting
- Product demonstrations completed in mid-October
- And the winner is ...





Reflections:

(views of a librarian and a member)

A Digital Library Project

- HKM is not my first digital library project
- This is not just another digital library project:
 - A project that needs to start from scratch
 - A project that matters to the community at large
 - A project that needs to transfer ownership
 - A project that involves many players and stakeholders



What's More:



- A multi-million digital library project (money isn't everything?)
- A HK government digital library project (does this make our life easier?)
- A 5-year digital library project (time flies!)
- ...

Two More Years To Go, We Need To:

- Set up IT infrastructure and proceed to creating the website
- Populate the website with more contents
- Enlist the participation of more collaborators
- Raise the visibility of HKM Project
- Engage the public
- Be prepared for criticisms and complaints ...





The plan is to hand over the HKM website (together with documentations, hardware, etc.) to HKJC/LCSD on or before Oct 2011



Thank you!