

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

HAB330

(Question Serial No. 4524)

Head: (95) Leisure and Cultural Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified

Programme: (5) Public Libraries

Controlling Officer: Director of Leisure and Cultural Services (Vincent LIU)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Home Affairs

Question:

Regarding e-books, please provide this Committee with the following information for each of the past 3 years: (1) the number and growth rate of books; (2) the usage rate and number of users as well as the respective growth rates; (3) actions to be taken by the Department to step up promotion and increase the usage rates; and (4) a breakdown of the actual expenditures and the amounts involved, as well as the estimated expenditures for 2020-21.

Asked by: Hon KWOK Ka-ki (LegCo internal reference no.: 105)

Reply:

- (1) As at 31 December 2019, the Hong Kong Public Libraries (HKPL) had acquired or subscribed to 11 e-book collections with about 338 000 items. The total number of titles and growth rate of e-book collections in the past 3 years are at Annex I.
- (2) Unlike physical library materials, e-book collections are hosted by service providers and licensed for library use at service providers' platforms through an annual subscription or a perpetual licence. Different service providers use different statistical elements, such as the number of e-books consulted, searches, tracks played, browses by category, to present the usage of their databases. The usage and growth rate of e-book collections in the past 3 years are at Annex II.

Regarding the number of users, registered borrowers of the HKPL can enjoy one-stop access to all e-book collections through the HKPL website. The number and growth rate of registered borrowers of the HKPL in the past 3 years are tabulated below:

Year	2017 (million)	2018 (million)	2019 (million)
Number of Registered Borrowers	4.532	4.609	4.682
Growth Rate	+1.8% ^(Note)	+1.7%	+1.6%

Note

The number of registered borrowers in 2016 was 4.454 million.

- (3) The HKPL is committed to the promotion of e-book collections to various sectors of the community by regularly organising educational and extension activities, library visits by schools/organisations, briefing sessions on electronic resources, “School Culture Day”, and through customer liaison groups, teacher liaison groups as well as paying visits to schools/community groups/organisations. The HKPL has also launched Online Registration for Borrowers and Take a Break - eReading Corner to facilitate readers’ access to e-book collections anytime and anywhere. In addition, the HKPL participated in the Hong Kong Book Fair and the Learning and Teaching Expo to promote its e-resources to members of the public and teachers. The HKPL will produce demonstration videos with a view to stepping up publicity on the internet and social media in encouraging members of the public to access e-books.
- (4) The expenditures and estimates on the acquisition and subscription of e-book collections from 2017-18 to 2020-21 are provided at Annex III.

**Hong Kong Public Libraries
Total Number of Titles of e-Book Collections (2017 to 2019)**

Item	Title of e-Book Collections	Total Number of Titles ⁽¹⁾		
		2017	2018	2019
<i>Chinese e-Book Databases</i>				
1	HyRead ebook	6 699	9 598	12 121
2	SUEP e-Book (launched in April 2017)	2 016	3 573	4 231
3	Apabi Chinese eBooks	95 200	98 560	104 000
4	FunPark (launched in April 2018)	-	314	373
5	Vista E-Book in Traditional Chinese	467	467	467
<i>English e-Book Databases</i>				
6	ProQuest Ebook Central ⁽²⁾	149 270	156 615	177 318
7	eBooks on EBSCO <i>host</i>	12 993	17 960	22 301
8	OverDrive eBooks (launched in February 2019)	-	-	4 987
9	Naxos Spoken Word Library (Audio book)	6 134	6 932	11 764
10-11	Safari Books Online ⁽³⁾	524	523	522
Total		273 303	294 542	338 084
Growth Rate		+12.1% ⁽⁴⁾	+7.8%	+14.8%

Notes

- (1) The e-book collections are hosted by service providers and licensed for library use at service providers' platforms through an annual subscription or a perpetual licence.
- (2) Formerly known as ebrary Academic Complete.
- (3) Including Safari Business Books Online and Safari Tech Books Online.
- (4) The number of titles in 2016 was 243 755.

Hong Kong Public Libraries
Usage of e-Book Collections (2017 to 2019)

Different service providers have used different statistical elements, such as the number of e-books consulted, searches, tracks played, browses by category to present the usage of their databases. The usage statistics of e-book collections of the Hong Kong Public Libraries provided by individual e-book database service providers from 2017 to 2019 are tabulated below.

Item	Title of e-Book Collections ⁽¹⁾	Statistical Elements Adopted	Use Count		
			2017	2018	2019
<i>Collections adopting similar statistical elements based on the number of e-books consulted</i>					
1	HyRead ebook	online reading, borrowing and trial	244 885	353 543	600 520
2	SUEP e-Book (launched in April 2017)	online reading, borrowing and trial	47 803	116 279	211 572
3	Apabi Chinese eBooks	online reading and borrowing	64 071	56 716	54 572
4	FunPark (launched in April 2018)	online reading	-	25 149	30 350
5	ProQuest Ebook Central ⁽²⁾	online reading and download	28 081	30 998	23 135
6	eBooks on EBSCOhost	online reading and download	26 277	26 634	24 899
7	OverDrive eBooks (launched in February 2019)	borrowing	-	-	18 962
Sub-total			411 117	609 319	964 010
Growth Rate			91.6% ⁽⁴⁾	48.2%	58.2%
<i>Collections adopting other statistical elements</i>					
8	Naxos Spoken Word Library (Audio book)	tracks played	26 134	26 315	28 949
9	Vista E-Book in Traditional Chinese	browses by category	17 771	13 015	11 821
10-11	Safari Books Online ⁽³⁾	searches	9 871	8 971	7 502

Notes

- (1) HyRead ebook, SUEP e-Book, Apabi Chinese eBooks, Funpark and Vista E-Book in Traditional Chinese are Chinese e-book databases whereas ProQuest Ebook Central, eBooks on EBSCOhost, OverDrive eBooks, Naxos Spoken Word Library and Safari Books Online are English e-book databases.
- (2) Formerly known as ebrary Academic Complete.
- (3) Including Safari Business Books Online and Safari Tech Books Online.
- (4) The use count for collections adopting similar statistical elements in 2016 was 214 590.

**Hong Kong Public Libraries
Expenditures and Estimates on the Acquisition and Subscription of
e-Book Collections (2017-18 to 2020-21)**

Item	Title of e-Book Collections	Expenditure (\$ million)			
		2017-18	2018-19	2019-20 (Estimate)	2020-21 (Estimate)
Chinese e-Book Databases					
1	HyRead ebook	1.42	2.08 ⁽⁴⁾	1.30	1.30
2	SUEP e-Book (launched in April 2017)	0.52	0.27	0.47	0.50
3	Apabi Chinese eBooks	0.29	0.40	0.67	0.61
4	FunPark (launched in April 2018)	0.08	0.08	0.18	0.22
5	Vista E-Book in Traditional Chinese	-(3)	0.03	0.03	0.03
English e-Book Databases					
6	ProQuest Ebook Central ⁽¹⁾	0.19	0.22	0.43	0.46
7	eBooks on EBSCOhost	1.40	1.40	1.38	1.40
8	OverDrive eBooks (launched in February 2019)	-	1.35	1.29	1.40
9	Naxos Spoken Word Library (Audio book)	-(3)	0.04	0.04	0.04
10-11	Safari Books Online ⁽²⁾	0.12	0.19	0.27	0.28
Total		4.02 [Chinese: 2.31 English: 1.71]	6.06 [Chinese: 2.86 English: 3.20]	6.06 [Chinese: 2.65 English: 3.41]	6.24 [Chinese: 2.66 English: 3.58]

Notes

- (1) Formerly known as ebrary Academic Complete.
- (2) Including Safari Business Books Online and Safari Tech Books Online.
- (3) Payment for the service period is expended in the 2018-19 financial year due to payment in arrears.
- (4) Including the ad hoc expense of \$0.68 million for an e-book publicity programme.