

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**HAB186**

**(Question Serial No. 0454)**

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:

It is mentioned in the Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2021–22 under Programme (5), that the Department will continue to enrich library e-resources including e-book. In this regard, please advise this Committee:

1. the number and growth rate of e-books in the past 5 years;
2. the usage rate and number of users as well as the respective growth rates of e-books;
3. will the Department consider building up an integrated and user-friendly system to cover all collection, so as to efficiently manage different formats of e-books, also encouraging the members of public to read e-books.

Asked by: Hon SHEK Lai-him, Abraham (LegCo internal reference no.: 57)

Reply:

1. The total number of titles and growth rate of e-book collections of the Hong Kong Public Libraries (HKPL) in the past 5 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 5 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 5 years are tabulated below:

<b>Year</b>	<b>2016 (million)</b>	<b>2017 (million)</b>	<b>2018 (million)</b>	<b>2019 (million)</b>	<b>2020 (million)</b>
<b>Cumulative Number of Registered Borrowers</b>	4.454	4.532	4.609	4.682	4.709
<b>Growth Rate</b>	+1.9% <sup>(Note)</sup>	+1.8%	+1.7%	+1.6%	+0.6%

Note: The number of registered borrowers in 2015 was 4.372 million.

3. The Leisure and Cultural Services Department is planning the development of a new Smart Library System, targeting the core functions to launch in 2023. The new system aims to enrich e-reading experience and arouse public interest in reading e-books by a single platform of unified, consistent and easy-to-use interface for using and reading various collections and different formats of e-books on mobile devices or smart phones.

**Hong Kong Public Libraries  
Total Number of Titles of e-Book Collections (2016 to 2020)**

Item	Title of e-Book Collections	Total Number of Titles <sup>(1)</sup>				
		2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
<b><i>Chinese e-Book Databases</i></b>						
1	HyRead ebook (launched in June 2016)	3 010	6 699	9 598	12 121	14 646
2	SUEP e-Book (launched in April 2017)	-	2 016	3 573	4 231	5 406
3	Apabi Chinese eBooks	91 900	95 200	98 560	104 000	108 263
4	FunPark (launched in April 2018)	-	-	314	373	444
5	Vista E-Book in Traditional Chinese	430	467	467	467	470
<b><i>English e-Book Databases</i></b>						
6	ProQuest Ebook Central <sup>(2)</sup>	138 800	149 270	156 615	177 318	197 054
7	eBooks on EBSCOhost	7 600	12 993	17 960	22 301	26 439
8	OverDrive eBooks (launched in February 2019)	-	-	-	4 987	11 094
9	Naxos Spoken Word Library (Audio book)	1 492	6 134	6 932	11 764	13 314
10-11	Safari Books Online <sup>(3)</sup>	523	524	523	522	1 005
<b>Total</b>		243 755	273 303	294 542	338 084	378 135
<b>Growth Rate</b>		+9.9% <sup>(4)</sup>	+12.1%	+7.8%	+14.8%	+11.8%

**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 2015 was 221 763.

**Hong Kong Public Libraries  
Usage of e-Book Collections (2016 to 2020)**

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 2016 to 2020 are tabulated below.

Item	Title of e-Book Collections <sup>(1)</sup>	Statistical Elements Adopted	Use Count				
			2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
<i>Collections adopting similar statistical elements based on the number of e-books consulted</i>							
1	HyRead ebook (launched in June 2016)	online reading, borrowing and trial	116 649	244 885	353 543	600 520	2 009 714
2	SUEP e-Book (launched in April 2017)	online reading, borrowing and trial	-	47 803	116 279	211 572	961 564
3	Apabi Chinese eBooks	online reading and borrowing	59 578	64 071	56 716	54 572	118 916
4	FunPark (launched in April 2018)	online reading	-	-	25 149	30 350	136 640
5	ProQuest Ebook Central <sup>(2)</sup>	online reading and download	21 178	28 081	30 998	23 135	35 571
6	eBooks on EBSCOhost	online reading and download	17 185	26 277	26 634	24 899	52 668
7	OverDrive eBooks (launched in February 2019)	borrowing	-	-	-	18 962	83 231
<b>Sub-total</b>			214 590	411 117	609 319	964 010	3 398 304
<b>Growth Rate</b>			+97.8% <sup>(3)</sup>	+91.6%	+48.2%	+58.2%	+252.5%

Item	Title of e-Book Collections <sup>(1)</sup>	Statistical Elements Adopted	Use Count				
			2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
<i>Collections adopting other statistical elements</i>							
8	Naxos Spoken Word Library (Audio book)	tracks played	41 793	26 134	26 315	28 949	42 976
9	Vista E-Book in Traditional Chinese	browses by category	22 403	17 771	13 015	11 821	27 356
10-11	Safari Books Online <sup>(4)</sup>	searches	10 084	9 871	8 971	7 502	11 727

#### 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) The use count for collections adopting similar statistical elements in 2015 was 108 480.
- (4) Including Safari Business Books Online and Safari Tech Books Online.

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