

## Marketing of Library and Information Services in University Libraries: A Case Study of University of Malaya Central Library, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Siti Juryiah MOHD KHALID  
University of Malaya

**Abstract:** Marketing and promotion play a very vital role in creating awareness for library and information products and services. This topic discusses the importance of marketing and promotion in academic libraries with particular reference to Central Library, University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur. University libraries are established to provide information resources and services in order to support the purpose of the university. There are two research questions of the study. What are the types of information resources that are available in the Central Library? and the other one is what are the marketing strategies used by the Central Library. The objectives of the study are to identify the available information resources and services in the Central Library and to unveil the strategies used by Central Library in marketing its resources and services. The reports included marketing strategies employed by Central Library in promoting and attracting more library clientele as well as keeping them for long in the library. The paper concludes by advising librarians to promote their libraries through exhibitions and displays, publicity and public relations.

**Keywords:** Marketing, Education, Promotion, University libraries, Information services, Library services

### Introduction

Libraries are the knowledge and information foundation of any nation. A library collects, organizes and makes information resources accessible to all kinds of users regardless of their ages, background and interests. Islam (2004) defined library as a learned institution equipped with treasures of knowledge, maintained organized and managed by trained personnel to educate the children, men and women continuously and assist in their self improvement through an effective and prompt dissemination of information.

Libraries and information centers of all types and sizes are faced with the need to market. Librarians and information professionals must learn to effectively market and advertise their services. Same as University of Malaya Library, who are very concerned about customer satisfaction with the services and facilities offered by the library. Marketing is essential to ensure customers aware about the services and facilities offered by the library.

According to Odine (2011) the effectiveness and efficiency of services provided by an academic library are mainly determined by library users. Aina (2004) recognizes this fact when he stated that the user is very critical in the practice of librarianship. No library can exist without the patrons. The entire human and material resources in a library are put in place at considerable expense for the overall purpose of providing effective services to the library users. On its part the library has a responsibility to ensure that its resources and services are used (Edoka, 2000). The user is regarded as the most logical source to determine whether the library is playing its role satisfactorily or not. The mission statement of any academic library should be the provision of excellent service to its users. In higher institution libraries there are various categories of library patrons. They are undergraduates, postgraduates, lecturers, researchers, external users from all walks of life and many professions.

**University of Malaya Library is a complex system comprising the following:**

**Central Library**

**Branch libraries**

- Za'ba Memorial Library
- Tan Sri Professor Ahmad Ibrahim Law Library
- T.J. Danaraj Medical Library

Both the Law and Medical Libraries serve the respective faculties. The Za'ba Memorial Library focuses on the preservation and conservation of Malaysiana items.

**The rest of the faculties are served by a network of special and satellite libraries**

- Built Environment
- Engineering
- Education
- The Centre for Foundation Studies in Science
- Islamic Studies
- Islamic Studies @ Nilam Puri
- Malay Studies
- East Asian Studies
- Indian Studies
- Language & Linguistics
- Dentistry
- Medical @ Klang
- Museum of Asian Art
- UM Art Gallery

**Central Library**

Established in 1959, the Central Library located in the middle of the University Campus. It is a four storey building with a floor space of 17,372 square meters. The University of Malaya Library encompasses a network of libraries and through this network the Library is able to provide comprehensive services and facilities using the discipline-based approach. The provision of facilities and services to the campus community is clearly stated in the three Library Quality Management Procedures, namely UM-PT08-PK01: Library Collection; Development; UM-PT08-PK02 : Library Client Services and UM-PT08-PK03 : Management of Education & Training. Through the Library's home page at <https://umlib.um.edu.my>, one is able to explore the multitude of services as well as the various facilities available to the users. The collection within the Library has been developed in line with the teaching, learning and research needs of the University. The Library now holds over 2.1 million items in various formats. In addition to that the Library provides access to more than 44 online databases comprising of more than 46,000 e-journal titles and more than 150,000 e-book titles. UM Library has over 184,884 registered users which can be sub-divided into four categories: academics and non-academic staff, post-graduate students, undergraduate students, research scholars, and other users from different universities/institutions who also use the library's collections.

The UM Library has fifty (54) professional staff and over one hundred fifty (150) support staff (comprising of clerical, administrative and para-professionals) deployed all over the branches. UM Library provides access to both print and electronic informational and instructional resources to strengthen the University's performance of its teaching, learning research, and community by:

- Transforming the University of Malaya Library into a world ranked library, consistent with UM's aspiration for world ranking.
- Supporting of the University of Malaya's global mission, the Library provides professional expertise, diverse information resources, and knowledge-based services for the advancement of its quality research, teaching and learning.

## Statement of the Problem

The existence of libraries is being challenged. This is because access to information is now very fast and relies on technology. Users now prefer to turn to the internet to source for information than coming to the libraries. Kaur (2007) reported that library resources are so expensive, but often remain underutilized resulting in wastage of money, time, energy and space. Also, said that “University libraries invest huge amount of money on collection development, processing and storage of information resources” and to ensure maximum utilization of these resources, there is the need for librarians to embark on publicity or sensitization of clientele so as to promote the use of their services. Carrington (2005) also observed that one of the problems or deficiencies faced by library is that of improper dissemination of library services to the target audience and that is one of the reasons for the low usage of library materials and facilities. In view of the above, it is observed that in recent time, UM Library is experiencing loan service declining. It is worrying as the library spent a substantial amount of budget in purchasing and acquiring library materials annually (Zanaria, 2019).

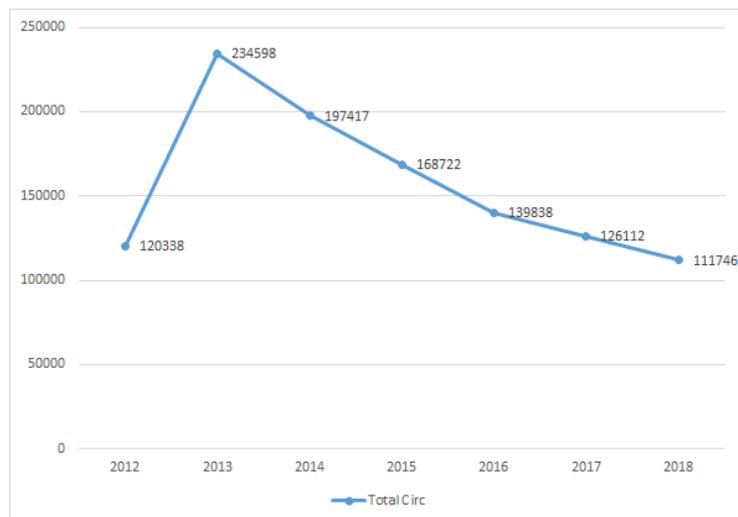


Figure 1. Analysis of borrowing trend (2012 - 2018) from directors station

## Research Questions

What are the types of information resources that are available in Central Library?  
What are the marketing strategies used by Central Library

## Objectives of the Study

To identify the available information resources and services in Central Library  
To unveil the strategies used by Central Library in marketing its resources and services.

## Significance of the Research

The findings will be significant to academic institutions administration in the area of policy formulation by providing a road map on the information resources and services to be provided to users in order to satisfy their information needs. It is hoped that that it will create awareness to the library committee as regards the strategies to enhance effective marketing of library services to users. Thus the study provides a comprehensive background and current scenario of marketing strategies used in University of Malaya Library.

## Library and information services in Central Library

University libraries are established to provide information resources and services in order to support the purpose of the university. Information services encompass services through which librarians directly supply users with information but also interfaces created by librarians through which users could independently find needed information. Generally speaking library user services can be divided into two categories: library public user services and library technical user services. Library public user services refer to circulation, bibliographic

instructions, distance learning, government documentation, reference and special collection. Library information user services focuses on procedures and operations of maintaining, developing and supporting library collection and services behind the scene such as acquisition, cataloguing, classification, inter library loan, document delivery and serial systems. Katz (1999) defined library services as help or assistance given to users in their quest for information resources. Various forms of publicity should encourage people to use the library. This includes welcome address delivered by librarians to users - staff and students of the founding body especially during the orientation programme of the fresh students, exhibition and display of books and sharing of circulars of Library news bulletin. Central Library is divided into different divisions but none, some of these divisions are directly involved in the marketing and promotion of library products and services. Examples are the Client Services, Academic Services, Cataloguing, Information Skills, Acquisition and Information System.

### **Client Services Division**

This division is responsible in providing effective services in meeting the needs of users, fulfill users satisfaction and also providing current information to users. The services provided to users are library material's transaction (loan, return, renew, reserve), Interlibrary Loan and Document Delivery, Library user's Registration (internal user, external user), Reference Desk Services and Services for locating unbound library materials.

### **Cataloguing Division**

This division is responsible to provide access to scholarly materials in the UM Library collection to support research, teaching and learning in the UM community by organizing, describing, and providing effective, accurate tools that assist our clients in locating information resources of value to them. The division is also responsible for the development and maintenance of the UM Library Catalog (Pendeta Discovery) and for the development and implementation of policies and standards that govern the creation and maintenance of the metadata that describe the collection.

### **Information Systems Division**

The division is responsible in ensuring that computer system in the Library Network is fully operational besides providing quality ICT service.

### **Information Skills Division**

The division offers information skills and user education programmes for undergraduates, postgraduates and Academic Staff. The programmes include: i) GIG1007 Information Skills Course. A compulsory course for all undergraduates. Students are taught skills which will be of use for their learning and research. ii) Information Skills sessions for postgraduates. These 2 hour sessions are held at least twice weekly. iii) Consultancy sessions for PhD. Students and Academic Staff. In this individual consultancy sessions, researchers will be guided to the information sources in the library pertaining to their specific area of research.

### **Acquisitions Division**

The Division is responsible for the acquisition of library materials in the form of books, serials (printed and electronic), non-book materials (audio/video tapes, microforms, CD-ROM etc.) and newspapers (local and international).

### **Academic Services Division**

The main functions of the unit are to prepare statistics and reports of University Malaya's publications indexed in Web of Science & Scopus; provide user education (such as workshop and talks) and consultation on publishing in journals indexed in Web of Science & Scopus and related issues; and coordinate and prepare statistical reports of Library services and collections.

### **Types of library resources in Central Library**

The library collection comprises mainly of books, journals, conference proceedings, microform, AV materials, theses and dissertations. UML subscribes to electronic resources such as e-journals, e-books, citation indexes, and bibliographic management software.

**(a) Print Resources:** These resources are books, journals, newspapers, magazines and pamphlets, bound copies of journals, documents generated within the university (local Contents), manuscripts, conference proceedings, statutes, reporters, government publications,

**(b) Non-Print Resources:** Otherwise known as electronic resources or audio-visual materials. These are soft copies of information that can only be viewed through the use of compatible hardware or application of information and communication technology. Electronic resources can be found in slides, CD-Roms, microforms, audio cassette, video cassette, long play (LP), Kindle and other storage devices. These resources are called e-books, e-journals, microfilms, microfiches, institutional repositories etc.

Table 1. Library Collection Statistics until 31 December 2018

<b>Collections</b>	<b>Quantity</b>
Printed (books, journals, theses, annual reports, etc.)	1,493,712
Manuscript	409
Non-Printed (photos, films, microforms, etc.)	485,901
Digital (e-books, cd, dvd, e-journals, etc.)	204,981
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,185,003</b>

Table 4. Institutional repositories until 31 December 2018

<b>Repository</b>	<b>Functions</b>	<b>Digital Object</b>
<b>UM Research Repository</b>	An Open Access digital archive containing the details of published and unpublished research work produced by the UM researchers and academic staff.	15,252
<b>UM Students' Repository</b>	An online archive for the written work of University of Malaya students such as academic exercises, dissertations and theses	7,856
<b>UM Common Repository</b>	An initiative by the library to preserve printed items digitally to increase accessibility, visibility as well as conserve old copies of items such as gazettes, magazines, journals and books	7,997
<b>UM Memory</b>	An initiative by the library to preserve University of Malaya valuable photos with historical context for the campus community and nation at large	9,474
<b>UM in the News</b>	News coverage relating to University of Malaya, its staff, students and alumni that have appeared in the local, regional and national newspapers. It also provides newspaper reports and pictorial coverage of events, announcements and achievements of the University. The news are updated regularly by the library staff as featured in the public media. To make the news more accesible and organised to users, each newspaper cutting is accompanied by several subjects.	24,080
<b>Malaysian Arts</b>	Malaysian Art, on the other hand, are news relating to events, exhibitions, artists, developments in the arts arena as reported in the local newspapers.	3,828
		<b>68,487</b>

## **Literature Review**

Significant research on marketing has been carried out around the world to encourage librarians to improve on marketing their products and services.

### **Library service marketing**

Marketing aims to identify the client base, and to determine and fill its needs, wants, and demands by designing and delivering appropriate products and services. The main focus of the concept is the client, and the goal is client satisfaction. According to Madhusudhan (2008), information marketing by university libraries is essential in order to promote the use of information resources; to create perception of need and thereby create demand; to ensure the optimum use of information; to improve the image and status of the libraries and library professionals; to tackle the problems of rising costs of reading materials, journals, and databases; to cope with the information explosion; to introduce cutting-edge information technology systems in library services; to balance shrinking funds; to save libraries from devaluation; to save libraries from declining reader-support and to uphold the dictum that information is power.

The concept of marketing goes beyond the buying and selling of products or services for financial gain, but also to help the parent bodies or organizations in achieving their goals. Marketing in librarianship is an act of planning, organizing, dissemination and controlling of information services on a proactive and users' oriented way that ensures the patrons satisfaction while achieving the objectives of the parent organization (Arachige, 2005).

Marketing in librarianship is an act of planning, organizing, dissemination and controlling of information services on a proactive and users oriented way that ensures the patrons satisfaction while achieving the objectives of the parent organization (Abiola, 2016). To achieve maximum utilization of library resources, librarians must improve the way they market their services due to the fact that marketing is vital to the growth and development of any library irrespective of the parent organization.

The library has many products and services that it can market. Each library needs to identify what it wishes to market and how. Marketing is not just about developing and promoting new services and products but also about bringing awareness to clients of existing services and products and determining their appropriateness. There are seven principles of marketing; these principles are also applicable to Library and Information services. These principles are Product, Price, Place, Promotion, Participants, Physical evidence and Process. These principles are described in brief:

- Product
- Products in Librarianship refer to services or general reference and information services offered by the library. Products are the information, reference, and supplementary services that add value to the traditional library services such as personal assistance, referral services, on-line data base searches, document delivery and interlibrary loan..
- Price  
Price can be expressed in currency; in the library, price can be used to express the value of information services: such as Online database usage or a fee of a service or membership. Central Library charges MYR100-200 as library membership fee for all fresh students of University of Malaya. A reasonable amount of income comes from fines charged on overdue books, fees charged on space allocation, printing and scanning services.
- Place  
Place of service, based upon knowledge of the market of library, is essential in order to identify users and their discrete information needs and wants. To expand the service area, the library may have branches, bookmobiles, or electronic access, etc.
- Promotion  
Promotion includes utilizing persuasive information about general information services, and communicating this information to target market segments that are potential users. Five kinds of promotion include: publicity, public relations, personal representatives, advertising, and sales promotion.
- Participants

The success of any programmes is depend on the feedback of the participants hence participants involved in promoting and marketing of the library services provided by library professionals, their feedback will help to improve the services and library system

- Physical Evidence

The environment in which the reference and information services are delivered that facilitates the performance and communication of the service.

- Process

The procedures, mechanisms and flow of activities by which the reference and information services are acquired

### **Display and Exhibitions**

Exhibition is defined as a public display of books, artefacts, objects, and other materials. Exhibitions can be online, physical or a combination of the two and of any scale or duration, within the literature it is obvious that library exhibitions fall into two major types: physical and online. The exhibition construct has been chosen over display, as exhibition is more encompassing; the word is inclusive of both large scale exhibitions as well as small displays (Williams, 2011). Williams (2011) citing Schaeffer (1991) posited that exhibitions are adjudged to be a major promotional instrument within a library's marketing strategy, as exhibitions are one of the most visual means of showcasing what the library can offer. Exhibition is a precious marketing tool, a poor exhibition can cause dent to the reputation of the library (Cleeve, 1995).

### **Strategies for marketing and promotional approaches by Central Library, University of Malaya**

Central Library introduced some products and services in order to maintain good relationships with its numerous clientele. Among these efforts are the introduction of exhibition and display; complaints/suggestion boxes, information skill session for postgraduate, library information skill course for undergraduate, electronic bill board, audio-visual services, online dissemination of information via the internet technology by creating links for current information on the library portal. Eye-catching displays, interactive web sites, contests, library briefing for new students during new semester opening and trial classes for introduction of new databases. Knowledgeable and enthusiastic staff members are also great promotion tools used to persuade the library users. The marketing strategies used by Central Library are discussed below:

#### **Publicity**

Wider publicity is given to the Library products and services by various ways. For example, banners, Library website and library portal are used for dissemination of information related to the various programmes and activities being performed by the library including the specific ventures such as conducting of the workshops/seminars/classes/training sessions.

#### **Users Education**

Users' education is a compulsory two credit hours course taught (GIG 1004) in University of Malaya Library. It is compulsory for undergraduate students of the institution particularly the newly admitted students. The course is one of the strategies used by the Library to bring students closer to the library. The aim of user education in University of Malaya is to enable the students use the library effectively with minimum problems for the purpose of learning, research and recreation.

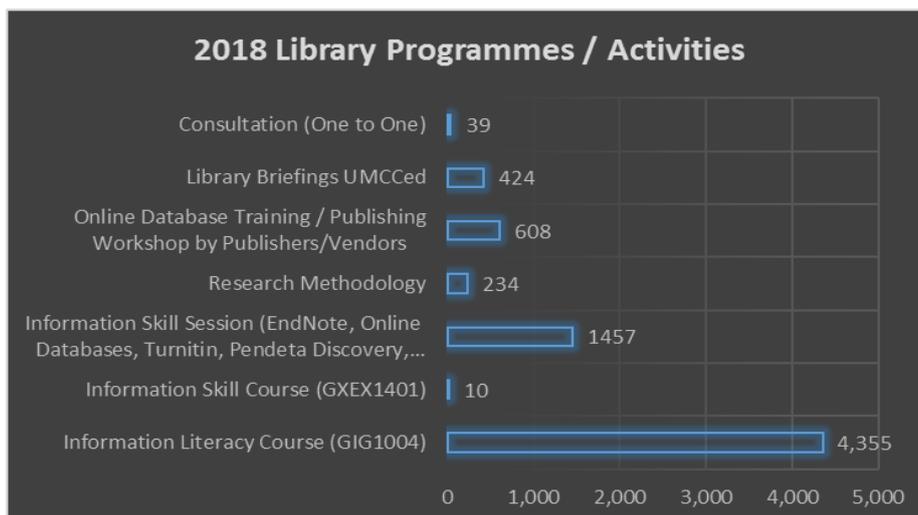


Figure 2. 2018 Library Programmes and activities

### Digital Reference Service

Digital reference services can be made through e-mail or chat. Libraries are also using a couple of different means of running an e-mail reference service: using basic e-mail or web forms. Live Chat is a very popular means of communication over the internet. Chat Reference enables the user and the addressees librarian to exchange brief written messages in quick succession. The communicating parties are online at the same time and can therefore react. Since 2018, live chat at UM library has started and without coming to the library, users can communicate with librarians during office hour from Monday to Friday only.

### Internet and Social Networking

To keep pace with evolving information technologies, UM librarians use a group of software applications including blog and social networking services such as Twitter and Facebook to market the services and resources with mixed success. Our librarians use tools such as RSS (Really Simple Syndication), tagging and bookmarking as a means of promotion. Besides posting materials for promotion purposes, UM librarians also post photos of the organization and staff to provide a virtual tour of the library.

Twitter is being used in libraries to market their services and resources by actually using the social networking site to provide the service (Fields, 2010; Milstein, 2009; Rodzvilla, 2010; Stuart 2010). A favorite networking site for people of all ages to keep in touch is Facebook. A broad study by Hendrix, Chiarella, Hasman, Murphy and Zafron (2009) on the use of Facebook by more than seventy librarians found that most libraries used the social networking site to predominantly market their services. A study by Garcia-Milian, Norton and Tennant (2012) suggests that the more likes a library's Facebook page has, the greater the potential for engagement with users through this medium.

### Display and Exhibitions

Davidson (2001) stressed the importance of marketing library and information services through displays and exhibitions. According to him exhibition can boost current awareness in the library because it allows library clientele to know the existence of materials in the library. Each year, UM library organized 2-3 exhibitions specifically to promote library collections by displaying the items for public according to the theme chosen. This effort is organized by a group of librarians appointed as UM Library Exhibitions committee.

### Face-to-face events or “Library Clients Day”

Library Clients Day is an annual event dedicated to professional development, networking, and continuing education within the University. Thinking of the importance of this marketing activity, Client Services Division, Central Library has organized the Clients Day each year since 2014 in conjunction with the start of the new

semester and the ongoing efforts to promote library services to students and staff of UM. Among the activities organized are e-resources Clinic to provide guidance and information related to Endnote, Online Databases, Turnitin and Online Public Access Catalog. Institutional Repositories Clinic to explain more closely to repositories which relevant to University of Malaya, special discounts up to 20% of overdue fines to encourage users to pay the fines, e-services Clinic to explain the services available in the Library Interactive Portal especially for Document Delivery service and Inter-library loan, demos to promote the latest database subscribed by library. Readers Voluntary Registration segment in collaboration with the Counseling, Career and Disability Section UM to inform users about the existence of those services to assist students with disabilities (PWDs) in the library and encourage people to sign up to become a volunteer reader for this group and introduction of Mobile application Clinic to promote new services offered to users as part of its initiative to promote ebooks as well as motivate and encourage the culture of reading among its community.

## **Conclusion**

Academic librarians are facing a variety of challenges and obstacles such as 'juggling many responsibilities at once', 'lack of funding/budgetary issues', 'lack of time' and 'lack of staffing/resources' (Polger and Okamoto, 2013, p. 247). To meet challenges, overcome obstacles and win over competitors, librarians play a key role in effectively promoting services and resources and, as such, the role of academic librarians is crucial to ensure this happens. This study confirmed that librarians at UM Library promoted services and resources using a variety of effective promotion techniques such as engaging users through the use of internet and social media network, face-to-face events, user education and display and exhibitions to promote services and resources. Future research will focus on how often librarians use these techniques and other effective techniques for promoting services and resources and the influencing factors, and on more promotion-related questions such as what to promote and how to evaluate promotional activities in the digital age.

## **Recommendation**

The following recommendation was made to enhance the quality of marketing library and information's services in academic libraries. Libraries ought to formulate a marketing plan along with yearly budget so that every book can get its reader and every reader can have his or her book. Librarians must ensure that they put in more efforts in the aspect of marketing and promotion of their resources and services through advertisement, exhibitions and displays, publicity, public relations. Therefore, the marketing policy of the UM Library needs 'careful planning, structuring, execution and evaluation with regular review'. Libraries are growing organization where resources and manpower increasing day by day so marketing strategies / tools must need to promote library services among the users as well as their organizational development.

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### **Author Information**

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**Siti Juryiah Binti Mohd Khalid**

Central Library, University of Malaya  
Pantai Valley, 50603 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia  
Contract E-mail: [sitijuryiah@um.edu.my](mailto:sitijuryiah@um.edu.my)

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