NLB's Transformation Journey
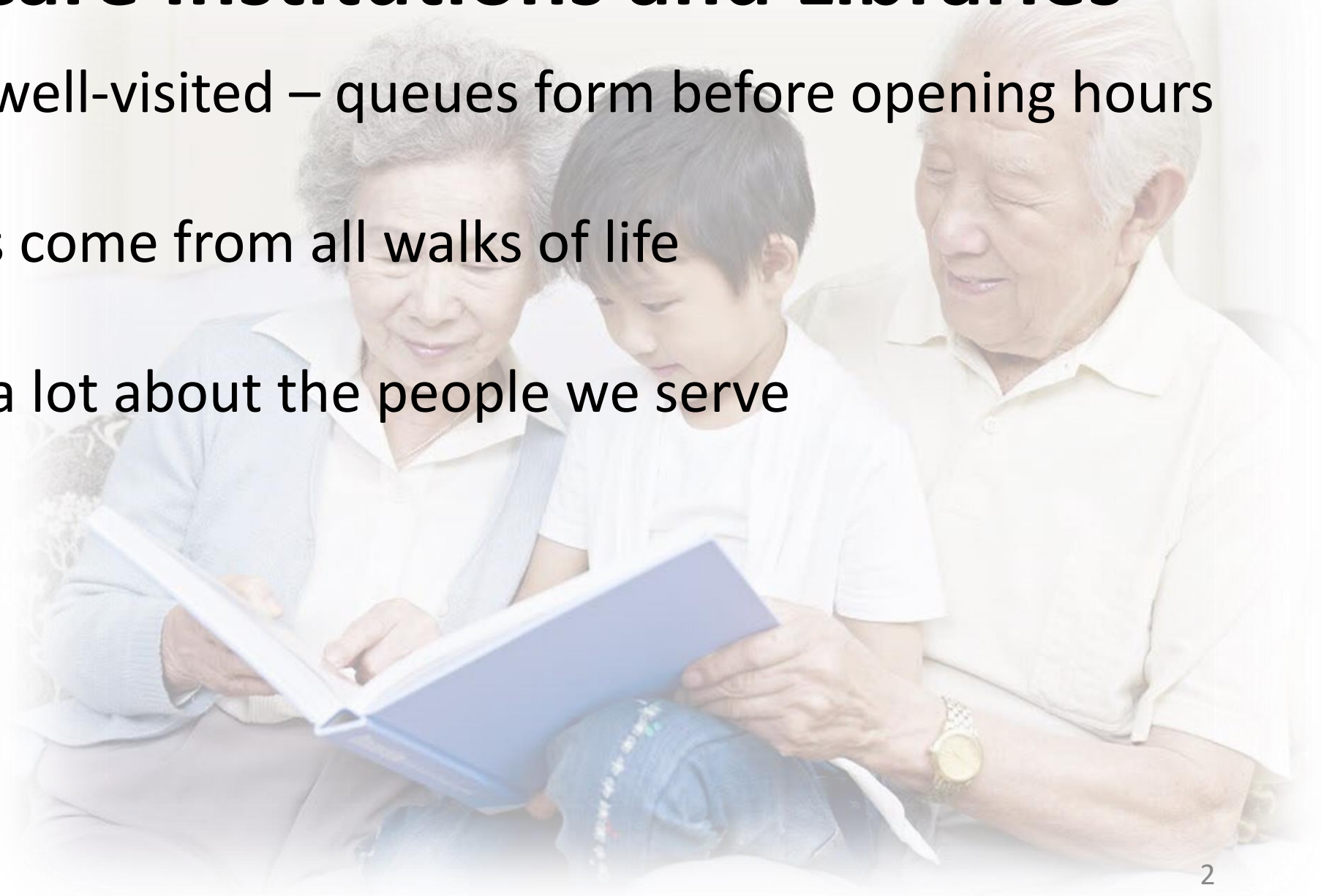
Ng Cher Pong, Chief Executive Officer

Singapore Healthcare Medical Congress, 14 Aug 2024

Healthcare Institutions and Libraries

- Both are very well-visited – queues form before opening hours

- Our customers come from all walks of life

- We both care a lot about the people we serve

INTRODUCTION TO NLB

NLB's Key Lines of Business

Vision: Readers for Life, Learning Communities, Knowledgeable Nation

Mission: We make knowledge come alive, spark imagination and create possibilities

Public Libraries

Network of 28 Public Libraries, including 3 partner libraries

Reading Programmes and Initiatives

Programmes and Exhibitions targeted at Singapore communities

National Library

Preserving Singapore's Print and Literary Heritage, and Intellectual memory

Reference Collections

Legal Deposit (including electronic)

National Archives

Transferred from NHB to NLB in Nov 2012

Custodian of Singapore's Collective Memory: Responsible for Collection, Preservation and Management of Singapore's Public and Private Archival Records

Promotes Public Interest in our Nation's History and Heritage

We have Significant Reach

2023 year-in-review

The National Library Board saw a significant increase in the past year in visitorship across its libraries and archives, contributing to growth in its overall reach in 2023. To cater to the growing number of patrons and their evolving learning and reading needs, NLB has also continued to enhance its services, including offering more digital resources as part of the LAB25 (Libraries and Archives Blueprint 2025).

OUR PATRONS

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION INDEX (CSI) 8.45 /10

78% overall reach

NLB's reach grew significantly to almost 8 in 10 residents, surpassing pre-Covid levels in 2019. Ongoing efforts to reimagine our libraries and archives have been well-received by the public.

OUR VISITORSHIP

19.8m total visits across our network of libraries, the National Archives of Singapore and the Former Ford Factory.

GREW BY OVER 3m FROM 2022

MOST VISITED LIBRARY

Punggol Regional Library

1.31m visitorship

OUR USAGE

24.5m + 11.9m = 36.3m
PHYSICAL LOANS + DIGITAL LOANS = TOTAL LOANS

121.2m digital usage

Number of page views to NLB's website and usage of subscribed eBooks and eDatabases.

Average number of sessions to NLB mobile app per month: 2.69m

OUR PROGRAMMES

~18,000 NLB Programmes

10 NLB Exhibitions

Total No. of Participants 2m

16.1m NODE VISITS ACROSS 101 LOCATIONS
Including at transport hubs, which saw our highest footfall.

LAB-25 LIBRARIES AND ARCHIVES BLUEPRINT 2025

NLB | National Library Board Singapore

Source: Year in Review 2023

We have a Sizeable Collection

Over 13m in multiple formats for multimodal discovery and learning

Lending Collection

Over 5m print collection

Over 1.7m e-books and audio books

78 databases

Over 2.4m music tracks

Over 7,400 e-newspapers and e-magazines titles

Over 8,000 e-learning courses

Reference Collection

Over 560,000 Singapore & SEA items

Over 147,000 Chinese, Malay & Tamil Languages items

Over 53,000 Arts items

Over 62,000 Social Sciences & Humanities items

Over 39,000 Science & Technology items

Over 19,000 Rare Materials items

Archival Materials

Over 1.14m Photographs

Over 290,000 Government files & Parliament papers

Over 190,000 Audiovisual & sound recordings

Over 70,000 Maps & building plans

Over 55,000 Speeches & press releases

Over 35,000 Oral history interviews

Over 7,000 Posters

6

Our Context:
We are living in an era of technological disruptions

TIME
Made by History

HISTORY • MADE BY HISTORY

What Libraries Risk W
They Go Digital

6 MINUTE READ

Students working on laptop computers at the British Library with the Kings Library in the background, London Pawel Libera/Getty Images

The Seattle Times

Local News

LOCAL BIZ NATION SPORTS ENTERTAINMENT LIFE HOMES OPINION | THE TICKET JOBS EXPLORE ∨ All Sections

Politics Law & Justice Watchdog Mental Health Education Lab Project Homeless Traffic Lab Eastside Climate Lab Obituaries

Books | Local News | Technology

Seattle Public Library goes offline after ransomware event

Article   3 minute read · 27 July 2023

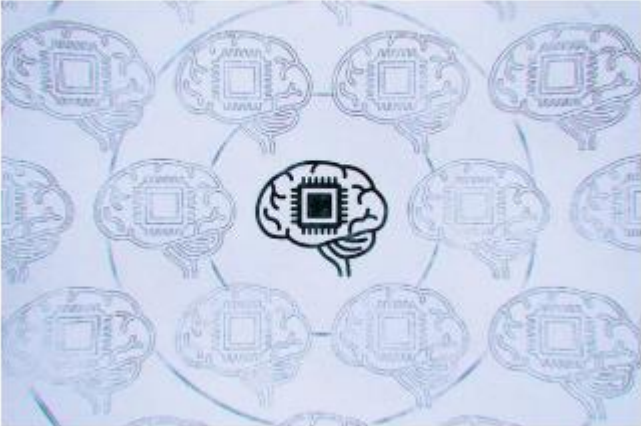# While we wait for the metaverse to materialize, young people are already there

Gen Zs and Millennials are stitching together their digital and physical worlds, setting the stage for the next version of reality.

Brooke Auxier
United States

Jana Arbanas
United States

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE / TECH

ChatGPT continues to be one of the fastest-growing services ever

/ In less than a year, it's hit 100 million weekly users, and over 2 million developers are currently building on the company's API, including the majority of Fortune 500 companies.

By Jon Porter, a reporter with five years of experience covering consumer tech releases, EU tech policy, online platforms, and mechanical keyboards.
Nov 7, 2023, 2:03 AM GMT+8

Illustration by Alex Castro / The Verge

Our Inspiration:

Retail

Content

Retail

Shifting Online

Rise in share of global e-commerce
- Made up approx. 19% of global retail sales in 2021
- Share is expected to increase to 25% by 2026
(Statistica, 2023)

E-commerce giants: Alibaba and Amazon
- Respectively generated est. 780 billion USD and est. 690 billion USD in annual online sales
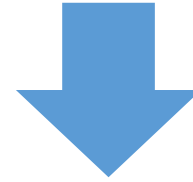(Statistica, 2022)

Rise of "Palm Retail" and Social Shopping
- Sale via mobile app and social media and livestreaming platforms (Instragram Live, TikTok) gaining market share, expected to hit $1.5trillion market value by 2025
(Forbes, 2024)

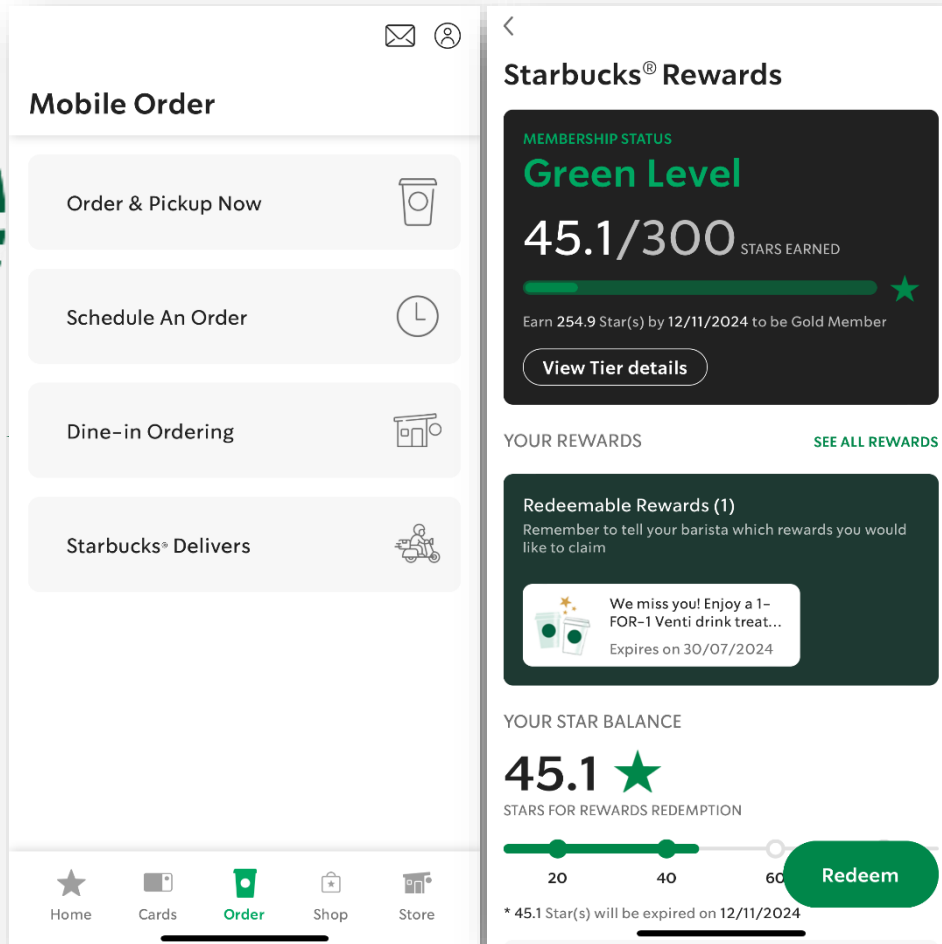| Retail	Single Channel
Omni-Channel	↓
	Multi-Channel
	↓
	Omni-Channel
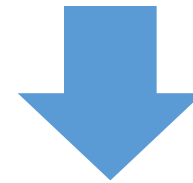
Retail

Omni-Channel

What does it mean to provide an omni-channel user experience?

Integrated. Consistent. Seamless.

The Starbucks Rewards app allows a customer to get his coffee in many ways: regardless if he has already entered the store, planning to visit a store, or if he intends to get it delivered.

Loyalty rewards and stored-valued gift cards features in the app are seamlessly integrated into each transaction regardless if online or in-store

If only we could book a seat at the cafe using the app too!

13

Integrated. Consistent. Seamless.

Unmanned Retail Stores
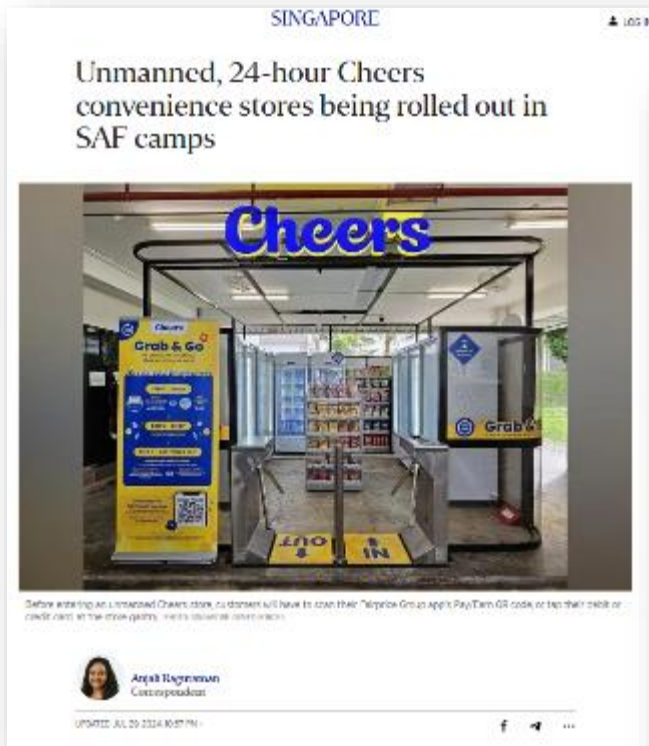
- Customers enter physical store gantry with the retailer's mobile app.

- Just Walk Out technology powered by AI charges items taken to customers' account when they leave the store, no cashier needed

Content

On Demand

Rise of Video-on-Demand
- Shifting from cable TV subscriptions to VOD platforms e.g. Netflix, Disney+

Anytime, Anywhere
- Content accessible via smart personal devices
- Consumption not fixed at locations (e.g. cinema)

Content

Personal-isation

Data-driven personalised recommendations based on users' preferences and usage history
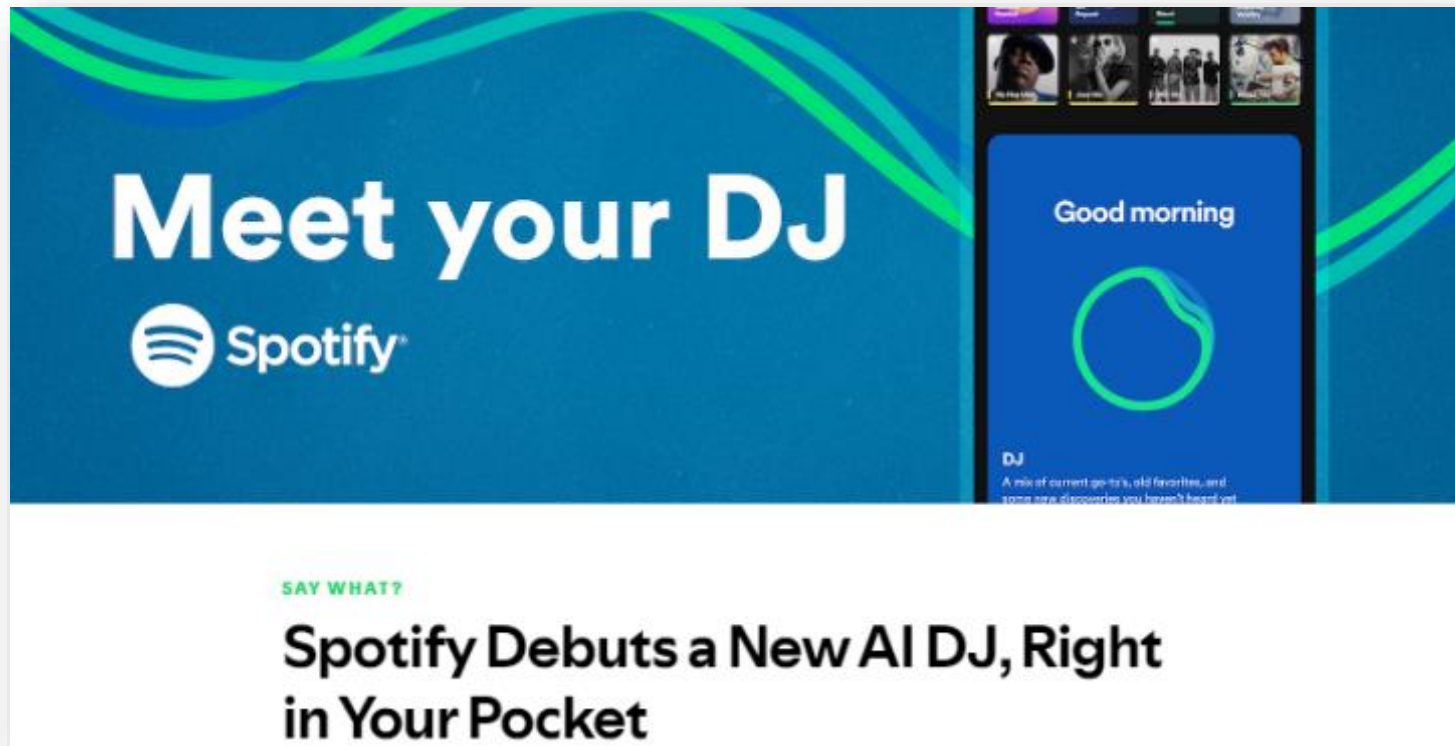
Customised for you.

Personalised Homepage on Netflix
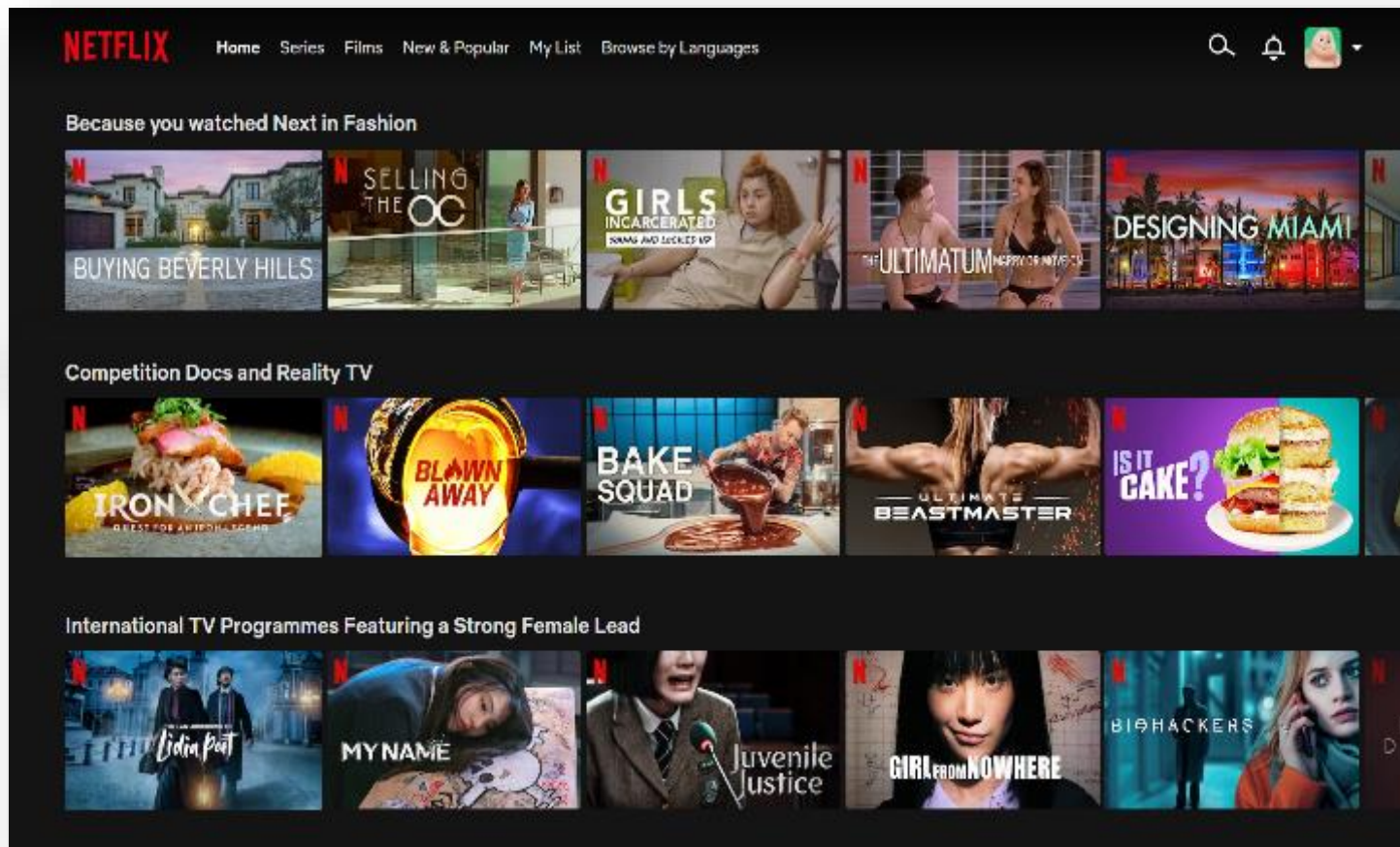
Netflix shows a unique homepage for each user, via AI-powered algorithm that generates "Because You Watched" recommendations.

Customised for you.

Meet your DJ

Spotify®

Good morning

DJ
A mix of current go-to's, old favorites, and some new discoveries you haven't heard yet

SAY WHAT?

Spotify Debuts a New AI DJ, Right in Your Pocket

Spotify generates a personalised playlist for each user, alongside AI-generated commentary around the tracks and artists, based on users' music taste.

Photo Credits: Spotify

Our Plan:

History of Transformation

2000

2010

2020

2025
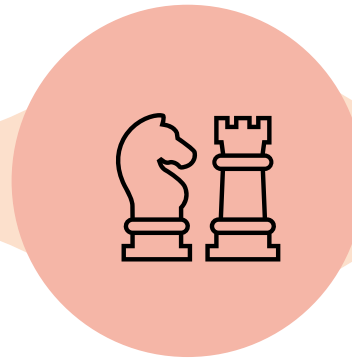
Library 2000 Report
(Focus on Physical Libraries)

Library 2010 Report
(Focus on Digital Infrastructure)

Library 2020
(Focus on Knowledge Building)

LAB25 (Libraries & Archives Blueprint)
(Focus on Omni-channel network)

NLB's 5-year journey of experimentation and innovation to reimagine our libraries and archives

WHAT IS LAB25?

LAB25 is NLB's invitation to partners and the community to collaborate on this journey of innovation and experimentation to reimagine libraries and archives. The goal is to be an even stronger companion to patrons as the society navigates an evolving social, cultural and economic landscape. Through four distinct roles, NLB seeks to work with the community to co-create products and services for our next generation of libraries and archives.

LEARNING MARKETPLACE

To transform NLB into a national platform of lifelong learning with like-minded partners

SINGAPORE STORYTELLERS

To inspire discovery and creation of Singapore stories and instil a deeper appreciation of our collective experience

READING & INFORMED SOCIETY

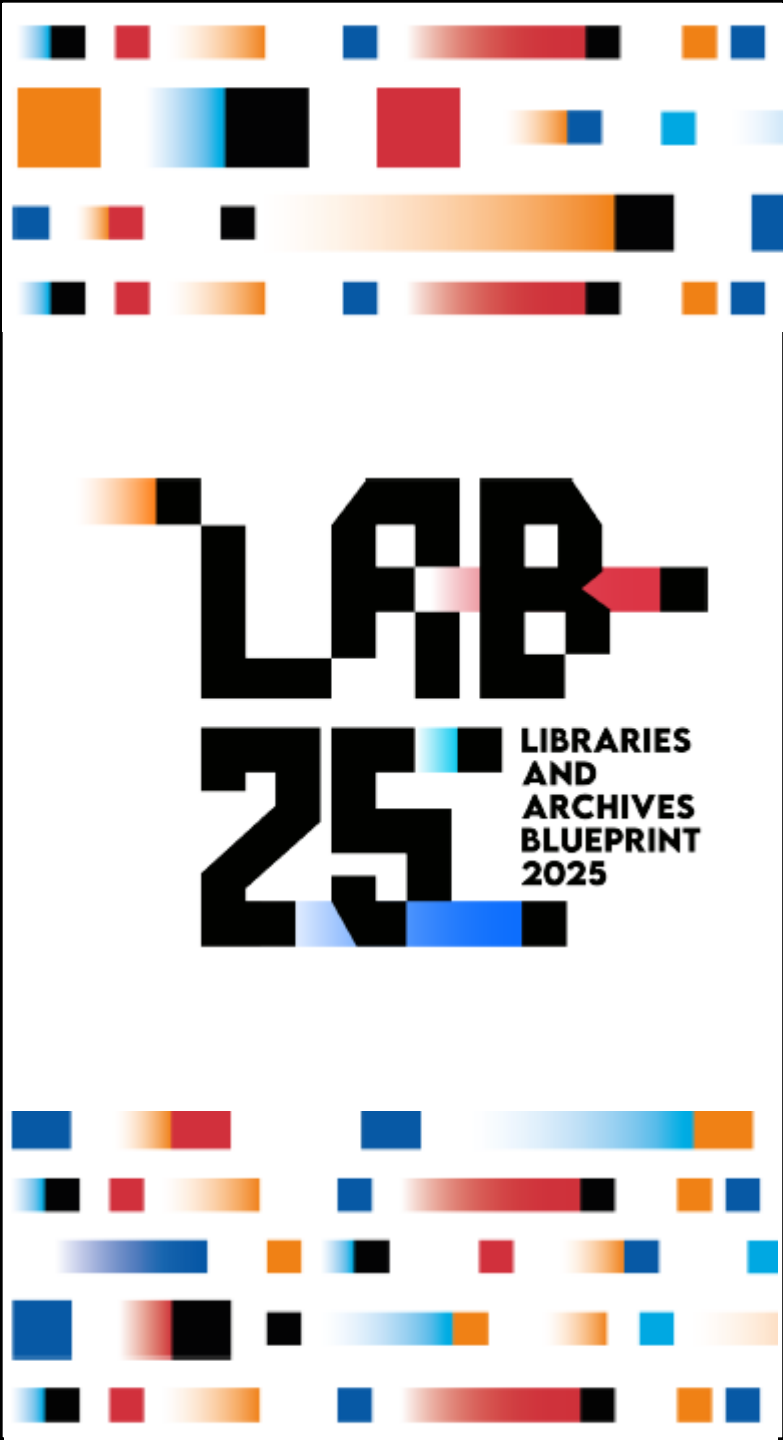NLB nurtures and sustains a reading and informed society.

EQUALISER

To bridge gaps, include more and empower all in this digital age

Key Priorities:

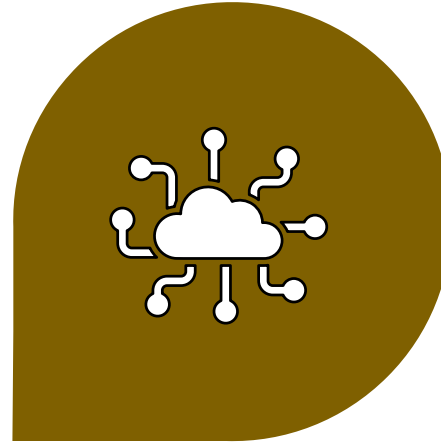1. **Rethinking our Channels**
2. **Transforming our Content**

Rethinking Our Channels

Channel Strategy: Extending Our Reach

HUBS

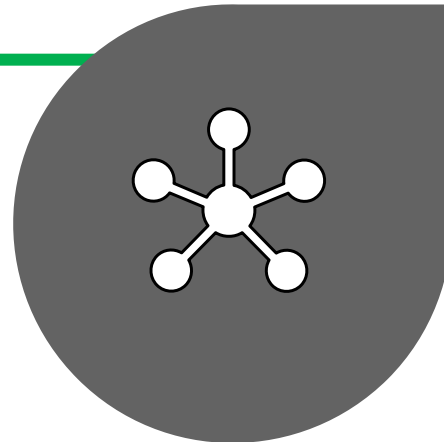Network of NLB-owned Regional, Standalone and Mall Libraries, supplemented by partner-funded libraries

DIGITAL

AI powered recommendation engines, personalised discovery

PHYGITAL

NODES

Encounters at surprising places (malls, parks etc.)

NEW!

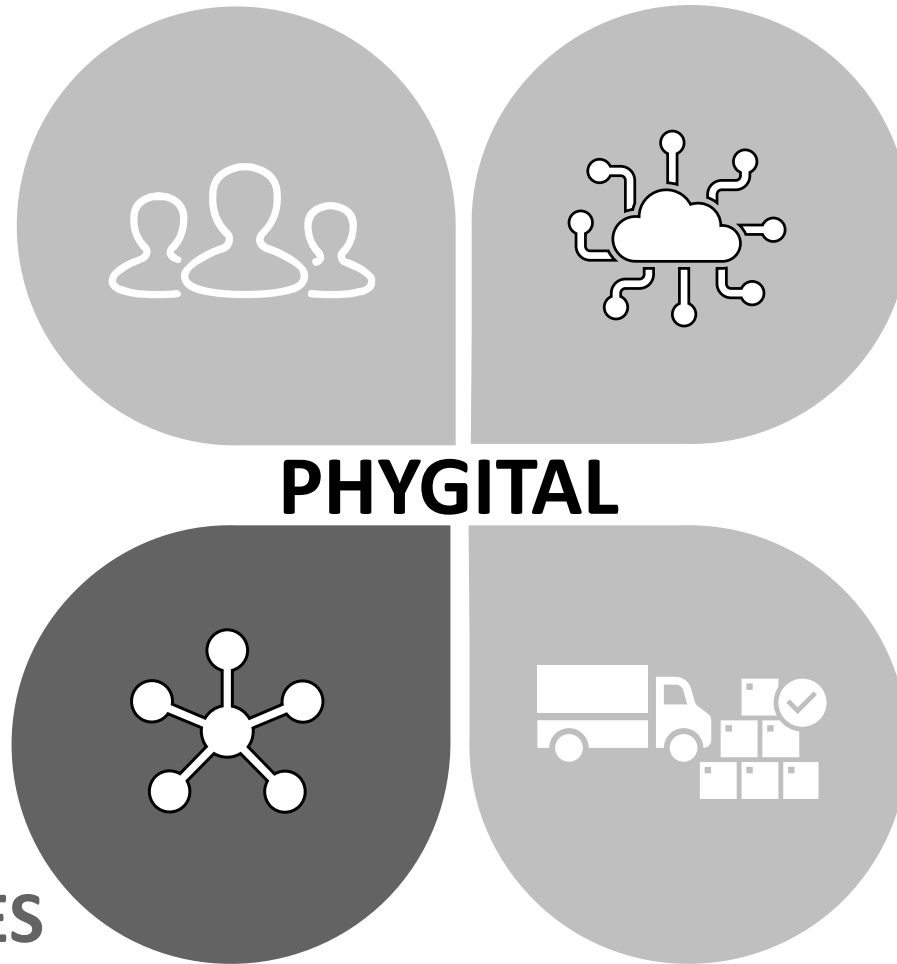**DELIVERY**

Subscription and delivery service for books

LAB 25
LIBRARIES
AND
ARCHIVES
BLUEPRINT
2025

PHYGITAL

NODES

Fixed Touchpoints → Nodes Everywhere

We expand our reach in a more flexible and agile way.

Direction of shift →

Network of 30+ physical facilities and website/app	Ubiquitous presence in both physical and digital spaces
Growth through touchpoints (expensive!)	Growth through partners (free/cheap!)
Rigidity in expansion or contraction	Agile in expansion or contraction

Nodes: Pop-up Library Experience

If you are in a rush …

Nodes with SMRT giving commuters access to quick reads and other NLB's eResources

Nodes at Healthcare settings promoting relevant eResources while people wait
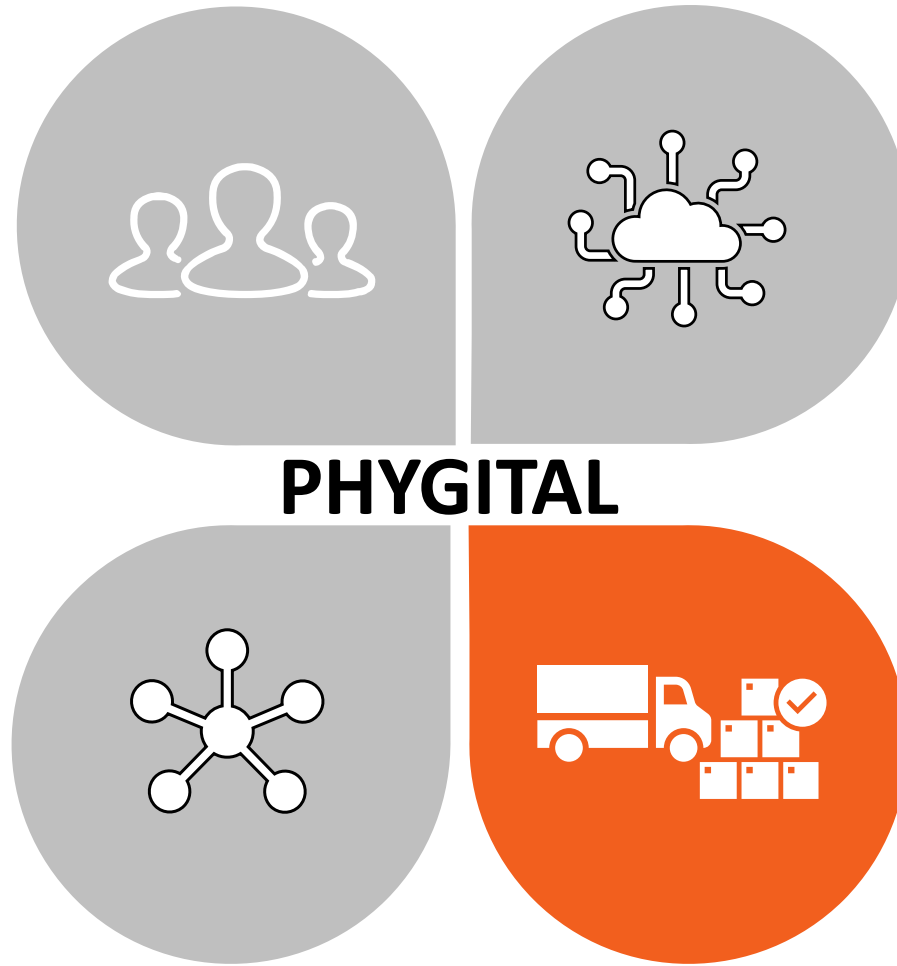
…Or if you had more time

Automated borrowing at unmanned Grab-n-Go pop-up libraries such as the Comics Library at Anchorpoint

LAB 25
LIBRARIES
AND
ARCHIVES
BLUEPRINT
2025

PHYGITAL

DELIVERY

Delivery Services : Increased Convenience

Subscription-based delivery service for 8 **curated children's books** (4-6 years old or 7-9 years old), including Mother Tongue languages. $32.70 for 3 months.

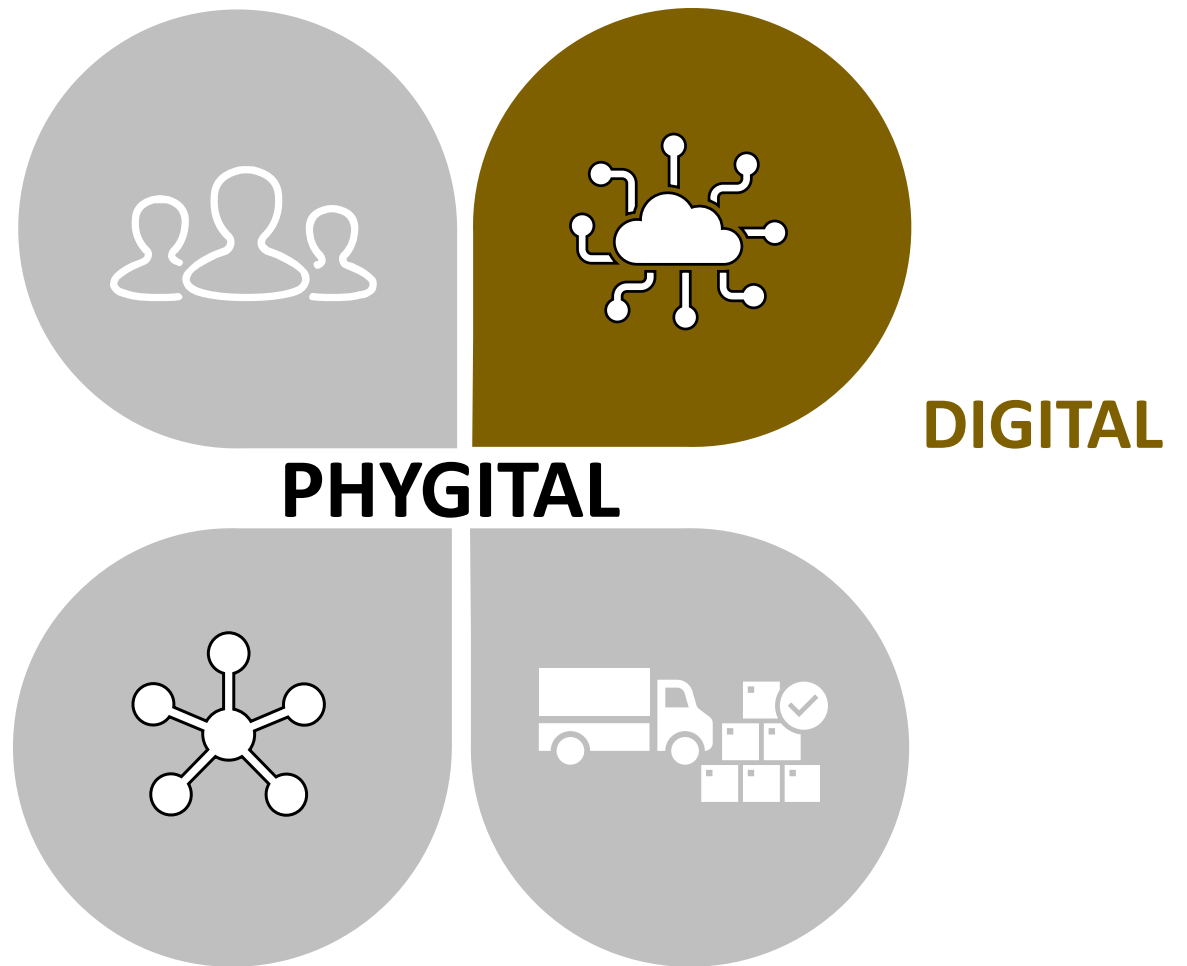**Select up to 4 items from the library catalogue and have them delivered**. $8.72 per delivery.

LAB25
LIBRARIES AND ARCHIVES BLUEPRINT 2025

PHYGITAL

DIGITAL

Search → T–shaped Discovery

We help **guide** discovery and be a more effective **concierge.**

Direction of shift	
Centres on search	Centres on personalization with relevance and context as our focus
Help customers zero in	Help customers go deeper and broader
Driven by customers' inputs	Driven by data from customer's history

Encouraging T–shaped Discovery

**Broadening perspectives, deepening understanding.
Expanding Formats beyond books & magazines into videos, audio, programmes**

User

Personalised Recommendations

T-Shaped Discovery

Multiformat Playlists

Searches for "Global Warming"

Generated by AI algorithm drawing from user's inputs and user history

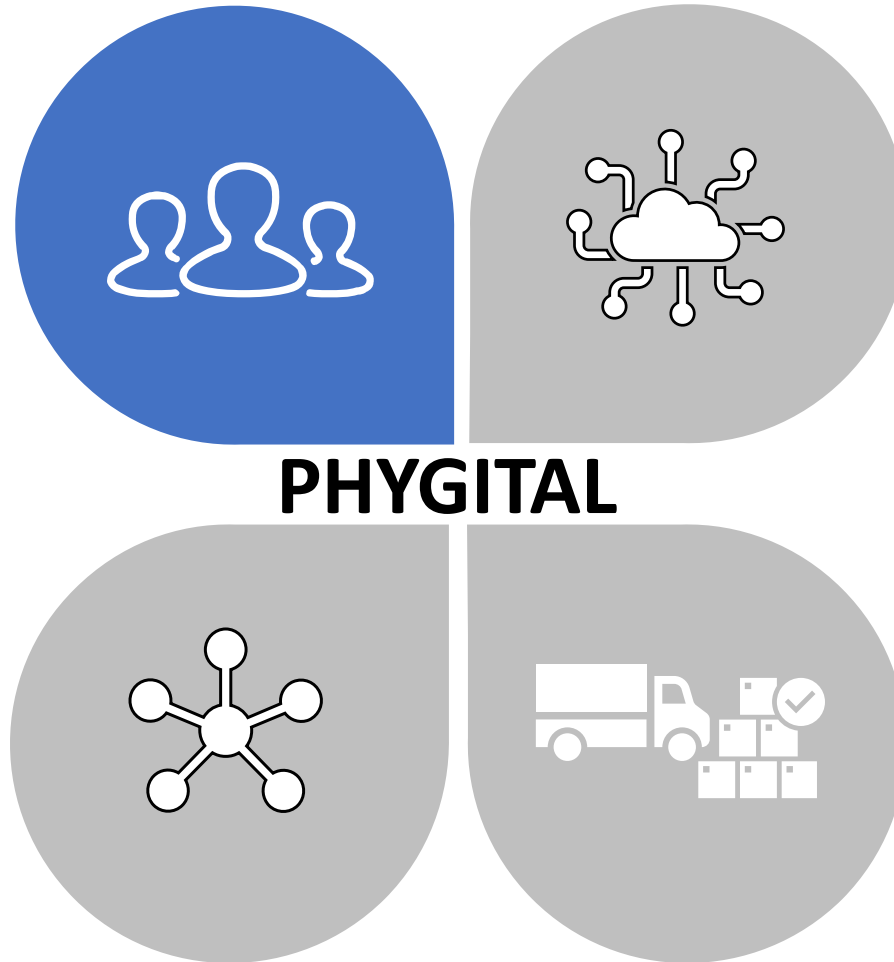Tap on knowledge graphs mapping subjects and creating relationships

Dynamically generated based on users' data

HUBS

PHYGITAL

Physical vs Digital → Hybrid "Phy-gital"

We leverage technology to enhance **experiences**, and to **reach and engage** citizens more effectively

Direction of shift →

Focus on physical and digital experiences separately	Focus on **seamless** "phy-gital*" experiences, with brand consistency and service integration being key
Physical and digital platforms compete against each other	Physical and digital platforms **amplify** each other
Growth in physical and digital patrons	Growth in "phy-gital" hybrid patrons

Reimagining Library Experiences

Creating new experiences with intentionality to inspire reading, learning and discovery

Telling Singapore stories through interactive exhibits and curated content from the National Library and National Archives

Making local artwork interactive and informative using Augmented Reality (AR) technology

Reimagining Library Experiences

Ensuring the library experience is inclusive for Persons With Disabilities – pilot at Punggol Regional Library

Borrow-n-Go
Allows wheelchair users to borrow books easily by going through this passageway that detects the books they are carrying.

Accessible Collection
3,000 books including Braille books, phonics readers, touch-and-feel books, and books for caregivers to learn about specific disabilities.

Calm Pods
Quiet and safe space for those who need a private and calming sensorial experience.

Accessible Membership
Includes doubling of loan period; free use of reservation locker service to pick up books at a nearer library.
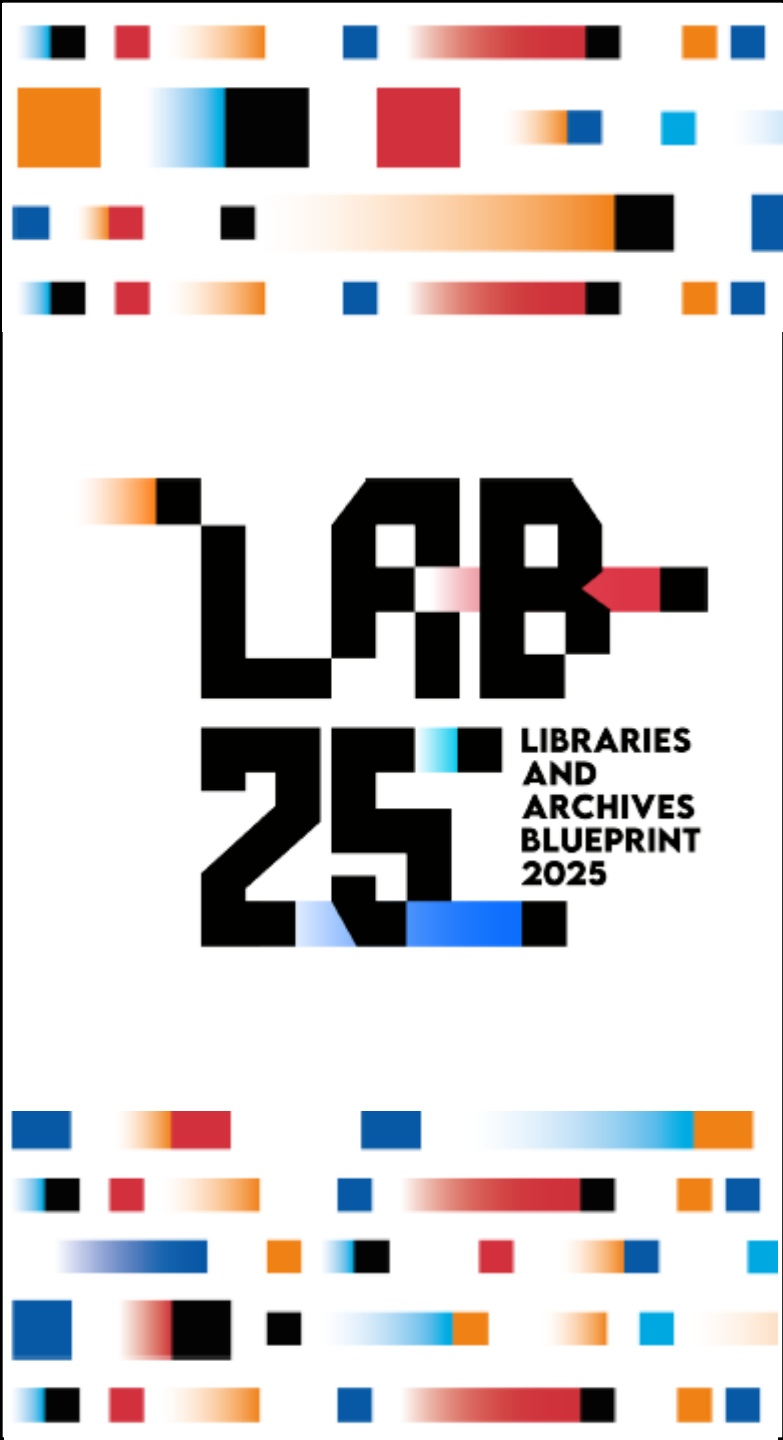
37

Enhancing Experience of Heritage Content

- In conjunction with 50th anniversary of cable car system
- Features a decommissioned cable car and archival **audiovisual footage and photographs** for visitors to experience the original journey from Mount Faber to Sentosa
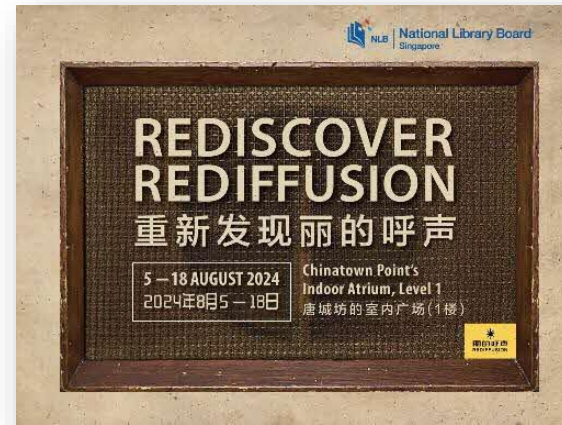
- Celebrating 75 years of Singapore's first commercial and cable-transmitted radio station
- Features selection of Mandarin and Chinese dialect **Rediffusion programme recordings** (e.g. Lee Dai Soh's telling of *Journey To The West)*

Transforming Our Content

Libraries used to be about Books

Source: NLB

Source: NLB

Now, Content is Multimodal

Acquisition
NLB's collection Expanded during COVID-19 (includes subscriptions)

Tech-enabled
Scaling up through tehcnology: AI/ML Learning Graphs and multiformat playlists

NLB Originals
In-house production of content across formats

Restricted

R

Unification of different formats

Content Strategy

Phy-gital content for users across ages

Approach
Shaped by Audience (different age ranges) and What's core to NLB and part of WOG agenda

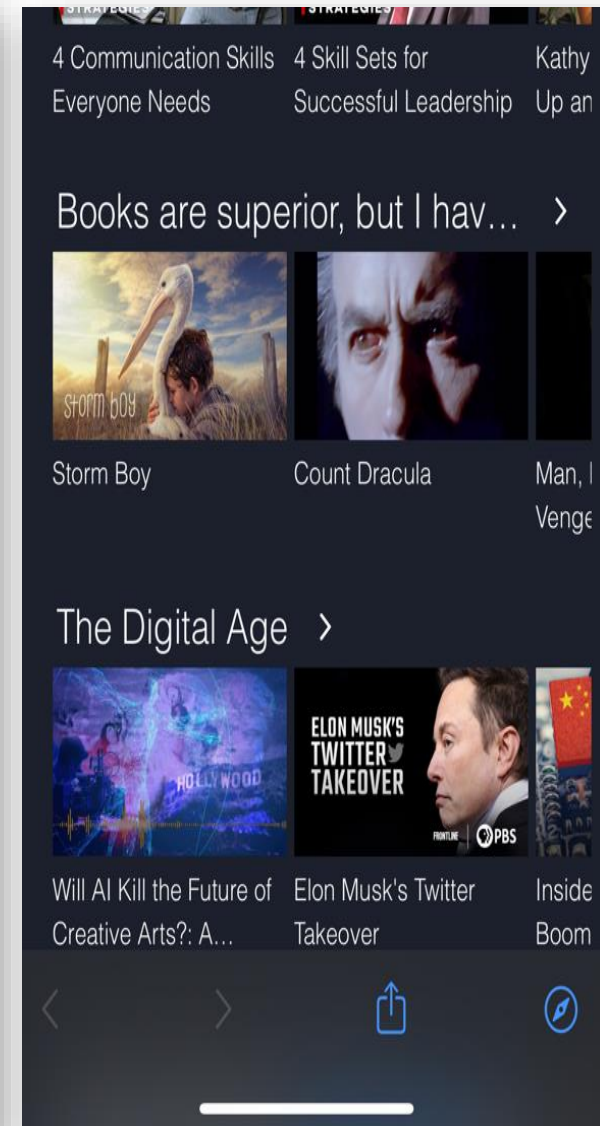**Collaborations**

To supplement and complement what we have

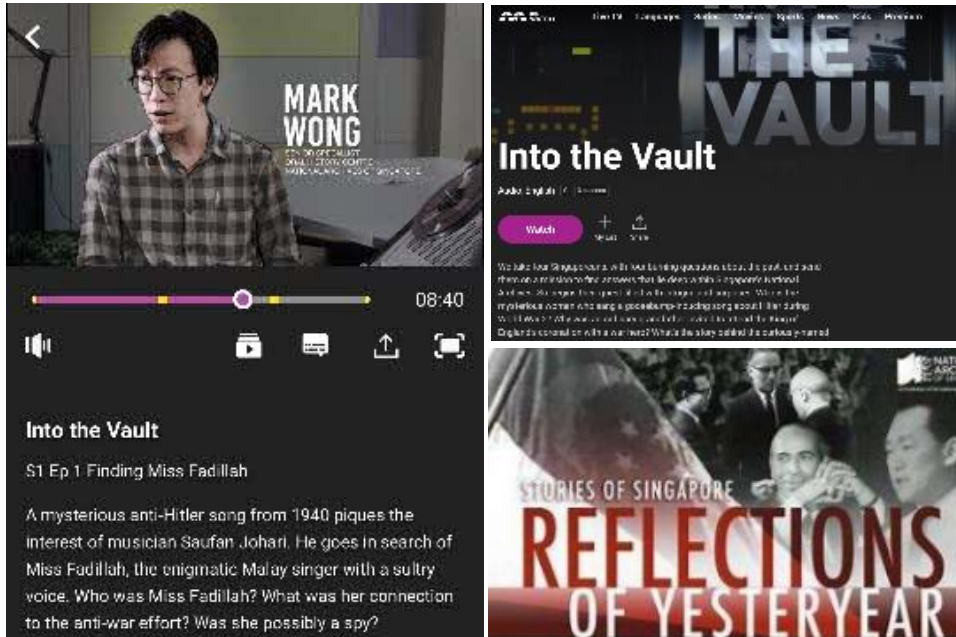**Partner-contributed**
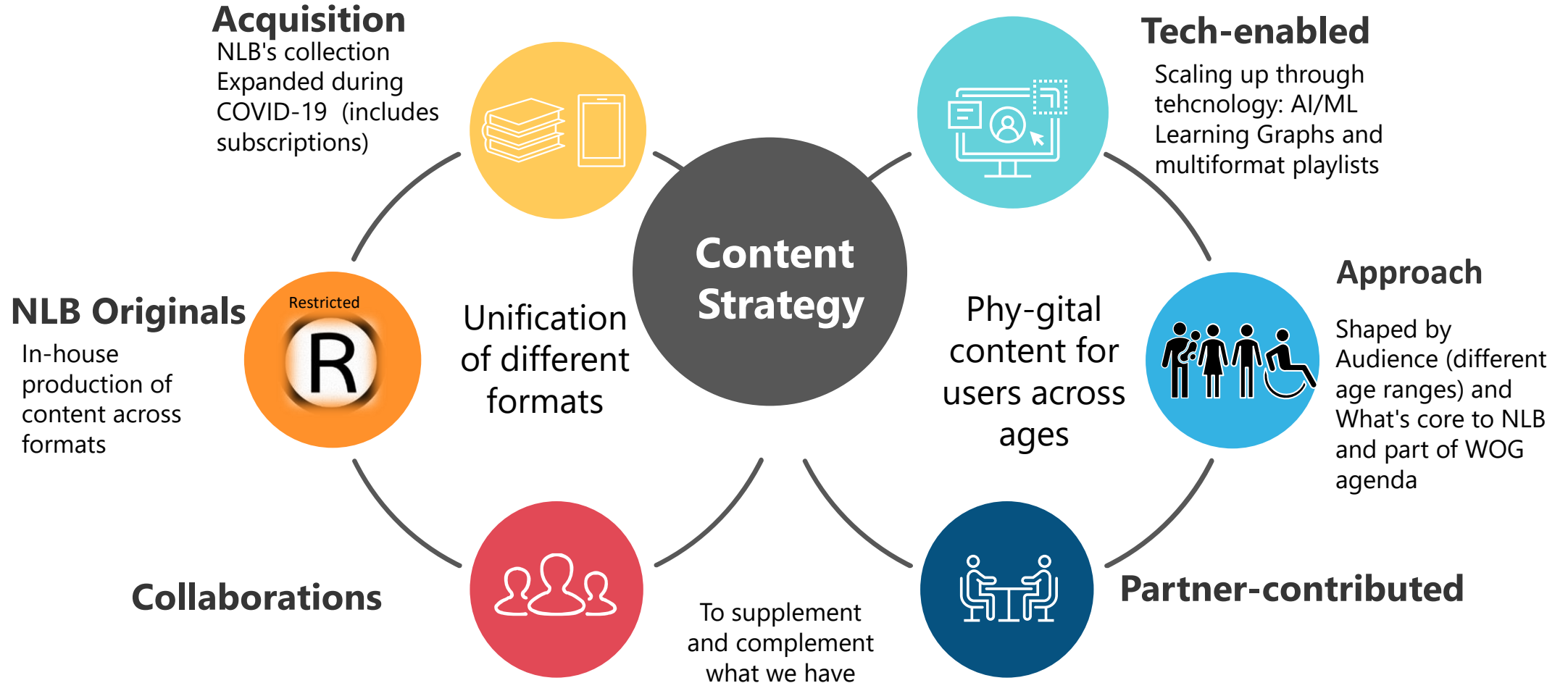
Different Formats Accessible on a Single Platform
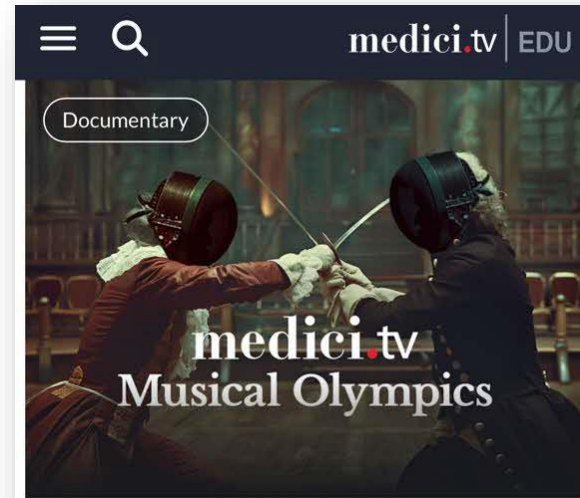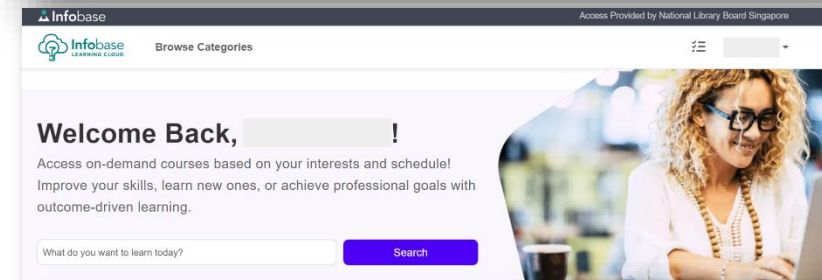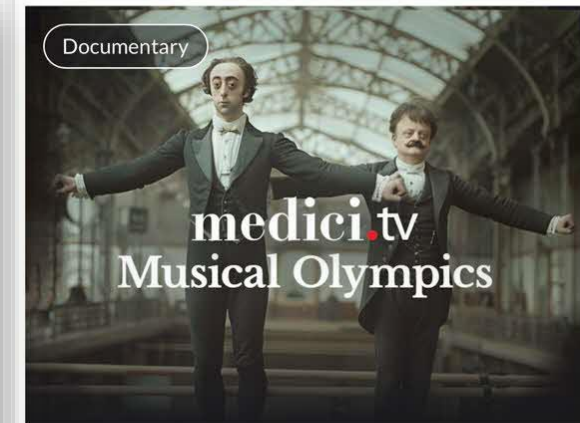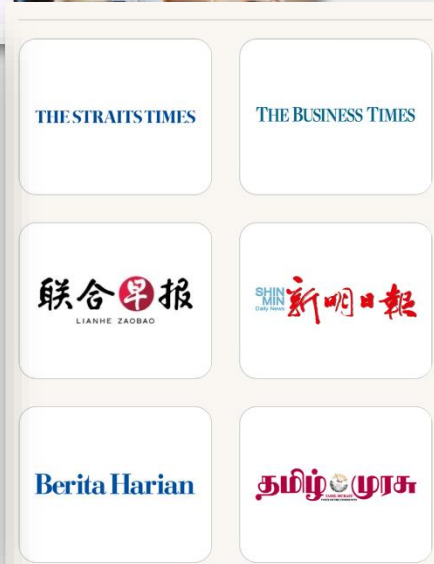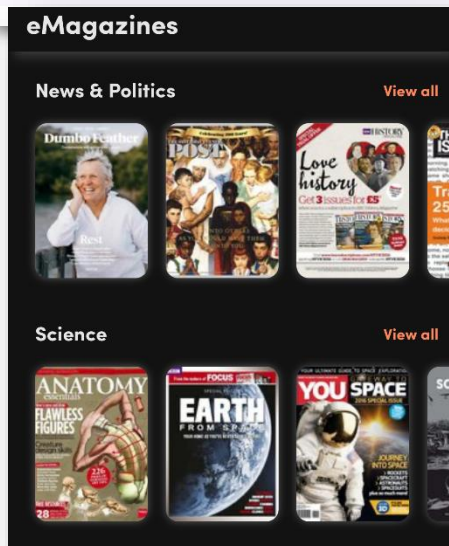
NLB Originals Renew Interest in Singapore Stories

Stream programmes containing **archival materials** along with **curated content** from the National Archives of Singapore. Available on MeWatch
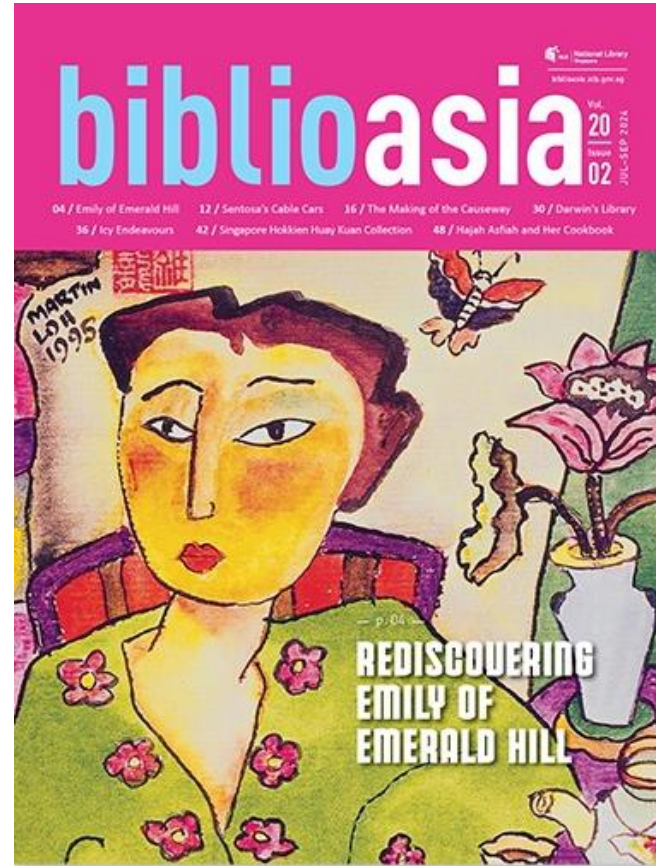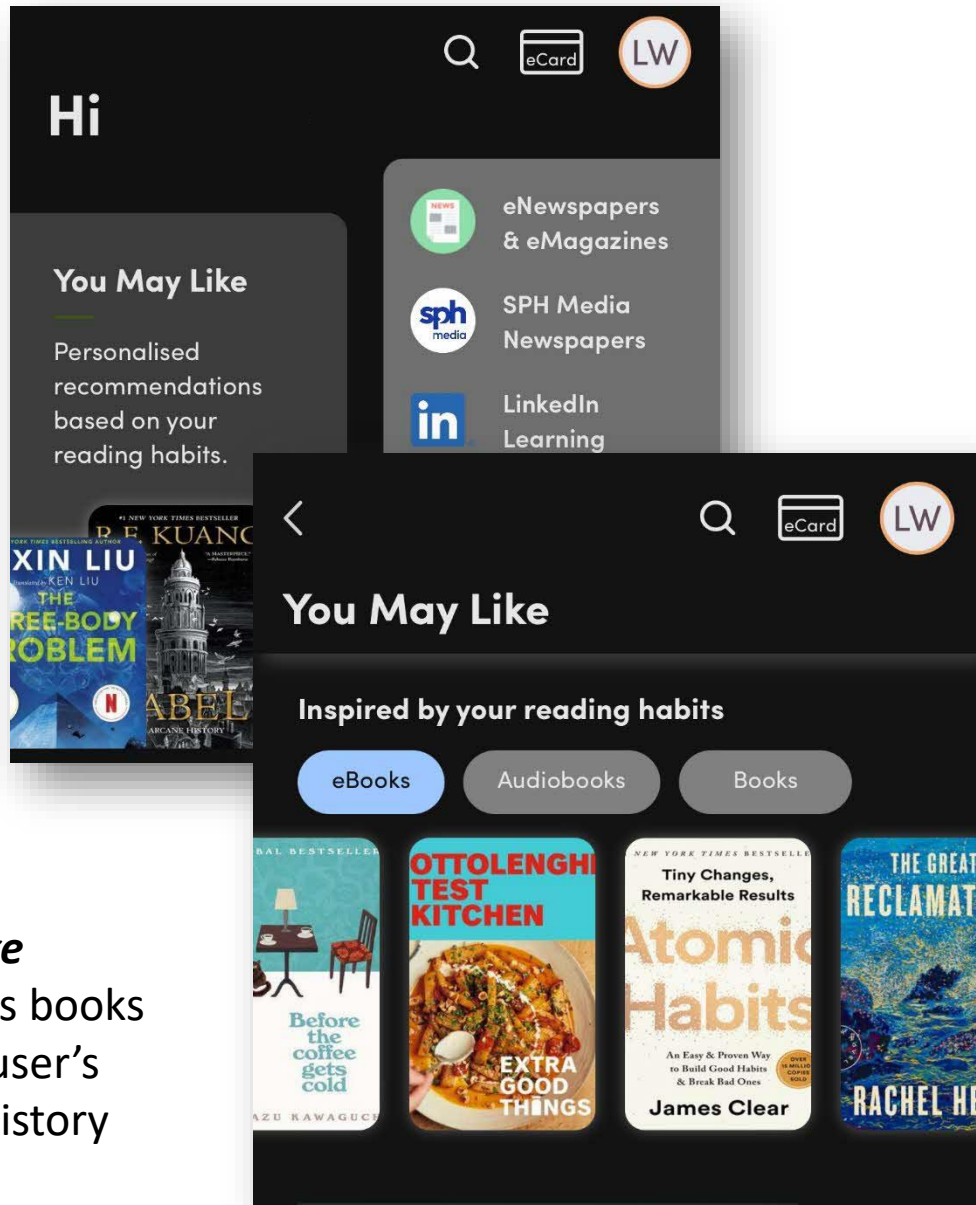

Publication with in-depth research and showcase of interesting material in the National Library's collection
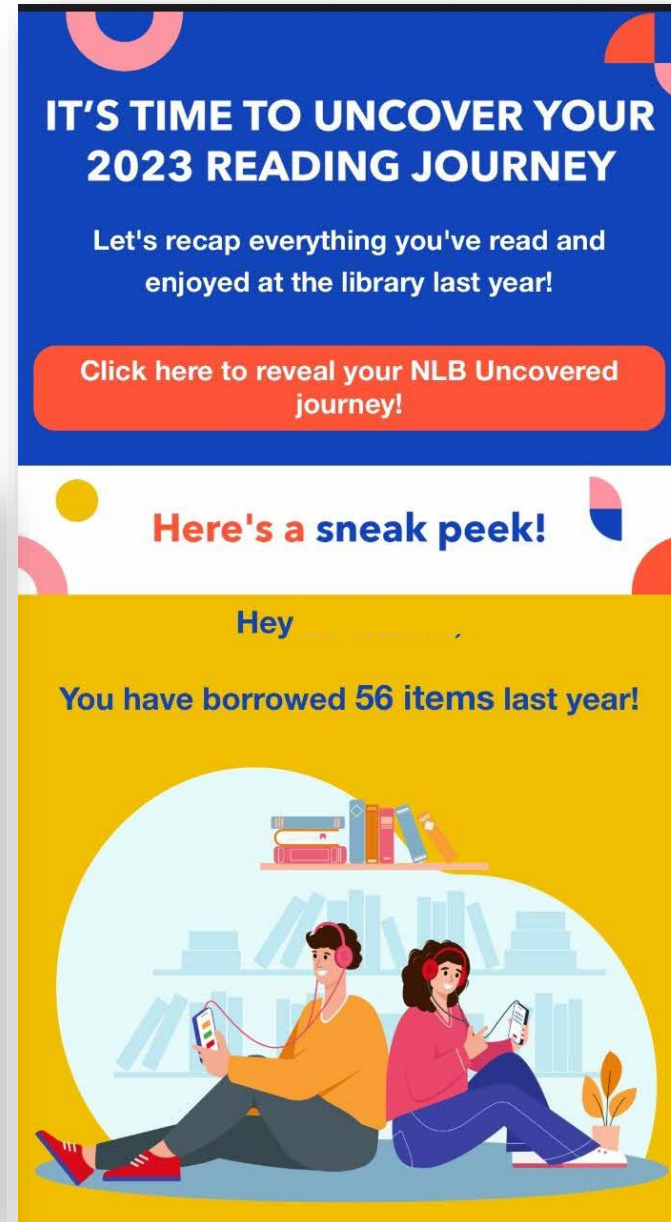

Engaging video series that features local chefs and heritage recipes

Personalized Content Discovery for Avid Users

You May Like
recommends books based on a user's borrowing history

NLB Uncovered
wraps up each user's borrowing habit over the past year into a visually appealing infographic

Content x GenAI

Have a chat with a digital archivist on one of Singapore's Founding Fathers, S. Rajaratnam.

Powered by GenAI using the rich collection from NLB and ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute

StoryGen : Experience GenAI through Stories

Users can generate a new spin to well-loved tales such as Attack of the Garfish, Badang, Little Red Riding Hood. Put these characters in local settings, select your favourite genre and artwork type, and watch the tale unfold

Suitable for children

What's next?

NLB will continue to transform and deliver value to our stakeholders

We invite you on this journey with us to discover new ideas and be inspired through our spaces, content and services

Question & Answer