Preface

Special libraries exist to provide information to professionals working in a special field of knowledge. In the absence of a professional colleague performing similar or related functions in the same institution, special librarians are on the lookout for professional associations and learning opportunities to continuously expand their knowledge and competencies.

The attention given to special libraries vary from country to country. Organizations such as the Special Libraries Association (SLA), known as one of the largest professional networking associations that encompass members from all continents, are at the forefront of changing the landscape for special libraries and information centers. Whilst SLA is mainly based in the USA and Canada, it has various chapters around the globe particularly in Asia, Arabian Gulf, Australia and New Zealand, Europe, and Sub-Saharan Africa.

Aside from SLA, there are other national library associations that focus their interest on special collections which aim to uplift the status of special libraries. In Europe, they have the Association of Information Management, a British Association of Special Libraries and the Norwegian Association of Special Libraries. In Asia, they have the Association of Special Libraries of the Philippines, Indian Association of Special Libraries and Information Centers, Japan Special Libraries Association, and Korea Special Library Association. The Australian Library and Information Association oversee the special library movement in their region.

These national and global library associations continue to expand and engage their members by allowing them to actively participate in their continuing professional education programs and knowledge sharing fora. At this vantage point, much experience has been gained from them and we want to look into how other special libraries and librarians have grown individually, as institutions and professionals, respectively.

In view of this, this publication is produced, aimed at becoming an essential reference source for the management of special libraries and knowledge providers in the age of information. This book intends to recognize the existing and ongoing trends, standards and technological advancements in special libraries and information
centers in many parts of the globe. It was conceived to highlight the recent developments and best practices in handling special libraries, knowledge repositories and information centers. This book is a product of a collaborative effort of special librarians and information professionals working around the world. Chapter contributions are about library and collection management, library standards and implementation, and integration of technology tools in special libraries and information centers.

The editors of this book felt that there is a need to contribute to the field of special libraries by documenting the experiences of the special libraries and librarians. A little bit of bias is sensed as most of the contributions came from Asia but rest assured that the objectives of the entire book is kept in mind, and the coverage of the topic is well balanced. This is also an opportunity for Asian librarians to be represented in the literature of special librarianship. It is known that most of the available literature on this subject comes from the Western part of the globe and this book aims to provide a venue for Asian librarians to share their valuable insights to the global arena.

The publication’s target audience are library policy, guidelines and standards makers; academicians; researchers; advanced level students; and practitioners in the field of Library and Information Science. We thought that these set of individuals will benefit from this work.

We have a mixed composition of editorial advisory board members based on their expertise in the field of library and information science. They have gained respect in their own rights as library professionals. Our set of reviewers was also selected purposely and composed of respected individuals in their fields. The time, effort and knowledge they devoted to this are incomparable and greatly appreciated.

Fourteen (14) chapters subdivided into six (6) sections were selected to be part of this book. The first two (2) chapters are on standards and competencies, followed by two (2) chapters on knowledge management and partnerships, two (2) on management of law libraries, three (3) on social media, one (1) on cloud-computing and four (4) chapters on various special topics.

Here’s what our readers can expect in the following chapters:

Section 1, “Standards and Competencies,” begins with a contribution from the Philippines. Chapter 1, entitled “Special Library Standards: the Philippine Scenario” talks about the process of formulating special library standards in the country. It discusses the role of the Philippines’ Professional Regulatory Board for Librarians (BFL) in reviewing the standards and monitoring of compliance by special libraries and librarians, as well as that of the various library associations in the country. The chapter highlights the urgent need and importance of establishing and most importantly, implementing standards in the operation of special libraries for the welfare of the industry and its stakeholders.
The next chapter under Section 1 is “Children and Youth Librarians: Competencies Required in Technology-Based Environment”. As its title implies, Chapter 2 focuses on the technological competencies and skills currently expected of librarians in the age of modern technology. It specifically discusses the case of the children and youth librarians at the Bibliotheca Alexandrina in Egypt and how they try to utilize various technologies in performing their roles as librarians and their evolving roles including teaching and research. Indeed, it is a must to integrate digital skills with the traditional teacher librarian expertise to meet the information demands of today’s fast-paced and high-tech environment.

Section 2 covers “Knowledge Management and Partnerships” wherein Chapter 3 features a perception study on the knowledge management programs of the selected private tertiary hospitals in the Philippines. The study focused on medical health librarians and the knowledge management programs of seven (7) major private tertiary hospitals in the Philippines. Entitled “Knowledge Management and the Medical Health Librarians: A Perception Study,” this chapter underscores the knowledge management programs implemented by healthcare organizations and the roles of medical health librarians in the performance and utilization of these programs. This also tackled the importance of knowledge management in the improvement of the health care delivery system.

Chapter 4 deals with the partnerships aspect under Section 2. “Special Library Consortia: A Resource Sharing Approach in an Electronic Milieu” talks about the rationale of resource sharing in the midst of the proliferation of electronic resources. Special library consortia are being organized to deal with budget constraints and user demand for electronic information services. This chapter provides an outlook of special library consortia and talks about issues faced in India and around the world. It offers ways on how to move forward despite the demands faced by the high cost of e-resources.

The next section zeroes in on a specific field of special librarianship. Section 3 deals with the “Management of Law Libraries” and begins with Chapter 5, a case study from Indonesia. “E-government Implementation on Law and Regulation Repository: Case Study in Indonesia” shares the country’s experience in adopting information technology to improve its government services. The country developed an institutional repository, and discussed the standards needed for the effective implementation of these systems. On the other hand, Chapter 6 proposes a Philippine model for law library consortia. Entitled “Law Library Consortium in Metro Manila: A Proposed Model and the Management of Law Libraries,” this chapter also discusses how managerial functions are exercised in law libraries in the Philippines and the need of law libraries to collaborate.
Section 4, composed of chapters 7-9, tackles “Social Media” and its tools. It begins with Chapter 7, “Maximizing Social Media Tools: Planning and Evaluating Social Media Strategies for Special Libraries,” which features selected social media tools appropriate for special libraries. It also recommends guidelines in planning social media campaigns and evaluating their impact. Chapter 8 deals with “Social Media and Special Collections: Exploring Presence, Prevalence and Practices in Academic Libraries.” This chapter provides insights on how social media is used or integrated in the delivery of special collections services. The findings provided an opportunity for researchers to discuss the importance of creating a model for designing an expanded study. The section ends with Chapter 9 which focuses on the “Social Media Literacy of Agricultural Librarians in the Philippines.” This chapter determines the technical competencies of agricultural librarians in the Philippines, particularly their social media literacy level.

Section 5’s lone chapter is on “Cloud computing.” Chapter 10, entitled “Cloud-Based Digital Library Era,” reviews the library services, problems and drives of change from the classical form to the digital one. It includes a comprehensive survey of digital libraries and discussion on the pros and cons of various cloud-based library system platforms, services management systems, innovative products and open environments.

The book’s final section covers various “Special Topics.” Section 6 starts with Chapter 11, “Local Studies Centers in the Philippines: An Introductory Text.” It identifies and describes the nature, practices and status of local studies centers and explores their role in the fields of history, culture and heritage studies in the Philippines. It also examines the impacts of their programs, projects, services, and activities on the study, development and promotion of the three abovementioned fields.

Chapter 12 is a special topic devoted to cartographic collections. In “Organizing the Cartographic Series – New Technical and Conceptual Contexts,” the author shares his project involving map libraries in France. The chapter emphasizes the need for better cataloging of map collections and tackles the challenges and issues in organizing them.

Chapter 13, a contribution by a renowned archivist in Japan, tackles “Preservation Management in Company Libraries.” This chapter delves into the best practices in managing and preserving corporate and special libraries, and the different approaches in dealing with the preservation of general and special collections.

The book ends with Chapter 14 which features a Malaysian news agency library. This chapter with the title “Special Libraries Contribution: Profiling Prominent Malaysians in BLIS’s Who’s Who” showcases the experiences of the InfoLibNews, an information centre for news, in creating a Who’s Who module which provides information on prominent personalities in Malaysia.
In conclusion, this book is a combination of varied topics in the field of special librarianship but all aligned with the theme of library administration, standardization and technological integration. It illustrates how special libraries and information centers around the world face the challenges that come with the continuously evolving landscape of special librarianship and information services, especially as the digital age continues to advance. It is hoped that the experiences and learnings on the practices in various areas of special librarianship that are discussed and documented in this book will provide valuable insights to special library practitioners, professionals, educators, and students. The guidelines and strategies contained herein can serve as references and models in furthering the delivery of quality information services in the special library industry. We also hope that this publication can help spark more interest and stimulate further studies and research in the field of special librarianship.

The length of time devoted to this book made us realize that everything is indeed possible if we work together in achieving one purposeful goal. Despite our busy schedules as full-time librarians and information professionals, we agreed to meet once in a while to push-through with this project.

This is being seen as a humble contribution to the field where we belong.

_The Editors_
_May 18, 2015_