



**Libraries**

# Highlights 2025



**Amplifying Impact, Enriching Community**



# Message from University Librarian

If you walked into our library at 3PM on any given day during term time in the year 2025, you would have found yourself in the middle of something extraordinary. You would have encountered people reading, writing, collaborating, creating, or simply being together. That captures what SMU Libraries has become: not just a place where knowledge lives, but a place where people come alive with purpose.

We are deeply proud of what this community accomplished this past year. Our Institutional Knowledge repository crossed 10 million downloads, which means SMU research is now informing decisions at the United Nations, the OECD, and the Government of Singapore. Ideas born in our classrooms and research institutes are shaping policy and lives far beyond our campus. That is the power of open access, and it is a responsibility we do not take lightly.

But what moves us most are the stories behind the numbers. The researchers who showed up week after week and finally finished that long-overdue draft. The freshmen who arrived uncertain and left HeadStart: UniReady a little more confident. The student assistant who pitched a wild idea about a

dinosaur mascot—then put on the costume herself to make it happen. These moments remind us why we do what we do.

As SMU celebrated its 25th anniversary, we also looked inward, launching SMUseum to preserve our institutional story, welcoming new art that turns our spaces into places of contemplation, and sharing what we've learned with library leaders from around the world. We were reminded that libraries are at their best when they give generously: of knowledge, of space, and of care.

Happy Reading,  
Shameem Nilofar,  
University Librarian



# At a Glance

## A thriving community

**1.3 million**  
library visits

**3% growth**  
in 2025

The  
3PM rush:  
Our Busiest Time

157k  
annual entries  
during this hour

## Amplifying SMU Research

**1.4 million**  
papers & data sets downloads in 2025

**10 million**  
accumulative downloads

from InK<sup>1</sup> & RDR<sup>2</sup>

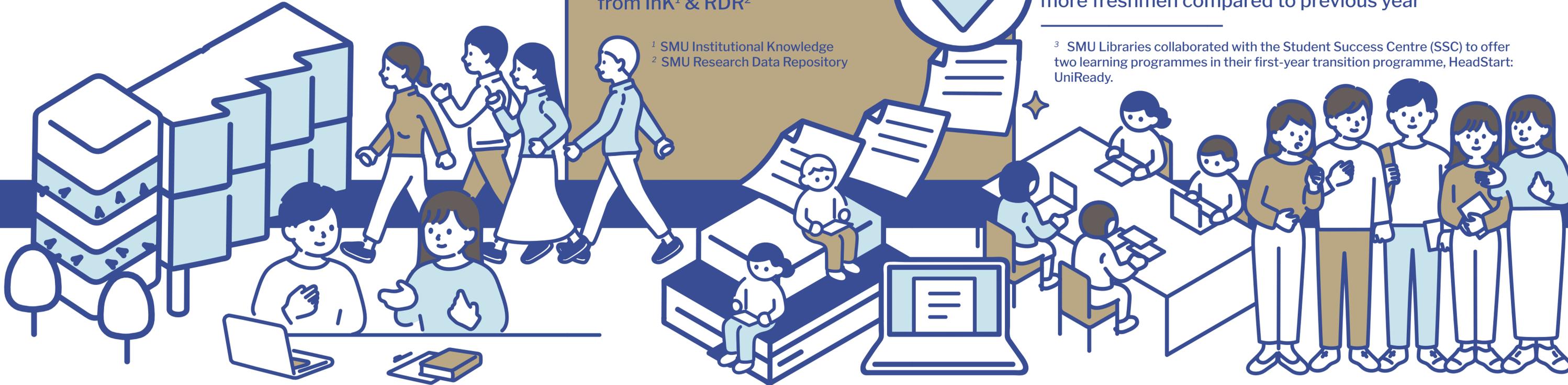
<sup>1</sup> SMU Institutional Knowledge  
<sup>2</sup> SMU Research Data Repository

## Engaging Incoming Freshmen

**375**  
incoming freshmen participated in  
**Head Start: UniReady<sup>3</sup>** programme in 2025

Engaging  
**23%**  
more freshmen compared to previous year

<sup>3</sup> SMU Libraries collaborated with the Student Success Centre (SSC) to offer two learning programmes in their first-year transition programme, HeadStart: UniReady.



# Amplifying Research Globally

SMU Libraries actively amplify the university's research by ensuring SMU scholarships are open and accessible. We empower researchers, policymakers, and organisations worldwide to leverage our research for meaningful impact, contributing to advancements that shape economies and societies everywhere.

## Expanding Access and Impact: Open Access and Global Reach

### Open Access

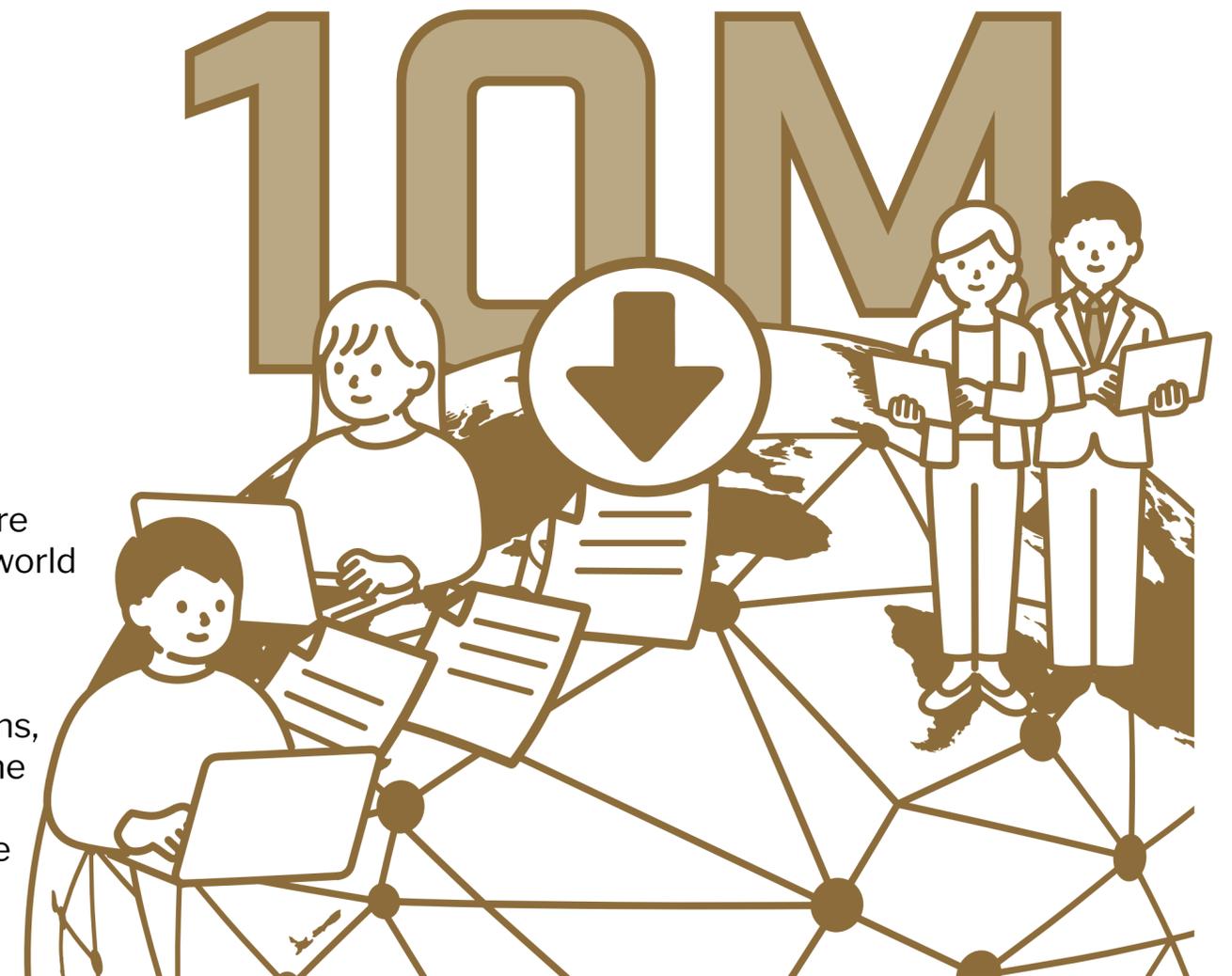
To further the reach of open access, SMU Libraries, together with the Office of the Provost and the Office of Research, launched Article Processing Charge (APC) support.

This initiative ensures that SMU faculty members, staff and students can get support for the Article Processing Charges (APC) when publishing in top-tier journals, ensuring SMU research remains accessible to all.

### National and Global Reach

SMU's Institutional Knowledge InK) surpassed **10 million in 2025** and we are celebrating not just numbers, but real-world impact.

The Government of Singapore and organisations such as the United Nations, OECD, Asian Development Bank, and the European Central Bank are citing SMU research to inform decisions that shape policy, economies and societies.



# Supporting the Diverse Needs of Researchers

## Community Impact: Tangible Outcomes for Researchers

### Productivity Gains

SMU Researcher Club organised a nine-week "Shut Up and Write" initiative to boost research productivity through communal writing sessions. Each week, groups of researchers gathered to work toward self-defined writing goals set at the beginning of each session, resulting in the completion of drafts for papers and theses.

**77% of the participants indicated strong interest in repeating the programme, citing the accountability and peer support as major benefits.**

Research can be a solitary journey; we strive to make it a communal one. |SMU Libraries co-founded SMU Researcher Club in 2024 to champion the professional and personal development of SMU's research community. In its second year, this dedicated team of librarians and researchers (also the winner of the SMU Team Excellence Award 2024) continued to engage research staff and postgraduate students through a series of targeted initiatives.



### Skill Building

SMU Researcher Club actively upskilled the research community in the digital competencies defining modern scholarship.

This ranged from conducting technical workshops on open-source tools like Quarto and RStudio for reproducible reporting, organising seminars on responsible AI usage in scholarly publishing and demos of emerging AI tools for research.

### Career Mobility

The Researcher Club explored professional development through an "Inside Research Careers" panel discussion. The event aimed to bridge the gap between academia and industry, with panellists from global firms like Arup and experienced academia, offering critical hiring insights to researchers transitioning careers.

# Enriching the Campus Experience

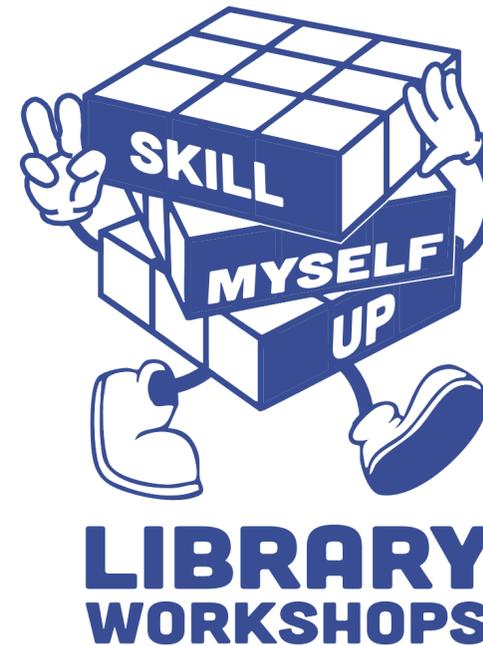
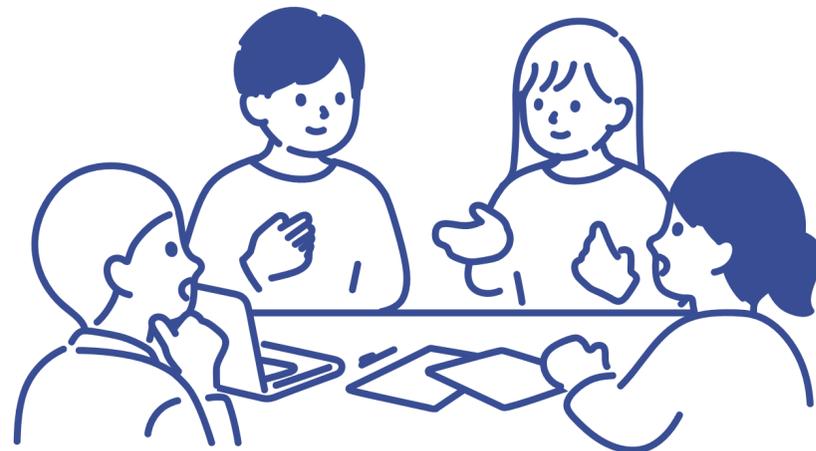
SMU Libraries continue to enhance the campus experience through active learning and bridging artistic practice with scholarly research.

## Active Learning

### Educational Escape Room

We turned information literacy into a 90-minute game ("Can you escape?"), challenging students to "escape" by mastering information literacy skills. The result?

**An increase in self-efficacy, with students reporting higher confidence in citing and evaluating sources.**



### Skill Myself Up

We restructured our signature Bite-Sized workshops under the new name of Skill Myself Up, offering four distinct tracks and defined complexity levels to help learners navigate topics from data to emerging subjects. The introduction of digital badges for completing selected workshops series provided additional motivation.

**These enhancements successfully drove a 14% increase in attendance, with 66% of participants indicating they would recommend Skill Myself Up workshops to their peers.**

## Cultivating Cultural and Intellectual Vibrancy

### Preserving Digital Heritage

SMU Libraries embarked on an initiative to ensure "born digital" material with institutional historical value remains accessible by creating SMUseum – a dedicated platform for the preservation, curation, and maintenance of SMU's institutional history. SMUseum was launched as part of the university's 25th anniversary in collaboration with the Silver Jubilee Taskforce.

The project team took a narrative approach of showcasing SMU's history through three distinct lenses: People (visionaries and alumni), Places (physical landmarks), and Purpose (SMU's role in the education landscape).

The showcase highlighted how SMUseum is more than a digital archive; it is a dynamic resource that both safeguards and celebrates SMU's rich heritage for future generations.

### Enriching the University's Cultural Landscape

SMU Art Collection expanded with the Thukhuma Collection (230 paintings from Myanmar donated by Ian Holliday) and a loan of 43 works by Cultural Medallion recipient Milenko Prvački. These new additions provide students with a window into different cultures and encourage quiet contemplation.

### 25x25 Initiative

Celebrating SMU's 25th anniversary, SMU Libraries launched a campus-wide place-making initiative, featuring a self-guided audio tour of 25 key artworks and a student exhibition that encouraged participants to draw personal connections between the art and their own experiences, fostering deeper community engagement with the campus art collection.



### Art as Inquiry

We empowered students to translate research into visual experiences. Exhibitions included Renee Tan's *Maladies of Rest* (an immersive thesis installation exploring narrative design and the sociology of rest in global cities) and Hong Huazheng's *The Light*

*Between Us* (a photo-documentary centred on the theme of poverty and development and utilised double-exposure photography to visualise the tension between prosperity and precarity in Singapore).



# What is a Dinosaur Doing in the Library?

## This is Dino.

Rather than leaving his bag behind to reserve seat, **he takes it with him**, respecting the other users in the Libraries.

Very demure,  
very mindful -  
**Be like Dino.**



A dinosaur entered the library and it caught everyone's eye (which is exactly what we wanted).

As a student assistant at the SMU Libraries' help desk, there was a time where we noticed a growing mismatch between user etiquette and house rules.

The question was: how do we remind everyone of the rules without sounding boring or negative?

The key challenge was:

- Using faces could potentially come across as discriminatory
- Etiquette posters are easy to ignore

**Beyond structured programmes, SMU Libraries foster an environment where students can apply what they learn to real-life challenges.**

**Our annual library etiquette campaign is co-created with student assistants, resulting in a fresh approach that communicates through humor, creativity, and peer authenticity.**

As we brainstormed solutions, somehow everything clicked all at once and I remembered our unused library mascot (the Dino!) and pitched the following idea:

What if we used the "Be Like Ben" meme framework with our library Dino to highlight library etiquette? By doing so:

- ✓ No one is put in a negative light
- ✓ Makes library etiquette memorable
- ✓ Grabs attention with a familiar meme framework

The library management loved it and the next thing I know, I was going to be suited up as the Dino!

Low Chiou Jiing led the creative direction and designed each poster which we then pasted together across the library. 🦖

The best part? Witnessing actionable impact as users walk in, giggle at the Dino, and rethink before bringing food or reserving spots. (Little did they know the Dino under the mask was right in front of them! 🦖)

Huge thanks to SMU Libraries for the opportunity; never thought my first marketing campaign would happen in the library, let alone as a 🦖!

#SMULibraries #SayNoToSeatHogging

*Aashritha Varma*

Library Student Assistant

# Global Leadership in Librarianship

SMU Libraries continued to build capacity within the library profession across the region and beyond.

## Journeying with Emerging Library Leaders

The third iteration of the Emerging Library Leaders' Summer School (ELLSSA) continued to build on its reputation as a professional development programme for emerging library leaders. This year's programme saw more participants from Asia-Pacific and beyond, including Switzerland, Hong Kong and China, highlighting its international reach.

The mentorship component of the programme has consistently proved to be a major draw for professionals seeking to advance within the library sector.

Many participants appreciated the guidance and expert insights offered by experienced leaders in the field.

## Extending Institutional Expertise

SMU Libraries extended our expertise to a wider audience by launching an online Masterclass series. The five-part programme addressed the critical dimensions of modern librarianship: AI in academic search, strategic vendor negotiation, university rankings and research impact, instructional design frameworks, and collaborative leadership.

## Cross-Border Exchange

We strengthened international ties by hosting 18 University Librarians from Nigeria (AULNU) for a two-day experiential learning programme on digital transformation and stakeholder engagement.

**I found the practical insights into how libraries are evolving to support student learning, research productivity, and digital transformation most valuable.**

**I especially enjoyed the interactive sessions on technology innovations and the discussions on student engagement strategies.**

*Participant, AULNU experiential learning programme.*



# Professional Appointments

## Asia Pacific Business School Librarians' Group (APBSLG)

Sumita Govindan,  
*Co-Chair*

Redzuan Abdullah,  
*Member*

## Charleston Advisor (renamed Katina) Editorial Board

Aaron Tay,  
*Editor*

## Clarivate Academia AI Advisory Council

Aaron Tay,  
*Member*

## CORE Advisory Board

Aaron Tay,  
*Member*

## EconBiz

Melody Chin,  
*Member*

Rajen Munoo,  
*Member*

## FORCE 11

Bella Ratmelia,  
*Board Member*

Dong Danping,  
*Member*

## Library Association of Singapore (LAS)

Shameem Nilofar,  
*President*

Rajen Munoo,  
*Member, Awards Panel*

Salihin Mohammed Ali,  
*Honorary Secretary*

Samantha Seah,  
*Member, IT Committee*

Yeo Eng Ling Lynn,  
*Honorary Treasurer*

## Library Carpentry

Bella Ratmelia,  
*Certified Instructor*

Dong Danping,  
*Certified Instructor*

## Libraries of ASEAN Universities Network (AUNILO)

Shameem Nilofar,  
*Secretariat*

## IATUL Special Interest Group for Leadership (SIG-L)

Rajen Munoo,  
*Member*

## IGeLU (International Group of Ex Libris Users)

Samantha Seah,  
*Co-Chair, Rialto Working Group & Conference Organiser*

## Open Education Global (OEGlobal)

Melody Chin,  
*Awards Review Committee*

## Open Educational Resources Special Interest Group (OER-SIG)

Melody Chin,  
*Co-Chair*

## Singapore Alliance of University Libraries (SAUL)

Bryan Leow,  
*Member, Research Support Task Force*

Nazimah Ram Nath,  
*Member, Copyright*

Vincent Ong,  
*Member, Resource Sharing*

Ooi Kooi Cheng,  
*Member, eResources*

Salihin Bin Mohamed Ali,  
*Member, Technology*

# Presentation, Report and Others

## Presentation

**ABDULLAH, Redzuan.** From data to discovery: empowering research with comprehensive library services at SMU Libraries. (2025). *International Conference on Economics and Business Information, Berlin, 2025 May 15-16.* 1-20.

**MAIDEEN, Shameem Nilofar.** Beyond a chapter: Libraries as key characters in SMU's sustainability saga. (2025). *Empowering Academic Research and Publishing on SDGs and the Library Support, University Muhammadiyah Malang, Indonesia, 2025 February 12.* 1-19.

**MAIDEEN, Shameem Nilofar.** Innovate, collaborate, lead: The global library leaders' toolkit. (2025). *2025 Forum on Future of World Academic Libraries (WAL), Nanjing, China, July 8-9.* 1-28.

**MAIDEEN, Shameem Nilofar.** Nurturing change makers: Best practices from SMU Libraries. (2025). *Dalub-Aklat: The 2025 UP Librarians Conference, Manila, Philippines, July 25.* 1-30.

**TAY, Aaron.** AI assisted literature review tools for undergraduates: Restrict, embrace or curate?. (2025). *Business Librarians Association (BLA) Summer Conference, University of Stirling, 2025 June 25-27.* 1-57.

**TEE, Lip Hwe.** Financial data stewardship: A librarian's approach to data discovery and a call for coding as a path to data comprehension and verification. (2025). *50th Annual Conference of IASSIST IASSIST at 50! Bridging oceans, harboring data & anchoring the future Bristol, UK, 2025 June 3-6.* 1-35.

**Yeo, Pin Pin; Liu, Suqing; and Amaritworachai, Pimnapa.** PRRLA members digital preservation landscape. (2025). *Pacific Rim Research Libraries Alliance (PRRLA) Annual Meeting 2025, Tohoku University, Sendai, October 29-31.* 1-21.

## Book Review

**LEOW, Chin Seng Bryan and LAU, Kwan Ho.** Han-Wei Liu & Weiping He. Australian banking and finance law and regulation. (2025). *Brawijaya Law Journal.* 12, (1), 176-179.

## News Article

**RATMELIA, Bella.** Why university libraries should not overlook research staff. (2025). *Times Higher Education.*

## Report

**Yeo, Pin Pin; Liu, Suqing; and Amaritworachai, Pimnapa.** Report on Assessing the Digital Preservation Landscape and Capacity of PRRLA Libraries. (2025). 1-33.

Available at  
[https://ink.library.smu.edu.sg/library\\_research](https://ink.library.smu.edu.sg/library_research)

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Li Ka Shing Library  
70 Stamford Road  
Singapore Management University  
Singapore 178901

[library.smu.edu.sg](https://library.smu.edu.sg)

