

**Transcript of speech by
Minister of Communications and Information Mrs Josephine Teo
at Singapore Book Fair 2022 and Youths Help Seniors Go Digital Workshop (5 June)**

CEO, SPH Media Group, Ms Teo Lay Lim
Editor-in-Chief, Chinese Media Group, SPH Media Trust Ms Lee Huay Leng
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Colleagues and friends from Singapore
Friends joining us virtually from afar

Speech is delivered in Chinese, except for paragraphs 11-12 in English

1. Good afternoon. I am happy to join you at this year's Singapore Book Fair.
2. The theme of this year's Book Fair is "Re-Start". Because of COVID-19, the Book Fair had to pivot online for the past two years. Finally, with the easing of the safe management measures this year, the Book Fair can return to a physical format, which all of us, booklovers and authors alike, have all missed.
3. Fittingly, SPH has chosen to locate the Book Fair for the first time at one of our most iconic libraries, the National Library. This is a place where our nation nurtures a love for reading amongst all citizens. You also have an additional venue at the Bras Basah Complex next door – another first in the Book Fair's history. I understand that you have a line-up of virtual activities, so that overseas authors and booklovers can continue to join us. With all these new efforts, and your experiences gained from organising virtual fairs amid COVID-19, I am sure that the Book Fair will "Re:start" and bring new surprises to readers!

Importance of Reading

4. The Book Fair increasingly takes place in a world where digitalisation pervades every aspect of our lives, changing the way we live, work and play. It is natural to ask ourselves, do books and book fairs still have a place in our society? Will our future generations still appreciate reading as much as we do, especially when other media – including non-stop social media interactions, on-demand video content, and online gaming – compete for their attention?
5. These are valid concerns. Yet, whenever we ask these, it is also helpful to remind ourselves of the enduring value of books and reading.
6. At the individual level, reading exposes us to new ideas. It challenges our thinking, allowing us to reflect and gain a better understanding of both ourselves and the world around us. As we are inundated with information – and misinformation – the ability to read and learn from trusted sources uplifts our skills and capabilities and sharpens our discernment. In challenging times, such as the pandemic, reading frequently provides answers to our most difficult questions; and can bring solace to wearied minds and souls. When I was a teenager, San Mao's works invoked my curiosity on how people found meaning and purpose in their lives. When I was a young mother, I



remembered how I had turned to books for answers on how to be a better parent. When my children entered their teens, Lung Ying-tai's *Dear Andreas* prepared me mentally on what was to be expected when raising youths. Now for work, I need to understand the opportunities and challenges brought about by digitalisation, and answers frequently present themselves in books, including e-books – instead through search engines. Books may not offer direct answers, but they never fail to help us think more sharply!

7. For parents and their young, reading is not only a good way to stimulate our children's minds. It is also an important way for us to bond; and transmit our treasured values from generation to generation.

8. As a society, it is of utmost importance to have our own local literature. It reflects Singapore's lived experiences, joys and challenges, and allows us to appreciate different perspectives and connect with one another at a deep and meaningful level.

Empowering Singaporeans to Learn

9. This is why NLB will never rest on our laurels to promote reading and learning amongst our citizens. Our libraries are constantly evolving to stay relevant. Last year, we launched LAB25, or the Libraries and Archives Blueprint 2025, to transform our libraries and archives into an omni-channel network so that Singaporeans can read and learn anytime and anywhere. Singaporeans can tap on the vast digital resources available on the NLB Mobile App. Learning nodes are also set up outside the libraries - in parks, shopping malls and other public spaces. LAB25 also strives to build an "Informed Citizenry" by enhancing information literacy amongst Singaporeans, as well as nurture "Singapore Storytellers" by nurturing a stronger appreciation and understanding of the Singapore experience amongst our people.

10. However, to nurture an informed citizenry that is curious and hungry for knowledge, government efforts alone are not sufficient. Hence, I am thankful for SPH Media Trust's steadfast efforts in growing our reading community - by partnering like-minded partners, like Federation of Merchants' Associations and Heartland Enterprise Centre Singapore - to hold this Book Fair. The Fair, which has been held for almost 40 years, is an important platform for our local authors and book publishers to showcase their talents; and for our community to immerse themselves in a literary environment, where they can connect, share and even co-create with local and international book communities!

11. Now, please allow me to say a few words in English. Last weekend, Parliamentary Secretary Rahayu and I were at Singapore's first-ever Digital for Life Festival. That event shared many similarities with today's Book Fair. It was also a platform that brought together people to learn and explore, and to better equip ourselves in this digital age.

12. I am heartened to note that in this Book Fair, the SPH Chinese Media Group is also organising a second run of the Youths Help Seniors Go Digital workshop. The workshop was first held in April 2022 and had gathered good responses from our senior participants who were keen to learn digital skills. I am told that the number of participants has doubled to 120 participants this time. Thank you to the trainers from Lianhe Zaobao and students from Ngee Ann Polytechnic for contributing to the Digital for Life movement. As more reading and learning happen online, the skills taught at such workshops will be much needed. Moving forward, NLB will work with more partners, including tech companies, to equip our citizens with the necessary digital skills to engage with emerging technology.



13. Let me end by thanking you once again for inviting me today. Like many of you here today, I am excited to start touring the Fair. For example, illustrator Ah Guo's new work. I love his intricate drawings and imaginative storyline filled with childlike wonder.

14. I hope you will all be inspired by these and the many other writers featured at the Fair. Happy reading and happy learning for all of us! Thank you!

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Original speech

新报业媒体集团总裁张丽琳女士

新报业媒体信托华文媒体集团社长李慧玲女士

国家图书馆管理局总裁黄子鹏先生

来自新加坡和远方的来宾及朋友们

1. 大家下午好！很高兴和大家一起出席今年的新加坡书展。
2. 今年的书展主题是“新起点”。因为冠病疫情的关系，过去两年，书展都是在线上举行。今年，书展终于能回归实体。我们这些爱书之人终于能聚在一起。对大家来说，无疑是一个期待已久的好消息！
3. 此外，我也高兴看到书展首次在这里和比邻的“书城”百盛楼举行。这两个文化地标都和培养国人阅读爱好有着密切的关系。主办单位也安排了一系列的线上活动。结合了今年双地点的新模式，加上之前举办线上书展的经验，我相信，今年的书展 必定能从“新起点”出发，为读者带来更多的惊喜！

阅读的重要性

4. 今时今日，数码科技已经彻底改变人们生活的方方面面。有人难免会问：书展和书本在人们心中还有重要的地位吗？大家可以在社交媒体上接收信息、交流互动、看网上视频、玩线上游戏… 内容选项让人目不暇接。大家还看书吗？



5. 这些都是值得我们思考的问题。但在我们提出这些问题时，也应该坚信深度阅读的永久价值，以及它所带给我们的不可磨灭的精神财富。
6. **对个人而言**，在科技日新月异的时代，阅读让我们增广见闻，与时俱进。在信息爆炸的时代，从可靠的信息来源获取资讯，让我们有分辨是非真伪的能力。在充满挑战的时代，如疫情期间，阅读帮助我们解答难题，并让我们疲惫的心灵得到安慰。我还记得，当我还是一名懵懂少年时，三毛的作品，让我好奇人们是如何找到自己生命的意义，如何形成个人的信念？我也记得，当我初为人母时，措手不及的感觉。当时，我积极地看书，尝试从书中寻找答案，学习当一名好家长。孩子步入青春期时，龙应台的《亲爱的安德烈》让我做好心理准备。现在我在工作上，特别需要了解数码时代为我们带来的机遇和挑战，但很多时候，答案不是在网上搜寻到的，而是在阅读书本时想到的。这当然包括了电子书，可见“书中自有黄金屋”的说法并未过时，反而有了新的意义。
7. **对家长和孩子来说**，阅读不仅能启发孩子的智力，它也能增进亲子关系；以及帮助我们传承可贵的价值观。
8. **对一个社会而言**，拥有属于自己的文学作品是至关重要的。它们往往反映了社会的面貌，让我们一窥社会里的人生百态让我们深入理解社会里不同的观点，从而拉近彼此的距离。

增强国人的学习能力



9. 有鉴于此，国家图书馆管理局不遗余力，在本地提倡阅读和学习的风气。为了跟上时代的步伐，去年，我们推出了“图书馆及档案馆蓝图2025”（LAB25），让国人通过多个渠道，使用图书馆和档案馆的资源，随时随地阅读和学习。这包括提供丰富数码资源的国家图书馆手机应用程序。另外，图书馆更善用科技，把资源带到公园、购物商场等公共空间，鼓励大家在忙碌的生活里抽出一些时间阅读。蓝图也致力加强全国的资讯素养，以及推广专属新加坡的故事和内容。因为，我们意识到培养本地作家和推广本土文学的重要性。
10. 然而，要培养富有好奇心和求知欲的人民，光靠政府的努力是不足够的。因此，我很感谢新报业媒体信托在过去近40年来，坚持举办书展，为培养更多本地读者的不懈努力。新加坡书展是一个让本地作家施展才华的平台，也是一个让读者有机会沉浸在书香之中，与海内外作家和读者互动、学习的平台。我知道，在这条道路上，新报业媒体信托也结交了不少志同道合的朋友，如新加坡全国商联总会（Federation of Merchants' Associations）和新加坡邻里企业中心（Heartland Enterprise Centre Singapore），让今年的书展能在百盛楼举行。
11. Now, please allow me to say a few words in English. Last weekend, Parliamentary Secretary Rahayu and I were at Singapore's first-ever Digital for Life Festival. That event shared many similarities with today's Book Fair. It was also a platform that brought together people to learn and explore, and to better equip ourselves in this digital age, in support of one another.
12. I am heartened to note that in this Book Fair, the SPH Chinese Media Group is also organising a second run of the Youths Help Seniors Go Digital workshop. The workshop was first held in April 2022 and had gathered good responses from our senior participants who were keen to learn digital skills. I am told that the number of participants has doubled to 120 participants this time. Thank you to the trainers



from Lianhe Zaobao and students from Ngee Ann Polytechnic for contributing to the Digital for Life movement. As more reading and learning happen online, the skills taught at such workshops will be much needed. Moving forward, NLB will work with more partners, including tech companies, to equip our citizens with the necessary digital skills to engage with emerging technology.

13. 最后，我要再次感谢主办单位今天的邀请。和在座的各位一样，我已迫不及待想要参观书展。比如本地插画家阿果的最新作品。我很喜欢他精细的画工和在作品里所流露的童真 及想象力。
14. 我希望大家都能从作家们的作品中得到启发。祝大家阅读愉快，满载而归！谢谢！

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