New Short Story Dispenser: Enhancing Community Experience and Engagement in a Sustainable Way

By Leo F.H. Ma, Linda Foong Yin Lee, Sue Man Fung, Katherine Man Yin Chu, and Violet Ying Lok Yeung, The Chinese University of Hong Kong Library

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MARC fields. For example, some items were cataloged with RBMS-controlled vocabularies while others were cataloged with similar but slightly different Library of Congress terms. I used the alphabetical subject list in DSpace to pinpoint which terms needed to be reconciled.

Over about seven months, the artists' books digital library on DSpace grew to 355 items. Moving forward, I plan to gather feedback from the professor teaching the artists' books course once it is offered again. Before the completion of the project, a student organization from the Art Department used the digital library for a recent Reading Room visit. Such usage suggests the value of the resource in helping to break barriers to accessing visual media in a closed-stack system. As a special collections library that emphasizes the significance of materiality, the SWC/SCL intends this artists' books digital library to serve as a reference tool, not a replacement, for our collection. It is arguably difficult, if not impossible, to replicate the artist's book experience in a virtual environment. Nevertheless, we can serve our patrons by providing a taste of what they might find in our rich collection of materials that push the boundaries between books and works of art.

Notes

1. "Artists' books," LC Genre/Form Terms (LCGFT), accessed November 17, 2024, https://id.loc.gov/authorities/genreForms/gf2017027220.html.
2. John Carter, *John Carter's ABC for Book Collectors*, eds. Nicolas Barker & Simran Thadani (New Castle, Delaware: Oak Knoll Press, 2016), 33.

Emily Grover
Assistant Librarian for Rare Books
Southwest Collection/Special Collections Library
Texas Tech University
✉ emgrover@ttu.edu

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Introduction

Founded in 1963, The Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) positions itself as a progressive, comprehensive research institution with an international perspective, dedicated to merging traditional values with contemporary practices and bridging the cultural divide between China and the West. At the beginning of the academic year 2024/25, the University Library introduced a new Short Story Dispenser and a dedicated web portal. This was developed in partnership with the French publishing house Short Édition. This initiative aimed to foster a love for literature and promote a culture of reading and writing within the university community. The notable usage of the Short Story Dispenser reflects its effectiveness in offering a unique and engaging experience for students and faculty, thereby enhancing their relationship with the CUHK Library. This initiative enriches the reading experience, encourages creative writing, celebrates the art of storytelling, and emphasizes literary works, especially those about Hong Kong. The University Library is instrumental in linking CUHK users to resources available locally and those accessible globally, thus broadening their literary perspectives and providing access to content that may not be available through other means

Short Story Dispenser: physical kiosk and online portal 3

The Short Story Dispenser serves as an independent kiosk providing fictional literature to users of the CUHK library. This innovative and enjoyable method promotes reading while fostering a spirit of creative leisure within the library environment. It features three categories of works: English literature from the public domain and Short Édition, Chinese literature from classical texts and the Hong Kong Literature Database, and CUHK submissions from the Literary CUHK Essay Competition. The selected contents have been meticulously curated to resonate with users, particularly emphasizing works by local authors and those pertinent to Hong Kong's literary scene.

Users can explore a diverse range of content *via* the physical Short Story Dispenser and the corresponding web portal, even when they are not physically present in the library. There are three separate buttons available for selection: "English," "Chinese," and "CUHK Works." This allows printing short stories, essays, poems, or comics on a long strip of recyclable paper resembling a receipt. Short Édition has created an online CUHK Short Story Portal offering library users a venue for creative writing, enhancing creativity and confidence in writing. This platform enables students and faculty members of CUHK to publish their creative works, a capability the CUHK Library has not yet utilized as of this writing. The portal facilitates the submission of entries for online short story writing competitions and enriches the publication experience for both students and faculty members while contributing to the development of a literary collection for CUHK Works.

The Short Story Dispenser and the Portal serve as excellent tools for fostering involvement, engagement, and connections. They are highly valued at the CUHK library for their role in improving community experiences, promoting sustainable engagement, and for their capacity to highlight student talent, thereby offering a distinctive experience.

Sources of content: English works, Chinese works and CUHK works

The flexibility of the Short Story Dispenser and Online Portal allowed institutions to create customizable content for the three buttons. The Library's aim to promote reading in both English and Chinese was a major consideration because of CUHK's unique bilingual curriculum. One of the Library's reading promotion initiatives is the Good Reads Collection. The Good Reads Collection is a long-established leisurely reading collection that houses nonacademic award-winning or best-selling fiction and non-fictional books (The Chinese University of Hong Kong Library, 2024a). From its inception in 2011 until now, there has been an emphasis on curating books in English and Chinese for readers of the CUHK community. Usage data showed Chinese titles are just as popular if not more compared to English ones when it comes to nonacademic reading.

Furthermore, being a bilingual institution founded to bring together China and the West (The Chinese University of Hong Kong Library, 2024b) has given rise to a larger body of works authored by staff and students in both English and Chinese. It is envisioned the Short Story Dispenser and Portal could fulfill the goals of promoting reading and creative writing beyond the classroom showcasing works authored by the CUHK community and those materials digitized in Special Collections of the Library. Therefore, as opposed to "1 min," "3 min" and "5 min" reads when customizing the Short Story Dispenser, the Project Team selected "English," "Chinese" and "CUHK works" as categories shown in the three buttons that readers could choose short stories from on the Dispenser and Portal (Figure 1).

The English category features work primarily sourced from the public domain, with over 80,000 stories curated from Short Édition, encompassing classic literature, newly added original pieces, and comic strips. The Chinese category includes selections from Short Édition and fifty selected articles from the CUHK Hong Kong Literature Database (The Chinese University of Hong Kong Library, 2024c). The Database was launched by CUHK Library in 2000 and consists of over 670,000 records comprising more than two hundred Hong Kong journals and literary supplements of 20 Hong Kong early newspapers. The Chinese works in the Short Story Dispenser include new poetry, essays,

Figure 1. The Short Story Dispenser physical kiosk at the CUHK Library.

and short stories such as "Mist over the Carp Gate" by Shu Xiangcheng, "We go to Victoria Park" by Xinqishi and "Amélie in Tuen Mun" by Yasi. All articles have been meticulously selected, with themes revolving around districts, streets, buildings, and heartfelt stories in Hong Kong. The CUHK Library aspires these articles will provide users with a deeper understanding of the diverse aspects of "Hong Kong" as portrayed by various local writers. For example, one of the famous short stories in the history of Hong Kong literature, "Mist over the Carp Gate" written in 1950, explores the experiences of a waterman returning to his hometown after fifteen years. The story captures vividly the local geography, land, and water transportation, portraying everyday life and reflecting the historical essence of old Hong Kong.

The CUHK Works category showcases award-winning submissions from the Literary CUHK Essay Competition, organized by the Department of Chinese Language and Literature and the Chinese Language Teaching Development Center at CUHK. This initiative aimed to stimulate students' interest in creative writing in Chinese while enhancing their observational and expressive abilities. Furthermore, the project team is investigating additional content from the campus's Power of Words poetry initiative, a reading and writing program facilitated by the CUHK Independent Learning Center (ILC), the Hong Kong Literature Research Center, the Office of the Arts Administrator (OAA), and Tolopoem, as well as works produced by local authors affiliated with CUHK.

Though short stories from the Short Story Dispensers intend to provide readers with a "quick read and inspire" type of experience, the project team worked with Short Édition to display randomized "quote of the day" at the very end to leave the reader with food for thought and enticing them to scan the QR code to visit the Portal to read more stories online (Figure 2).

Launching and publicity

The Short Story Dispenser was officially launched on August 30, 2024, at the CUHK Library. At the launching ceremony, held at the User Education Room of the CUHK Library, several notable members of the CUHK community were in attendance, including University Librarian Mr. Benjamin Meunier and Director of Communications and Public Relations Ms. Lavender Cheung (The Chinese University of Hong Kong, 2024).

Figure 2. "Quote of the day" to leave food for thought at the end of short stories.

During the ceremony, Mr. Meunier expressed his enthusiasm for the new addition, stating, "The new Short Story Dispenser and online portal at the CUHK Library allow the university community to explore different stories in a more convenient and enjoyable way. We are excited to experiment with this innovative approach to sharing stories with them."

Mr. Meunier further emphasized the unique opportunities presented by the Short Story Dispenser, highlighting the inclusion of "CUHK Works" - a special collection that showcases the creative talents of the CUHK students and faculty. "Users can also take home 'CUHK Works' that showcase the talents of our students and faculty. We look forward to hearing feedback from the CUHK community and hope to extend this storytelling method beyond our campus, sharing Hong Kong literature and other works that resonate with readers," he added. This initiative not only promotes local literary works but also encourages the university community to engage more deeply with the written word.

The project has been extensively promoted through posters, press releases, various social media channels, and dedicated web pages, ensuring the university community is well-informed about this exciting new resource. Additionally, a promotional video was produced and shared on social media platforms, garnering a wider audience for the Short Story Dispenser. It was also introduced and promoted at CUHK freshmen orientation, InfoDay, and various special events of the Library. Users expressed enthusiasm about this new initiative and enjoyed reading the short stories.

The Short Story Dispenser is a testament to the CUHK Library's dedication to fostering a love for literature and supporting the creative endeavors of its community. By providing an accessible and innovative means of distributing stories, the dispenser serves as a bridge between traditional literary culture and contemporary digital engagement. As the university community begins to explore the diverse range of stories offered by the dispenser, the CUHK Library anticipates more valuable feedback that will help shape future literary projects and initiatives.
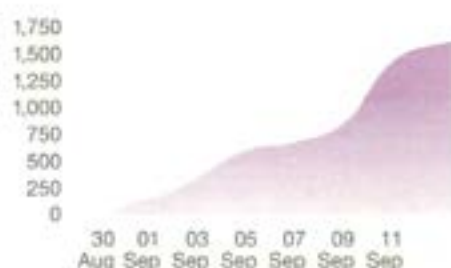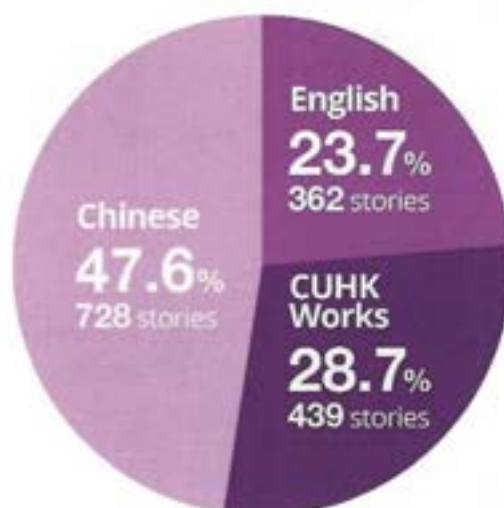
Figure 3. The cumulative number of stories printed.

Figure 4. Breakdown of stories printed by button.

Usage study after launching

The Short Story Dispenser Project seeks to support creative writing, promote the arts of storytelling, and promote literature, with a particular emphasis on materials related to Hong Kong literature. The objective of this usage study was to evaluate the effectiveness of a distinctive and captivating reading experience for students and faculty to enhance their relationship with the CUHK Library. The study was conducted from 30 August — 12 September 2024 during opening hours of the University Library. The empirical data was collected from three main sources: (1) data analytics from the vendor; (2) feedback and inquiries received by the library; and (3) observation by front-line staff. Below are the findings of the study.

Promoting literacy and literature

According to the data extracted from the web portal, the study shows that over 1,500 short stories were printed and shared in 2 wk (Figure 3). As noted by Short Édition, short stories are read three to four times. Thus, the actual number of times of reading would be approx. 4,500 to 6,000 times over two weeks. The dispenser showcases works from local authors, making literature easily accessible to the users. Nearly half of the stories printed were "Chinese" works (47.6%) mainly from the CUHK Hong Kong Literature Database. It indicates clearly users had a greater interest in this area.

Supporting emerging writers

In this study, 28.7% of printed stories were from "CUHK Works" For example: the winning entries from the Literary CUHK Essay Competition (Figure 4). It is very encouraging to know the dispenser provides a platform for new voices to be heard and appreciated, building a diverse literary community.

Figure 5. Average number of stories printed by day and by hour (Aug 30–Sep 12).

Figure 6. Stories sharing.

Enhancing community engagement

As expected, the number of stories printed during lunch hour (1-2 pm) on weekdays is the largest by an average of 24.8 stories (Figure 5). Users used it to take quick, enjoyable reading breaks during study sessions. The project team is excited the CUHK Independent Learning Center has expressed its interest in collaborating with the library to develop story-telling workshops.

Environmental sustainability

To ensure the Short Story Dispenser is environmentally friendly, it works with printing on demand and uses eco-friendly paper, which is FSC certified and BPA-free. As it is thermal printing, no ink or cartridges are used. As observed, readers were happy to share the stories with others before recycling, and a recycling bin was provided next to the dispenser. (Figure 6).

Concluding remarks

As noted in the result of the usage study in Figure 3, the Short Story Dispenser served to motivate users to read content from our collections they might not otherwise encounter. Concerns have been expressed for some time in the sector about the loss of opportunities for serendipitous discovery of content from browsing bookshelves in the electronic information age, where content visibility is often driven by narrow searches and algorithm-based recommendations. The Short

Story Dispenser can enhance awareness and utilization of a wider range of content by reengaging users with reading material in the University Library they would not expect to encounter using their usual information-finding methods. Also, the increase in visitor numbers can enhance awareness and utilization of various library programs in the University Library. It is anticipated that the selection of stories available through the dispenser can be broadened to feature more localized narratives that reflect CUHK's unique literary stories. Among other options, one feasible choice is to collaborate with local authors to help produce content that resonates more profoundly with users. Additionally, organizing events and workshops related to the dispenser, such as writing workshops, storytelling sessions, and community reading gatherings, can instill a sense of ownership and pride among users, encouraging their active participation in the literary culture. The Short Story Dispenser initiative can cultivate a passion for reading and writing while reinforcing academic community connections.

Acknowledgements

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Leo F. H. Ma
Head, New Asia College Library & United College Library
The Chinese University of Hong Kong Library, Hong Kong
✉ leo-ma@cuhk.edu.hk

Linda Foong Yin Lee
Head, Chung Chi College Library & Architecture Library
The Chinese University of Hong Kong Library, Hong Kong

Sue Man Fung
Outreach and Engagement Librarian
The Chinese University of Hong Kong Library, Hong Kong

Katherine Man Yin Chu
Special Collections Librarian
The Chinese University of Hong Kong Library, Hong Kong

Violet Ying Lok Yeung
Research Assistant
The Chinese University of Hong Kong Library, Hong Kong

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Troubleshooting Electronic Resources Tickets: A Technological Adventure in ERM

By Uyen Nguyen ⓘ, Duke University Medical Center Library and Archives

Troubleshooting access problems is one of the main responsibilities in electronic resources management, however, these skills are not always taught in library school and there are often unclear answers to some access problems. Access disruptions can have a negative impact on library services by devaluing purchased content and inhibiting the discovery process for users (Brett, 2018). Solving access problems often requires experience with how databases work, which vendors to contact, and institutional network rules. For a new electronic resources librarian, troubleshooting tickets can be one of the more challenging parts of the job because of the constant changes in electronic content and the uncertainties in the digital world. Nevertheless, this can also be one of the most rewarding parts of working in electronic resources because of the direct impact we can have in assisting the patron—which is not always the case for other aspects of the work. This paper explores troubleshooting electronic resource tickets as a technological adventure and offers tips for ER librarians on how to diagnose access problems and why it can be an exciting part of the job.

Identify your character (user)

In this day and age with the reality of libraries having to prioritize electronic resources because of budgetary restraints, managing these resources can often feel overwhelming. Unlike physical collections, which are tangible items, electronic resources rely on a complex web of systems, platforms, and access points that are not always under the direct control of the library. As a result, librarians often only become aware of access issues when users report them through tickets. The searching and discovery process always starts with the user, and how they interact with the library system can be helpful in understanding the issues (Zmau & Talbott, 2022). This is why the first step in diagnosing access problems begins with identifying the user and the general context of how the user is interacting with the resource.

For example, access problems may arise with an affiliated user if they are not logged in properly or using credentials incompatible with the resource, such as a personal email instead of an institutional one. In other cases, the user's location can affect their ability to authenticate, particularly if the user is off campus. Understanding the user's context helps pinpoint the root of the issue and reinforces the importance of user-centered service in libraries.

Common mishaps

While there has not been a systematic or universal way to categorize electronic resources access problems in libraries, there have been many attempts to define broad themes through analysis of access disruption trends (Zmau & Talbott, 2022), content analysis of tickets (Goldfinger &