

***Library Marketing for Southeast Asia Chinese Overseas Special Collections: Transnational Discovery & Delivery***

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In recognition of the dynamic research, teaching, learning, and collecting needs of Chinese Overseas studies, scholars, librarians, archivists, curators, and knowledge creators have been collaborating for decades to create, collect, and provide research information access to the community in academic institutions, libraries, archives, museums, documentation centers, and depositories in both public and private sectors. They may not recognize that they have been conducting “unconscious” marketing for ongoing collections and services as a commodity to keep the field survive and thrive especially in special collection development which is perceived as a “luxury” in many research institutions.

This paper will serve as an open discussion for resources sharing and collaborative initiatives to promote scattered hidden treasures locally and globally in the public domain. Given my specialization in Southeast Asian studies librarianship, I will focus on how librarians could conduct proactive and productive marketing for Southeast Asia Chinese Overseas special collections of primary sources to better serve a worldwide, diverse target audience. I will define the scope of Southeast Asia Chinese Overseas special collections in breadth and depth and showcase some specific samples of rare items as illustrations. I will elaborate on my insightful perspectives of ongoing cultural, social, political, and institutional challenges of identifying, acquiring, cataloging, preserving, and providing onsite and online access to Southeast Asia Chinese Overseas special collections in all possible subjects, formats, and languages within Southeast Asia and beyond. I will address practical marketing strategies which include public relations, publicity, promotion, advertising, advocacy, and branding between knowledge creators and knowledge seekers as part of a solid marketing action plan to accomplish the academic objectives and evaluate the outcome as an ongoing marketing agenda in our Southeast Asia Chinese Overseas special collection development enterprise.

Last but not least, I would like to call for volunteers to create an online action-oriented marketing committee in 1) promoting essential onsite and online special collections; 2) initiating cooperative digitization projects; and 3) facilitating conference call meetings, webinars or research projects of common interest to enhance the advancement of Southeast Asia Chinese Overseas studies.