

FIRST MALAYSIAN CHILDREN NURSERY RYHMES IN THE MALAY LANGUAGE ON MULTIMEDIA CD-ROM

1. OBJECTIVES

The National Library of Malaysia undertook the creation and production of the first Malaysian Children Nursery Rhymes in Malay Language on Multimedia CD-ROM with the following objectives:

- 1.1 To revitalise and promote local nursery rhymes and present them in multimedia format to capture children's interest.
- 1.2 To preserve and popularise indigenous children's nursery rhymes among children of the new generation.
- 1.3 To encourage focal publishers to embark on publishing children's multimedia production.
- 1.4 To increase and enhance the usage of Malay language through simulation rhyme songs and games for educational purposes and for developing creative minds amongst children.
- 1.5 To promote electronic publishing in Malaysia.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 To create awareness and computer literacy among children, the National Library of Malaysia initiated the setting up of the Hypermedia Resource Centre for children, the first its kind in Malaysia. The centre was sponsored by Esso Production Malaysia Inc. on the occasion of its 100 years celebration as a gift to the nation. The facilities provided include a combination of various computer hardware, videos and audios for children 12 years and below to experience the hypermedia environment and to be creative in developing their own application or material accordingly. The Hypermedia Resource Centre consists of 5 sections namely Storytelling, Science, Music, Art and Creativity. The aim of the centre is to expose children to computer applications at an early learning stage of their educational programme. There were 90 titles of CD-ROM available for use in the centre, all of which are in English and mainly produced overseas. There was not a single CD-ROM in the local language available for children in the market at the time. Electronic publications needed for use by the local children is still Very much dependent on imported materials.

- 2.2 Thus in 1996, the Esso Companies in Malaysia offered the National Library of Malaysia some contribution in the form of purchase of new titles of CD-ROM to equip the software collection of the Hypermedia Centre. However, the National Library of Malaysia felt that it was more appropriate and beneficial instead to publish a book on children's local nursery rhymes in the form of CD-ROM, as it was a problem to obtain Multimedia CD-ROMs in Malay for children.
- 2.3 The National Library of Malaysia also felt committed to initiate the publishing of non-printed material especially for children due to the dearth of local materials in the country.
- 2.4 The cheque presentation ceremony was held on the 6th December 1996 at 10.00 AM at Esso Headquarters Office, Kuala Lumpur where Mr. PJ Dingle, Chairman of Esso Companies in Malaysia presented a mock cheque to Datin. Mariam Abdul Kadir, the Director General, National Library of Malaysia.
- 2.5 In 1997, National Library of Malaysia with the financial support of RM60, 000 from Esso Companies in Malaysia produced the first Malaysian Nursery Rhymes in Malay on Multimedia format.

3. RATIONALE FOR PRODUCING CHILDREN'S NURSERY RHYMES ON CD-ROM FORMAT

The National Library of Malaysia was more interested in providing reading materials in CD-ROM format for children for the following reasons:

- 3.1 The Hypermedia Resource Centre had a collection of 90 titles of CD-ROM in English published overseas. There was no CD-ROM available in the Malay language for local children who are not fluent in English to use. Therefore, the National Library of Malaysia felt it was more suitable and appropriate to develop local children's nursery rhymes in the form of CD-ROM to enhance the use of Malay language besides enriching local resources.
- 3.2 Malaysia is rich in local literature such as poetry and legends and its appreciation in these needs to be enhanced. In old Malay literature, there are numerous poems or rhymes with themes based on family affection and love, especially between mother and child, father and child, between siblings and between grandparents and grandchildren. From young, the child is nurtured and given advice and encouragement expressed through poems and rhymes.
- 3.3 Multimedia CD-ROM is able to revitalise legends and folk tales, children's poetry songs and nursery rhymes as it marries the rhymes of childhood with highly original formatting and with new concepts needed to interact intuitively, creatively and freely.

- 3.4 CD-ROM is able to store volumes of information and minimum space is required for storage. It is more easily marketed to libraries, schools, parents and individuals.
- 3.5 The effort to produce children's CD-ROM is to encourage local publishers to be more positive and- proactive in publishing children's multimedia production such as the conversion of translated children's classics and storybooks on CD-ROMs.
- 3.6 In the case of Malaysia especially, publishers are encouraged to take advantage of the application of new information technologies and multimedia formats. Electronics publishing is viewed seriously now in Malaysia not only because of the various fiscal measures and legislative guarantees offered by the Government in its effort to develop the Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC) but also due to the rising affluence of society to become technology adopters.
- 3.7 Information Technology (IT) literacy among children is fast growing. Therefore, it is vital to equip them with appropriate skills for a high technology future especially as Malaysians move towards the attainment of Vision 2020.

4. IMPLEMENTATION

- 4.1 In order to make the project a reality, a Committee on the Implementation Plan of the Production of Children Nursery Rhymes on CD-ROM was set up in 1997. The Committee comprised of officers from the National Library of Malaysia, Esso Malaysia and Puan Azah Aziz a local writer and expert Malay culture, under the Chairmanship of the Deputy Director General of the National Library of Malaysia. The National Library of Malaysia officers involved in this project were from the Library Information Technology, Reading Promotion and Malaysia Reference divisions. The Committee worked together to visualise and conceptualise the idea of producing the Children's Nursery Rhyme on CD-ROM. The National Library of Malaysia was the Project Co-ordinator.
- 4.2 The nursery rhymes were selected from the book *Dendang dan Dondang Sayang* compiled by Puan Azah Aziz and Dr. Ariff Ahmad. The melodies of some of the nursery rhymes were recomposed by Dr. Ariff Ahmad, a well-known local musician attached with the Department of Culture, University Malaya. The nursery rhymes include the following titles:
- Pok Amai-Amai (Clappity Clap)
 - Tok-Tok Noyang (Old Grandma Noyang)
 - Buai Laju-Laju (Swing, Swing Away)
 - Henjut-Henjut Semut (Bobbing Ant)
 - Air Pasang Pagi (Rising Tide At Morn)
 - Lompat Si Katak Lompat (Leap, Little Frog Leap)

- Can Mali Can (Oye, Oye, Ola)
- Jong-Jong Inai (Henna-Laden Junk)

- 4.3 The selection of the company to produce the children nursery rhymes on multimedia CD-ROM was done according to government procedures and quotation process. Only two companies submitted their proposal and they were given the opportunity to present their prototype demonstrations to the National Library's management team. The evaluation committee then made a recommendation based on agreed criteria and remarks given by the team members during the prototype demonstration.
- 4.4 Mekktoon Sdn. Bhd., a new multimedia company owned by a young, dynamic and creative group was selected. Forefront IT facilities were used by the company to develop the children nursery rhymes CD-ROM.
- 4.5 An agreement was made between the Government of Malaysia and Mekktoon Sdn. Bhd. on the 19th November 1997. Mekktoon was entrusted to design creatively the local children nursery rhymes on Multimedia CD-ROM. Features of the CD-ROM include the following:
- 8 nursery rhymes
 - Animated dictionaries
 - Two games
 - Internet connectivity - Internet connection to Web Pages of National Library of Malaysia, Exxon Company International and Shockwave Mekktoon. Public are able to submit comments on line/or through e-mail. Online registration and ordering are also provided.
 - Files on Pentium PC & Power Mac.
- 4.6 Co-operation was also received from several institutions and individuals in making the project successful. The Institute of Language and Literacy Malaysia (DBP) helped in verifying the meanings of Malay classic terminology used in the nursery rhymes. Meanwhile, the Forest Research Institute of Malaysia (FRIM) assisted in verifying the names and characteristics of leaves and flowers used in the nursery rhymes. Puan Azah Aziz with full commitment and enthusiasm assisted throughout the project particularly by giving ideas, opinions and suggestions on ways of improving the storyboard. Puan Norhayati Nasaruddin did the translation works of the nursery rhymes for the accompanying booklet published.
- 4.7 The packaging of The Children's Nursery Rhymes CD-ROM was creatively done in an attractive kit which contained a disc and a booklet.
- 4.8 Mekktoon Sdn. Bhd. completed the production in three (3) months and produced 500 copies for free distribution and another 500 copies for commercial market which is sold at RM40.00. Mekktoon was given the right to print the CD-ROM for sales purposes which was stipulated in the agreement. National Library gets 20% commission from

the net profit sales that are credited into the National Library Community Trust Fund. Mekktoon is required to submit safes report to National Library once in three months.

4.9 The *Puisi Kanak-Kanak* CD-ROM was launched on the 7 October 1997 by The Honourable Datuk Khalid Yunus, Deputy Minister of Education at the National Library of Malaysia. In his speech, the Deputy Minister of Education commended the National Library of Malaysia for its strategic alliance and smart partnership with a large corporation like Esso Malaysia, which has succeeded in producing a Multimedia CD-ROM for children.

4.10 Free distribution of 500 copies were given to 242 schools (with Multimedia PC), 64 public libraries, committee members, project sponsor, Malaysia Resource Centres in Ohio and Leiden, selected embassies and nurseries, TV stations, individuals and others.

5. COSTING

The financial assistance of RM60,000.00 from Esso Companies of Malaysia was fully utilised. The National Library of Malaysia had to supplement an additional RM20,000.00 as part of total the production cost of RM80,000.00. See **Appendix A**.

6. PROBLEMS

The project team managed to carry out the project smoothly with a lot of patience, commitment and hard work. Budget constraint was the only problem identified which caused the limitation of the animation works and affected marketing and sales of the CD-ROM.

7. SOLUTIONS AND FUTURE PLANS

Plans to overcome the problem of lack of promotion and sales were agreed by Mekktoon Sdn. Bhd. and the National Library of Malaysia, which are as follows:

- (i) To reduce the price of the CD-ROM to RM30.00. This was implemented in 1998.
- (ii) To sell the CD-ROM at strategic Esso petrol station outlets.
- (iii) To publicise through IT and children's programmes through Television networks. Conversion from CD-ROM to beta format for Television broadcasting was done in 1998.
- (iv) To advertise in IT journals and IT newspaper columns. This was implemented in 1997 - 1998.
- (v) To package the CD-ROM together with new titles identified, for example Puteri Gunung Ledang (Princess of Mount Ledang) and Legends of Mahsuri.

8. CONCLUSION

8.1 The first Children Nursery Rhymes in the Malay Language on Multimedia CD-ROM

project can be considered to be highly successful from a number of perspectives. Apart from promoting and stimulating interest in Malay children folk literature it also enhances the use of technology in promoting literacy and Edutainment. The project also proved to be a mutually beneficial and fruitful collaboration between public/private sector/multinational organisation, namely the National Library of Malaysia, Mekktoon Sdn. Bhd. and Esso Malaysia.

- 8.2 With positive indication of economic recovery in Malaysia, the National Library of Malaysia will continue to explore the possibilities of producing more materials on Multimedia CD-ROM for children to meet the ever-growing demands for interactive. Multimedia materials.

Production Cost of Malaysian Children Nursery Rhymes on Multimedia CD-ROM

Items	RM
Illustration (fine)	17,500.00
Animation	30,000.00
Voice over & studio rental	2,500.00
Music background	-
Authoring/Programming	7,500.00
Compilation	2,500.00
CD Mastering & duplication (including sleeves design & casing)	20,000.00
TOTAL	80,000.00