

What are the biggest Challenges faced by Libraries Today?

A. Global Challenges in Librarianship and Libraries

1. One of the most significant global challenges in librarianship is digital transformation and technological change. Libraries are increasingly moving from traditional print-based services toward digital libraries, institutional repositories, online databases, cloud-based services, and AI-powered systems. However, this transformation requires substantial investment in infrastructure, technical expertise, staff training, and system maintenance. Rapid technological obsolescence also creates sustainability challenges for libraries worldwide.
2. Another growing challenge involves artificial intelligence (AI) and emerging technologies. AI technologies are increasingly used for information retrieval, metadata generation, cataloguing, and virtual reference services. While AI improves efficiency and user experience, librarians face concerns regarding ethical AI use, data privacy, copyright infringement, misinformation, and the reliability of AI-generated content.
3. Libraries also face increasing pressure in combating misinformation, fake news, deepfakes, and online information manipulation. Modern librarians are expected to promote information literacy, media literacy, critical thinking, and digital citizenship among users to help them evaluate reliable information sources effectively.
4. Funding constraints and budget reduction remain major concerns globally. Many libraries face reduced government allocations, staffing shortages, rising operational costs, and expensive digital subscriptions. These financial challenges affect collection development, digitization projects, preservation activities, and community outreach programs.
5. Digital preservation is another critical issue. Libraries are increasingly responsible for preserving born-digital materials, websites, social media records, research data, and audio-visual collections. Challenges such as file format obsolescence, data corruption, storage limitations, and cybersecurity risks threaten long-term access to digital heritage materials.
6. Cybersecurity and data privacy have become increasingly important due to libraries' dependence on online systems and digital repositories. Libraries now face risks related to cyberattacks, ransomware, malware, and unauthorized access to digital collections and user data.
7. In addition, changing user expectations have forced libraries to redesign their services. Modern users expect 24/7 access to digital resources, remote services, mobile-friendly platforms, and instant information retrieval. Libraries must continuously adapt to remain relevant in the digital era.

B. Challenges Faced by Libraries and Librarians in Malaysia

1. Libraries in Malaysia experience many of the same global challenges while also facing local socio-economic and infrastructural issues. One major issue is the digital divide, particularly between urban and rural communities. Unequal access to internet connectivity, digital devices, and online learning resources continues to affect library accessibility and digital inclusion efforts.
2. Many Malaysian libraries also face limitations in digital infrastructure. Challenges such as aging systems, limited automation, insufficient digital repositories, and inadequate funding for technology upgrades affect the quality and efficiency of library services.
3. Another important challenge is the need for digital competencies among librarians. Modern librarians are increasingly expected to possess skills in digital librarianship, AI literacy, metadata management, digital preservation, research data management, and cybersecurity awareness. However, continuous professional training and upskilling opportunities are sometimes limited by financial and institutional constraints.
4. Low public awareness and declining physical library visits also present challenges. Many users now rely heavily on online information sources, resulting in reduced engagement with traditional library services. Libraries, therefore, need to strengthen outreach programs, digital services, and community engagement initiatives to remain relevant.
5. In academic and digital libraries, copyright and licensing issues continue to affect access to electronic resources and digital content sharing. Libraries must carefully manage licensing agreements and copyright compliance while ensuring equitable information access for users.

C. Challenges Faced by Libraries and Librarians in Sarawak

1. Sarawak faces unique challenges due to its geographical, infrastructural, and cultural diversity. One major challenge is geographical and connectivity limitations. As the largest state in Malaysia, Sarawak contains many rural and remote communities where internet access and transportation infrastructure remain limited. These conditions make it difficult for libraries to provide equitable access to information and digital services.
2. Another important challenge involves the preservation of indigenous and cultural heritage. Sarawak is rich in indigenous knowledge, oral traditions, local publications, ethnic languages, and cultural materials. Libraries and archival institutions, therefore, face significant responsibilities in digitizing, preserving, and managing fragile historical and cultural collections for future generations.
3. Legal deposit compliance is also an ongoing issue in Sarawak. Many publications, especially digital publications, self-published materials, and

community publications, are not consistently deposited with the relevant authorities. Libraries, therefore, need stronger awareness programs, stakeholder collaboration, enforcement mechanisms, and digital submission systems to improve compliance.

4. Digital preservation challenges continue to grow as libraries increasingly manage electronic documents, websites, multimedia content, and born-digital government publications. The risk of technological obsolescence and digital data loss creates additional pressure for libraries to establish sustainable digital preservation strategies.
5. Human resources and skills challenges also affect libraries in Sarawak. Librarians are increasingly expected to function as digital curators, information specialists, technology facilitators, and educators while managing both traditional and digital collections. However, limited ICT expertise, increasing workloads, and the need for continuous professional development remain significant concerns.
6. Finally, many libraries and repositories in Sarawak face space and collection management challenges. The continuous growth of physical and digital collections requires additional storage facilities, preservation spaces, and repository expansion to ensure proper management and long-term accessibility of materials.

How many visitors come to the library every month?

Number of visitors from January to April 2026

No.	Month	Total
1.	January	8,479
2.	February	7,077
3.	March	6,896
4.	April	9,282
Total:		31,734

How many books are available in Pustaka Negeri Sarawak?

The total number of books available at Pustaka from 2000 until 16 May 2026 is **371,112 items**.

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