



Access Policy - 2020

National Digital Library & Repository

National Library and Documentation Services Board

1. Introduction and background

The National Library and Documentation Services Board (NLDSB), established in the year 1970, is a statutory body functioning under the provisions of the National Library and Documentation Services Board No. 17 of 1970 (as amended by the National Library and Documentation Services Board Act No 51 of 1998). It falls under the administrative purview of the Ministry of Education. The main statutory functions of the NLDSB are the maintenance of the National Library of Sri Lanka and the development of library and information services at the national level.

Having taken the concept of 'Digital Library' into consideration, the digitization of printed information sources available with 'the National Library' was commenced around the year 2000. The collection of new digital information sources was also initiated. With the gradual progress of digitization activities, the National Digital Library of the NLDSB was inaugurated in the year 2016. A specialized unit named 'Digital Library Unit' was also administratively established within the NLDSB to carry out the mandate of the 'National Digital Library.' A number of digitization activities have been carried out by the Digital Library Unit including the development of digital collection, digitization of national library resources and providing digitalized information to the users. 'Digitization', being a fast-moving and essential trend in the library and information field, is expected to better preserve the information sources and provide the users with a wide and efficient access to the information sources. The National Digital Library has been re-named as the 'National Digital Library & Repository' from the year 2020.

Against this background, the constructive development and efficient management of the National Digital Library and Repository became a pressing need involving far-reaching national interests. As an essential pre-requisite for achieving the desired goals, a National Digital Library and Repository Policy has been already formulated and is being implemented. The formulated National Digital Library and Repository Policy covers certain areas which require their own policies to ensure the effective functioning of the National Digital Library and Repository Policy Framework. One such area is 'Open Access' to the digital information resources.

The access to digital information resources takes two forms, namely (i) restricted access and (ii) open access. The restricted access is managed for the time being as part of the general administration of the NLDSB and the Digital Library Unit leaving room for a policy framework, when necessary, as the activities of the National Digital Library & Repository further progress. However, a policy outlining the fundamentals relating to 'open access' has become necessary for the benefit of both the Digital Library Unit and the users of the digital information resources. The 'Open Access Policy' is therefore hereby formulated and declared.

2. Objectives

The Open Access Policy is expected to

- (i) Have a more user-friendly and efficient environment for dissemination of information;
- (ii) Enhance the information-sharing capabilities of the NLDSB.
- (iii) Attract more users to the NLDSB information system thereby enhancing the opportunities for promoting a knowledge-driven user-community in Sri Lanka; and
- (iv) Support the free flow of information both at national and international levels.

3. Open Access

'Open Access' in this context means: Free availability of information on the public Internet, permitting any users to search, download, read, view, copy, print, distribute and link to the digital information for any lawful purpose, without financial or technical barriers other than those inseparable from gaining access to the Internet itself.

4. Users

Users are the members of the public who have access to the digital information resources that is made available by the National Digital Library & Repository. There are two kinds of users, namely, remote users (on-line users of the digital information outside of the premises of the National Library) and walk-in users (the users of the information within the premises of the National Library)

5. Common Principles

The Open Access Policy embraces the following common principles:

- (i) It is based on best practices recognized from time to time in relation to digital libraries.
- (ii) It ensures the free and efficient access to the unrestricted digital information for all lawful purposes within the existing legal and regulatory framework.
- (iii) The digital information is generally available on-line, but there may be instances where the access to certain digital information is provided only at the premises of the National Library to the walk-in users.
- (iv) The open digital information resources are available for immediate download
- (v) The measures necessary to ensure the safety of the digitized information and the equipment are introduced and maintained
- (vi) User Monitoring System is devised and implemented.
- (vii) User friendly environment including quick responses to the user needs, suggestions and complaints is maintained
- (viii) The availability of digital information resources for use is expanded as the digitization of printed information sources available with 'the National Library' and the collection of new digital information sources continue.

6. Access-administration

'Open access' is subject to, among other things, to the following administrative guidelines:

- (i) Access-administration is expected to be efficient, user-friendly and productive.
- (ii) Cost-effectiveness is desired while waste of resources of any nature is eliminated.
- (iii) User-responsibilities should be identified, documented and publicized.
- (iv) Access is granted using formal user registration processes as may be devised.
- (v) Each user is allocated a unique user identity for identification purposes, where necessary, and the users can be held accountable for any unlawful or prohibited act carried out through the allocated user identities.
- (vi) Every effort is made to keep the National Digital Library & Repository portal up and running smoothly. However, The National Digital Library & Repository takes no responsibility for the portal being unavailable due to technical defects or any other reason.
- (vii) Inappropriate use of walk-in user network facilities in any form or manner is prohibited and results in the termination of the registration and such users are blacklisted thereby not allowing them to have registration in future.
- (viii) Walk-in users are not allowed to make copies of the restricted digital information resources.
- (ix) Walk-in users are prohibited from having access to any digital information resources other than those expressly allowed and from carrying out any act such as altering, changing, defacing and erasing of digital information
- (x) Use of the computers for any unauthorized purpose including commercial purposes is prohibited.
- (xi) Both the technical and administrative precautions are taken to ensure the safety of the digital contents.
- (xii) The Digital Library Unit staff regularly monitors the users and acts of use. The Head of the Digital Library Unit is required to review the user access and make recommendations from time to time to the competent authority for necessary action.
- (xiii) All administrative rules that the users should be aware of are made publicly available.
- (xiv) Where the agreement of the users is required for any condition for use, such agreement should be obtained in the first instance.
- (xv) Necessary guidelines for regulating access-administration may be devised from time to time in consultation with the competent authority.

7. Competent Authority

The Director General of the NLDSB is responsible for this policy and its implementation. In implementing the policy, he has the authority including, but not limited to, the development of rules, procedures and infrastructure.

8. Privacy

The National Digital Library & Repository compiles and maintains a database consisting of the personal information of the users that they voluntarily provide for processing their requests. Such personal information is used only for internal administrative purposes and not for any other purpose. Such personal information may be disclosed to third parties only as required by law.

9. Amendment

This policy is subject to review and amendment from time to time as the competent authority considers appropriate.