

Bangkok Patana School extends reading beyond the library

Using a balanced approach that brings together physical collections, digital access and a shared commitment to literacy.

Bangkok Patana School has long fostered a strong culture of reading. As learning environments evolved, educators looked for ways to extend that experience beyond the library walls.

The result was an approach that combines traditional library services with digital access, enabling students, teachers and families to borrow and read wherever curiosity takes place.

Expanding access to a global school community

Before introducing Sora, the student reading app, Bangkok Patana School already had thriving library spaces and a well-established reading culture. Students regularly borrowed print books, librarians collaborated with teachers to support curriculum needs and families relied on library resources to encourage reading at home. Even so, the school faced a challenge familiar to many international schools: how could students continue accessing books while away from campus?

Adding a digital collection alongside the school's physical libraries helped answer that question. Students can browse, borrow and read wherever they are.

"Sora has not replaced the school library," the library team said. "It has helped the library travel further."



Supporting different paths to reading

Librarians recognize that there is no single way to be a reader. Students arrive with different interests, language backgrounds, reading abilities and learning preferences, so the library offers multiple pathways into reading through print books, ebooks and audiobooks. During library lessons, students learn how to search for books, place holds, browse audiobooks and independently navigate the school's digital collection in Sora.

Teachers use digital titles to supplement classroom reading, provide instant access when print copies aren't available and offer audiobooks to students who might benefit from alternative formats. The library team sees digital reading as another way to make books more accessible and give students greater choice in how they read.

"The more carefully chosen doors we can open for readers, the more likely it is that they will walk through one of them," the library team shared.

Building a shared collection

One of the school's most distinctive initiatives has been its participation in the Thailand International Schools Consortium. What began as a small collaboration has grown into a network of more than twelve international schools working together to build a shared digital collection.

The partnership has expanded Bangkok Patana School's digital library from approximately 1,750 titles to more than 7,000, giving students access to a broader range of age-appropriate, high-interest and curriculum-supporting resources than any one school could provide on its own.

Looking ahead

While digital access has expanded opportunities, the library team emphasizes that it is just one part of a broader literacy strategy that includes physical collections, library lessons, classroom reading initiatives and strong partnerships with teachers.

"The strongest reading cultures are not built by narrowing choice," the library team explained. "They are built by widening it."

As Bangkok Patana School continues to grow its collections and strengthen partnerships through the Thailand International Schools Consortium, its mission remains the same: connecting students with stories, information and ideas that inspire lifelong reading.

For the library team, digital reading has never been about replacing the printed book. Instead, it complements the resources already on the shelves and extends the library, creating what they describe as "the best of both worlds."

