



## **Asia Pacific Networking Group (APNG)**

### ***9<sup>th</sup> APNG Post-Camp Report***      *By*

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#### **Introduction:**

When the Camp Committee announced the venue of the 9<sup>th</sup> APNG Camp as Xian, the historical city of the P.R. China, I was enthralled since I have won a golden opportunity to visit Silk Road where my country Sri Lanka was too a link within that historical path. Ninth Camp in Xian is my second participation to the great event of the APNG. As a member of the LKiNG, the local counterpart of the Group I was actively engaged in its activities. As the theme of the camp denotes, the 9<sup>th</sup> APNG Camp tried to motivate the next generation of the AP to march forward to achieve more innovative goals. Tommy-San the Grandpa was the driving force. With the five-member team from Sri Lanka I engaged in lot of activities of the Camp. I am much delighted that my design was selected for the Camp Banner in Xian. The Camp this time had very energetic and creative leaders, Sumith and Shi. Also my special mention goes to Khun, the camp Secretary. This Camp would not come off the ground unless her active secretarial ability.

I arrived in Xian on 23<sup>rd</sup> evening, and our team was given accommodation in the Silk Road Hotel next to Sheraton.

The following day, 24<sup>th</sup> August with Shi, Sumith and Tommy-san I engaged in some logistic arrangements for the Camp. I also attended the Camp preparatory meetings on the Saturday 25<sup>th</sup>.

#### **Camp Activities and Presentations:**

My first participation for the Camp proper was the “Digital Archive Conference on Human Civilizations” organized by the APAN on 27<sup>th</sup> August at the Dynasty No1 of the Sheraton Xian Hotel.

From that one-day Conference I was able to gather a lot of current information in the Discipline. It was very useful event for me as a LIS professional. Most of the novel methods of digital preservation were highlighted by the tutorials, presentations and live streams. Amongst the topics that discussed at the Conference, “Towards Creative and Accessible Digital Archives”, “Digital Bayon Project” and “The Million Books Project” were very useful to me.

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The Disaster Management Tutorial and presentation given by Miss Sagarika Wickremasekera and Isuru at the APAN sessions was very innovative and expressive. It emphasized the very methods to be adopted and practiced when a country encountered with a disastrous situation which struck not leaving a second for taking precautionary measures.

On the 28<sup>th</sup> the APNG Camp activities started with the introductory speech by Tommy-San and followed by Opening remarks by both Xiaohui Shi and Sumith, Co-camp Chairs. Presentations by Mr. Ching Chiao on “Introduction to Dot Asia” and Prof. Kanchana Kanchanasut on “Dumbo Project” were very interesting. Special mention goes to Master Chiao who exhibited extraordinary talent by presenting his interesting on Internet. Congratulations, Master Chiao!!

Presentations on the WG activities were done by Dihan Morawaka (Internet Technology WG), Hikita-San (E-Learning & Live-E), Sagarika (Disaster management & E-Health), Kashif (Internet Culture & Blog), Rahman (E-Commerce & Business Stratup) consisted full of first-hand information on the themes and were helpful in furthering the knowledge on the current activities carried out in the respective countries.

Presentation by Dr. Nimal Ratnayake on “Introduction to FOSS” was very informative and has become an eye-opener for all who are searching for an alternative to OS which have been dominating the existing software environments. Also, the Presentation on “NIDA activities” was a significant one.

Third day(29<sup>th</sup> ) of the Camp was a very live one and was arranged to run as two separate tracks. Fellowship Presentations were done simultaneously in two tracks in two separate Conference Halls of the Hotel. I was able to attend the presentations in the Track 2 where most of the papers read on Live-E & E-Learning and internet Culture & Blog. All the Presentations were of high standards and I could learn a lot from those. The facts and novel information gathered from those presentations can be useful for my academic teaching in the field of LIS in the University. I had my presentation as the last event of the day on “Effective Inter-Library Network for promoting e-Learning of Undergraduate and Postgraduate students in Sri Lankan Universities”.

August 30<sup>th</sup> was the final day of the programme. Two workshop sessions were arranged jointly with the APAN and I had an opportunity to share the expertise in the field of E-Learning with the elite members of the APAN.

Work Group reports were read and discussed the final afternoon. We were able to share our knowledge amongst our counterparts and arrive at some solutions to the problems we encounter within our projects.

### **New Committees and Team Building**

A novel activity for the Camp was suggested by our Grandpa Tommy-San with a vision to inculcate the habit of collective thinking, knowledge –sharing and working hand-in-hand amongst the fellows and general participants. I was invited to assist him in organizing the event and introducing the task. This activity was very fruitful since it was conducted under the objective of learning more about the historical city Xian in a short spell of time, say in 4 days. Entire camp was divided into five groups and each group was assigned a topic. A Team Leader was selected and each group was given a specific name. I was in the 3<sup>rd</sup> group and under the leadership of Bong Bong. We studied on the topic “Entertainment in Xian” made our findings as a short presentation. Likewise all groups presented and through those presentations by the groups we learnt a remarkable share of facts about Xian; their culture, communication & transportation, Food & drinks, Entertainment etc. in a very short period of time. Thanks a lot for your wonderful idea, Grandpa.

At this Camp there were three more Committees formulated viz.: Camp Organising Committee, Finance Committee and Sponsorship Committee in order to streamline the Camp organizing work for the 10<sup>th</sup>.

### **Social & Cultural Activities**

The decision to have the 9<sup>th</sup> APNG Camp in a historical city rather than in an Industrial or Commercial city can be considered as a wise and timely one due to the fact that participants could feel their stay more valuable. The visit to very symbolic artifacts of Terra Cotta Warriors Museum in Xian was remarkable. Also the participants had a golden opportunity in enjoying great Chinese Opera at the National Opera House in Xian. Our thanks are due to the APAN for organizing the dinner and the trip to Xian Opera Theatre on 30<sup>th</sup> evening. Welcome dinner and Costume party organized by APNG were two memorable events that helped to strengthen the ties between all the participants and to create a one AP family under the APNG umbrella. Our Sri Lankan team had visited a lot of religious and historical places in Xian during that short stay.

### **Gain from the Camp**

I must stress here that vast amount of knowledge gathered on novel innovations and projects which presented by participants, fellows and keynote speakers would definitely be helpful in devising and restructuring of our existing systems of ICT related activities for the benefit our respective countries. The enormous knowledge I gained in the Camp would undoubtedly helpful to me in my Academic activities in the field of LIS.

### **Suggestions for improvement of the 10<sup>th</sup> Camp**

- Must adhere to one unique system of Camp Fellowship
- Have a longer time / days for the Camp
- Try to invite more AP Countries still haven't partaken
- Organize more social events
- Look for more sponsors
- Include more practical aspects on Team Building
- Organize more sight-seeing trips
- Include some evaluative system or measures for fellowship presentations and award some prizes for best performances

**Special note:** When the WGs were formed and members were selected in the last day of the Camp, some of the WGs didn't have sufficient number of members. It showed a reluctance of the members for some of the WGs. Internet History Museum WG was an example. Lastly Sumith, Shi and myself had to join to form that WG. Hence, as the Chair of the IHM WG I would like to invite more members to volunteer for making that WG's activities a reality and more fruitful.

### **Acknowledgements**

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Hope to meet at the 10<sup>th</sup> Camp in AIT, Thailand in August, 2008.