

Digital library goes 24 hours as 'lepak' haven for students

GEORGE TOWN — The RM2.5 million Penang Digital Library will keep its doors open round the clock from May 1, offering a safe and cool place for students... even if they're just looking for a place to *lepak* or hang out.

"We want to provide a safe and healthy place for the younger generation and this facility is provided free for them to use," Penang Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng announced at the library yesterday.

He noted the nearby 24-hour McDonald's outlet was always crowded, even at nights, and said having a 24-hour library would provide an additional — and perhaps more conducive — space for youths to study.

"We will increase security especially in the middle of the night to ensure the safety of users as this is a quiet area," he said.

He also said the library's 24-hour operations will be reviewed every three months to see if there were any improvements to be made.

The digital library officially opened last October and draws between 1,800 and

2,000 users each month; 2,000 people have registered for the library's mobile app, "Readcasa".

There are no physical books at the facility, but Lim said there were 3,000 e-reading materials available for free.

Only those who use the mobile app outside the library have to pay subscription fees of RM60 per year for adults and RM30 for students.

There are also 10 tablets provided for public use in the library free of charge.

In line with the library staying open for 24-hours, its in-house cafe, Love a Loaf, will also be open 24 hours daily.

"The library will be open every day, even on public holidays and Hari Raya and the cafe will also be open for users to get drinks and food when using the facilities here," Lim said.

The digital library is located next to Penang Free School and is accessible through the school and through an entrance from Jalan Masjid Negeri.



Ten iPads are provided at the Penang digital library for public use.
— Picture by K.E. Ooi