

Shanghai Library turns a new page as East Branch opens

Ke Jiayun

College freshman Lu Yicheng completed all the tasks and collected five stamped bookmarks at a “theme pavilion” of local documents at the Shanghai Library’s East Branch on its opening day.

The 18-year-old, who joined almost all the library events and won some souvenirs on Wednesday, was one of the first 200 visitors to the East Branch, each of whom received a stuffed toy of its mascot owl Tuxiaoling.

“It’s super easy to find a book here, thanks to the intelligent screens placed near the bookshelves, which help in locating the books,” Lu told Shanghai Daily. “At some other libraries, I have to bend down and look for the books on every shelf.”

Dubbed an intelligent hybrid library of the old and the new, the East Branch of Shanghai Library has introduced robot “librarians” and various intelligent systems that help readers search books online, find, borrow and return books as well as experience reading events with the latest technologies.

These services were already on offer during the library’s trial operation last month.

So, the newly opened special “theme pavilions” were the highlight on the first day.

Two “theme pavilions” on the fourth floor focus on local documents and celebrity manuscripts, respectively.

At the local document theme pavilion, besides reading books about the city’s literature, history, culture, art, economy, life, etc., visitors can move a screen along a digital scroll of the Bund, one of the iconic landmarks of Shanghai, to locate different historical buildings and use digital keys to get information about them.



Visitors take photographs of a wall decorated with surnames in Chinese at the Shanghai Library’s East Branch, which opened in the Pudong New Area on Wednesday. — Jiang Xiaowei

Not far from this, there’s a much larger upright screen that people can stand in front of and use body gestures to interact. On this screen, visitors can choose local cultural venues, even some which have already disappeared, and see their 3D models.

A smaller screen nearby shows a complex 3D tree map of Shanghai’s cultural elements, including people, venues and old magazines and presents the relations between them.

The manuscript pavilion is now hosting an exhibition of late renowned playwright Xia Yan. From the manuscripts, visitors can learn more about Xia’s life and how he changed the endings when adapting novels like Mao Dun’s “The Shop of The Lin Family” and Lu Xun’s “The New Year’s Sacrifice” into movies.

The library has “replicated”



The Shanghai Library’s East Branch in the Pudong New Area opens to the public on Wednesday. — Xinhua

Xia’s desk with his photos, replica of his manuscripts, old decorations and cat toys to shed light on the life of this feline lover.

The pavilion of selected rare books of the Shanghai Library on the seventh floor has the library’s most expensive

exhibits.

A manuscript of Buddhist text Vimalakirti Sutra during the Northern Wei Dynasty (AD368-AD534) written in 518 is the oldest book in the library, which visitors can have a glimpse of at this pavilion.

Also on the seventh floor,

the library has set up a screen for popular virtual singer Luo Tianyi to sing pieces from ancient poetry collection book “Shijing”, or “Classic of Poetry.”

Meanwhile, the new library’s location is a boon for residents of the Pudong New Area.

“For elderly people living in Pudong, like us, it’s not very convenient to go to the Shanghai Library on Huaihai Road M(in Puxi),” said 85-year-old Wang Donghai, who came with his wife.

“After we learned that the East Branch of Shanghai Library will open today, we got up early and arrived here two hours ahead of the opening time,” he revealed.

“The new branch has so many books and provides a comfortable reading environment. I think I’ll come here more often to borrow books.”