





Residents fleeing the Bukit Ho Swee fire (left) in 1961, the biggest in Singapore's history, which gutted the entire area. Right, Singapore fans not in force supporting the Lions at the height of the Malaysia Cup fever in 1994. ST FILE PHOTOS



Escape from fire to a new life

FIRST-PERSON account of the Bukit Ho Swee fire, by Mr James Seah, 42, a retired financial supervisor.

"There was dark billowing smoke in the sky, the smell was thick. People were shouting 'Fire, Fire', screaming, shouting..."

My mother and I ran as fast as we could to flee from the burning houses. There was a stampede. The older and weaker people were carried by younger and stronger ones. I noticed my neighbour's daughter... knelt down on the ground to pray, stating at a desperate cry of smoke.

(They ended up at Kim Seng School)

The school compound was crowded with thousands of fire victims, police, military personnel, doctors, nurses and helpers. Tents were erected for registration of fire victims, cooking utensils to cook on the spot and supply needs.

There was also milk powder for babies. My family visited the fire site and saw the shocking scene of the aftermath of the fire the following day.

Within the week, my family was allocated an HDB two-room flat at Margaret Drive."



Stories to weave tapestry of a nation

By ANDREA ONG

AN INITIATIVE to capture Singaporeans' recollections of their country has gathered more than 33,000 stories to the short span of a month.

Called *rememberSG*, the initiative is part of the Singapore Memory Project, which aims to collect five million memories by 2015, when the nation turns 50.

The project underscores the importance of capturing memories of ordinary people who lived through events that defined Singapore, said Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong yesterday.

Building a sense of ownership and belonging is crucial as the society grows more diverse, he said. While it would be a challenge, Singaporeans would have to "strengthen the forces that unite us and overcome the forces that pull us apart".

Said PM Lee: "We are Singaporeans together on a small island. We are anchored by our emotional links with family and friends and by our shared sense of our history and our common destiny."

Singapore did not "materialise out of nowhere", he said. "We came here somewhere, some time, there was a history to it. And it's crucial to remember where we came from and how we got here."

Reiterating a point he made when he launched Singapore HeritageFest last month, PM Lee said it was important to preserve what he called "human stories".

These are the stories of ordinary people who struggled to improve their lives and lived through defining moments such as World War II and the turbulent years of independence.

It is precisely such stories that the Singapore Memory Project hopes to capture, he added, stressing that the stories can

come from any person, organisation or institution which has experienced Singapore. "Together, all these individual stories will weave the tapestry of our nation," he said.

The project was launched by the Ministry of Information, Communications and the Arts last year. *rememberSG*, one part of the project, started last month. Singaporeans contributed stories and photos via Facebook and e-mail, among others.

AIMING TO BE FAIR AND JUST SOCIETY

"As we strengthen the sense of our common past, we must look ahead to create our shared future. We aim to be a fair and just society that nurtures and inspires the human spirit - a society that encourages people to go forth and do well for themselves and do good for their community. It depends on Singaporeans, believing that we have created something special and precious that we must protect and improve; striving not just for material success but for ideals and dreams, serving with passion and the heart, as well as the mind."

PM Lee

rememberSG's Facebook page and blog were officially launched yesterday.

From the 33,000 stories collected so far, PM Lee selected two to showcase last night. Against the backdrop of video footage and slides of photos, he read out a first-hand account of the 1961 Bukit Ho Swee fire by retired financial supervisor James Seah, 42.

He also read out 33-year-old videographer Muhammad Raydin's recollection of watching the thrilling showdown between Singapore and Fuhang in the 1994 Malaysia Cup final, which Singapore won 4-0.

Said PM Lee: "When we talk about history and national education and a sense of belonging, it's not just words and abstract concepts. It's really the stories of people, real people, what they lived through, what it meant for them."

Mr Raydin's story also stirred feelings of national pride in last night's audience, who clapped fervently when PM Lee played a clip of the final goal of the 1994 away match. It was scored by local football legend Fandi Ahmad.

Mr Raydin also said he looked forward to the camaraderie among fans when Singapore returns to the Malaysia Cup next year and "not so much of the win".

"But," Mr Lee quipped, "I hope the Lions win too."

Looking ahead, as Singapore strengthens its roots and sense of a common past, it must also work on creating a shared future, he said.

Painting his vision of Singapore's future, PM Lee said it would have a "fair and just" society that nurtures and inspires the human spirit and encourages people to "go forth and do well for themselves and do good for their community".

Together as one at Malaysia Cup

FIRST-PERSON account of the 1994 Malaysia Cup final between Singapore and Fuhang, by Muhammad Raydin, 33, a videographer.

"I loved showing support to the Lions battling it out (in the) Malaysia Cup... I was 17 years old then, a mere schoolboy."

When we were walking towards the stadium before the match, there was this feeling of euphoria and anxiety... As everywhere we went, fans of both sides were in their best country's colours.

The feeling when the final whistle was blown was simply awesome, as if the whole of Singapore was there at that time.

The most memorable moment during the whole Malaysia Cup, to me, was not the players (but) the integrity of the fans, to come together as one, and only in this competition do we

see strangers become good friends and buddies become family. This is what I'm definitely hoping for in the next Malaysia Cup, and not so much of the win."



Announced by Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong

at the National Day Rally 2011

14 Aug 2011

A long-term national programme to enable the memory of our nation to be collected, organised, preserved, discovered, researched and co-created.

Value (up to FY2013)
\$27.95 m

Target: 5 million
personal memories



Singapore Memory

91 Partners

Ahmad Ibrahim Primary School. **Anglo-Chinese School (Independent)**. Army Museum of Singapore. **Asia Pacific Breweries Limited**. Asian Film Archive. **Attorney-General's Chambers Library**. **AWARE**. Beatty Secondary School. **Bhaskar's Arts Academy**. Bukit Timah Constituency. **Catholic High School**. Central Singapore District. **Centre for Liveable City**. Citibank Singapore Ltd. **Civil Service College**. Council for Third Age. **Digital Storyteller**. Economic Development Board. **Football Association of Singapore**. Fullerton Heritage. **Genealogy Society of Singapore**. Geylang Serai Constituency. **Haw Par Healthcare Limited**. Health Promotion Board. **Hindu Advisory Board**. Home Team Academy. **Housing Development Board**. Hwa Chong Institution. **Infocomm Development Authority of Singapore**. Institute of Southeast Asian Studies Library. **Jurong Constituency**. Laborans Pte Ltd. **Library Association of Singapore**. Management Development Institute of Singapore (MDIS). **Media Development Authority**. MediaCorp (TODAY). **Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports**. Ministry of Trade and Industry. **MOE Heritage Centre**. Nanyang Polytechnic Library. **Nanyang Technological University Library**. National Archives of Singapore. **National Arts Council**. National Council of Social Services. **National Heritage Board**. National Institute of Education. **National Junior College**. National Parks Board. **National University of Singapore**. NEXUS. Ngee Ann Polytechnic, LYC Library. Oak3 Films Pte Ltd. **One Motoring (LTA's e-services website)**. Parliament Library. **Pasir Ris Secondary School**. People's Association. **PlasticSoldierFactory**. Professional Photographers Association (Singapore). **Public Utilities Board**. Raffles Institution. **RediscoverSG**. Scrawl Studios. **Sentosa Leisure Group**. Singapore Chinese Girls School. **Singapore Federation of Chinese Clans Association**. Singapore General Hospital, The SGH Museum. **Singapore Girl Guides**. Singapore Hainan Hwee Kuan. **Singapore Heritage Society**. Singapore Hokkien Huay Kuan. **Singapore Institute of Architects**. Singapore Institute of Management. **Singapore Management University**. Singapore Polytechnic. **Singapore Press Holdings**. Singapore Tourism Board. **Singapore Youth Olympics Games 2010**. SPRING Singapore. **Supreme Court Library**. Toa Payoh-Bishan Constituency. **Temasek Polytechnic**. The Art Fission Company. **The Arts House**. The Chinese Opera Institute. **Urban Redevelopment Authority**. Woh Hup (Private) Limited. **Ya Kun International Pte Ltd**. Yuhua Constituency.

about

- **Knowledge Assets**

building & preserving content on Singapore

beyond libraries.beyond print.beyond Singapore.beyond official

- **Discovery & Creation**

providing access to content on Singapore

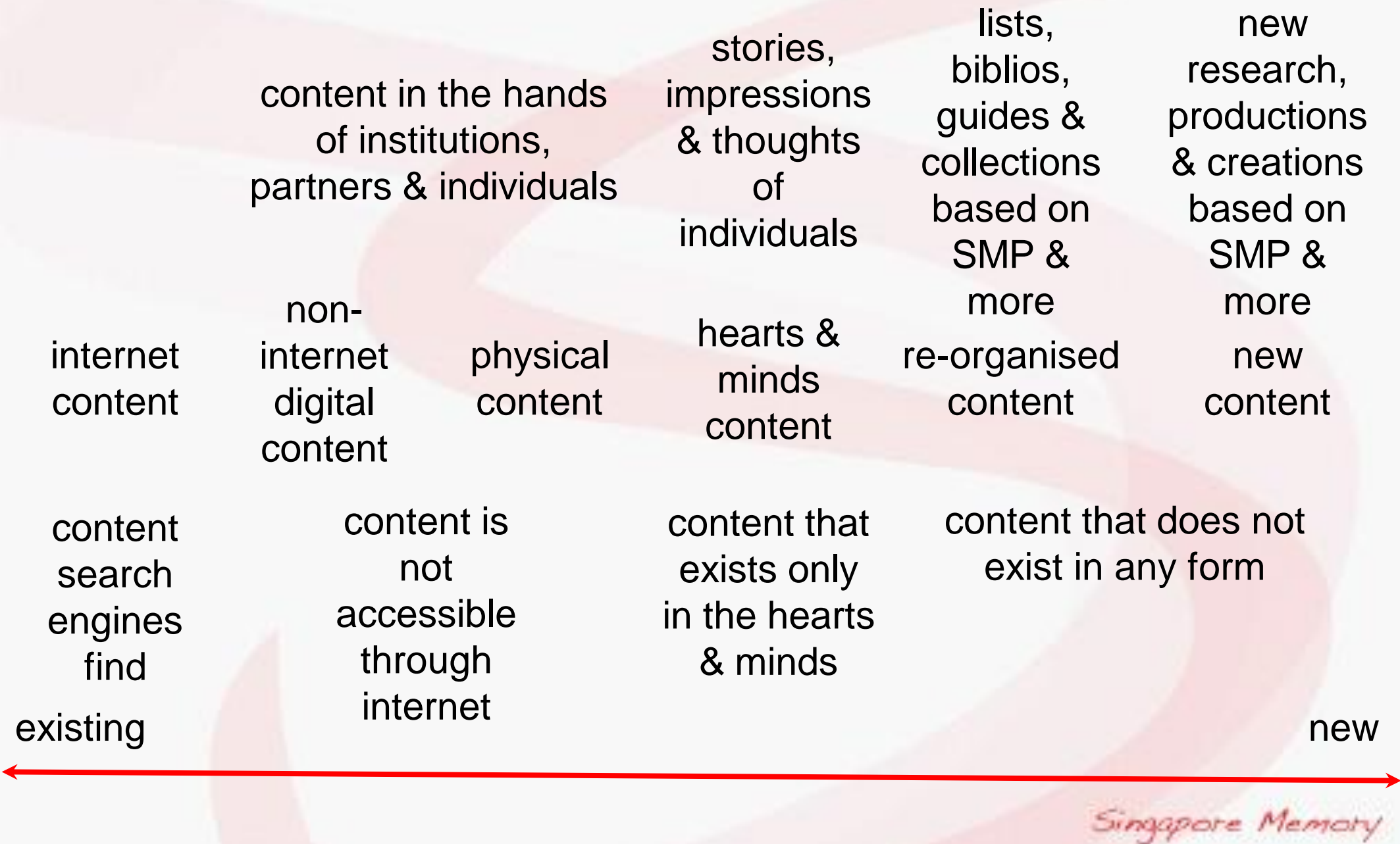
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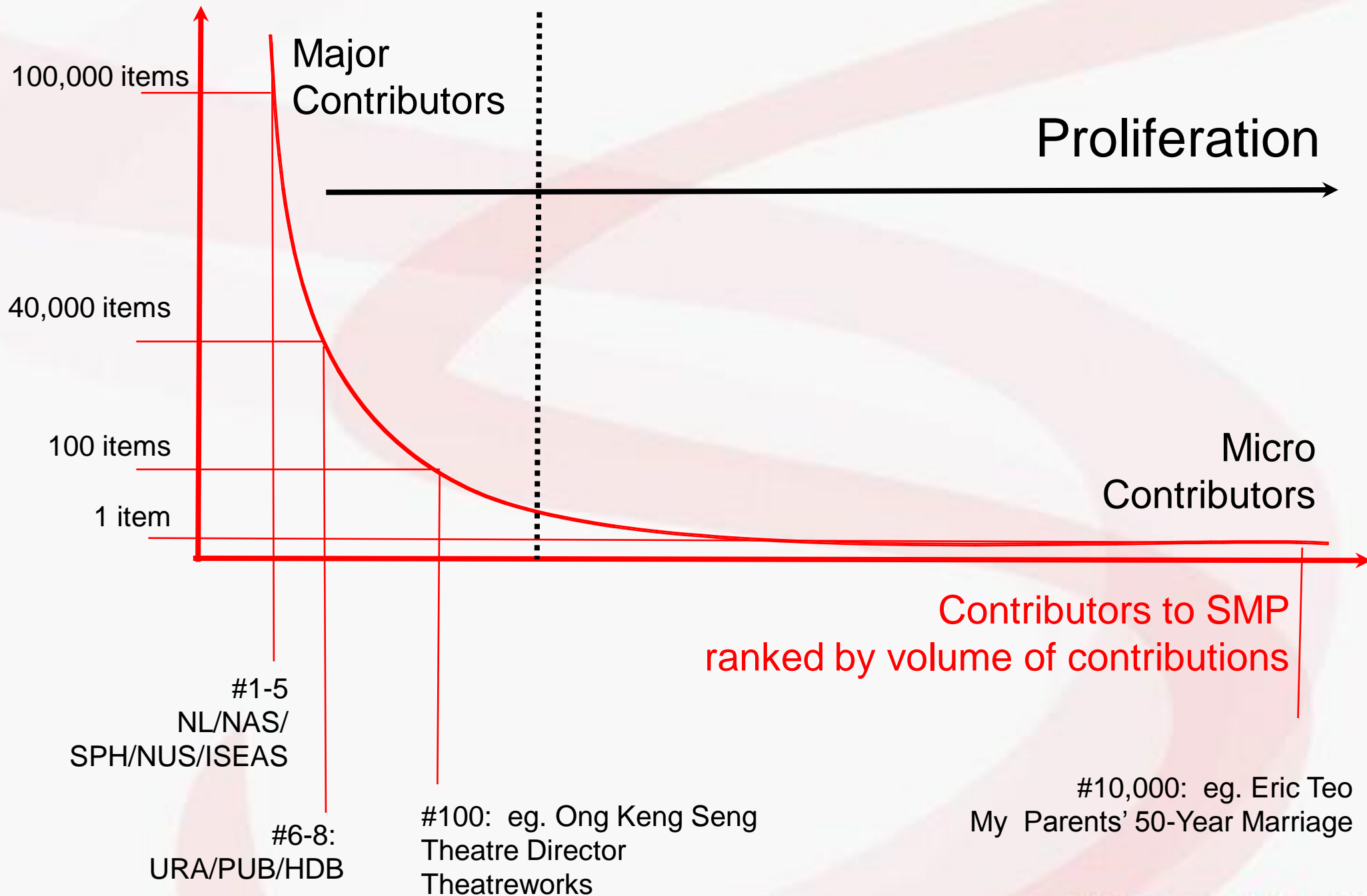
building an understanding of all things Singaporean

*Singaporeans.New Singaporeans.Young Singaporeans.
Beyond Singaporeans*

Singapore Memory Assets



Volume of Contribution



Building the Memory Corps

Memory Corps

Like-minded **believers** to seek and collect stories and memories about Singapore to contribute towards capturing the unfolding Singapore Story from the **people's perspective**.



Singapore Memory

Roles of Memory Corps

Advocate & Imparter

James Seah, a senior citizen blogger of “blogtoexpress” is a passionate Memory Corps have contributed significantly to SMP and have helped to promote the project including contributing regular postings to IrememberSG Facebook page. James is also experienced to train others how to blog.

Storytellers

Pauline Loh, a professional writer who regularly conducts SMP interview assignments. **Peter Chan**, researcher & regular blogger at ‘Good Morning Yesterday’ blog.

Jerome Lim, avid photographer, author of blog "The Long and Winding Road", and creator of the "On a little street in Singapore" Facebook Group.

Content Packager

Rosie Wee, part of research team for Sun Yat-Sen Memorial Project. **Lily Wong** conducts interviews including translations.

Connector

Belinda Tan, a marketing and advertising consultant links SMP to other like-minded volunteers. **Mr Seah**, Vice-Chairman of Geylang Serai CCC, has all the leads to the potential interviewees in Geylang. **Zahra Aljunied** has strong network with local Arab community & is also a grassroot activist.





excerpt from an
eye witness' account of the
1972 Robinsons
Department Store Fire
— chronicled on 26 August
2010 by Pauline Loh

example of
Memory Collected
of **Event** by
Memory Corps

section in Robinsons Department Store at Raffles Place.

“Hullo,” the Indian national lift attendant, Mr Singh, greeted him. Robert was not very familiar with Mr Singh, but he knew from the others that this ‘uncle’ was almost an establishment in Robinson’s.

He decided to climb down the stairs rather than take the lift because he did not wish to keep the customer waiting. “That decision saved my life,” said Robert solemnly.

As he reached the ground floor, he saw one of the many wires on the ceiling suddenly burst into flame. Robert ran for the exit. Should he rescue the Charity Box? After all, the money was meant for the poor. But the heavy box will require two men to haul and, besides, Robert did not know how fast the fire would spread. On hindsight, Robert said that he regretted not saving the Charity Box, as everything went up in flames.

Only later did he learn the extent of the horror. Mr Singh, the lift attendant, along with seven other people, had been trapped in the lift when the fire started. They died of smoke inhalation. “One of them was a pregnant



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Gone are the days where family businesses were run from the home. Sharon Ng shares her childhood memories living at Weld Road amongst sauce bottles, New World and the Rex Cinema.

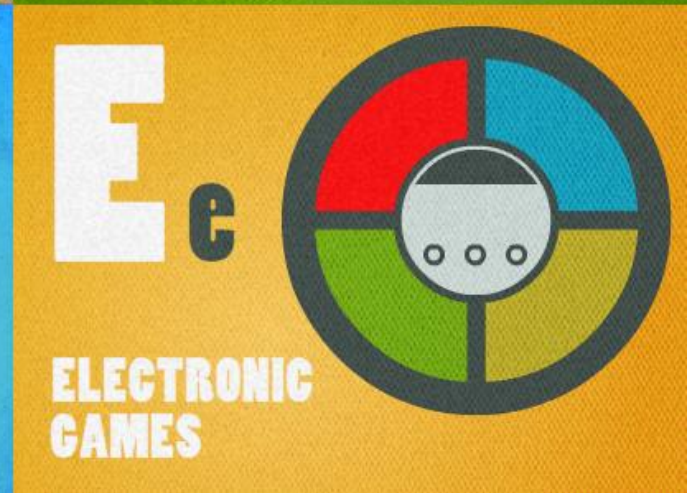
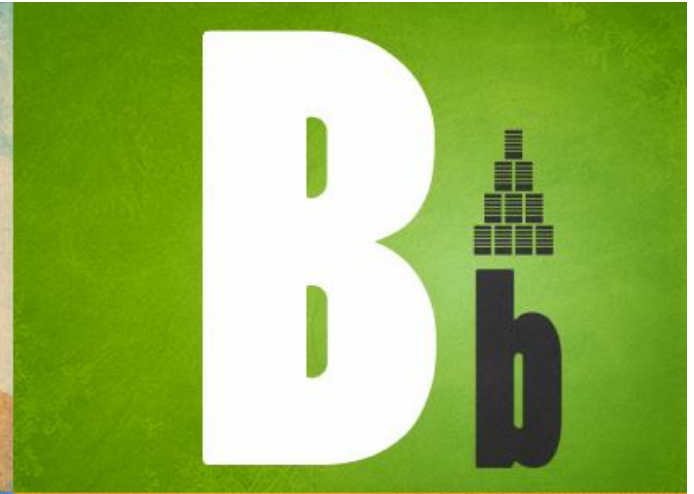


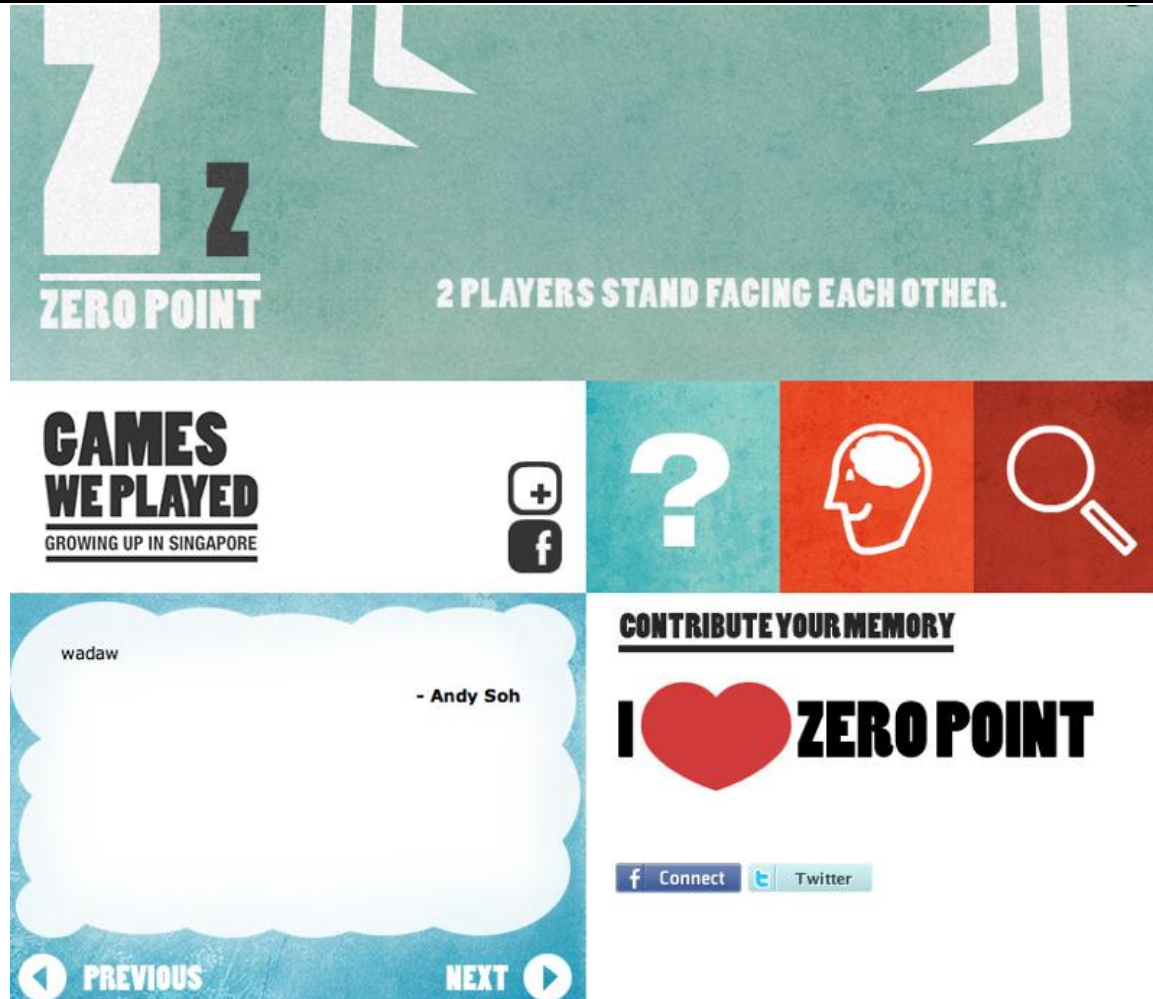
Growing up in a sauce factory: Sharon Ng - irememberSG
www.iremember.sg

"My home was also a small family-run factory of sauces. The factory was on the ground floor while we lived on the second floor. The words Kian Guan Sauce Factory were on the front facade above the steel wrought gate while inside my father, uncle and one hired worker would sit on small stools or on...

GAMES WE PLAYED

GROWING UP IN SINGAPORE





GamesWePlayed

by Plate Interactive
an experiment
by Singapore Memory

SingaporeMemory.SG

The online platform for the Singapore Memory Project that will enable everyone who's experienced Singapore to discover, share and contribute their personal memories towards the growing body of **all things Singapore.**



Singapore Memory

Key Features

Showcase

Curated presentation by SMP based on commissioned work, user memories and institutional content

Browse

Browse content by collections (eg iremembermySchoolDays), partners (eg ISEAS, NUS), contributors and subjects.

Search

Filter results by content type, subjects, time period, author and language

Add

Direct Contribution of memories.



Singapore Memory

A few considerations evolved:

- We need a **strong hook** to build and elicit a positive emotional response (e.g. how can I contribute to this project)
- We need to demonstrate the **immediacy** of the potential user's actions (**interactivity**)
- We need to demonstrate the “human” face of the project. Not as an impersonal entity but as a project run by real people



Singapore Memory

Addressing the “involvement” gap

- **“I’m part of something”** : I can see how my actions are part of a dynamic process contributing to a larger tapestry (i.e SMP)
- **“Context creates identity”**: I’m able to appreciate how my story relates to the sea of “my stories” contributed by others





SINGAPORE MEMORY

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MEMORY**

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Cluster 5



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