

## Contents Development of Library Signage Manual in Korea

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### ABSTRACT

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There is an increase in the need of an unified manual for library signage system, due to recent increase in library construction or remodeling. This paper, therefore, can be a basic research to develop library signage system manual. Based on an anual released from KLA and the sum of opinions of expert groups, this research proposes a concrete list of contents for library signage system manual as follows. First, there is a need of theoretical basis of library signage system. Second, for the actual practices of signage system, planning, check list, and standard terms shall be necessary.

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## 1. Introduction

Libraries are one of the oldest, most traditional building types and usually use one of the most general signage systems. Many people has visited a library, looked for books, used on-line catalog system and talked to a librarian. They are familiar with how libraries operate and how the building is organized. But still intuitive signs to navigate in the library are often challenges.

Signage is the methodology of arranging indicators to guide people to their destinations. Signs are tools that aid in Wayfinding. Architectural indicators such as light, color, materials, and pathways also play a large role in signage. A successful signage system is intuitive and self-navigable, and it protects the overall visual integrity of the site. Also signage is specific to its place and visitors.

Signs improve and are most times integral to a clearly designed wayfinding program. The function of a sign is to identify, inform, direct, restrict or permit. A good signage recedes into the background while providing clear information when needed.

In addition, sign codes, life safety issues and disabled universal guidelines need to be included to meet the national and world wide requirements. Successfully designed signage helps visitors find their way, makes information accessible, provides enhanced experience. In addition, an inclusive assessment of the environment and issues that affect orientation for the first time visitors is imperative to a successful signage and wayfinding program.

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Successfully designed signage and posters in library can be key measures of library marketing to invite potential users (Jun, 2003).

Recently, many libraries are being newly built or remodeled, based on new interior designs and signage system. However, there is neither of consistency nor of guidelines for library terms in foreign languages. We cannot ignore the fact that both Korean and English are being used as official library terms. Moreover, as South Korea become more of multicultural societies, we are expecting the increasing need of various language uses in library terms, for example, Chinese or Vietnamese.

The library products used for signage system are different in their size, material, and colour. Some of them are not continually produced in a long-term. Therefore, there is a need of active communications between the product manufacturers and Librarians. Standard forms of library products are necessary.

The objective of this paper is to address useful information for librarian to build library signage system, which will be the base of library signage system manual. The applied research methods are; 1) literature reviews of existing studies on library signage system, including library manual of KLA, and other library standards related researches, 2) selection of contents applicable for library signage manual, and 3) discussion additional contents through consultation meetings. The consultation committee consists of 8 people; 2 chiefs in public libraries, 1 university librarian, 3 library product manufacturers, and 2 professors of library science. The consultation meetings have held twice, and addressed manual structures and contents.

## 2. Literature Reviews

There have been very few of studies and researches on library signage system. In 2009, Korea Library Association (KLA) released 「The Library Handbook」, which includes roles, conditions, types, planning and core principles, and design examples of library signage system. Chapter 2.1~2.4 will discuss the contents below.

In the first consultation meeting, the core and optional factors in signage system were discussed. The core factors include basic signage principles from KLA Handbook and the signage system for the disabled, and the English terms for library areas and resources. The necessary factors in planning and developing library signage system were also included as a core factor, as seen on a table below.

**Table 1.** the core factors in library signage system manual

Theoretical basis	Case/ methods
concept of signage	A style of type and marking
functions of signage	Pictogram
types of signage	Area Identification and terms in foreign language
principles and formations of signage	Data identification and terms in foreign language
signage regulations for the disabled	

The optional factors include size, material, and designs of products used in libraries. Libraries

desired flexible usage of the above factors, based on a guideline, as an expression of their individuality and personality. In cataloging system, however, the color consistency of a number in hundreds was agreed, in order to ease users' recognitions of distinguishable units in the system. The second consultation meeting reviewed the proposed discussions and introduced sample designs.

The followings are the contents of signage system cited from 「The Library Handbook 2009」 released from KLA.

### *2.1. The concept of signage*

A dictionary of library science defines signage that 'any kind of visual symbol/mark created to display particular meaning'. Dictionary of modern design (Park, 1996) explains signage that 'a basic unit of communication, creating massive possibilities by combining meaningless indicators'. Signage contains messages to deliver. Signage uses marks, lights, and symbols to express or deliver a message. The range of signage is very broad, including library building itself, trees around the main entrance, and landmarks on the top of the building (KLA, 2009).

### *2.2. The role of signage*

The roles of signage are divided into two: a) as a visually delivery of necessary information and as a composition of exterior and interior designs. The former roles permit or restrict certain behaviors of users and to help them find their destinations. The later roles maximize the harmony of spaces by displaying signs on walls, stairs, hallways, and floors of libraries.

The library signs, therefore, not only provides easier ways of access for visitors, but also visually express the nature of organizations and the function of areas, and worked as a image marketing strategies of library.

It can be specified with pictogram -which is being used in real-sized figures, directory maps, numbering signs in offices and conference rooms, toilets, parking spaces, elevators, drinking fountain and stairs emergency lightening, classified tables on bookshelves, and labels on books. The signs also play a role as directional or indicating information when following conditions are met.

- ① Signage provides all basic information to library users
- ② Signage is a tool to discern various books, service points and facilities
- ③ Delivering messages in signs should be simple and straight forward
- ④ Signs shall be designed in consistent and symbolic ways, while express the intentions of the library.
- ⑤ Signs shall be changeable to the extension or modification of library building
- ⑥ Library signage shall be harmonized with building structures and decorations
- ⑦ Signage location, height, color, the contrast of colors and the use of Braille shall strictly observe the disability related laws.

### *2.3. Signage types*

When signage systems are designed, the following functions and forms of signage should be

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considered.

- ① Spatial cognition signage helps library users recognize their current locations and their destinations, such as reference room, children's reading room or bookshelf (e.g. building floor plan)
- ② Directional signage leads library users to particular service or destinations (e.g. arrows to certain point)
- ③ Identification signage indicates the identification of specific area (e.g. locations or service point like common room, lecture hall, information desk, donor recognition, and bookshelves of adult fictions or periodicals)
- ④ Operational signage shows facility instructions (e.g. copy machine instructions)
- ⑤ Regulation signage indicates restrictions, warnings, or necessary procedure to conduct certain action (e.g. non-smoking, no food or beverage are allowed sign)
- ⑥ Announcement signage contains necessary information for library users (e.g. program time table, opening of special program, services provided by the library and equipment failure)

Cited from a report released from the University of Notre Dame, Heo Kyung(2000) listed 6 types of library signage.

- ① location signage shows the whole picture including the location and interrelations of objects in library
- ② Direction signage leads library users to their destinations
- ③ Identification signage identifies certain object by putting a title on
- ④ Information signage contains necessary information for library users to use appropriate data, tools and facilities of library. The signage includes administrators' intentions, general information, restrictions, opening hours, titles of facilities and exhibitions, handling descriptions and operational manuals.
- ⑤ Regulation signage restricts certain behaviours for the maintenance of security and order.
- ⑥ Bookshelf signage: 10 classifications between 100 classifications signs, front label, sign or phrase in the end of shelf.

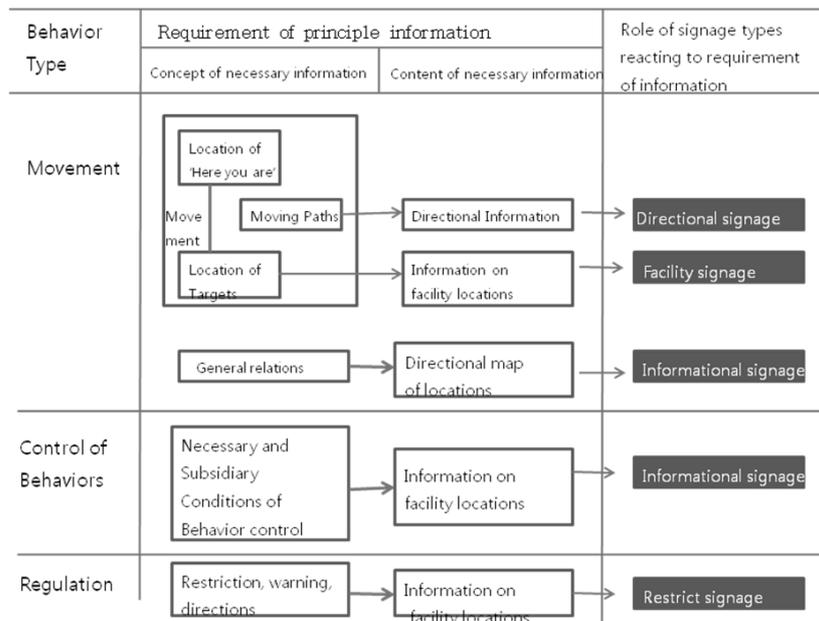
Library signage can be sorted into two ways, considering their shapes and usage. In terms of its of shape, there are linear and side models of signage. The linear models are based on non-selective pathways, and focus more on the process of access rather than the destination (e.g. traffic lights). The side models of signage are pathway selective, focusing mainly on destination itself (e.g. directional signs in department stores).

As seen on the table 2 below, Youn (2002) divides library signage into four; information, direction, location and regulation signage. The Fig. 1 shows the relations between users' behaviour, request of information, and signage types. Library signage can also be divided by their installing methods; adhesions on the wall, hook types, stand types, hangings from ceiling, and by their materials; metal, acrylic and etc.

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**Table 2.** The type of signage

types	role	contents	Installing locations	
Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• general information</li> <li>• internal arrangement</li> <li>• floor arrangement</li> <li>• counter</li> <li>• user guide</li> <li>• board</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• general information</li> <li>• general arrangement</li> <li>• floor arrangement</li> <li>• counter information</li> <li>• user guide of room/ facilities/ tools</li> <li>• contact information, /displaying posters</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• name of library, opening hours, holidays, service details</li> <li>• Shelving, facility location, directional map</li> <li>• Shelving every floor, facility arrangement</li> <li>• register, check out/in, reading information</li> <li>• operational regulations/ description</li> <li>• title of board</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• outside of building, access to building</li> <li>• entrance, reception</li> <li>• main hallways in each floor</li> <li>• counter</li> <li>• room/ facility</li> <li>• walls</li> <li>• entrance hall</li> </ul>
Direction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• major directions</li> <li>• minor direction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• parking lot, entrance, floor, directions</li> <li>• direction to bookshelf</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• outside of building, entrance, floors, identification of facility and directions</li> <li>• contents and directions of bookshelf and area</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• outside of building, entrance, hall</li> <li>• main interchange, hallway</li> <li>• main/ sub hallways and interchange</li> </ul>
Location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• floors</li> <li>• Identification of facility</li> <li>• Identification of space</li> <li>• bookshelf</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• floor sign</li> <li>• room/facility sign</li> <li>• location sign</li> <li>• bookshelf sign</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• floor</li> <li>• identification of room/facility</li> <li>• name of area(light reading area etc.)</li> <li>• Classification of books</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• floors and walls</li> <li>• room/ facilities area</li> <li>• each area</li> <li>• sides of bookshelf</li> </ul>
Regulation restriction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• restriction</li> <li>• regulations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• restriction, regulation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• non-smoking, restricted area</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• non-smoking, restricted area</li> </ul>



**Fig. 1.** Role of signage

## 2.4. Planning and practices of signage system

### 2.4.1. Planning process

Library signage system is the first impression that can be positively or negatively made to library visitors. It has a directional role addressing voluntary actions of the visitors, such as access to a building or data. The planning process of signage system has several steps as shown below; organization, research and analysis, basic planning establishment, practical planning, order, assembling, adhesion, evaluation and remuneration.

- ① Organization of the signage system planning committee
  - ② Library signage system is the sum of opinions of various expert groups. In order to address an ideal signage planning, it is therefore desirable to organize a planning committee. The committee of a newly built library should include at least a chief librarian, signage manager, accounting manager, architect designer, interior designer, library user, and librarian in charge.
  - ③ Research and analysis
  - ④ A signage planning manager not only receives concrete opinions from librarians and architect designers, but also collects related data and researches current status of facilities. Then the manager shall report the results to the committee. The committee reviews the report and decides appropriate guidelines of signage guidelines.
  - ⑤ Establishment of a basic plan
  - ⑥ A signage planning manager writes a basic planning report which indicates the necessary kinds, number, arranges, and forms of signs, based on the guideline of the committee. Then the committee reviews and finalizes the plan. The construction and furniture related plans are also proposed here such as displaying location, wiring system for lights, hanging on walls, and adding an extra adhesion and color of painting
  - ⑦ Practical planning
  - ⑧ This step relates to the actual designs of signage in the basic plan. It includes visiting the scene and the concrete RP, using a miniature model. The construction or reconstruction of library building should have achieved a considerable progress by this point of step.
  - ⑨ Order, assembling, and adhesion
  - ⑩ When the practical planning is completed, the library administration and a signage planning manager select a manufacturer to make an actual order. The selected manufacturer starts the adhesion step of signage, cooperating with a building manager. A planning manager finalizes the location of signs.
  - ⑪ Evaluation and remuneration
  - ⑫ The evaluation of signage system matters. It is desirable for the signage committee to keep being involved with the system for another year after the opening, in order to handle possible problems in the system, make extra orders, and evaluations
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### 2.4.2. Basic principles and formations

Library visitors have different objectives, and not all visitors make an access to a reference room after checking all the signs provided. The signage system, therefore, should take an account of the experience of first time users of library rather than a librarian who is already familiar with the library arrangements. In order to the need of the first-time users, there are several basic principles of library signage system; legibility, simplicity, continuity and unity. The Fig. 2 schematizes the principles.

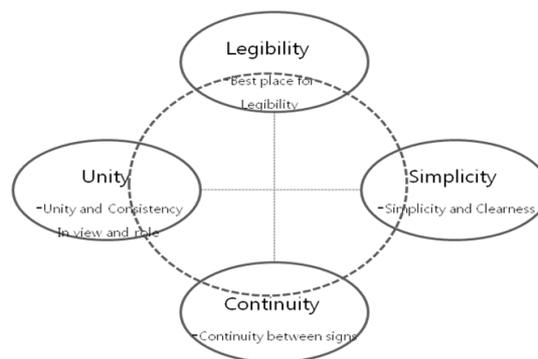


Fig. 2. Principle of Signage

### 2.4.3. Sign Planning Checklist

The following sign types are candidates for a comprehensive sign program.

#### *Exterior Signs*

- Primary building identification, freestanding or on facade (name of bldg)
- Monument sign (primary or secondary signature, freestanding in landscape)
- Building address (often required by Fire Dept for emergency purposes)
- Building entry ID (eye level at pedestrian entrance(s))
- Restriction sign (No smoking, no food or drink, no skateboards, etc.)
- Hours of operation
- Delivery entrance
- Directional signing (to key entrances, bridges to other facilities)
- Disabled access (preferred routes to vertical transportation)
- Donor recognition or building dedication cornerstone
- Touch screen interactive displays

#### *Parking & Vehicular Signs*

- Parking ID
  - Directional signs
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- Parking fee information
- Tow away / private parking disclaimer
- Disabled access parking

#### *Interior Signs*

- Main building directory (departments, personnel, resources)
- Building floor directories on each level (departments, destinations, facilities)
- Directional signing to key destinations
- Circulation Desk / Information Station Interactive Touch Screen
- Area ID (i.e., Circulation, Information, Registration)
- Desk bar (reception, station closed, circulation, etc.)
- Book drop sign for front desk
- Suggestion board or box with reply board
- Weekly calendar of events board
- Library shelves and/or stack-end signs (w/ changeable insert system)
- Conference room ID with (in-use) slider panel
- Room ID sign
- Office and Workstation ID sign (flexible/changeable)
- Informative signs (i.e. instructions for computers, copiers, etc.)
- Telephone and other services
- Restriction signs (No smoking, No food or drink, No Cell Phones, etc.)
- Emergency door ID (to restrict exiting / alarm will sound)
- Code, Regulatory And Universal Access Signing
- Restroom ID
- Accessible facility maps (showing elevators, room numbers, restrooms, phones, etc.)
- Room occupancy / emergency procedures booklet
- Stair code sign, required at stairwells
- Evacuation map

### **3. Signage System and Accessibility Guidelines for the Disabled**

Library signage system observes Americans with disabilities Act (1990) and other related federal laws. There are a few regulations of signage system released from ADA (Accessibility Guidelines for Building and Facilities).

- ① Letters and numbers on signs shall have a width-to-height ratio between 3:5 and 1:1.
  - ② Letters and numbers on signs shall have a stroke-width-to-height ratio between 1:5 and 1:10
  - ③ The highest signs shall be 89" (2,261mm) above the finish floor, and letters and numerals shall be raised 3" (76mm) minimum
  - ④ Signs shall be installed on the wall adjacent to the latch side of the door. The height shall
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be 60 in (1525 mm) above the finish floor to the centerline of the sign. Raised characters shall be at least 5/8 in (16 mm) high, but no higher than 2 in (50 mm). Letters and numerals shall be raised 1/32 in (0.8 mm) minimum, upper case, sans serif or simple serif type and shall be accompanied with Grade 2 Braille.

- ⑤ Pictograms on a fixed sign shall be accompanied by the equivalent verbal description placed directly below the pictogram. The contrast of color between characters shall be used.
- ⑥ Light-colored characters or symbols shall be used on a dark background, and dark-colored characters or symbols on a light-background.

#### 4. Examples of Library Signage

The list below shows a few examples of library signage, being used in American Universities and public libraries.

- ① *Bookshelf* (including space for reading and multimedia, and Research & Information)
    - Book Stacks
    - Mobile Racks, Compact Shelving, Mobile Shelving, Mobile Aisle Shelving
    - Sorting Shelves - Shelves Areas of the stacks used by library employees to sort and organize books in order to return them to their proper locations)
    - Rack - Shelf or shelves used for displaying books, magazines, periodicals or other library materials
    - Range - A row of book shelves, usually double-faced, anywhere in the library.
    - Wall Rack
    - Donation Shelf
    - Reference Stacks
    - Quarto / Folio Shelves
    - Media Resources
    - Media Viewing Rooms
    - Multimedia Design Studio
    - Research & Information
    - Reference Collection
    - Current / Back Periodicals
    - Microforms
    - Periodicals
    - Government Publications / Maps
    - Bound Periodicals
    - Periodicals Collection
    - Abridged Dictionary
    - E-Journal
    - Journal & Newspaper
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- Encyclopedia
- House Organ
- Monograph
- Style Manual - Special handbooks that illustrate the accepted forms for citing references in bibliographies, footnotes, and endnotes
- Trade Journal
- Browsing Collection
- General Collection
- Faculty Publications
- Teaching Materials Collection
- Dissertations
- Heritage Center
- Senior Report
- Mech. - Mechanics
- Audiovisual Material Room
- A/V Room
- Reading Area
- Special Collections Reading Rooms
- Audiovisual Room
- Assisted Reading Room
- Library Catalogue

② *Staff areas*

- Staff Areas, Librarians Offices
- Library Administration
- Librarian
- Library Staff Lounge
- Systems Department
- Staff Only

③ *Check In and out, and information desk*

- Circulation Desk
  - Check Out
  - Service Desk
  - Reference Desk
  - Reserve Desk
  - InterLibrary Loan
  - Document Delivery Services
  - Inquiry
  - After Hours Book Drop
  - Issue Desk
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- Assistive Technology Area
- Computer Help

④ *Library entrance and reception*

- Entrance
- Lobby
- Emergency Exit
- Fire Exit

⑤ *Common area and rest room*

- Cafe
- Lounge Area / Fireplace
- Laptop Lounge
- Restaurant
- Rest Room
- Disability Toilet
- Mothers Room
- Drinking Fountain
- Vending Machines
- Public Seating

⑥ *Space for users (seminar room, reading room and working area)*

- Conference Room
  - Program Room
  - Teaching and Learning Center (TLC)
  - Collaborative Learning Center
  - Seminar Room
  - Meeting Room
  - Community Room
  - Instruction Room
  - Training Room
  - Literacy Room
  - Center For Teaching Excellence
  - Experimental Classroom
  - Library Classroom
  - Distributed Learning
  - Study Area
  - Group Study Room
  - Quiet Study Room
  - Internet Work Station
  - IT Room
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- Copier / Printer / Scanner
- Photocopier
- Presentation Equipment
- Editing Suite

⑦ *etc.*

- Library Security
- Multipurpose Room
- Dewey Decimal Classification Signs
- Children's Area
- Teen Area
- Graduate and Professional Students' Association
- LASR (Lied Automated Storage and Retrieval)
- Book Truck
- Storage Area
- Cabinets / Lockers
- Theater
- Coat Room
- Handicap Accessible Elevator
- Elevator
- Handicap Accessible
- Public Telephone
- Fire Equipment
- Periodical Work Area

## 5. Conclusion

Library signage system provides library users basic information. In spite of its importance, there have been very few of literatures regarding library signage system available. Now, there is an increase in the need of an unified manual for library signage system, due to recent increase in library construction or remodeling. This paper, therefore, can be a basic research to develop library signage system manual. Based on an manual released from KLA and the sum of opinions of expert groups, this research proposes a concrete list of contents for library signage system manual as follows.

First, there is a need of theoretical basis of library signage system. The theoretical basis includes its concept, function, types, principles, formations, and regulations for the aged. Second, for the actual practices of signage system, planning, check list, and standard terms shall be necessary. Third, we are expecting an increased use of more various foreign languages including Chinese, Vietnamese, and Thai.

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