

**Interesting:** Margaret (left) and Kadim visiting some of the book stalls during the seminar.



# Adapt to flourish

## Librarians need to keep libraries relevant in digital era

By **RUSSELL TING**  
russell@thestar.com.my

**KUCHING:** Librarians and libraries still have a role to play despite the digital revolution.

Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (Unimas) held its annual librarianship seminar themed "The Transformation of Libraries towards the Culturisation of Knowledge" yesterday, with hundreds of librarians, academics, information experts and students attending the two-day talk.

Speaking at the opening of the seminar, Unimas head librarian Margaret Simeng said that libraries throughout the country had to keep up with the large influx of digital information and changes affecting the industry in order to flourish.

"With the advent of Internet, we are now

overconnected in a sense. Students nowadays have changed the way they communicate and how they look up information," said Margaret.

"According to Marc Prensky in his book titled *Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants*, the average college student spends 5,000 hours reading but more than 10,000 hours playing video games. This is the scenario in America, but I'm sure students in Malaysia aren't that far off from those figures.

"We can see how digital resources and the Internet play a big part in how students study these days. The contribution of librarians is necessary in order to facilitate the transition from books to digital information.

"I hope that all those attending the seminar here will be able to come together and brainstorm new ideas to help one another and to come up with solutions on how to keep librar-

ies relevant in the digital era," she said.

Unimas deputy chancellor Prof Datuk Dr Mohamad Kadim Suaidi also said that while he realised the difficulty in doing so, he was confident that it could be done.

"Departing from the traditional functions of a library and adopting new methods of doing things is definitely a challenge, but I am sure that all of you here today will be able to exchange opinions and ideas on how to make the library a place where one can obtain knowledge in an environment that is relevant to the digital age."

A total of nine papers were discussed during the seminar, which was divided into three sessions titled *Library Transformation: Issues and Challenges*, *Community Knowledge: Service Strategies and the Culturisation of Knowledge Towards Creativity and Innovation*.