


NINETEENTH CONGRESS OF THE )  
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES )  
*First Regular Session* )



23 APR 17 P4:13

**SENATE**  
**S. No. 2075**

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**Introduced by Senator Jinggoy Ejercito Estrada**

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**AN ACT**  
**DIGITIZING ALL BOOKS NECESSARY FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION AND**  
**ESTABLISHING THE PHILIPPINE ONLINE LIBRARY, PROVIDING FUNDS**  
**THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES**

**EXPLANATORY NOTE**

E-government is defined by the United Nations as "the use of information and communication technologies (ICT) to more effectively and efficiently deliver government services to citizens and business. It is the application of ICT in government operations, achieving public ends by digital means".<sup>1</sup> Consistent with this, Republic Act No. 10844 or the "Department of Information and Communications Technology Act of 2015" also defined e-government as "the use of ICT by the government and the public to enhance the access to and delivery of government services to bring about efficient, responsive, ethical, accountable and transparent government service."

The 2022 ranking of the Philippines in the Digital Quality of Life Index administered by cybersecurity firm Surfshark is not very encouraging as it declined by seven (7) points from its ranking in 2021. However, it is worth noting that while we regressed in all the criterion used for the said index, we improved in the aspect of electronic government wherein we ranked 67<sup>th</sup> in 2021 but climbed to 62<sup>nd</sup> in 2022.

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<sup>1</sup> [Overview \(un.org\)](https://www.un.org/)

One sector that will greatly benefit from e-government is the education sector. The delivery of education will have broader reach in a faster and more convenient manner with the use of ICT. Among others, the availability of various reference and reading materials will be more efficient and accessible with the use of modern technology that will allow the storage of bigger volumes of materials, digital and more secure storage, usage by multiple readers, interactive modalities and user-friendly interface.

At present, the National Library of the Philippines (NLP), University of the Philippines (UP), Department of Science and Technology (DOST), Department of Agriculture (DA), and the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) collaborated to launch the project, the Philippine eLib which “hopes to provide for the information needs of all sectors of society in a convenient, affordable, and efficient way of delivery”.<sup>2</sup> The project is funded through the e-Government Fund.

The “*Philippine Online Library Act*” seeks to replicate this project by catering especially to elementary and secondary students. It proposes to create a digitized copy of all textbooks and reference books in the said level and make them available online. Such online library will complement the existing physical libraries in schools and in local government units around the country. It will also aid both teachers and students who have utilized various learning modalities, including online and hybrid classes, during the surge of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The records of the Department of Education (DepEd)<sup>3</sup> for School Year 2021-2022 shows that there are 28,033,530 learners, including Alternative Learning System (ALS) learners in basic education nationwide. The insufficient number of textbooks in public schools remain a serious concern and with this sheer number of students, the achievement of the ideal textbook to student ratio is far from realization. In this light,

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<sup>2</sup> [Philippine eLibrary | National Library of the Philippines \(nlp.gov.ph\)](http://nlp.gov.ph)

<sup>3</sup> [Databits - Functional Computers and Internet Connectivity \(deped.gov.ph\)](http://deped.gov.ph)

the Philippine Online Library can supplement the required books, especially to students who has internet connectivity.

Apart from serving the needs of the students and teachers, the Philippine Online Library will be a central repository of all digitized textbooks and reference materials for the country's basic education. This reliable database will be useful to both the present and future generations.

In view of the foregoing, the immediate passage of this bill is highly recommended.



**JINGGOY EJERCITO ESTRADA**

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*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:*

1 Section 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the “*Philippine Online Library*  
2 *Act*”.

3 Sec. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It shall be the policy of the State to ensure that  
4 its citizens are computer literate and are provided access to an increasingly digitized  
5 world. Thus, the State shall provide its citizens with the opportunity to increase their  
6 adaptability with information and communications technology, and to enhance their  
7 learning experience by providing access to digitized copies of textbooks necessary for  
8 the provision of quality primary and secondary education.

9 Sec. 3. *Philippine Online Library.*– The Department of Education (DepEd) shall  
10 create a digitized copy of all textbooks and reference books it deems necessary for  
11 the public education of Philippine elementary and secondary students. This shall be  
12 compiled in the Philippine Online Library which shall be jointly managed by the DepEd  
13 and the Department of Information and Communication Technology (DICT).

14 Sec. 4. *Provision for Access to the Digitized Copies of Textbooks.* --  
15 The DepEd shall ensure access to the digitized copies of textbooks by providing  
16 computers, laptops or appropriate wherewithal to all primary and secondary public

1 schools nationwide. Similarly, in order to ensure access to the digitized copies of  
2 textbooks, the DICT shall provide fast and reliable internet access to each primary and  
3 secondary public school.

4         *Sec. 5. Recycling of Computers.* – In order to offset expenses related to the  
5 procurement of computers, laptops or appropriate wherewithal necessary for the  
6 immediate execution of the provisions of this Act, national government agencies,  
7 government-owned and controlled corporations, and other government financial  
8 institutions which shall procure new computers shall endorse their old units to the  
9 DICT to check if the computers can still be used for the intent of this Act and  
10 afterwards shall be given to DepEd for deployment to primary and secondary public  
11 schools nationwide.

12         *Sec. 6. Additional Online Educational Materials.* – The DepEd may seek the  
13 assistance and support of the National Library of the Philippines to complement the  
14 Philippine Online Library’s digital repository of textbooks with additional materials that  
15 is representative of Filipino culture and literature. DepEd shall also be allowed to add  
16 other online materials that it deems necessary for expanding the learning opportunities  
17 for students.

18         *Sec. 7. Custody over Digitized Copies of Textbooks.* – The DepEd and the  
19 National Library of the Philippines shall have joint custody over the digitized copies of  
20 the textbooks. The DICT shall likewise ensure the technological management of the  
21 digital repository to ensure the integrity of the system.

22         *Sec. 8. Appropriations.* – The initial amount of Five hundred million (Php  
23 500,000,000.00) shall be appropriated for the immediate implementation of this Act  
24 and shall be jointly managed by the DepEd and DICT. The amount necessary for the  
25 continuous and effective implementation of this Act shall be included in the annual  
26 General Appropriations Act.

27         *Sec. 9. Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – Within ninety (90) days from  
28 the approval of this Act, the DepEd, the DICT, and the National Library of the  
29 Philippines shall promulgate the necessary implementing rules and regulations for the  
30 effective execution and enforcement of this Act.

1           Sec. 10. *Separability Clause.* – If, for any reason, any part, section, or provisions  
2 of this Act is held invalid or unconstitutional, the remaining provisions not affected  
3 thereby shall continue to be in full force and effect.

4           Sec. 11. *Repealing Clause.*—All laws, presidential decrees, executive orders,  
5 rules and regulations, and parts thereof which are inconsistent with the provisions of  
6 this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

7           Sec. 12. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect after fifteen (15) days following  
8 the completion of its publication in the Official Gazette or in at least two (2)  
9 newspapers of general circulation.

*Approved,*