

# Singapore Post reinvents to keep up

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Mail volumes may be on terminal decline throughout the world, but Singapore has managed to buck the trend.

More items went through the local post in recent years, from 870.9 million in the financial year 2008/9 to 959.7 million items in 2011/2012, said Singapore Post.

This is not a sign, however, that the Republic is immune from the broader technological shifts driving people away from paper to paperless communication. With one of the highest rates of Internet use in Asia, letters are on the decline, said SingPost's head of postal services Woo Keng Leong.

But as more people go online for work or play, this has had the unexpected consequence of giving the postal operator a fillip.

More Singaporeans are shopping online and parcel volumes, particularly those going to and from overseas, have risen. Last year, SingPost delivered 3.7 million items per month, up from 3.3 million in 2010 and 2.4 million in 2009.

To meet the changing needs of its customers, the postal company,



PHOTO: NASSIM HILL

At Tanglin Post Office, SingPost has carved out space for Nassim Hill, a bistro and bakery, where customers can grab a bite after posting parcels and letters.

which was privatised in 1992, has had to adapt.

With fewer individuals and businesses sending letters, SingPost stopped collecting mail on Saturdays two years ago. It also intends to roll out parcel locker-stations from next year, which will allow customers to deposit and pick up parcels at all hours, to take advantage of an area in which demand is surging.

Confronting its nemesis the Internet head on, the post office has also gone online, coming up with mobile apps and various online services, including an Internet shopping portal.

One mobile app, to be launched later this year, will allow users to calculate postage, track registered mail and find nearby post offices

and post boxes.

SingPost has also found rich pickings outside its core business, for instance, by taking advantage of the prime location of many of its post office branches.

Space at some post offices has been converted into shops, child-care centres and, in the case of Killiney Post Office along fashionable Orchard Road, an upmarket bar.

Like postal services around the world, Singapore's postman will need to constantly reinvent itself to stay ahead of the times.

Said Mr Woo: "It is key that SingPost remains relevant in the changing landscape, hence the transformation journey that we have embarked on."

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