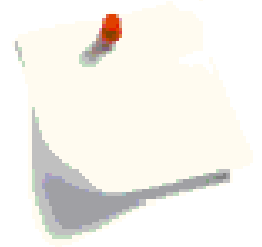


# Editorial



## **Artificial Intelligence, Digital Transformation, and the Evolving Role of Libraries in Knowledge Creation**

The present-day knowledge landscape is at the verge of a significant change, mainly due to the tremendous breakthroughs in digital technologies, artificial intelligence (AI), and the increasing reliance on data for research. Traditionally, academic libraries have been known to be mere guardians of the physical books and other materials. They are now slowly turning into vibrant knowledge centers that offer ample research support, promote ethical scholarly communication, and implement innovations based on user needs. The current issue of the *International Journal of Information Studies and Libraries (IJISL)* is a compilation of diverse yet interrelated studies that together mirror this change and emphasize how the role of libraries is shifting in the digital and AI-empowered world.

It is a recurring topic in this issue that academic libraries and scholarly workflows are being transformed through the integration of artificial intelligence. Artificial intelligence (AI) technologies are not just experimental additions but are becoming an integral part of library services, research assistance tools, and publishing platforms. Investigations into AI-based technologies implemented in academic libraries as well as research on end-user experiences with AI research assistants have demonstrated that these tools are indeed changing modes of information discovery, reference services, and research support. The results tell a story that AI can greatly improve productivity, personalization, and accessibility, the requisites being that librarians and users are sufficiently trained, and they understand the tool's capabilities and limitations. However, these studies also serve as a warning that the inclusion of technology should be non-exclusionary and it should take into account the particular circumstances, especially in academic contexts where there is a great disparity between the level of infrastructure and digital literacy.

As AI tools play bigger roles in preparing manuscripts, reviewing, detecting plagiarism, and spreading content, ethical issues about transparency, bias, authorship, and academic integrity have become very important. The debate on ethical standards in AI use is a good reminder that progress in technology should always be underpinned by responsible policies and human judgement. Both libraries and publishers have a joint duty to make sure that the use of AI will enhance, rather than weaken, trust in scholarly communication. This article suggests that ethics should not be behind innovation, but should develop at the same pace.

One more crucial aspect analysed is how research performance is measured using bibliometric analysis. Bibliometric analyses of institutional research outputs reveal valuable knowledge about the practice of knowledge production, collaboration, and the growth of disciplines. Such evaluations are becoming more and more important as research assessment decisions play a role in the distribution of funds, institutional rankings, and strategic planning. These studies, using bibliometric methods, illustrate how a data-driven approach can be helpful to an institution in the identification of its research areas of strength, weaknesses, and the discovery of new research topics. Significantly, if bibliometrics is considered together with debates on AI and digital tools, it turns out to be not only a mere measuring tool but also a library strategy instrument for supporting research planning and policy development.

The addition of studies on digitization initiatives and mobile technology-based library services provides additional perspectives into this matter. Digitization is still the main process of preserving knowledge, increasing access, and combining traditional resources with modern digital platforms. At the same time, mobile technologies are essential tools for the provision of library services outside the physical boundaries of the library. Research on awareness and access to mobile technologies indicates that libraries can make use of widely available devices to raise user engagement, particularly among young people and users living in remote areas. These works taken together show that the digital transition covers several aspects- the upgrade of facilities, the creation of new services, and the provision of user education on a regular basis.

One significant merit of this issue is the focus on the users' perspective. Even when the topic is about AI research assistants, mobile services, or digital access mechanisms, the authors of the articles highlight, without exception, the user experience, awareness, and satisfaction as the most important aspects. Such attention to the user is indicative of a general change in the library's philosophy that has been going on for some time— from system-centered to user-centered service design. When libraries are embracing new technologies, it is vital not only that the library staff know the users well but also that the users' needs, expectations, and problems are taken into consideration. The studies account for the fact that technological advancements, on the one hand, and human factors, on the other hand, are equally significant for successful technological implementation.

Together, the articles in this issue portray libraries as proactive research partners and creators of knowledge instead of mere service units. Nowadays, libraries hold a central position in empowering ethical publishing, providing support to research analytics, raising the level of AI literacy, and offering the community fair access to digital resources. The combination of AI, bibliometrics, digitization, and mobile technologies points towards a scenario where libraries operate as smart ecosystems—integrating technology, scholarship, and society.

From discussions in this issue, there are a few things that clearly stand out as priorities if we move forward. First of all, there is no end to training and retraining of library professionals if they are to remain capable of handling the ever-changing technologies. Second, it is absolutely necessary for policies at the level of institutions to allow the tacit balancing between the desire to keep innovating and putting ethics at the centre of the decisions. Third, partnering up between librarians, researchers, technologists, and publishers will be a key to creating knowledge infrastructures that are not only sustainable but also trustworthy. Last but not least, it will be really important for Library and Information Science (LIS) research to keep track of these changes, give their critiques and point the way by means of empirical evidence and reflective analysis.

The *International Journal of Information Studies and Libraries* remain committed to providing a scholarly platform for such critical inquiries. We hope that the studies presented in this issue will stimulate further research, inform professional practice, and contribute meaningfully to the ongoing discourse on the future of libraries in a digitally driven world.

Best Wishes

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