RAY: International Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies, E-ISSN: 2456-3064
Volume X, No. Special Issue on Library and Information Science (LIS) / June, 2025, pp. 40-49.

Transforming Library Services through Artificial Intelligence: Applications, Opportunities, and Challenges

Nihal Alam

Assistant Librarian,
Aliah University,
Kolkata, West Bengal, India.
nihal@aliah.ac.in

Structured Abstract:

Background: The rapid advancement of Artificial Intelligence (AI) has transformed various sectors, including library environments, by introducing innovative approaches to information access, management, and user services.

Objective: This study aims to explore the role of AI in modern libraries, evaluate its applications, and identify opportunities and challenges associated with its adoption.

Methods: The paper reviews AI technologies such as chatbots, predictive analytics, metadata generation, and virtual assistants, analyzing their impact on library workflows and information retrieval. It examines real-world implementations in Indian and international libraries through case studies and literature analysis.

Results: AI enhances efficiency in library operations by automating tasks, improving user engagement, and streamlining information retrieval. Notable applications include AI-driven chatbots for user support, predictive analytics for resource allocation, and automated metadata generation for cataloging. However, challenges such as data management, technical integration, algorithmic bias, and ethical concerns pose significant barriers to effective implementation.

Conclusion: AI presents substantial opportunities for transforming library services by improving accessibility and operational efficiency. Addressing challenges related to data management, technical integration, and ethical considerations is critical for successful AI adoption in libraries.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, Libraries, Library Management, AI Applications in Libraries.

Introduction

Artificial Intelligence has been developed through interdisciplinary efforts, drawing theories from disciplines such as philosophy, mathematics, economics, neuroscience, psychology,

engineering, and linguistics. Originally this idea was first time presented in 1955 by John McCarthy, he is also considered the founder of the AI. AI is considered a computer science field that aims to create computer systems that perform tasks normally requiring *human intelligence*, such as reasoning, learning, planning, decision-making, and predicting. The goal is to develop such a system using algorithms or computational tools so that it can mimic human intelligence to perform these tasks as well as humans. After 2010, AI technology got fastest development in all the walk of life Medicine, engineering, computer programming, research, higher education and even libraries services and operations.

Role of Artificial Intelligence in Libraries for Information Access and Management

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has ushered in a transformative era in libraries, marking a significant shift in the way information is accessed and managed. As libraries embrace this evolving technological landscape, it is essential to recognize both the opportunities and challenges associated with AI applications. The integration of AI into the library environment has led to faster, more accurate, and efficient services, significantly reducing the time users spend searching for information. These systems not only improve service delivery but also lighten the cognitive workload for librarians and library staff by automating repetitive and data-intensive tasks. Additionally, the physical footprint of libraries is shrinking, giving way to the expansion of digital and virtual spaces that enhance remote accessibility and resource availability.

Interestingly, many individuals already interact with AI without realizing it—search engines being a primary example. These platforms employ AI to identify spam, refine search result rankings, tailor responses based on a user's past behaviour, interpret natural language queries, enable image searches, and target advertisements more effectively. While human oversight remains important, the integration of AI greatly increases the speed and precision of these processes, reducing the dependency on manual input.

The way users conduct searches has also been reshaped by the widespread adoption of voice-activated virtual assistants such as Apple's Siri, Microsoft's Cortana, Amazon's Alexa, and Google Assistant. According to a study by Granitzki (2017), over half of both teenagers and adults use voice search daily, demonstrating a growing reliance on AI-powered mobile internet solutions that offer quick, user-friendly access to information.

Security and access control within libraries have also improved with the help of AI technologies. Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) systems provide robust protection for library materials, reducing the need for physical security personnel. Additionally, AI-driven facial recognition and deep learning-based image processing are increasingly being used for secure check-in and check-out processes, ensuring that only authorized users can access library facilities.

In terms of cataloging and metadata management, AI plays a vital role through the use of international data standards such as MARC (Machine-Readable Cataloging), which supports the migration and maintenance of bibliographic data within Indian libraries. Complementary standards like Resource Description and Access (RDA) and Dublin Core are used to structure online content and improve resource discoverability. Tools such as the Online Computer Library Center's Classify browser assist in resolving classification issues and automating cataloging, replacing manual indexing systems with web-based solutions that promote global interoperability.

AI is also transforming user services through the implementation of intelligent chatbots that provide virtual reference support, interactive tutorials, and personalized assistance. These chatbots enhance user experience by recommending resources based on user preferences, thus improving the overall resource discovery process. Moreover, AI technologies streamline back-end workflows, such as cataloging and inventory management, resulting in more organized and responsive library systems.

Smartphones equipped with AI-based virtual assistants further enable voice recognition and internet search functionalities, making the mobile internet a powerful and increasingly preferred tool for accessing library resources. Its convenience, constant availability, and swift responsiveness make it an essential platform for modern information access.

In the domain of acquisitions, AI contributes significantly through hybrid recommender systems that support patron-driven selection and weeding of library collections. As discussed by Rhanoui et al. (2020), these AI models analyze usage patterns and user preferences to recommend materials for purchase or removal, making the process more data-driven and user-centered.

In conclusion, the integration of AI in libraries is reshaping the traditional roles of information professionals and revolutionizing how users interact with knowledge resources. From automating routine tasks to enhancing user engagement and optimizing collection management, AI represents a vital tool in the ongoing evolution of library services.

AI Tools for Libraries: Categories and Applications

1. **Reference and Patron Services**
    a. AI chatbots such as **QuickChat** (quickchat.ai) and **Botsonic** (botsonic.com) handle routine patron queries, offering 24/7 support. **Quickchat.ai** and similar platforms integrate intelligent chat assistants directly into library websites, helping automate repetitive tasks while complementing human-led services.
    b. Tools like **Research Rabbit** (researchrabbit.ai) and **Consensus** (consensus.app) assist librarians in locating scholarly sources and verifying information.
2. **Collection Management and Cataloging**
    a. AI platforms such as **OCLC Wise** use predictive analytics for informed collection development.
    b. Tools like **Cataloging.ai** automate metadata generation and classification processes.
    c. **Ex Libris Alma** offers AI-powered insights for effective resource and inventory management.
    d. Research from platforms like **Iris** (iris.ai) highlights AI's role in modernizing catalog systems through smart content indexing.
3. **Content Creation and Marketing**
    a. Visual tools like **Canva AI**, (canva.com) **Midjourney** (midjourney.com), and **Craiyon** (craiyon.com) help design promotional materials for library events and services.
    b. Writing tools such as **Copy AI** (Copy.ai) and **Anyword** (anyword.com) streamline the creation of newsletters, website content, and social media posts.
4. **Research Support**

a. Tools like **ChatPDF** (chatpdf.com) and **Perplexity AI** (perplexity.ai) can summarize academic articles and highlight emerging research trends.

b. **Scite** (Scite.ai) examines citation contexts, helping users assess the reliability and impact of sources.

c. **Andi** (andisearch.com) offers search insights similar to Google but with unique angles, making it useful for deep or overlooked research areas.

d. Writing tools like **Copy.ai**, **Anyword**, **Peppertype**, and **Hypotenuse.ai** support content creation, brainstorming, and drafting with data-backed suggestions—though human judgment remains crucial for quality output.

e. **Typewise** (typewise.app) enhances writing with predictive typing, real-time translation, and smart reply features—especially valuable in libraries serving multilingual communities.

5. **Productivity Tools**

a. **AudioPen** (audiopen.ai) and **Flixier** (flixier.com) convert spoken content into text, aiding transcription of interviews, lectures, and presentations.

b. Apps like **Mem** (get.mem.ai) and **Dante** (dante-ai.com) support task management and collaborative editing.

c. **Descript** (descript.com) enables fast, accurate editing of complex audio content, such as lectures and podcasts, with features like text-based editing and automatic filler word removal.

d. Platforms like **Harmonai** (harmonai.org) and **Boomy** (boomy.com) let users generate original music and sound effects using AI, potentially useful for multimedia projects and creative programming.

6. **Digital Preservation**

a. AI algorithms assist in digitizing and preserving rare or fragile materials, enhancing metadata, and improving the discoverability of digital archives.

Several leading academic and public libraries have adopted artificial intelligence (AI) to enhance their services and operations:

a. **IIT Delhi** and **Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU)** have launched AI-driven initiatives. At JNU, the library employs predictive analytics to manage collections and forecast user needs.

b. The **Indian Institute of Science (IISc)** Library uses sentiment analysis tools to interpret user feedback from surveys and social media, helping improve library services.

c. The **IGNOU Library** (Indira Gandhi National Open University) utilizes AI-enabled search engines capable of understanding queries in multiple Indian languages.

d. The **Delhi Public Library** has experimented with AI recommendation systems that suggest books based on a user's borrowing history, similar to product recommendations on e-commerce platforms.

e. The **Central Library of IIT Bombay** has deployed a 24/7 chatbot that assists users in locating resources, checking book availability, and navigating the catalog, thus improving information access beyond standard hours.

f. The **National Digital Library of India (NDLI)** leverages AI and machine learning to digitize and process content in various Indian languages. It offers access to a vast repository of books, theses, and research papers, supporting students and researchers nationwide.

g. The **University of Hyderabad's Central Library** uses an AI-enhanced Library Management System (LMS) to efficiently handle its large collection. This automation allows staff to focus on complex and value-added tasks.

h. Internationally, **Tsinghua University** developed "Xiaotu," an AI-based virtual assistant that delivers real-time reference support via chat interfaces.

i. The **University of Oklahoma Libraries** introduced "Ally," a 24/7 AI reference assistant that helps users navigate library services and resources, enhancing accessibility.

j. The **Singapore National Library Board** offers "Ask NLB," an AI chatbot that provides quick and accurate assistance with both digital and physical collections, significantly reducing wait times and improving user satisfaction.

k. In 2023, the **University of Delaware Library** piloted a cost-effective AI chatbot developed collaboratively by IT and reference departments to boost user engagement and examine the resource demands of training and maintaining AI systems.

l. **OCLC's WorldShare Management Services** integrate AI to optimize library workflows, improve resource sharing, and manage digital collections more effectively.

Challenges in Implementing AI in Libraries

1. **Managing Data Quantity and Quality:** Processing and maintaining large volumes of high-quality data is a significant challenge for many libraries. This includes tasks such as cleaning, organizing, and updating datasets, especially for specialized or historical collections. Ensuring data accuracy is critical for the success of AI-driven applications.
2. **Lack of Skilled Personnel:** Implementing AI systems requires specialized skills that are often scarce in library settings. Recruiting or training staff in AI technologies demands considerable time and financial resources. In India, many libraries already operate under tight budgets and face competing priorities, making it even more difficult to invest in expertise.
3. **Algorithmic Bias:** Since AI algorithms are created by humans, they may unintentionally reflect existing biases. This can lead to biased search results or recommendations, raising questions about fairness and objectivity. Addressing algorithmic bias is a major concern when deploying AI in information services.
4. **Technical Complexity and Maintenance:** Integrating AI tools with existing systems—such as Library Management Systems (LMS), Online Public Access Catalogs (OPAC), and RFID infrastructure—can be technically complex. AI solutions also require continuous updates, performance monitoring, and troubleshooting to ensure they remain effective and reliable.
5. **User Adoption Challenges:** Many library users, particularly those from rural areas or older age groups, may find it difficult to adapt to AI-based tools. While some patrons prefer traditional services, others may have concerns about privacy and data usage. Ensuring inclusivity and building user trust are essential for successful adoption.
6. **Digital Divide and Access Disparity:** The introduction of AI technologies may unintentionally widen the digital divide, especially among marginalized or

underprivileged communities with limited access to digital tools. Libraries must take proactive steps to ensure equitable access to AI-powered resources and avoid exacerbating existing inequalities.

7. **Ethical and Privacy Concerns:** AI implementation raises critical ethical issues, particularly regarding data collection, consent, and usage. Libraries must develop clear policies to address user privacy, ensure informed consent, and mitigate risks related to algorithmic decision-making in order to uphold ethical standards.
8. **Legal and Budgetary Constraints:** Other barriers to AI adoption include complex licensing agreements, copyright issues, and ongoing financial limitations. Securing funding for AI tools and navigating legal regulations can be particularly burdensome for smaller or underfunded institutions.

Conclusion

The integration of Artificial Intelligence into libraries is not merely a technological upgrade but a paradigm shift in how information services are delivered and consumed. AI has proven effective in automating routine tasks, personalizing user experiences, improving the accuracy and speed of information access, and optimizing backend workflows like cataloging and acquisitions. Real-life case studies from institutions such as IIT Delhi, JNU, IGNOU, and IISc illustrate the tangible benefits AI brings to the library ecosystem. However, the implementation of AI is not without challenges. Libraries face hurdles related to data quality, technical complexity, skills shortages, and ethical concerns—especially regarding user privacy and algorithmic bias. Additionally, there is a risk of deepening the digital divide if AI tools are not inclusively designed. To realize the full potential of AI in libraries, a balanced approach is essential—one that combines technological innovation with strong ethical standards, staff training, and inclusive user adoption strategies. Ultimately, AI represents a transformative opportunity for libraries to evolve into more intelligent, accessible, and efficient information hubs.

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