



Editorial

By guest editors

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Enhancing Information Access in an Era of ChatGPT and Other Artificial Intelligence Technologies

The emergence of artificial intelligence (AI) technologies, particularly generative AI tools such as ChatGPT, has ushered in a transformative era for information access, knowledge creation, teaching, learning, research, and professional practice. Across the globe, libraries, universities, research institutions, and information professionals are increasingly confronted with both the opportunities and challenges presented by these rapidly evolving technologies. As AI continues to reshape information environments, there is a growing need for critical reflection on how these technologies influence information access, literacy, ethical use of information, scholarly communication, and the future of library and information services.

It is within this context that the 4th CARLIGH International Conference was organized under the theme “Enhancing Information Access in an Era of ChatGPT and Other Artificial Intelligence Technologies.” Held from 6th to 10th May 2024 at the GIMPA Executive Conference Centre in Accra, Ghana, the conference brought together librarians, researchers, educators, publishers, technology experts, policymakers, and information professionals to explore the implications of AI for information access and management. The discussions highlighted the transformative potential of AI while also raising important questions regarding ethics, equity, digital literacy, academic integrity, privacy, and institutional preparedness.

The five papers featured in this special issue capture different dimensions of these conversations and collectively provide valuable insights into the evolving relationship between artificial intelligence, information access, and academic librarianship.

The issue opens with Dinah Koteikor Baidoo's paper, *Making Academic Electronic Information Resources Accessible in a Comfort Zone: Exploring Students' Awareness of Resources at Ashesi University Warren Library*. Although not exclusively focused on artificial intelligence, the paper addresses one of the most fundamental issues in contemporary librarianship - ensuring that users are aware of and able to effectively utilize available information resources. Through an exploration of students' awareness and use of electronic resources, the study reminds us that technological infrastructure alone does not guarantee information access. Libraries must continue to invest in user education, awareness creation, and engagement strategies if electronic resources are to achieve their intended impact. The findings underscore the continuing relevance of user-centred library services in increasingly digital information environments.

The second paper by Jibril Attahiru Alhassan, *Developing a Federated Institutional Repositories in Nigerian University Libraries*, shifts attention to the role of institutional repositories in enhancing access to scholarly information. The study examines the development and management of federated institutional repositories in Nigerian university libraries and highlights their potential to improve the visibility and accessibility of research outputs. While the findings indicate widespread adoption of institutional repositories and supportive policies, they also identify challenges such as poor ICT infrastructure and internet connectivity. The paper underscores the importance of staff capacity building, open access practices, and collaborative repository management in strengthening scholarly communication and expanding access to knowledge within higher education institutions.

The transformative influence of AI on teaching, learning, and scholarly communication is further explored in the paper by Abdul-Rahim Mohammed Hardi, Issah Dawuda, and Inusah Baasha. Their study, *Artificial Intelligence, Academic Writing and Access to Information among Graduate Students at the University for Development Studies*, highlights the growing integration of AI-powered tools such as ChatGPT, Grammarly,

QuillBot, and Wordtune into academic workflows. The findings reveal high levels of awareness and utilization among graduate students and demonstrate how AI is increasingly supporting information discovery, writing, and learning. At the same time, the study raises concerns regarding access barriers, technical skills, and digital inequalities, reminding us that equitable access remains a critical consideration in the adoption of emerging technologies.

As AI tools become increasingly embedded within academic practice, concerns regarding academic integrity have become more prominent. Christopher K. Filson and Diana Atuase address this issue in their paper, *Artificial Intelligence and Academic Integrity: The Role of Academic Librarians*. Their study positions academic librarians as key stakeholders in promoting ethical information use and safeguarding research integrity in an era characterized by AI-assisted writing. The findings highlight the evolving responsibilities of librarians beyond traditional information provision, emphasizing their roles as educators, advocates, and ethical guides. The paper calls for enhanced professional development and policy reforms to address the realities of AI-assisted learning and scholarship, an issue that is likely to remain at the forefront of higher education discourse in the coming years.

The final contribution by Mac-Anthony Cobblah, Gloria Tachie-Donkor, and Paul Nunekpeku broadens the conversation beyond academic libraries and educational settings. Their paper, *Improving Health Literacy Knowledge Using AI-Assisted Technologies among University Lecturers*, explores the application of AI technologies in supporting personal health management and health literacy. The study demonstrates how wearable devices, virtual assistants, predictive analytics, and AI-assisted health technologies can empower users to make informed decisions regarding their well-being. However, it also highlights concerns relating to privacy, surveillance, psychological well-being, and trust in AI-generated health information. This paper reminds us that information access in the age of AI extends far beyond academic contexts and increasingly influences many aspects of everyday life.

Taken together, the papers in this special issue reveal several recurring themes. First, access remains central to the mission of libraries and information institutions. Whether the focus is electronic resources, AI applications, digital writing assistants, academic integrity, or health information, meaningful access requires more than the availability of technology. It requires awareness, skills, support systems, trust, and inclusive policies.

Secondly, the studies demonstrate that AI is no longer a future possibility but a present reality within higher education and information environments. Students, lecturers, librarians, and researchers are already interacting with AI technologies in ways that are transforming information behaviour and scholarly practice.

Additionally, the papers highlight the importance of balancing innovation with responsibility. While AI presents significant opportunities for enhancing efficiency, productivity, and decision-making, it also raises important ethical, legal, and professional questions that require thoughtful engagement by librarians, educators, policymakers, and researchers.

Finally, the contributions indicate the need for continuous professional development and institutional preparedness. As technologies continue to evolve, libraries and information professionals must remain proactive in acquiring new competencies, developing appropriate policies, and ensuring that technological advancements contribute to equitable and meaningful access to information.

As Guest Editors, we are delighted to present this special issue of the *Ghana Library Journal*. The papers contained herein contribute to ongoing scholarly conversations regarding artificial intelligence, information access, digital transformation, and the future of libraries in Africa and beyond. It is my hope that they will stimulate further research, inform policy and practice, and encourage continued dialogue on how libraries and information professionals can harness the benefits of AI while remaining committed to the core values of equity, access, ethics, and lifelong learning.

We extend my sincere appreciation to all authors, reviewers, members of the Editorial Board, and the editorial management team whose contributions made this publication possible. We are equally grateful to the Consortium of Academic and Research Libraries in Ghana (CARLIGH) for providing the platform through which many of these important conversations were initiated.