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Artificial Intelligence and Applications in Library and Information Science (LIS): Transforming the Future of Libraries

Deepak Singh
Jaipuria School of Business
Ghaziabad . India
dsingh071@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is revolutionising various sectors, and Library and Information Science (LIS) is no exception. By leveraging AI technologies, libraries can enhance their services, streamline operations, and improve user experiences. This paper explores the various applications of AI in LIS, the benefits of integrating AI technologies in libraries, and AI tools currently in use within the field. The adoption of AI in libraries signifies a significant evolution in the way these institutions operate and interact with their communities. Through the integration of AI technologies, libraries enhance multiple facets of their operations, such as information organisation, user services, research support, and accessibility. This technological advancement not only boosts the efficiency of library services but also enables personalised user experiences, ultimately promoting increased community engagement and digital literacy. [1][2] AI applications in libraries include automated cataloguing and recommendation systems, as well as chatbots that offer immediate assistance to patrons. These innovations empower libraries to customise their services according to individual user preferences, greatly improving the overall experience. Furthermore, AI is essential in the digitisation and preservation of delicate materials, making historical documents more accessible and ensuring that cultural heritage is safeguarded for future generations. [3][4] Nevertheless, the incorporation of AI in libraries presents its own set of challenges and controversies. Concerns regarding privacy, algorithmic bias, and ethical implications are vital considerations for library professionals as they navigate the intricacies of AI technology. For example, there are apprehensions about the potential for AI systems to reinforce existing inequalities and widen the digital divide, especially among marginalised communities. [5][6] Consequently, libraries must embrace responsible AI practices that emphasise transparency, inclusivity, and ethical use. Libraries must consequently embrace responsible AI practices that emphasise transparency, inclusivity, and user education to alleviate these risks. [7] As libraries progress in the digital era, their function as knowledge facilitators is becoming ever more significant. By adopting AI, libraries not only improve their services but also strengthen their dedication to ensuring equitable access to information, thereby establishing themselves as essential resources in nurturing informed and engaged communities. [8][9].

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, AI tools and Technology, Application of AI

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1. Introduction

The incorporation of artificial intelligence (AI) within libraries signifies a notable transformation in the traditional operations of these institutions. Libraries have long served as hubs of knowledge and information, transitioning from mere physical collections of books to vibrant environments that increasingly adopt technological innovations. The introduction of AI into library systems can be traced back to the creation of machine-readable formats, such as the MARC format, which facilitated the sharing and accessibility of bibliographic data on digital platforms [1]. As technology advanced, libraries commenced the digitization and dissemination of their collections, as demonstrated by initiatives like the American Memory program, which was one of the pioneers in making historical collections accessible online [1]. The advent of the internet further revolutionized library functions, enabling effortless access to extensive information from any location, at any time. This evolution highlighted the necessity for libraries to adapt and innovate in response to the expanding digital environment. By leveraging sophisticated algorithms and machine learning, libraries can now implement recommendation systems that assess user behavior and preferences, providing customised suggestions that enhance resource discovery and the overall user experience [2][3]. Nevertheless, the integration of AI also presents challenges, including the imperative to protect user privacy and address potential biases in AI-driven services [4][5]. The historical backdrop of AI in libraries is marked by a dedication to evolving alongside technological progress while upholding the fundamental mission of ensuring equitable access to information. As libraries continue to navigate the intricacies of AI integration, they find themselves at the forefront of fostering digital literacy and ensuring that patrons can engage with emerging technologies in responsible manners [6][7]. This historical development illustrates the continuous progression of libraries as they adjust to fulfil the evolving requirements of their communities in a progressively digital environment.

2. Applications of AI in Libraries

The integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into library functions and services has grown, enabling improvements in multiple domains, including information organisation, accessibility, and user interaction.

The above table provides a structured overview of six key applications of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in library services, highlighting how AI technologies can modernise and enhance both operational efficiency and user experience.

1. Automated Cataloguing: AI tools streamline the cataloguing process by automatically analysing content and assigning appropriate metadata. This reduces manual effort, minimises errors, and ensures uniformity across the library's catalogue.

2. Chatbots and Virtual Assistants: Libraries can deploy AI-powered chatbots to offer round-the-clock support to users. These virtual assistants handle common inquiries, guide users in finding resources, and improve accessibility, while allowing library staff to focus on more complex and specialised tasks.

Application	Description	Benefits
Automated Cataloging	AI-driven tools can automate the cataloguing process by analysing and tagging content with metadata.	Saves time, reduces human error, and ensures consistency in cataloguing.
Chatbots and Virtual Assistants	AI-powered chatbots and virtual assistants can provide 24/7 support to library users, answering queries and assisting with resource discovery.	Enhances user experience, provides instant support, and frees up staff for more complex tasks.
Predictive Analytics	AI can analyse user data to predict trends and user needs, helping libraries to curate relevant resources and plan services.	Helps in making data-driven decisions and improving resource allocation.
Recommendation Systems	AI can suggest books, articles, and other resources to patron based on their preferences and past behaviours.	Provides personalised recommendations, enhancing user engagement and satisfaction.
Digital Preservation	AI can assist of digital content by detecting and mitigating potential risks like data corruption and format obsolescence.	Ensures long-term accessibility and integrity of digital archives.
Information Retrieval	AI enhances search capabilities by understanding natural language queries and providing more accurate and relevant search results.	Improves the efficiency of information retrieval processes.

Table 1. Areas of AI applications in Libraries

3. Predictive Analytics: By analysing user behaviour and borrowing patterns, AI enables libraries to forecast future needs and trends. This supports strategic decision-making in collection development, programming, and service planning, ensuring resources are aligned with community demands.

4.Recommendation Systems: Leveraging user data such as reading history and preferences, AI systems

suggest relevant books, articles, and other materials. These personalised recommendations increase user engagement and satisfaction by making discovery more intuitive and tailored.

5.Digital Preservation: AI aids in safeguarding digital collections by identifying risks such as data degradation, corruption, or outdated formats. Proactive monitoring and intervention help maintain the long-term integrity and accessibility of digital archives.

6.Information Retrieval: AI improves search functionality by interpreting natural language queries and understanding user intent. This results in faster, more accurate, and contextually relevant search outcomes, enhancing the overall research experience.

In these discussions, we can understand how AI integration in libraries can transform traditional services—making them more efficient, responsive, and user-centred—while also supporting long-term preservation and data-informed management.

3. AI Tools and Technologies Used in LIS

AI Tool	Description	Features
IBM Watson	An AI platform provides various services, including natural language processing and machine learning.	Provides chatbots, data analytics, and cognitive search capabilities.
Google AI	AI and machine learning (ML) tools for data analysis, natural language understanding, and predictive analytics.	Enables advanced search, personalised recommendations, and data-driven decision-making.
Alexa and Google Assistant	Virtual assistants that can be integrated into library services for voice-activated information retrieval and user assistance.	Provides hands-free access to information and resources, enhancing accessibility.
Ex Libris Alma	A cloud-based library management platform that uses AI to automate and optimise library workflows.	Supports predictive analytics, automated cataloguing, and user engagement features.
OCLC Wise	A library management system that leverages AI for personalised user experiences and efficient resource management.	Offers data-driven insights, personalised recommendations, and automated marketing tools.

Table 2. The use of AI tools and technologies in libraries

Table 2 highlights a detailed overview of five prominent AI tools that can be integrated into library services to enhance operational efficiency, user engagement, and resource management. Each tool is described with its

core functionality and key features, demonstrating how modern libraries can leverage advanced technologies to evolve their offerings.

1. IBM Watson: This AI platform offers robust capabilities in natural language processing, machine learning, and cognitive computing. Libraries can use Watson to develop intelligent chatbots for user support, perform deep data analytics, and enable cognitive search functions that understand context and meaning, significantly improving information discovery.

2. Google AI: Google's suite of AI and machine learning tools supports a wide range of applications, including natural language understanding, data analysis, and predictive modelling. In library settings, these tools can power advanced search functionalities, deliver personalised content recommendations, and support data-driven decision-making for collection development and service planning.

3. Alexa and Google Assistant: These voice-activated virtual assistants can be integrated into library systems to allow users to access information hands-free. Whether searching for books, checking due dates, or receiving reading suggestions, users benefit from increased convenience and accessibility—especially valuable for individuals with disabilities or those preferring voice interaction.

4. Ex Libris Alma: A cloud-based library management platform that utilises AI to streamline and optimise workflows. It supports automated cataloguing, predictive analytics for collection management, and tools that enhance user engagement. By reducing manual processes, Alma enables libraries to operate more efficiently and respond proactively to user needs.

5. OCLC Wise: This AI-powered library management system focuses on delivering personalized user experiences and efficient resource management. It provides data-driven insights into user behaviour, offers tailored recommendations, and includes automated marketing tools to promote library resources and services effectively.

Together, these AI tools represent a transformative shift in library services—moving from traditional, manual operations to intelligent, user-centred systems. They empower libraries to automate routine tasks, gain actionable insights from data, and offer personalised, accessible, and responsive services. The integration of such tools not only enhances the user experience but also strengthens the library's role as a dynamic, forward-thinking information hub.

3.1 Information Organisation and Discovery

AI has transformed the way libraries organise and discover information. For example, machine learning algorithms are utilised to categorise images and enhance the accessibility of collections [3]. Furthermore, AI-driven models have been created to facilitate automated classification and improve the searchability of library collections [3]. Libraries have also leveraged AI to optimise metadata discoverability in institutional repositories through robotic process automation [3].

3.2 Research Assistance

AI tools are crafted to support both novice and experienced researchers in their academic endeavours. These tools assist in identifying gaps in current research, formulating research questions, and analysing data [7].

They also aid users in locating pertinent resources, structuring papers, and verifying bibliographies for precision [7]. For instance, AI applications have been employed to produce reports and manuscripts, as well as to enhance reference and information literacy instruction within library environments [3].

3.3. Enhanced User Services

The incorporation of artificial intelligence has resulted in enhanced user services within libraries. AI-enabled chatbots offer immediate assistance to patrons by responding to frequently asked questions and directing users to available resources [8]. Additionally, AI-based recommendation systems evaluate user behaviour and preferences to propose pertinent materials, thus improving the personalised library experience [2]. These systems have demonstrated effectiveness in content curation, creating tailored reading lists, and emphasising trending topics suited to individual users [8].

3.4. Digitisation and Preservation

AI technologies significantly contribute to the digitisation and preservation of delicate materials in libraries. Automated image enhancement algorithms help maintain the visual quality of digitised documents, while Optical Character Recognition (OCR) supports the transcription of text from historical artefacts [2]. Moreover, predictive maintenance algorithms allow libraries to proactively tackle potential material deterioration by assessing environmental conditions [2].

3.5. Data Analytics and Collection Development

AI-driven analytics tools furnish libraries with insights into patron behaviour, resource distribution, and usage trends, facilitating data-informed decision-making [8]. By examining user preferences and patterns, libraries can make educated collection development choices, ensuring that the materials acquired are relevant and sought after [8]. Furthermore, AI can streamline automated collection management, assisting libraries in forecasting user demand and keeping a current collection [2].

3.6. Accessibility Services

AI advancements have significantly improved accessibility for library patrons with disabilities. Tools like text-to-speech features and image recognition contribute to fostering a more inclusive environment for all users [8]. AI-driven language translation systems enhance the accessibility of multilingual collections, expanding the variety of resources available to diverse user groups [2].

3.7. Benefits of AI in Libraries

The incorporation of AI in libraries offers numerous advantages that improve both user experience and operational efficiency. AI technologies enable library staff to provide more personalised, efficient, and responsive services, ultimately enhancing the role of libraries in the digital era [9].

3.8. Enhanced User Experience

AI applications greatly enhance the user experience in libraries by offering personalised assistance and better resource management. Virtual assistants can deliver customised support to patrons, aiding them in navigating catalogues and effectively locating resources [2]. By examining users' reading habits and preferences, AI systems can produce personalised book recommendations, allowing library users to uncover new materials that align with their interests [9]. Furthermore, AI-enhanced search engines improve the accuracy and relevance of information retrieval, simplifying the process for patrons to find what they require within extensive

3.9 Enhanced Accessibility

AI technology provides round-the-clock assistance, enabling users to utilise library services at any hour, thereby dismantling conventional limitations related to operating hours [2]. This ongoing support is vital for promoting inclusivity, as virtual assistants frequently deliver services in various languages, and promote that diverse communities can interact with library resources [2].

3.10 Efficiency and Cost Reduction

The automation of repetitive tasks through AI leads to more efficient operations, alleviating the burden on library personnel and allowing them to concentrate on more intricate inquiries [10]. This increased efficiency can result in considerable cost reductions, as libraries can optimise their resource distribution and maximise their budgets while upholding high-quality service delivery [8].

3.11 Innovation and Flexibility

The incorporation of AI stimulates innovation within libraries, propelling the creation of new services and solutions designed to address the changing needs of users [8]. By utilising AI in various facets of library operations—such as automated cataloguing and management of digital archives—libraries are better equipped to adjust to the evolving technological environment and enhance their significance within the community [10].

3.12 Addressing Challenges

While the advantages of AI in libraries are considerable, it is crucial to recognise the criticisms that arise from its implementation, including possible digital divides and the financial implications of sustaining AI technologies [10]. However, when implemented with care, AI can transform libraries into more efficient and user-centric spaces, allowing them to achieve their goal of knowledge dissemination in the contemporary era [10].

3.13 Challenges and Considerations

The incorporation of AI in libraries introduces a variety of challenges and considerations that professionals must address to guarantee ethical and responsible application of these technologies.

3.14 Ethical Implications

As A systems are integrated into libraries, ethical considerations take precedence. These systems may reinforce biases and discrimination, particularly if they rely on flawed datasets or algorithms. For instance, AI algorithms utilised in hiring practices have been shown to favour specific demographics, raising significant concerns regarding fairness and accountability in decision-making processes [11] [12]. Consequently, libraries must carefully examine the values and assumptions inherent in these technologies to ensure that their application is consistent with principles of inclusivity and equity [11].

3.15 Privacy Concerns

Privacy represents a significant issue in the implementation of AI tools. Numerous case studies underscore the intricacies related to privacy when executing AI-driven initiatives, especially in domains such as recommendation systems and data management [13] [14]. For example, the creation of an open science recommendation system must take into account existing regulations and policies that protect users' privacy [13]. Furthermore, partnerships with vendors necessitate the alignment of privacy policies with the fundamental principles of libraries to avert potential misuse of personal information [13] [14].

3.16 Transparency and Accountability

A further major challenge is the absence of transparency regarding AI algorithms, which complicates the ethical framework. Libraries are required to pursue clarity about the functioning and decision-making processes of these systems, as non-transparent algorithms can result in accountability challenges, particularly when biases or mistakes arise [12]. Professionals are urged to participate in critical dialogues concerning the ramifications of AI technologies, ensuring that users comprehend how their data is utilised and the related risks [11].

3.17 AI Literacy

To tackle these issues, AI literacy is emerging as a crucial competency within libraries. Grasping the technical, ethical, and societal aspects of AI is vital for both library staff and patrons [11]. Libraries have the potential to spearhead initiatives aimed at enhancing AI literacy, encouraging interdisciplinary partnerships, and creating specialised programs that empower users with the necessary skills to assess AI technologies and their societal implications critically [11] [12].

3.2 Case Studies

3.2.1 AI Applications in Libraries

Various case studies have illustrated the practical uses of AI in library settings, demonstrating how libraries are successfully incorporating AI technologies to improve their services and operations. A notable instance is the implementation of AI-driven chatbots for assisting patrons. Libraries such as North Carolina State University Libraries have adopted chatbots like “Ask D. H. Hill,” which aid users in navigating resources and addressing frequently asked questions. Another example is the Zayed University Library, which has introduced the AI assistant “AISHA,” thereby enhancing user engagement and satisfaction [8].

3.2.2 Digital Archives and Preservation

AI is significantly contributing to the preservation and digitisation of rare and fragile materials within library collections. By employing AI technologies, librarians can automate the indexing of these materials, increasing their accessibility for researchers and the general public [2]. Furthermore, case studies underscore the considerable advantages of AI in digital archiving, as it facilitates more efficient management and retrieval of information, ultimately supporting the preservation of cultural heritage [2].

3.2.3 Reskilling Initiatives for Library Professionals

The advent of AI has also led libraries to establish reskilling programs for their personnel. One case study highlights the necessity of cultivating a culture of continuous learning among librarians, enabling them to adapt to the changing landscape of library services enhanced by AI. Such initiatives can empower library staff to utilise AI tools effectively [15].

3.2.4 Enhancing User Engagement

Libraries are increasingly utilising AI to provide personalised recommendations based on patron learning and reading histories. This approach not only assists patrons in discovering new content but also fosters digital literacy by enabling access to educational resources customised to individual needs [16]. Additionally, public libraries have incorporated AI into their educational programming, offering workshops that employ AI-generated content, such as storytelling sessions that educate users about ethical AI usage and misinformation detection [16].

3.2.5 Ethical Considerations and Challenges

Despite the advantages of AI in libraries, ethical issues have arisen, particularly concerning data privacy and accessibility. A 2023 study revealed that a notable percentage of library patrons encountered difficulties in effectively using AI-powered catalogue systems, underscoring the risk of worsening existing digital divides [10]. Libraries are foresighted in communicating these challenges by balancing the capabilities of AI with privacy protections, ensuring that patron data remains secure while promoting equitable access to information [16] [10].

3.3 Success Stories and Future Directions

Creating repositories of case studies that document successful AI implementations can further clarify AI for librarians and demonstrate practical applications. Initiatives such as "GAI Success Stories and Challenges" could act as valuable resources for libraries aiming to integrate AI into their operations, showcasing specific examples like utilising AI for grant writing or strengthening patron engagement through customised content [3][7]. As libraries continue to adopt AI technologies, they are set to transform their services while upholding their commitment to equitable access to knowledge.

4. Future Trends

The incorporation of AI in libraries is anticipated to transform traditional services and operations significantly in the years ahead. As AI technologies progress, libraries will increasingly implement these tools to improve user experience and optimise processes.

4.1 Enhanced Information Discovery

AI is poised to revolutionise information retrieval in libraries. AI-powered cataloguing systems will evolve beyond simple automation to provide intelligent classification and tagging of resources, thereby enhancing metadata accuracy and searchability [2][7]. This change aims to create smoother user experiences by facilitating quicker access for patrons to relevant materials.

4.2 Automation and Efficiency

The utilisation of AI in libraries will result in enhanced operational efficiency. By automating routine tasks, libraries can diminish manual workloads, enabling staff to focus on higher-value activities such as community engagement and programming [8][10]. This transition towards AI-driven processes is anticipated to liberate resources and time, thereby improving the overall quality of service.

4.3 Personalised Patron Experiences

AI technologies will empower libraries to deliver more tailored experiences for patrons. For example, AI-driven virtual assistants and chatbots can offer immediate support, assisting users in navigating library resources and providing customised recommendations based on their unique needs and preferences [17][8]. This level of personalisation is anticipated to improve user satisfaction and engagement with library services.

4.4 Ethical and Equitable Implementation

As libraries adopt AI, they will need to tackle challenges related to cost, data privacy, bias, and equitable access. Studies show that a considerable number of library patrons, especially those from low-income and rural backgrounds, encounter obstacles in effectively utilising AI-powered systems [3][10]. Libraries must

focus on enhancing information literacy and offer training to ensure that all patrons can take advantage of these technological innovations.

4.5 Collaborative Opportunities

Libraries are set to play a vital role in guiding patrons on the ethical use of AI tools. By creating spaces where users can explore AI applications, libraries can help clarify these technologies and enable individuals to utilise AI in innovative and productive manners [18]. This forward-thinking strategy not only aids patrons' learning but also establishes libraries as significant contributors in the changing digital environment.

5. Future Challenges

Despite the encouraging prospects of AI in libraries, numerous challenges persist. Issues regarding the potential expansion of the digital divide, the sustainability of AI technologies, and the critical necessity for responsible AI utilisation will demand thorough consideration and strategic planning. As highlighted in a 2023 leadership brief by the Urban Libraries Council, libraries should strive to increase productivity while establishing equitable pathways to wealth and access to information [18][3]. This emphasis will be crucial in guaranteeing that the advantages of AI are broadly shared among all library patrons.

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