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The Librarian as AI Futurist

Rethinking AI leadership at
Imperial College London

Coco Nijhoff, Senior Teaching Fellow (Library Services)



Claim



South Kensington campus

Librarians have a distinctive contribution to make to institutional AI governance.

Poll question for you...

How would you describe
your library's role in
institutional AI initiatives?



menti.com
4865 1988

How did we get here? AI in Education at Imperial College London



Queen's tower steps, South Kensington campus

2022 Generative AI appears

2023 Pockets of ad hoc activity

2024 Problematic fragmentation

Inception of AI Futurists

2025 Gen AI principles

2026 Vision for Education in the age of AI

Late 2026

Centre for AI in Learning and Teaching

The AI Futurists at Imperial, formed in 2024

Cross-disciplinary

Academics and educational developers

Community-building

Connecting pockets of practice, providing spaces for experimentation and discussion

Shared frameworks

Identifying priorities and translating this into strategy



As individuals: professional expertise, identity, agency, and development

My role: Senior Teaching Fellow (Library Services)



MS

Coco Nijhoff

Strategically develop and manage Library's Information and Digital Literacy programmes

Work in alignment of library curriculum with university imperatives

Develop ongoing awareness of institutional and sector initiatives

Foster student, faculty and non-faculty partnerships

Organise staff development for librarians who teach

My role: Lead AI Futurist



Facilitate and further the work of the AI Futurists

Work in alignment with university strategy and imperatives

Develop ongoing awareness of institutional and sector initiatives

Foster student, faculty and non-faculty partnerships

Organise staff development for the university community

Move from the ad hoc to the holistic and governed

Literature review: Academic libraries and AI

- Partnerships
- Support
- Existential crisis
- Ethics and values

RESEARCH ARTICLE

 Open Access



How artificial intelligence might change academic library work: Applying the competencies literature and the theory of the professions

[Andrew Cox](#) 

First published: 07 March 2022

[Find at Imperial](#) 

Assessing AI Literacy among Librarians: A Study in Academic Libraries

Author: Laxmibai S. Kattimani^{1*}, B. Nandeesh^{2**}, raja Suresh Kumar Pitla^{3***}

2026
Total Page Count: 7

Generative AI and the Information Society: Ethical Reflections from Libraries 2025

by [Molefi Matsieli](#) *   and [Stephen Mutu](#)

Academic Librarians in Times of AI and AI Literacy: Tasks, Responsibilities, and Leadership

[Plamen Miltenoff](#)  

Pages 296-305 | Published online: 18 Sep 2024

Role of Librarian in AI Age for Content Creation in Academic Research

Dr. Dhande S.A. 2025

Librarian, Vaidyanath College Parli Vaijnath Dist. Beed M.S., India

Literature review: Academic libraries and AI

- Governance and policy development

JOURNAL OF LIBRARY ADMINISTRATION
2023, VOL. 63, NO. 7, 928–938
<https://doi.org/10.1080/01930826.2023.2262367>



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Russell Michalak, Director of the Library, Archives, & Learning Center,
Goldey-Beacom College, Wilmington, DE, USA

From Ethics to Execution: The Role of Academic Librarians in Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy-Making at Colleges and Universities

Russell Michalak 

Director of the Library, Archives, & Learning Center, Goldey-Beacom College, Wilmington, DE, USA



Don't forget
the poll 😊

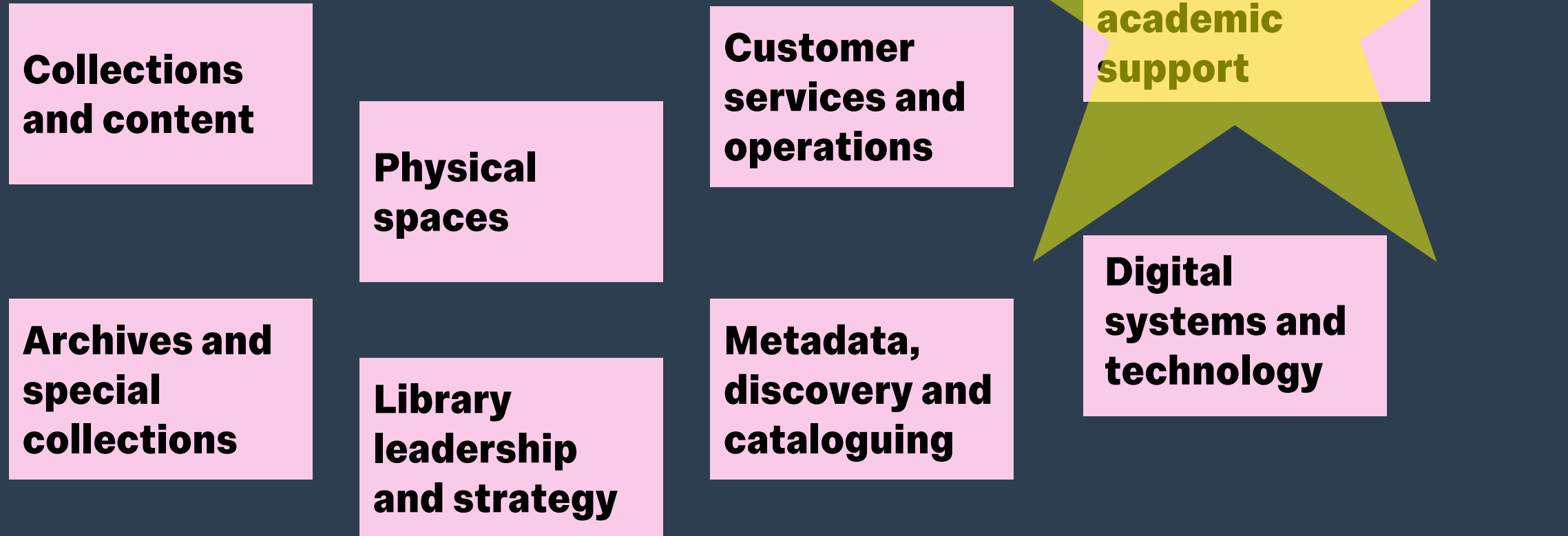
(Philosophical) questions

Who *does* university governance?

Who *does* AI governance at a university?

Core domains of academic librarianship

Functional areas in the university library



Librarian professional domains

Librarian as educator

Professional domain expertise

Information Literacy frameworks, critical thinking, the range of information sources available, knowledge of disciplinary domain, scholarly publishing models, ethical use including plagiarism

Relational and institutional expertise

Partnerships, knowledge of academic programmes, horizon scanning, mediation between people and information systems, interpreting programme specifications, asking questions, spending time with people

Values

Ethical use of information, academic integrity, authorship, multiplicities of voices, social justice, alternative sources and points of view, advocacy and diplomacy, inclusion

Some of the outputs of the AI Futurists

Baseline AI literacy

Introduction to GenAI courses for staff and students

Assessment transformation

Supporting assessment and curriculum redesign

Goal-oriented experimentation

AI Hackathons

Sharing practice, building community

GenAI Shorts series | Special Interest Group

Imperial's GenAI Principles

Values-based approach to AI

Vision for Education in the Age of AI

Framework for future decisions

Let's look at the Mentimeter results



View of Queen's tower, South Kensington campus
Imperial College London

How would you describe
your library's role in
institutional AI initiatives?

Reframing the role of librarians



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Future research and activity

What comes next?

***Future Literacies* as an extension of Information Literacy**

conference workshops

speculative methods as a response to uncertainty

PhD research on librarian professional identity and agency

the influence of technological disruption

cross- and inter- disciplinary practice

AI and institutional governance

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Thank you

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