**Call for Papers: 5th IFLA Symposium on Artificial Intelligence.**

The University of KwaZulu-Natal Library Services, in partnership with the IFLA Information Technology Section and [IFLA Artificial Intelligence (AI) Special Interest Group](https://www.ifla.org/units/ai/), are pleased to announce the upcoming symposium under the theme, **“Artificial Intelligence and Robots Transforming Libraries: Opportunities and Challenges,"** scheduled to be held from **16-20 June 2025 at the Golden Horse Casino Hotel.** This Symposium aims to explore the transformative impact of artificial intelligence (AI) technologies on libraries and the evolving role of librarians in this digital age with a focus on the Southern Africa region.

Founded in 1910 as the Natal University College in Pietermaritzburg, the University of Natal was granted independent University status in 1949 owing to its rapid growth in numbers, its wide range of courses and its achievements in and opportunities for research. The University of KwaZulu-Natal was formed on 1 January 2004 as a result of the merger between the University of Durban-Westville and the University of Natal. The new university brings together the rich histories of both the former Universities.

Nestled amidst the picturesque landscapes of KwaZulu-Natal, the University of KwaZulu- Natal (UKZN) stands tall as a beacon of African scholarship. With five sprawling campuses, UKZN has carved a name for itself as one of the top universities in South Africa and, indeed, the African continent.

**Symposium Overview**

The IFLA IT section promotes the sharing of knowledge and best practices in implementing IT solutions across various library environments. Each year, the IFLA IT section conducts symposiums in different locations to enhance global outreach. IFLA AI-SIG focuses specifically on integrating AI technologies in the library and information science (LIS) field. The collaboration between the University of KwaZulu-Natal Library Services, IFLA IT section, and IFLA AI SIG will empower and advance library and AI research in the Southern Africa region.

AI impacts all aspects of our daily lives with technologies like generative AI having an impact on all aspects of the information landscape. The world around us is evolving at an unprecedented pace, increasing access to knowledge and creating new informational and ethical challenges. AI and related technological development are reshaping the landscape of libraries and the information professions. Libraries worldwide have both an opportunity and are faced with the challenge to envision how libraries and librarianship can evolve, benefit, and empower the profession to best serve their communities. This symposium will be a chance to engage with these tools while also focusing on how we can advocate for responsible use of AI, promote information literacy, and build staff capacity.

By collaborating with the IFLA IT section and AI SIG, this Symposium will examine different uses of AI in libraries; focusing on the Southern African region, libraries’ best practices in using generative AI and other AI models, and ethical guidelines for utilizing AI in libraries and information studies.

We invite proposals for paper presentations, panels, workshops and poster presentations on topics including, but not limited to:

* AI and libraries in the Southern Africa region;
* Natural language processing (NLP);
* Challenges of using AI applications in libraries in Africa countries;
* Bias (gender, ethnicity, religion, culture, region, etc.) in large language models (LLM);
* Implementation of AI and machine learning (ML) in library systems and services;
* Challenges facing librarianship education with the rise of AI and ML;
* Training and skills development for librarians in the age of AI;
* Case studies of AI and ML applications in libraries;
* AI literacy programs in the region;
* Responsible and ethical considerations in the use of AI and ML in libraries;
* ML algorithms for cataloguing and classification;
* Predictive analytics and library management;
* AI and ML in digital preservation and archiving;
* Leveraging AI to address SDG (Sustainable Development Goals) challenges.

**Submission Guidelines:**

Submissions are open to librarians, academics, researchers, students and educators in Library and Information Studies and related fields.

Proposals should include the following:

* Title of the paper presentation/panel/workshop/poster;
* Abstract (300-350 words);
* Author(s) and affiliation(s);
* Contact information for the corresponding author;
* Type of presentation (e.g., oral presentation, panel discussion, workshop, poster);
* Any special requirements for the presentation (e.g., AV equipment, internet access).
* It should be typed in Times New Roman front size 12 with a line spacing of 1.5.
* It should be submitted preferably as a Word file (.doc or .docx). Papers must not be sent in PDF format and should not be zipped.

The event will be live-streamed, but at least one speaker for each presentation is expected to attend in person.

Presentations will be in English.

Please click on this link to submit your abstract <https://forms.gle/nu7wvAEHt2uu2hAY9>

Inquiries must be sent to [ailib@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:ailib@ukzn.ac.za).

**Important Dates:**

* Deadline for submission of proposal abstract: 30 January 2025.
* Notification of Acceptance: 26 February 2025.
* Deadline for submission of full paper/presentation slides: 24 May 2025.
* Symposium Dates: 16-20 June 2025.

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