Introduction to Generative AI and Libraries: Applications and Ethics, Part I

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Introduction

The release of ChatGPT in late 2022 brought intense popular and professional attention to generative artificial intelligence (AI). Since then, information professionals in all types of libraries and information settings have wrestled with questions about how this rapidly evolving technology will impact information creation and consumption and, by extension, library services that span reference and instruction to metadata and cataloging and everything in between. Librarians have also grappled with ethical concerns ranging from how to use an information tool with the potential (or even propensity) for producing inaccurate or biased information, to questions of authorship and copyright, to addressing the harmful labor practices and environmental costs associated with AI tools.

This is the first of two issues of *Library Trends* that examine all these topics and more. Collectively, the authors provide a broad look at the way generative AI is affecting the library and information science (LIS) field, raise important questions about the ethical implications of these tools, and suggest how librarians can be leaders in the thoughtful application (or rejection) of generative AI. Across both issues, the articles collected here provide a blend of original research, thought pieces, and speculation about possible and desirable futures. Some authors embrace the possibilities of generative AI, some take a pragmatic approach to working with the seemingly inevitable, and some argue for a stronger rejection of an AI-infused future. Regardless of their prior knowledge of or stance on the topic, readers will find much to consider in these issues.

The current issue, 73 (3), begins with two articles that set the stage for a critical look at how librarians engage with generative AI. Sarah Appedu and Jasmina Tacheva explore librarians' perceptions of their own and others' agency with regard to new technology, while Andrea Baer dissects

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narratives of inevitability and personal and professional agency around generative AI.

Next is a collection of articles that explore the impact, or potential impact, of generative AI on research and scholarship. Leo S. Lo suggests implications for open access, while Nicole Helregel focuses on implications for open science. Both authors end with calls to action for librarians. Suhyeon Yoo, ChoongNyoung Seon, and Taeseok Lee provide a case study in the development of a publicly available research assistant, ScienceON, for Korean science and technical literature. Their work will be of interest to readers following the development of similar products by commercial publishers. David Gustavsen, Holly M. Surbaugh, and Mark Emmons provide a fascinating comparison of human and AI-generated coding for qualitative research. Allison Hosier and Laureen P. Cantwell-Jurkovic share survey results from LIS journal editors about their perceptions and policies related to AI in the research, writing, and publishing process. While focused on LIS journals, the authors raise important questions about the role of AI in the scholarly communication process more broadly.

A final group of articles explore how generative AI will affect the daily work of librarians. Benhur Ravuri and Marcia A. Mardis look at a chatbot's ability to answer reference questions through the lens of Kuhlthau's Information Search Process. Mayukh Bagchi shows how generative AI might support the development of nuanced metadata models. Norah Mazel examines how generative AI tools can reinforce information privilege, with important implications for information literacy instruction. Allison Faix reviews Consensus, a tool that attempts to summarize research literature to provide simple answers to user questions, while Max Sparkman and Alan Witt explore the use of Claude AI for literature reviews. Finally, Lili Luo surveys librarians to uncover how they are learning about and using generative AI tools and where professional development is needed and wanted.

The next issue, 73 (4), will feature articles on information literacy and instruction for patrons as well as on professional development for librarians in the context of LIS graduate education. The issue will conclude with a collection of thought-provoking pieces on where the LIS field might go from here.

A note on peer review: These issues used an open peer review process in which all authors participated in reviewing and providing feedback on manuscripts from other authors. One member of the *Library Trends* editorial board also stepped in as a peer reviewer to provide subject expertise for a specialized manuscript. All manuscripts underwent at least two peer reviews. This editor in chief, who also served as the issues' guest editor, greatly appreciates all the authors' thoughtful participation in the process, which provided valuable guidance for revisions and resulted in a stronger collection of articles.

Melissa A. Wong is an adjunct instructor in the School of Information Sciences at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, where she teaches courses on reference, instruction, and e-learning. Her work focuses on learner-centered pedagogy, e-learning, and accessibility. Wong is the coeditor of *Reference and Information Services*, 7th edition (Bloomsbury Libraries Unlimited, 2024); coauthor of the open-access textbook *Instruction in Libraries and Information Centers: An Introduction* (Windsor & Downs Press, 2020); and author of *Instructional Design for LIS Professionals* (Libraries Unlimited, 2019). She has a master's degree in library and information science from the University of Illinois and a Certified Professional in Accessibility Core Competencies credential from the International Association of Accessibility Professionals. Wong was appointed editor in chief of *Library Trends* in February 2024.