

# Humanist Librarians in the AI Era : Maintaining Human Values in Information Services

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**Abstract .** :The development of artificial intelligence (AI) technology has brought about a major transformation in the world of libraries and information services. Automation, data analysis, and AI-based recommendation systems have increased the efficiency and accessibility of information for users. These advances also pose new challenges for librarians, particularly in maintaining human values in the service process. Humanist librarians in the AI era are required not only to understand technology but also to maintain an ethical, empathetic, and communicative role in interactions with users. This research uses a literature review to address the questions raised. Librarians, as mediators between technology and humans, act as bridges between digital literacy and ethical information, maintaining warmth and empathy in library services. By prioritizing human values such as empathy, responsibility, and information justice, librarians can ensure that the application of AI in libraries remains oriented toward human needs and does not diminish the essence of civilized service.

**Keywords:** humanist librarians; information services; human values.

## 1. BACKGROUND

*artificial intelligence* ( AI) technology has brought significant changes to various aspects of life, including libraries. The use of AI can accelerate collection management, facilitate information retrieval, and provide more efficient data-driven services. This transformation opens up significant opportunities for libraries to improve service quality and reach users more quickly and accurately. These benefits, however, raise ethical and social challenges that cannot be ignored, such as privacy issues, algorithmic bias, and the reduction of the personal touch in librarian-user interactions.

The role of librarians becomes very important amidst the rise of AI. Librarians not only function as information managers, but also as guardians of human values that uphold justice, empathy, and social responsibility. People who carry out library activities by providing services to the community in accordance with the mandate of their parent institution based on library science acquired through education is the mandate of a librarian (Lasa HS, 2009) . The presence of librarians in the AI era is needed to ensure that technology does not replace the essence of human relationships, but rather becomes a supporting tool that strengthens interaction, understanding, and meaningfulness in information services.

During the 2025 International Literacy Day commemoration, E. Aminudin Aziz emphasized the need for libraries to transform to remain relevant amidst the development of *Artificial Intelligence* (AI) technology. The rapid and complex development of AI must be aligned with literacy skills. Libraries must innovate to accommodate today's tech-savvy users (Anastasia Lily, 2025) .

Furthermore, librarians in the AI era are required to provide professional services as critical information managers, digital literacy facilitators, and ethical mediators between technology and society. Librarians are not merely “operators” of intelligent systems, but also agents who ensure that technology remains on the side of humans. The professionalism of librarians in providing services to users is a library priority. Experts who manage libraries equipped with knowledge, experience and professionalism are librarians (Suwarno, 2010) . The professionalism of librarians is reflected in the librarian's

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ability to manage information, knowledge, experience, and skills in carrying out tasks in the library. (Purwono, 2013) The professionalism of librarians today has a service work method based on the principles of *people-based service* and service excellence (Mustika, 2017)

Based on this background, this study seeks to examine how librarians can maintain humanitarian values in the management and dissemination of information amidst the rapid flow of automation and AI-based digitalization. This study is expected to provide conceptual and practical contributions to the development of the role of librarians in facing the challenges of the digital era without losing their humanistic identity.

## 2. THEORETICAL STUDY

Previous studies related to the relevant research the author has discussed include research conducted by (Bifakhlina, 2024) entitled "The Impact of AI Implementation on the Role of Librarians in the Digital Era." This study concluded that AI technology can optimize routine library tasks such as cataloging, information retrieval, and collection processing. Optimized routine tasks allow librarians to focus more on other tasks, such as developing service programs and interacting with users. This research shows that librarians are optimistic about the development of AI technology.

Research conducted by (Setyawan et al., 2025) concluded that the presence of AI transforms libraries into dynamic and interactive information centers, transforming them into more than just book repositories. The presence of AI in libraries offers significant benefits, making routine tasks more efficient.

The use of AI has led to a decline in students' reading interest and critical thinking skills due to their dependence on technology. One factor influencing the low reading interest of elementary school students in the implementation of the independent curriculum is their dependence on applications such as *ChatGPT* (Deli Puspita Anjani et al., 2025).

## 3. RESEARCH METHODS

This research was completed using a literature review (Sugiyono, 2013). The writing process began with comprehensive secondary data collection (Naamy, 2022). The author conducted an in-depth review of various sources, such as books, scientific journals, and research reports (Moleong, 2017), to understand how librarians maintain humanist values amidst AI technology in library information management. Literature collection was carried out by assessing the suitability of the literature obtained with the study conducted by the author. The collected literature was selected based on the content of the literature that was appropriate to the topic of discussion to be studied.

## 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### A. Use of AI in libraries

Libraries today serve not only as book repositories but also as centers for information, learning, and innovation. Digital transformation is driving libraries to adopt new technologies, including Artificial Intelligence (AI). AI enables the automation of administrative processes, collection recommendations, user behavior analysis, and intelligent bibliographic data management. According to IFLA (2023), the implementation of AI is a crucial step in creating adaptive and user-oriented libraries.

- a) Humans as central means that humans as digital technology regulators will be directed or as the main policy holders.
- b) Mobility: The digital world offers easy mobility. In this regard, librarians act as agile information workers in meeting the demands of their users.
- c) Services, in this case librarians have the opportunity to provide easy service to library users with various services available in the library.
- d) Simplicity: With technology, librarians can provide simple yet targeted services. For example, by reducing administrative tasks that could potentially be eliminated.
- e) Social (societal) librarians can use technology to make human work easier as individuals or work groups.
- f) Continuous, continuing without having to abandon previous aspects that have been built.

The development of artificial intelligence (AI) technology has brought about major changes in the way humans manage, search for, and utilize information. Librarians utilize AI as a strategic tool that can improve work efficiency, expand the reach of services, and

deepen understanding of user needs. AI encompasses a variety of methods, from simple algorithms to complex machine systems used to solve various problems and manage information (Russell, S., & Norvig, 2016).

The application of AI in libraries has shown promising results. According to (IFLA, 2020), several libraries around the world have successfully implemented AI to improve services and

operational efficiency. This success depends on management support and a commitment to continuous learning and adaptation to change. Librarians' readiness to face AI over time must be thoroughly prepared. Rapid technological developments require skilled human resources to leverage technology. With the skills possessed by professional librarians, it's certainly not difficult to keep up with technological developments circulating in the library environment today.

The use of AI also raises ethical and professional challenges. Overreliance on algorithms can lead to information bias, privacy violations, and a decline in human critical analysis skills (Primasatya et al., 2024).

Librarians, who frequently work with information, possess strong digital literacy skills and a deep understanding of information ethics principles, such as accuracy, fairness, and transparency. AI is not a replacement for information workers, but rather a tool that extends human capabilities. Empathy, understanding social context, and critical thinking remain key strengths that machines cannot replace.

The use of AI tends to be done to complete tasks quickly or obtain information instantly. The tendency to learn quickly will lead to minimal elaboration, which is related to the brain's reward system (Susanti, n.d.). This harmonious collaboration between artificial intelligence and human intelligence will create an effective, ethical, and humanity-oriented information ecosystem. With wise technology integration based on humanitarian values, librarians become managers of information and knowledge, as well as directors of an inclusive and equitable information future.

#### **A. Library services**

Library services are at the heart of all activities within a library institution. Through the services provided, libraries function as centers for information, education, research, recreation, and cultural preservation (Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 43 of 2007 concerning Libraries, 2007). The quality of library services is the primary benchmark for assessing the extent to which a library is able to meet the public's information needs.

In general, library services are divided into two broad categories: technical services and user services. Technical services encompass behind-the-scenes activities such as library materials procurement, cataloging, classification, and collection maintenance. User services, on the other hand, relate directly to the interaction between librarians and users, such as circulation, reference, user guidance, and digital services (Elva Rahmah, 2018).

In the modern context, libraries are required to adapt to developments in information technology in providing their services. Digital or electronic services (e-library services) have become a primary need for today's library users, accustomed to fast and easy access (Lasa HS, 2005). This adaptation optimizes library services. Libraries are collaborating with information technology by utilizing its facilities and features to facilitate service delivery.

The implementation of information technology services in libraries can help answer user questions, provide reading recommendations, and facilitate efficient information searches. Information searches can be completed quickly and easily. Information generated through information technology is displayed from various sources according to user preferences.

However, technology cannot completely replace the role of humans in providing a personal touch and empathy. Librarians play a crucial role as facilitators, information educators, and mediators between users and information sources (Hartono, 2020). Good service is measured not only by technological speed but also by the librarian's friendly demeanor, communication skills, and ability to understand user needs.

In the era of globalization and information overload, library services are innovative, inclusive, and sustainable. Innovative means consistently striving to provide new services that are relevant to current developments; inclusive means accessible to all without discrimination; and sustainable means maintaining service quality with adequate human resources and technology (Setyawan et al., 2025).

Library services are not merely routine activities, but also a form of social responsibility in educating the nation. They provide superior services that are user-centered. Library services that prioritize humanity harmonize technology with user

satisfaction and the comfort of library interaction. Libraries will continue to be a source of knowledge and inspiration relevant to every era.

## B. Humanist librarian in the library

With the rapid advancement of information technology in the digital era, the role of librarians is not limited to collection management but also to how they interact with people. Interaction with people requires adequate skill and knowledge to create a humanistic environment. A humanistic librarian is someone who places human values as the foundation for carrying out their duties and responsibilities in the library.

Library users with diverse backgrounds, needs, and personalities come to the library for different purposes. Librarians will always accommodate these differences. Humanist librarians are there to ensure that library services remain imbued with empathy, fairness, and respect for human dignity.

The humanist concept views humans as having the ability to help others as best as possible and also expects help from others who have moral and spiritual responsibilities that lead to actions, attitudes, behavior, values, and ethics in achieving happiness (Anis Masruri, 2015).

From a humanist perspective, libraries are seen not simply as places to store books, but as social spaces that foster human values, knowledge, and wisdom. Humanist librarians act as bridges between information and users, emphasizing the emotional and social aspects of every interaction. Librarians are not merely data providers but also companions who understand users' information needs on a personal and contextual level.

A humanistic attitude is reflected in the ability to empathize, be inclusive, and respect diversity (G. Goble, Frank, 1987). In providing services, humanistic librarians strive to create a comfortable, open, and respectful atmosphere for each individual without discrimination. They are able to balance technological sophistication with a human touch, so that the library remains a friendly, warm, and relevant space amidst the widespread use of AI.

In practice, humanist librarians also play a role in developing information literacy and digital literacy in the community. They not only teach how to find information but also instill ethical values in its use. Librarians provide guidance on academic honesty, responsibility, and respect for the work of others. Thus, humanist librarians help shape the character of critical, independent, and ethical learners. Efforts that can be made to create humanist librarians (Anis Masruri, 2015)

1. Effectiveness and efficiency of service; a librarian is ready and responsive to user issues quickly. The information users need can be found by librarians, both in the library and outside the library they manage. This assistance can be achieved through the use of appropriate information technology to locate both manual and electronic information.
2. User satisfaction; realizing user satisfaction is a requirement that libraries must fulfill. Among the factors that can provide user satisfaction in libraries is *responsiveness*, *tangible reliability*, *assurance*, and *empathy*.
3. Understanding the code of ethics: Librarians, as a profession, should adhere to a mutually agreed-upon code of ethics. The librarian code of ethics explains that librarians must uphold individual rights to information. They must provide equitable access to information, without discrimination based on social status, class, economic status, gender, or political affiliation.

Amidst the emergence of technologies like Artificial Intelligence (AI) and service automation, the humanist values of librarians are becoming increasingly important. While AI can accelerate information retrieval, it lacks the ability to understand users' feelings, social context, or emotional needs. This is where humanist librarians play a crucial role, acting as the "heart" of the library, ensuring that technology is used to humanize, not replace, people.

## 5. CONCLUSION

While AI brings efficiency and convenience to information services, it cannot replace the human values that are at the core of the librarian profession. Humanist librarians are required to be able to combine technological intelligence. Humanist librarians work professionally, being technically competent, emotionally intelligent, and socially ethical. Librarians who are committed to making libraries not just places to find data, but also learning spaces that foster empathy, inclusivity, and a humanitarian spirit. They uphold human values by ensuring that technology is used to strengthen the

relationship between librarians and users, not replace it. Librarians act as moral and ethical guides in the use of information, while also safeguarding fair access to knowledge sources.

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