



Defining Artificial Intelligence (AI) for Librarians

HSLG Journal Club

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Paper

Cox, A. M., & Mazumdar, S. (2022).

Defining artificial intelligence for librarians. *Journal of Librarianship and Information Science*.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/09610006221142029>

The aim of the paper is to define Artificial Intelligence (AI) for librarians by examining general definitions of AI, analysing the umbrella of technologies that make up AI, defining types of use case by area of library operation, and then reflecting on the implications for the profession, including from an equality, diversity and inclusion perspective.

Formal Definitions of AI

‘a machine-based system that can, for a given set of human defined objectives, make predictions, recommendations, or decisions influencing real or virtual environments. AI systems are designed to operate with varying levels of autonomy’. (OECD, 2020).

‘Simply put, AI is a collection of technologies that combine data, algorithms and computing power’. (European Commission, 2020: 2)

Common theme:

- Ability to perform tasks that humans normally do

But.....

- What about the things humans cannot do?

AI Technologies

- Machine learning
- Natural language processing
- Speech recognition

Library Applications

1. Backend library operations
2. Library services to users
3. Supporting communities of data scientists
4. Data and AI literacy
5. User management

Impact of AI on Libraries

1. Automation of tasks – can destroy jobs or free staff to do more meaningful work
2. Shift away from collection management to data management
3. Equality, inclusion and diversity

Discussion

1. Does your organisation have an Artificial Intelligence (AI) strategy?
2. The authors suggest 5 different types of use of AI in libraries, do you agree with these, or can you think of others?
3. Do you see a role for your library with AI?
4. Should librarians feel threatened by AI?
5. Do you see an impact of AI on equality and diversity in the library profession?

Further reading

- [gov.ie - AI - Here for Good: National Artificial Intelligence Strategy for Ireland \(www.gov.ie\)](https://www.gov.ie)
- [IFLA Statement on Libraries and Artificial Intelligence](#)
- [EU AI Act: first regulation on artificial intelligence | News | European Parliament \(europa.eu\)](#)
- [AI in libraries: a rapidly-developing field](#) – article by Caitriona Lee in HINT (Summer 2023)

[UKeiG CPD: Artificial intelligence for librarians, information and knowledge professionals](#)

presented by Andrew Cox and Suvodeep Mazumdar.

Thursday 26th October 2023

1 to 4 p.m.