



# A Whole New Information World: AI, Bots, Metadata, and Discourse

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Bard, Google AI Chatbot

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## Abstract

This introductory article explores the interconnectedness of the articles in this issue through the lens of artificial intelligence (AI), bots, and other technologies. The articles published in this journal strive to demonstrate how the library and information science (LIS) field uses AI to interrogate social conflicts, critically question our professional knowledge base, engage in localized community knowledge building, and create interactive maps to preserve cultural knowledge and decentralize Western metadata values in non-Western contexts. This introductory article is presented as a readerly and writerly response to those articles because, as an experiment, I have co-authored this piece using Google's Bard, a recently released AI chatbot. Google's Bard is a powerful tool that generates text, translates languages, writes creative content, and answers questions. In this editorial, I share my own experience using Bard to identify the implications of AI as a co-author of the text. I discuss its advantages (if any) and disadvantages, and I outline how AI could impact the future of the LIS field.

**Keywords:** artificial intelligence (AI), criticality, library and information science (LIS), values, writing

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**A**s we emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic, LIS work is being reported via thoughtful research that tells meaningful stories while asking critical questions about how librarians and our fellow citizens navigate learning in this highly digitized, information-focused world. Our learning is continually curving and shifting. With the recent launch of AI chatbots such as ChatGPT and Google's Bard, these applications have joined our public discourses as collaborative readers, interpreters, and co-authors of our questions and ideas. Just like that: we are in a whole new information world.

How do we embrace this latest evolution of information technology? What does it now mean to read, write, and respond to reading as a literacy practice where the text has been co-authored effectively by an algorithmized technology (as in this introductory article)? We code and read technology, and now the technology is coding and reading us. What does this collaboration mean for the LIS values and praxis we advocate for in communities we serve and with humanity?

COVID-19 revealed the power of social media as a premier method by which humanity shares information, builds relationships, and sustains global networks. AI has entered our discourse to broaden our ideas about thinking, writing, and literacy, and its meaning impacts all data and media. The LIS scholars and practitioners who sought this journal to share their research on AI



and other information technologies recognize this emerging discourse. Their article topics range from the impacts of artificial intelligence (AI) on social systems to critical international librarianship, literacy organizations promoting women's education, critical cartography in digital archives, and librarians operationalizing metadata to create decolonized networks and community resources.

To further the discourse, I experimented by using Google's Bard to co-author this article. Since platforms such as ChatGPT and Bard are said to produce valuable knowledge (Dong et al., 2022), I wanted to see what that production could mean for writing as a literacy practice and contribution to the discourse. When I asked Bard to synthesize the abstracts of all the papers published in this issue, Bard responded in the following way (note: Bard's contribution appears in italics):

**Start: Bard's contribution in italics.**

Soesantari et al. review *the work of Aisyiyah, a grassroots women's organization in Indonesia, working to improve women's education and literacy. Aisyiyah is an example of how civil society can play a role in addressing social conflict. Aisyiyah's work contributes to public awareness of the importance of women's education and literacy in Indonesia, which is a practical example of how relationship-building in communities via information and knowledge production methods builds the mission and vision of knowledge-based educational institutions like schools, libraries, and community centers. It is essential to support organizations like Aisyiyah working to build a more just and equitable world.*

Yeon et al. argues that a power imbalance exists between *Western and non-Western LIS curricula, theory, and practice. This power imbalance can lead to epistemic injustices in which LIS professionals are denied the opportunity to develop their knowledge and understanding. The authors introduce the importance of critical international librarianship as examining and critiquing the power structures and hegemonies in library and information systems. Critical international librarianship is an essential tool for addressing epistemic injustice. This consideration is important because considering how LIS systems are structured, based on a hegemony that is embedded in power structures globally, critical international librarianship gives us a theoretical lens that can help to prevent the spread of epistemic injustice so that the distribution of epistemic goods, such as knowledge, truth, and understanding, are equitably embraced within LIS theory and practice.*

BIJU and Gayathri's research examines *how artificial intelligence (AI) and social media are used to perpetuate social conflict. For example, the authors discuss how in India, AI bots and trolls are being used to spread fake news and propaganda to divide the population along the lines of caste, class, religion, gender, and region. This approach negatively impacts social cohesion and makes it more difficult for communities to resolve conflicts. This paper illustrates the power of AI technology to self-breed misinformation when unchecked by human interaction (or intervention) based on intrinsic humanistic values that machines do not and cannot possess. Using AI and social media to perpetuate social conflict is a growing problem. It is essential to be aware of this issue and to take steps to combat it.*

*Silberberg addresses how map-making historically suppressed Spanish-language radio programs. The paper explores the construction of an interactive Spanish-language map called TopoRadio,*

which showcases publications and archives about U.S.-based Spanish-language radio. *TopoRadio* aims to promote a more inclusive and comprehensive representation of U.S. radio history by improving the visibility of contributions from Latinx broadcasters. Silberberg proposes using critical cartography as a framework for mapping this history.

Montague discusses the work of the Information Justice Institute (IJI). This Chicago-based project brings librarians and community members together to consider key topics and questions to build understanding around critical community needs. The paper reports on two key activities undertaken during the project's initial phase: a survey of librarians and community members on social justice engagement and developing a webliography on serving incarcerated people/recently released and their support networks. Montague argues that the IJI collaboration encourages dialogue focused on posing questions and grappling with complex issues to grow insights and serve the needs of incarcerated/recently released citizens and their support networks.

The Indigenous Authors Collection at the University of Calgary in Canada has been decolonizing its catalogue to make the index inclusive of its community's language, knowledge, and values. Dahl and MacLeod convey how they enhanced the Indigenous collection's directory by adding Canadian authors and providing culturally appropriate metadata to increase visibility and access in the library's catalogue. The authors discuss the problems they faced with current metadata standards not allowing the use of special characters, enhancements made, and the implications of cataloguing policies and workflow for other collections. The authors also demonstrate how users view and access their changes and show new ways to interact with the collection. The authors also explore future possibilities linked data practices offer to display enhanced author information from local authorities and broaden the collection's reach even further.

### Stop: Bard's contribution ends.

The book reviews for this issue include timely publications connecting technology, community, and social change. Fiona Collins conveys in her review of Mohamed Taher's edited volume, *Handbook of Research on the Role of Libraries, Archives, and Museums in Achieving Civic Engagement and Social Justice in Smart Cities* (2022) ways in which libraries, archives, and museums incorporate digitized technologies for community engagement and social justice initiatives in smart cities across 12 countries. Taher's volume covers 22 case studies demonstrating sociopolitical change as an outcome of information technology's impact on geocultural contexts.

Vivian Chin highlights Ivory and Pashia's thoughtful approach to conveying their expertise on how Open Educational Resources (OER) is a valuable tool for information equity. Chin conveys that Ivory and Pashia's (2022) edited volume, *Using Open Educational Resources [OER] to Promote Social Justice*, is a thoughtful publication offering insights for adopting OER for new users and veterans. Valerie Brett Shaindlin reviews Jeannie Austin's latest release, *Library Services and Incarceration: Recognizing Barriers, Strengthening Access* (2022), an excellent companion to Montague's paper about library services and community building with incarcerated/recently released citizens in her project. Likewise, Lilly Hoi Sze Ho's review of Rachel Chong's (2022) book, *Indigenous Information Literacy*, dovetails Dahl and MacLeod's report on decolonizing the library catalogue for Indigenous information literacy. IJIDI book reviewer Andrew Wertheimer discusses

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Bailey and Becher's (2022) publication, *Academic Librarian Faculty Status: CLIPP #47*, published by the Association of College & Research Libraries (ACRL). Wertheimer examines the policies and procedures modeled in the book for academic libraries considering the thick issues associated with tenure and promotion.

This issue provides a valuable overview of how AI, social media, and critical librarianship can address social conflict, build, and sustain communities, and center local and Indigenous epistemologies, information needs, and values. This collection is serendipitous - the papers were not canvassed to connect or intersect with one another topically or methodologically. However, connected they are - with explorations of the impacts of semantic technologies on human interactions, vis-à-vis human interactions to dissect and correct technological interventions on human connection and understanding. Thus, this issue organically presents a timely theme highlighting the importance of critical thinking and media literacy in today's challenges in an information-interpolated world.

Google's Bard chatbot did add value to this editorial. As the primary author, I am fascinated by the act of asking Bard to co-write with me and having it complete the practical application of writing so well. Still, as the human intimately connected with these papers via my prior, organic editorial process, I had to spend time heavily editing Bard by reordering the paragraphs, narrowing the language, and adding specifics to the articles since I did read and interact with the texts within a writerly process.

The mechanical process was smooth but multi-layered: the papers' authors composed their abstracts, the IJDI editorial team refined and edited the abstracts, the authors agreed on the final versions, I inputted the abstracts into Bard, and Bard responded with its responsive composition, to which I re-read, edited, and added my contribution. My "writing back" or co-writing with Bard was an enhancement process. Using the chatbot to editorialize proved nominally helpful. The gap between Bard's work and my nuanced lens (as a human being) to writing about the articles to include context as a literacy practice was considerable. This perceptive gap makes sense because, as scholars have long noted, the human element of the reading and writing experience requires a vulnerability that cannot be duplicated, even from human to human (Butler, 2004; Hall & Campano, 2014; Robertson et al., 2020).

Ethical questions are being asked about the impacts of writing with AI (Robinson & Bawden, 2017; Duffy, 2019). We see this issue being addressed in the articles presented in this volume (and in the results of my experiment here). When writing with "the machine" (Forster, 1909), appropriation without revelation becomes an ethical concern for discourse from collegiate to professional to community levels (Duffy, 2019). In-kind, the papers in this issue ask questions about the impacts of "the machine" on the information worlds of the communities we serve, the artifacts we preserve, the values we advocate, and the practices we enact.

The works in this issue provide examples of how our LIS information world can heighten understanding of how the texts we read, research, and write are kaleidoscopically interwoven and embedded. With the advent of "the machine" as a co-author of our discourse, authorial intention and agency may soon become requisite for scholarly, professional, and media writing and publication to substantiate authenticity in composition.

We are in a new information world and have yet to determine what the sanctioned protocols and practices will look like in the coming months and years. As we embark on this new journey, the

papers in this issue ask us to consider how our interactions with machine-learning technology inform and misinform data and media and possibly disrupt power structures and hegemonies within local communities, organizations, and the LIS knowledge system worldwide. Are we ready to critically revamp our beliefs, attitudes and ideas about what information is, what knowledge means, and who gets to tell our stories? If “the machine” tells a story truthfully or not, creatively or not, helpfully or not - where do we identify “us” in the technology?

This issue of *The International Journal of Information, Diversity, & Inclusion (IJIDI)* contributes to the start of that conversation. Trustfully, we will come together to think more, read more, write more, and do more to engage in this conversation for evocative growth and change within the LIS knowledge world. That said, the articles in this issue demonstrate the potential of AI and other machine-based technologies to transform the LIS field. AI can create new ways of accessing and managing information, develop new teaching and learning tools, and build new relationships with communities, or be used to plant fear, divide communities, and question ethical values towards writerly communications. Humans created AI; how AI treats us will depend on how we nurture it.

Remember that AI is a tool; like any tool, it can be used for good or not. As educators and community advocates, we must ensure that AI is used ethically and equitably. I believe the research in this issue’s articles contributes to a foundational roadmap for considering the future of AI in LIS. By establishing ethical AI applications, we can create a more equitable and inclusive information landscape (especially if we employ it honestly and with transparency), empower communities, promote critical thinking, and solidify the agency of many cultural heritages.

I am excited to see what the future holds for LIS and the ways in which AI will significantly shape that future. I hope you enjoy this volume, and I thank you for critically engaging with this content.

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**Bard, the Google AI chatbot** (no email), is an artificial intelligence (AI) chatbot developed by Google and launched on March 21, 2023. Bard can regenerate content based on authors' input. Bard is located at <https://bard.google.com/>.