



What the Council of Europe Recommendation on Library Legislation and Policy says in terms of digital technologies and AI: Implications for library staff

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AGENDA:

- What are “The council conclusions ...?”
- How is it structured?
- What does it say about the digital transformation and AI?
- What does it all mean?

Visualize a unique library in Lisbon that seamlessly integrates one of the city's famous sights, the Belem Tower, into its design.



What are "the council conclusions ...?"

- A collaboration between EBLIDA and The Council of Europe
- It was formally approved by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on April 5th 2023
- An update of the 2000 version
- A set of recommendations about library legislation and policy
- ... and therefore indirectly a set of statements about what libraries should be incl. the roles and education of the people working in it





How is it structured?

- Sets itself in a very comprehensive context of other Council of Europe documents, European professional documents and international legal documents
- Overall recommendations:
 - 2. enlarge the scope of traditional rules for libraries, in order to take into account all the different issues relevant for library legislation and policy
- 5 sections and 15 parts
 - I. Freedom of expression, free access to information and democratic participation
 - II. Libraries within the framework of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
 - III. Global and local threats and library operations
 - IV. Digital transformation and the promotion of a sustainable, reliable and inclusive library ecosystem
 - V. Copyright and the protection of library heritage

An example

II. Libraries within the framework of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

5. Library governance

i. National, regional and local authorities in member States should provide the necessary organisational, economic and monitoring mechanisms to enable library activities and services. Libraries should be included in national cultural and educational policies pursuing the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals as prescribed by the United Nations and their equivalent programmes in a European context. National, regional and local authorities of the member States should:

- secure the necessary legal status and professional platforms for all types of libraries within the framework of a national policy oriented towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals;
- provide specific organisational structures for all levels of the library sector – public, academic, national, school or specialised libraries – clarifying their distinct roles, duties and responsibilities, and mandating the presence of professional librarians in management at all relevant organisational levels;
- encourage libraries to adhere to international standards and guidelines;
- provide a transparent administrative framework clarifying the relations between libraries and other governmental and non-governmental agencies in the provision of material that is of interest to library users, in particular (e-)books and other media of cultural and educational or recreational interest;
- strive to develop the necessary infrastructure to foster co-operation between libraries, recognising their specific missions and tasks in the wider framework of the Sustainable Development Goals;
- consider that the provision of cultural library goods and services reduces the informational divide and is often of crucial importance for persons in disadvantaged situations as a result of poverty, isolation or social exclusion.

Imagine a picturesque library by the Lisbon harbour, where the blend of historical and modern architecture is even more pronounced.





What does it say about the digital transformation and AI?

- I. Freedom of expression, free access to information and democratic participation
 1. Open access to information and the development of a democratic society
 2. Principles for collection development
 - 3. Principles for access to digital content**
 4. Promotion of democratic participation

I. 3. Principles for access to digital content

Libraries should (a selection):

- **seek to obtain electronic access to information resources on behalf of users** according to the principles underlined in section 1;
- **provide public access points with suitable levels of support and guidance**, enabling independent use of digital content and information;
- **not knowingly permit access to internet material that is illegal within the jurisdiction where it is accessed and highlight, as far as possible, elements of misinformation and disinformation**, it being understood that it is left to the users to determine what information they wish to access;
- **respect user rights, including the rights to confidentiality and privacy**, in compliance with legislative instruments concerning personal data protection;
- **store, protect, enhance and develop historical collections**, if that forms part of their remit, and actively promote such collections to the general public.



What can be deduced from section I?

Access to digital resources as part of collection development

- **For traditional and untraditional digital publishing:** discovery, negotiation, digital promotion even marketing (social media etc.)
- **For help and support:** tech savvy
- **For information integrity and provenance;** source criticism, fake news spotter
- **For rights;** GDPR and other digital legal frameworks
- **For historical collections;** digital archivist and historian

*Imagine a scene in a modern
Lisbon library, where a blue-
haired girl with glasses is
browsing through the shelves.*





What does it say about the digital transformation and AI?

- IV. Digital transformation and the promotion of a sustainable, reliable and inclusive library ecosystem

- 10. Libraries as active agents in the book and information chains

- 11. Information and digital literacy

IV. 10. Libraries as active agents in the book and information chains

At the forefront of the digital transformation, libraries play a pivotal role within the book and information chains, both digital and printed. The adoption of cross-cutting technologies and the implementation of transformative capabilities, using artificial intelligence (AI) and algorithmic systems, can create the potential to enhance this role. In collaboration with library managers, national, regional and local authorities of the member States should:

- prepare library plans which allow libraries to **scale up their practices from the analogue to the digital and combine the two formats in order to meet traditional library objectives**
- **pursue distance-learning objectives in conjunction with educational establishments**, including harnessing the virtual dimension of learning and providing digital hotspots for young people;
- ensure regulation of AI products to protect privacy and equity principles, including **user education in libraries and promote the role of libraries as forums in which to exchange best practices on the ethical use of AI** technologies in libraries;
- **encourage public reuse of resources and create opportunities for content integration and knowledge extraction**, in compliance with copyright regulations, fostering sustainability and diversity in both the medium and long term.



IV. 11. Information and digital literacy

As community hubs designed to encourage the social development of the communities they serve, libraries should host and provide media and information literacy programmes and courses. They should therefore:

- encourage and promote the implementation of effective and **tailored media, information and digital literacy programmes** with a view to enabling individuals and groups to be aware of their rights and to know how to put them into practice;
- **empower individuals to protect the information they can access against any attempt to manipulate or exploit people's mindsets** and actions through misinformation and disinformation;
- **reinforce information and digital literacy activities for targeted categories of people**, in close link with general policies, aimed at bridging national and local digital divides;
- within the framework of general educational and vocational training schemes, and in the spirit of inclusiveness, **teach all segments of the population, in particular young people, proper media and technological literacy**; this should be incorporated into guidelines and curriculums at all levels of education;

What can be deduced from section IV?

Libraries as active agents in the book and information chains + Information and digital literacy

- **Physical and digital materials are equal!** This is quite the seismic shift
- **Distance learning:** didactics, pedagogy
- **Libraries as ethical AI knowledge exchange centres:** know-how of generative, LLM AI
- **For re-mixing and mash-ups etc.:** skills, practices and law
- **Digital & literacy programs:** digital literacy, media literacy, information integrity, didactics, pedagogy(!)



What does it all mean?

- The equality of physical and digital media is rather huge
- Digital promotion and marketing skills are lacking
- The mind set lags behind
- Media, information and digital literacy knowledge to the point where you can teach it is huge
- The teaching skills alone ...
- Information integrity and copyright issues are complicated
- AI is a hand grenade thrown into all this ...
 - The technical issue
 - The ethical issues
 - The practical issues (prompt engineering!)

The librarian as an octopus, skillfully juggling various tasks such as managing physical books, assisting patrons, handling digital media, and teaching, all within the lively environment of a modern library.

