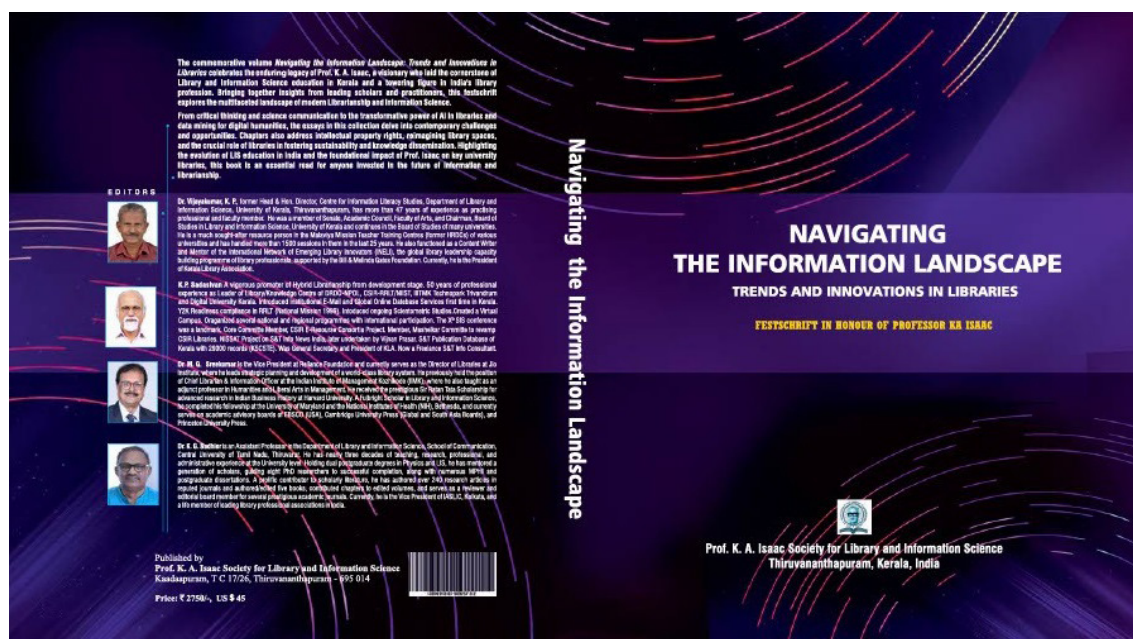


Navigating the Information Landscape: Trends and Innovations in Libraries. Festschrift in Honour of Professor K.A. Isaac.



In Navigating the Information Landscape: Trends and Innovations in Libraries, A Festschrift in honour of Prof. K. A. Isaac. Edited by: K. P. Vijayakumar, K. P. Sadasivan, M. G. Sreekumar, and K. G. Sudhier. Thiruvananthapuram: Prof K A Isaac Society for Library & Information Science, 2025. Pp. 163-176. ISBN 9788198925732, Price: INR-2750

The Book is a commemorative festschrift published by the Prof. K.A. Isaac Society for Library and Information Science to mark the birth centenary of K.A. Isaac. The volume pays tribute to one of the pioneering figures of Library and Information Science (LIS) in India, whose contributions significantly shaped the development of modern librarianship in Kerala and influenced the evolution of library education and services across the country. The book is both a scholarly compilation and a commemorative reflection that captures the intellectual legacy of Isaac while exploring contemporary developments and future directions in the LIS domain.

The commemorative volume contains 33 articles contributed by 53 prolific authors in the LIS domain. In his foreword, N.V. Sathyanarayana, Chairman and Managing Director, Informatics

(India). Ltd., Bangalore, situates the volume within the broader historical context of Indian librarianship. It highlights Isaac's distinguished academic background, including his early association with S.R. Ranganathan at the University of Delhi, where he completed one of the earliest Master's programmes in Library Science in India. The foreword emphasizes Isaac's transformative role as the first University Librarian of the University of Kerala and his contribution to establishing the first library school in Kerala, thereby laying the foundation for professional LIS education in the region. This contextual framing highlights the purpose of the volume: to celebrate a legacy while examining the dynamic transformations in the contemporary information environment.

The volume comprises a wide range of scholarly contributions that collectively reflect the diversity and interdisciplinary nature of modern librarianship. The opening paper by G. Devarajan presents a comprehensive biographical account of Isaac, tracing his personal background, academic journey, and professional accomplishments. This paper provides valuable insights into his intellectual development and institutional leadership, illustrating how his initiatives contributed to the growth of library education,



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professional organizations, and academic libraries in Kerala and beyond. The paper effectively establishes the intellectual foundation upon which the subsequent contributions of the volume are built.

Several papers in the volume explore conceptual and policy-oriented issues relevant to higher education and scholarly communication. For instance, the paper on critical thinking by Sabu Thomas and P. I. Joseph Illickan examines the theoretical foundations of critical thinking and its role in contemporary education, connecting philosophical traditions with current educational policies such as the National Education Policy 2020. Another notable contribution by Subbiah Arunachalam critically analyses the underutilization of preprint repositories, such as arXiv, by Indian researchers. It discusses the broader implications of the “serials crisis” and the sustainability of academic publishing models. These discussions highlight the evolving landscape of scholarly communication and the growing importance of open access initiatives.

Many papers in the volume address emerging metrics and evaluation systems in research and higher education. The study by Gangan Pratap, eminent scientist and former Vice Chancellor, introduces the “Frugality Factor,” a composite indicator designed to measure the efficiency of research output by considering factors such as research expenditure and the number of researchers involved. Similarly, the analysis of institutional rankings by Jagdish Arora examines the parameters used in the National Institutional Ranking Framework and evaluates their correlations with overall institutional performance. These contributions provide useful perspectives on research assessment and highlight the growing importance of data-driven decision-making in academic institutions.

M. G. Sreekumar and Jhan, P. J., examine the profound influence of the Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs) on the Indian higher education system. A critical evaluation of the scenario of Library and Information Science Education in India is made by two eminent academicians- A.Y. Asundi and C.R. Karisiddappa, who have made indelible marks in the LIS domain in the country. They express concern about a potential decline in the field due to depleting employment opportunities, urging a rationalisation of LIS education to meet the country’s specific requirements.

The growing necessity of data mining to extract meaningful insights from the vast amounts of data generated is highlighted by B. Abhijith and K.G. Sudhier. Sadasivan K. P., addresses India’s relatively stagnant growth in the Intellectual Property (IP) landscape despite its improved global WIPO rating.

The book also gives considerable attention to technological transformations shaping contemporary libraries. Several chapters explore developments such as metadata standards, digital repositories, data mining, and artificial intelligence. The paper by N.S. Harinarayana examines the pedagogical challenges of

teaching cataloguing in an era characterized by the transition from traditional standards such as AACR to modern frameworks like Resource Description and Access and linked data models. Similarly, contributions on data mining tools for digital humanities and on persistent identifiers highlight the growing role of digital technologies in enhancing research visibility, information retrieval, and knowledge discovery.

Artificial intelligence emerges as a particularly significant theme in the volume. The paper by Vijayakumar K. P. provides an overview of the opportunities and ethical challenges associated with AI integration in library services, while another contribution discusses the potential of generative and agentic AI systems to transform user interaction and knowledge services. Complementary research examining librarians’ perceptions of AI adoption indicates both optimism about improved services and concerns regarding privacy, data security, and technological dependence. Together, these papers provide a balanced perspective on the opportunities and responsibilities associated with technological innovation in libraries.

Beyond technological developments, the volume also addresses social, ethical, and community-oriented dimensions of librarianship. The paper on human libraries, for example, explores how interactive dialogue-based library initiatives can promote social inclusion and challenge stereotypes by enabling meaningful conversations between individuals from diverse backgrounds. Other contributions discuss information governance, privacy, and intellectual property rights, emphasizing the need for librarians to navigate complex legal and ethical environments in the digital age.

The book further includes several case studies that illustrate innovative practices in academic libraries. Examples include the development of online library orientation programmes, the evolving role of librarians in digital learning environments, and the integration of research information management systems within institutional workflows. These case studies demonstrate how libraries are adapting to changing user needs by embracing digital pedagogy, collaborative services, and new forms of scholarly communication.

Another notable aspect of the volume is its focus on institutional histories associated with Isaac’s legacy. The papers are from the major university libraries and LIS departments in Kerala, including those at the University of Kerala, University of Calicut, Cochin University of Science and Technology, and Mahatma Gandhi University. These highlight the role of visionary leadership, technological innovation, and institutional collaboration in transforming academic libraries into modern knowledge hubs.

This book is a comprehensive and intellectually stimulating contribution to the LIS literature. By combining theoretical reflections, empirical studies, technological discussions, and institutional narratives, the volume successfully captures the

evolving contours of librarianship in the twenty-first century. At the same time, it serves as a fitting tribute to K.A. Isaac, whose pioneering work laid the foundations for many of the developments explored in the book. The volume will be of

considerable value to researchers, educators, and practitioners in Library and Information Science, providing both historical insights and forward-looking perspectives on the future of libraries in an increasingly digital and knowledge-driven world.

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