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IFLA Journal March 2025

Trends in Academic and Research Libraries

Editorial

Welcome to this Special Issue of the IFLA Journal, in which the Academic and Research Libraries section has brought together a diverse array of articles exploring current trends in academic and research libraries.

There is no doubt that the World has changed. Both the physical and the geopolitical climate of our planet has been transformed on the timescale of only a few generations. The impact on peoples, nation states, communities and institutions is being felt all over the globe. The feedback from these climatic changes – broadly understood – are felt across all sectors of societies, in politics, economics, demographics, technology and so on. This results in a complex situation as legal, technological, economic and other trends are in a continuous state of flux.

Academic and research institutions worldwide are among the institutions that are adapting both strategically and practically to these changes, while also working to find solutions to global challenges. Though libraries are sometimes challenged as being, on the part of the administrative setup, while on the other hand service and support research-based education and the research community at large. Thus, academic and research libraries are an integral part of the endeavours of academic institutions when it comes to tackling change, and many libraries are at the forefront when it comes to actions mitigating or embracing changes. This results in a range of trends among libraries that are highlighted in this Special Issue.

The Academic and Research Libraries Section has set out to provide a perspective on these trends, highlighting both challenges and innovations, looking across regions and capturing the breadth of the trends we see. We present 12 excellent papers that take you through a range of perspectives on library services and the library organisation in academic and research institutions. This includes trends such as the changing role of the research librarian; supporting the impact and integrity of research; supporting sustainable development; deploying new services related to technology such as Generative AI and Big Data; and political and economic changes implemented through Open Science related issues including Open Access and Research Data Management.

We hope that you, in exploring these current and emerging trends shared by authors from academic libraries from all over the globe, will be able to inspire, develop and implement actions at the forefront of library services, new roles and new challenges.

Happy reading!

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