Infopreneurship and the Future of LIS Profession: An Opinion on the Role of Library Personnel

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Abstract

The rapid advancement of information and communication technologies (ICTs), digital scholarship, artificial intelligence, and the global knowledge economy has transformed the responsibilities of Library and Information Science (LIS) professionals. Traditional library functions are no longer sufficient to meet the dynamic information needs of contemporary society, making entrepreneurial thinking an indispensable component of professional practice. This opinion paper argues that infopreneurship should no longer be viewed as an optional career pathway but as a strategic necessity for the future sustainability and relevance of the LIS profession. Drawing on contemporary literature and observations from the evolving operations of A. W. Ambi Library, Kaduna State College of Education Gidan Waya, the paper contends that library personnel possess unique competencies that can be transformed into innovative information products and services capable of creating both social and economic value. It further expresses the opinion that embracing information consultancy, digital content development, research support services, institutional repository management, information brokerage, and other knowledge-based enterprises will strengthen professional relevance while contributing to institutional development and national economic growth. Although challenges such as inadequate entrepreneurial training, limited digital infrastructure, poor funding, and weak policy support continue to hinder the growth of infopreneurship among librarians, these obstacles should be regarded as opportunities for strategic reforms rather than barriers to innovation. The paper concludes that integrating entrepreneurship education into LIS curricula, promoting continuous professional development, and strengthening institutional support mechanisms are essential steps toward preparing library personnel for the future of the knowledge economy. Ultimately, infopreneurship represents a practical and sustainable direction for repositioning the LIS profession in Nigeria and beyond.

Keywords: *Infopreneurship, Library and Information Science, Entrepreneurship, Digital Libraries, Knowledge Economy, Innovation, Library Personnel.*

Introduction

The twenty-first century has ushered in unprecedented technological advancements that continue to reshape the global information landscape. Innovations such as artificial intelligence, cloud computing, big data analytics, digital repositories, and electronic

communication have fundamentally changed the ways information is created, organized, stored, disseminated, and accessed. Consequently, Libraries have evolved from traditional repositories of information into dynamic centres supporting research, digital scholarship, innovation, and lifelong learning (IFLA, 2022; UNESCO, 2023).

This transformation has equally altered the expectations placed upon Library and Information Science (LIS) professionals, who are increasingly required to combine traditional librarianship skills with technological competence, creativity, and entrepreneurial thinking.

In our view, one of the most significant developments influencing the future of the LIS profession is the emergence of infopreneurship has expanded the professional landscape of librarians by encouraging the creation and commercialization of information products and services (Chiwara-Ndoro & Dewah, 2020; Mubofu & Malekani, 2023). Infopreneurship represents the application of entrepreneurial principles to the creation, management, packaging, and dissemination of information products and services. Rather than depending solely on conventional employment opportunities within academic, public, or special libraries, librarians now have the opportunity to transform their professional expertise into sustainable enterprises that respond to the growing demand for quality information services. These may include research consultancy, digital publishing, indexing and abstracting services, bibliometric analysis, academic editing, records management consultancy, institutional repository management, information literacy training, and digital content development.

It is our considered opinion that the future of the Library and Information Science profession will largely depend on how effectively librarians embrace innovation and entrepreneurial practices. The traditional perception of librarians as custodians of books is gradually becoming obsolete in an era characterized by digital transformation and rapidly changing user expectations. Today's information professionals must become creators of value, managers of digital knowledge, consultants, innovators, educators, and entrepreneurs capable of delivering specialized information solutions across multiple sectors of society.

The increasing integration of entrepreneurship into higher education reflects the growing recognition that graduates require innovative competencies to compete within modern labour markets (WEF, 2023).

This opinion is particularly relevant within Nigerian higher education institutions, where declining public funding, rising unemployment among graduates, and increasing technological demands require librarians to diversify their professional competencies. Libraries can no longer rely exclusively on institutional budgets to sustain quality service delivery. Instead, they should explore innovative approaches that generate additional value while improving access to information and supporting teaching, research, community engagement, and institutional development.

A. W. Ambi Library, Kaduna State College of Education Gidan Waya, provides an appropriate context for this discussion because it reflects many of the realities confronting academic libraries in Nigeria. Like many institutions, the library operates within a rapidly evolving information environment where technological innovation presents both opportunities and challenges. In our opinion, the library possesses considerable human capital capable of driving infopreneurial initiatives if supported through appropriate policies,

professional development programmes, digital infrastructure, and institutional commitment. Such initiatives would not only enhance service delivery but also position library personnel as active contributors to the knowledge economy.

This paper therefore presents our professional opinion that infopreneurship is no longer a supplementary aspect of librarianship but a strategic direction for the future of the profession. We argue that entrepreneurial competencies should become an integral component of library education, professional practice, and institutional policy. By embracing innovation, technology, and enterprise development, librarians can strengthen their professional relevance, improve institutional sustainability, create employment opportunities, and contribute meaningfully to national development.

Infopreneurship: A Strategic Imperative for the Future of the LIS Profession

The Library and Information Science (LIS) profession is experiencing one of the most significant transitions in its history. Digital transformation, globalization, changing user expectations, and the increasing commercialization of information have altered the traditional responsibilities of librarians. In our opinion, these developments demand a paradigm shift in the way library professionals perceive their roles. Rather than viewing themselves solely as custodians of information resources, librarians should embrace their identities as innovators, entrepreneurs, consultants, and creators of knowledge-based solutions.

Infopreneurship enables librarians to transform professional knowledge into innovative services that generate educational, economic and social value (Ramugondo, 2022), that can be responsibly harnessed through entrepreneurial initiatives. Unlike conventional business enterprises that primarily deal with physical goods, infopreneurship focuses on creating, organizing, packaging, and disseminating information products and services that address specific knowledge needs. This perspective aligns closely with the professional competencies of librarians, whose expertise lies in information organization, retrieval, evaluation, preservation, and dissemination.

In our view, digital transformation has significantly expanded the responsibilities of librarians beyond collection management to include digital preservation, research support, scholarly communication, and knowledge management (Noh, 2021).The rapid expansion of digital scholarship, online education, open science, research data management, and artificial intelligence has created new opportunities that extend beyond the physical library environment. Librarians who develop entrepreneurial competencies are better positioned to provide specialized services that meet these evolving demands while strengthening the visibility and relevance of their profession.

Furthermore, infopreneurship should not be interpreted as replacing the traditional values of librarianship. Rather, it complements the ethical principles of equitable information access, intellectual freedom, lifelong learning, and community development by introducing sustainable approaches to service delivery. Entrepreneurial thinking enables libraries to diversify their activities, improve financial resilience, and expand their societal impact without compromising their professional obligations.

Another reason why infopreneurship has become strategically important is the growing mismatch between the number of LIS graduates and the availability of conventional employment opportunities. Many graduates possess valuable knowledge and technical skills

but remain unemployed because they continue to depend exclusively on vacancies in public institutions. We believe that entrepreneurship education should encourage graduates to identify information needs within society and transform those needs into viable professional enterprises. Such enterprises can generate employment not only for librarians but also for other professionals working within the information ecosystem.

Equally important is the emergence of artificial intelligence and digital automation, which have prompted concerns regarding the future relevance of librarians. While some routine library operations are increasingly automated, technologies such as artificial intelligence cannot completely replace the professional judgment, ethical reasoning, instructional competence, and user-centred services provided by trained librarians. Instead, these technologies should be viewed as tools that enhance professional productivity and create new entrepreneurial opportunities. Librarians who understand how to integrate emerging technologies into information services will remain indispensable contributors to research, education, innovation, and national development. Therefore, artificial intelligence and emerging digital technologies should be viewed as opportunities for professional innovation rather than threats to librarianship (Raju, 2021).

It is therefore our opinion that institutions responsible for educating future librarians should move beyond teaching entrepreneurship as a peripheral course. Entrepreneurial thinking should be embedded throughout the LIS curriculum, enabling students to acquire practical experience in business planning, digital innovation, project management, marketing of information services, financial sustainability, and technology-driven service delivery. Such reforms would better prepare graduates to thrive within an increasingly competitive knowledge economy.

Emerging Opportunities for Library Personnel through Infopreneurship

The expanding digital information environment has created numerous opportunities that can reposition library personnel as active participants in the knowledge economy. In our opinion, these opportunities remain underutilized, particularly within many developing countries where librarians continue to focus primarily on conventional library operations despite possessing competencies that are highly valuable in diverse sectors of society.

One of the most promising opportunities lies in **Research Consultancy SERVICES**. Research consultancy, bibliometric analysis, institutional repository management, academic editing, digital publishing, and information literacy training represent important entrepreneurial opportunities for librarians (Mubofu & Malekani, 2023) Contemporary researchers increasingly require assistance with literature searching, systematic reviews, reference management, plagiarism detection, research impact analysis, citation indexing, bibliometric studies, and scholarly publishing. These services fall naturally within the professional expertise of librarians and can be offered as specialized consultancy services to universities, research institutes, government agencies, and private organizations.

Another important opportunity involves **Digital Publishing and Academic Editing**. The rapid growth of open-access publishing, institutional repositories, electronic journals, and online learning platforms has increased the demand for professionals capable of managing editorial workflows, metadata creation, indexing, proofreading, copyright compliance, and digital preservation. Library personnel or Information professionals possess competencies

that are increasingly demanded by universities, government agencies, industries, and research organizations (Ramugondo, 2022).

Information Literacy Education also presents significant entrepreneurial potential. As misinformation, disinformation, and digital manipulation become increasingly prevalent, individuals require guidance in locating, evaluating, and ethically using information. Librarians can develop online training programmes, professional workshops, certification courses, and educational content that improve digital literacy across educational institutions, corporate organizations, and local communities.

We further believe that **Records and Archives Management** represents another expanding area of professional opportunity. Government institutions, healthcare organizations, financial institutions, and private companies continue to generate enormous quantities of digital records requiring systematic organization, preservation, retrieval, and compliance with regulatory standards. Library professionals possess transferable competencies that can be adapted to these growing information management needs.

Digital Content Creation has equally emerged as an attractive area for infopreneurship. Librarians can produce educational videos, podcasts, webinars, blogs, newsletters, online tutorials, electronic databases, and specialized information products tailored to specific user communities. These activities not only generate income but also increase professional visibility and demonstrate the continuing relevance of librarians within the digital society.

Within A. W. Ambi Library in Kaduna State College of Education Gidan-Waya, these opportunities could significantly enhance institutional visibility while creating additional avenues for professional growth. By encouraging library personnel to explore entrepreneurial initiatives, the institution can strengthen service delivery, improve staff motivation, attract external collaborations, and contribute more effectively to teaching, research, innovation, and community engagement. In our opinion, infopreneurship should therefore become an integral component of institutional strategic planning rather than an individual career aspiration.

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Challenges Limiting the Growth of Infopreneurship among Library Personnel

Although infopreneurship presents enormous opportunities for Library and Information Science (LIS) professionals, its adoption within many developing countries, including Nigeria, remains relatively limited. In our opinion, this slow progression is not a reflection of inadequate professional competence but rather the result of institutional, economic, technological, and policy-related constraints that continue to affect the profession. These challenges deserve serious attention because they determine the extent to which librarians can successfully participate in the emerging knowledge economy.

Limited entrepreneurial education, inadequate funding, poor ICT infrastructure, and weak institutional support remain significant barriers to infopreneurship in many developing countries (Chiwara-Ndoro & Dewah, 2020).

One of the most significant barriers is **inadequate entrepreneurial education**. While many Library and Information Science programmes now include entrepreneurship courses, these courses often emphasize theoretical concepts rather than practical enterprise development. Consequently, many graduates leave higher institutions with sound professional knowledge but limited experience in business planning, innovation management, digital marketing, financial management, client relations, and enterprise sustainability. We believe that entrepreneurship education should move beyond classroom instruction to include practical incubation programmes, mentorship, internships, and collaborative innovation projects that expose students to real entrepreneurial experiences.

Another major challenge is **insufficient technological infrastructure**. Modern infopreneurship depends heavily on reliable internet connectivity, cloud computing services, digital repositories, electronic databases, content management systems, artificial intelligence tools, and other information technologies. Unfortunately, many academic libraries continue to experience inadequate internet bandwidth, irregular electricity supply, obsolete computer systems, and insufficient investment in digital infrastructure. These limitations reduce the ability of library personnel to develop innovative information products and compete effectively within the digital marketplace.

Financial constraints also remain a significant obstacle. Establishing information-based enterprises often requires investment in hardware, software, internet services, professional certification, office facilities, digital platforms, and continuous skills development. However, access to startup capital remains difficult for many librarians, particularly young graduates who lack collateral or institutional support. In our opinion, governments, financial institutions, professional associations, and educational institutions should establish funding mechanisms specifically designed to support knowledge-based entrepreneurial initiatives within the information sector.

Equally important is the **persistence of traditional professional mindsets**. Many librarians continue to associate professional success exclusively with permanent employment in government institutions or academic libraries. While such employment remains valuable, exclusive dependence on conventional career pathways limits innovation and reduces the profession's adaptability to changing economic realities. We argue that cultivating an entrepreneurial culture within the profession requires changing attitudes toward self-employment, innovation, calculated risk-taking, and value creation.

The **rapidly evolving technological environment** presents another important challenge. Emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, machine learning, blockchain, data analytics, and virtual reality continue to transform information services at an unprecedented pace. Library personnel who fail to update their knowledge risk becoming professionally irrelevant. Continuous professional development should therefore become an essential component of librarianship rather than an optional activity.

Policy and institutional support also deserve careful consideration. Many academic institutions have yet to develop comprehensive policies that encourage entrepreneurial innovation among library personnel. Existing administrative structures often prioritize routine service delivery while providing limited incentives for creativity, commercialization of information products, interdisciplinary collaboration, or external consultancy. In our opinion, institutional leaders should create environments that encourage experimentation,

reward innovation, and support responsible entrepreneurial initiatives that align with the educational mission of their institutions.

Finally, **public awareness** remains relatively low regarding the diverse competencies possessed by librarians. Many individuals continue to perceive librarians primarily as custodians of books rather than information specialists capable of providing consultancy, digital knowledge management, research support, scholarly communication, and technology-driven information solutions. Improving public understanding of these competencies is essential for expanding the market for infopreneurial services and enhancing the overall visibility of the profession.

Despite these challenges, we remain optimistic about the future of infopreneurship within the LIS profession. Most of these obstacles are not permanent limitations but transitional issues that can be addressed through strategic investment, policy reforms, technological advancement, continuous professional development, and stronger collaboration among educational institutions, governments, professional associations, and private-sector partners.

Therefore, continuous professional development is essential if librarians are to adapt to rapidly changing technologies and user expectations (IFLA, 2022).

Our Perspective on the Future of Library and Information Science Profession

Noh, 2021; and Raju, 2021 opined that future librarians will increasingly function as a digital knowledge manager, research consultant, innovation facilitator, and information entrepreneur. According to UNESCO (2023) academic libraries should become centres of innovation capable of supporting digital transformation and sustainable development.

The future of the library and information science profession will be shaped not merely by technological advancement but by the willingness of information professionals to embrace innovation, entrepreneurship, adaptability, and lifelong learning. In our opinion, librarians who continue to rely exclusively on traditional service models may find it increasingly difficult to remain relevant in an information environment characterized by rapid technological change, evolving user expectations, and growing competition from commercial information providers.

Rather than viewing technological innovations as threats, the profession should recognize them as catalysts for transformation. Artificial intelligence, cloud computing, data analytics, digital repositories, and automation are redefining information management across the world. These technologies are capable of improving service efficiency, supporting evidence-based decision-making, enhancing user experiences, and expanding access to knowledge. However, their successful application depends on professionals who understand both technological systems and the ethical principles governing information access, preservation, privacy, and intellectual freedom. Librarians possess this unique combination of competencies and should therefore position themselves as leaders in the responsible use of emerging technologies.

We further believe that the future librarian will function as a multidisciplinary knowledge professional rather than a conventional information custodian. Future responsibilities are likely to include research data management, digital scholarship support, open-access publishing, metadata architecture, digital preservation, knowledge consultancy, information policy development, scholarly communication, digital literacy education, and innovation

management. These expanding roles demonstrate that the profession is evolving rather than declining.

Within Nigerian higher education institutions, this transformation presents both opportunities and responsibilities. Institutions such as A. W. Ambi Library, Kaduna State College of Education Gidan Waya, have the potential to become centres of innovation where librarians actively contribute to institutional research, digital transformation, entrepreneurship education, and community development. By encouraging staff to establish information-based enterprises, participate in interdisciplinary collaborations, and develop technology-driven services, academic libraries can strengthen their relevance while contributing directly to national development priorities.

We also contend that future library schools must redesign their curricula to reflect the realities of the digital knowledge economy. Courses on artificial intelligence applications in libraries, digital entrepreneurship, innovation management, business development, intellectual property, research analytics, digital content creation, project management, and technology commercialization should become integral components of Library and Information Science Education. Such reforms would ensure that graduates possess both professional competence and entrepreneurial confidence.

Professional associations likewise have an important responsibility to provide continuous training, mentorship programmes, innovation competitions, enterprise development workshops, and networking opportunities that expose librarians to emerging entrepreneurial possibilities. These initiatives would strengthen professional resilience while promoting a culture of creativity and lifelong learning across the profession.

Ultimately, we are convinced that infopreneurship represents more than an alternative source of income for librarians. It is a strategic philosophy that encourages innovation, expands career opportunities, improves institutional sustainability, and enhances the contribution of libraries to national development. The future of the Library and Information Science profession therefore depends not on preserving traditional practices but on combining professional ethics with entrepreneurial vision, technological competence, and a commitment to continuous innovation.

Suggestions

Based on the opinions presented in this paper, the following suggestions are proposed to strengthen the adoption of infopreneurship and enhance the future of the Library and Information Science (LIS) profession in Nigeria and other developing countries.

1. Entrepreneurship Education should be integrated throughout the LIS Curriculum. Rather than limiting entrepreneurship to a single course, library schools should embed entrepreneurial thinking across the curriculum. Students should receive practical training in innovation, business development, digital marketing, project management, financial literacy, and information product design to prepare them for both traditional employment and self-employment.

2. Academic Libraries should establish Innovation and Infopreneurship Hubs. Universities and colleges should create dedicated innovation centres where library personnel and students can develop, test, and commercialize information-based products and services.

Such centres would encourage creativity, interdisciplinary collaboration, and the practical application of professional knowledge.

3. Continuous Professional Development should become mandatory. Library personnel should regularly participate in workshops, seminars, conferences, certification programmes, and online training on emerging technologies, artificial intelligence, digital scholarship, data analytics, research support services, and entrepreneurial skills. Continuous learning is essential for maintaining professional relevance in an evolving information environment.

4. Governments and institutional administrators should increase investment in digital infrastructure. Reliable internet connectivity, uninterrupted electricity, modern computer facilities, digital repositories, cloud-based platforms, and emerging information technologies are fundamental requirements for successful infopreneurship. Increased investment in these areas will improve both service delivery and entrepreneurial innovation.

5. Professional associations should actively promote entrepreneurial culture. Organizations representing library professionals should organize mentorship programmes, innovation competitions, enterprise development workshops, and networking platforms that expose librarians to successful infopreneurial practices. Recognition and awards for innovative information services would further encourage professional creativity.

6. Financial support mechanisms should be established for information-based enterprises. Government agencies, development partners, financial institutions, and educational institutions should introduce grants, innovation funds, low-interest loans, and business incubation programmes specifically designed to support librarians who wish to establish sustainable information enterprises.

7. Academic libraries should encourage strategic partnerships. Collaboration with universities, research institutes, technology companies, publishers, non-governmental organizations, and private-sector organizations will enable library personnel to expand their professional services, access new technologies, and create innovative solutions to societal information challenges.

8. Greater public awareness of librarians' competencies should be promoted. Libraries should implement advocacy campaigns highlighting the diverse expertise of librarians in research consultancy, digital information management, scholarly communication, data management, information literacy, records management, and knowledge organization. Improved public awareness will increase demand for professional information services and strengthen the visibility of the profession.

In our opinion, implementing these recommendations will not only strengthen infopreneurship but will also reposition the Library and Information Science profession as a strategic contributor to national development, digital transformation, innovation, and the knowledge economy.

Conclusion

The transformation currently taking place within the global information environment presents both challenges and unprecedented opportunities for the Library and Information Science profession. Advances in digital technologies, artificial intelligence, open source, and the knowledge economy have fundamentally changed how information is created, managed,

disseminated, and utilized. Consequently, librarians must continually redefine their professional roles to remain relevant within this rapidly evolving landscape.

This opinion paper has argued that infopreneurship represents one of the most promising pathways for achieving this transformation. Rather than viewing entrepreneurship as an activity separate from librarianship, we maintain that it should be recognized as a natural extension of the professional competencies already possessed by Library and Information Science practitioners. Skills in information organization, knowledge management, research support, digital literacy, scholarly communication, and information technology provide a strong foundation upon which sustainable information enterprises can be developed.

Using the context of A. W. Ambi Library, Kaduna State College of Education Gidan Waya, this paper has expressed the view that academic libraries possess significant untapped potential to become centres of innovation, digital transformation, and entrepreneurial excellence. By embracing infopreneurship, library personnel can diversify their professional roles, improve institutional sustainability, expand access to information, create employment opportunities, and contribute meaningfully to educational advancement and national development.

We acknowledge that barriers such as inadequate funding, limited technological infrastructure, insufficient entrepreneurial education, weak policy support, and resistance to organizational change continue to hinder progress. Nevertheless, these challenges should be regarded as opportunities for strategic reform rather than reasons for professional stagnation. Through collaborative efforts involving educational institutions, governments, professional associations, and the private sector, the conditions necessary for successful infopreneurship can be established.

In conclusion, we firmly believe that the future of the Library and Information Science profession will depend not only on technological advancement but also on the willingness of librarians to innovate, collaborate, and embrace entrepreneurial thinking. Infopreneurship is therefore more than a professional alternative; it is a strategic imperative that will determine the sustainability, visibility, and societal relevance of librarianship in the twenty-first century. Library professionals who embrace this philosophy will not merely adapt to change—they will become leaders in shaping the future of knowledge creation, information access, and national development.

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