IFLA Section Information Technology

UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE
UNIVERSITEIT VAN DIE VRYSTAAT
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# Building an AI-Empowered World: Practical Applications of AI

## Full Programme | 9–12 November 2026

Pont de Val, Parys, Free State, South Africa

Workshop: 9 November | Symposium: 10–12 November 2026

**Symposium Themes**

- Practical Applications of AI
- Data Sovereignty in the AI World
- AI: Beyond the Horizon
- The Human-AI Synergy
- Economic and Societal Transitions in an AI World
- Sustainable and Inclusive AI Future



## 9 November 2026: Pre-Symposium Workshop | Hands-On AI for Library Professionals (Pont De Vaal Hotel)

### AI WORKSHOP FOR ACADEMIC LIBRARIES

| Time | Session / Presentation Details |
|---|---|
| 09:00–09:30 | Registration |
| 09:30–09:45 | Opening and Welcome |
| 09:45–10:30 | Session 1: AI landscape for libraries |
| *10:30–10:40* | *Tea Break (10 min)* |
| 10:40–12:15 | Session 2: Hands-on live demo and guided exercises using AI tools |
| *12:40–13:10* | *Lunch (30 min)* |
| 13:15–14:45 | Session 3: Recommendation engines and reference services case study walkthroughs; group activity – mapping AI to your workflows |
| *14:45–14:55* | *Tea Break (10 min)* |
| 15:55–16:50 | Session 4: Implementation planning frameworks, lessons learned, and developing an institutional AI roadmap |

**Day 1: 10 November 2026 | Programme Director: Nambitha Manqola**

| Time | Session / Presentation Details |
|---|---|
| 08:00-08:45 | Arrival & registration |
| 08:45-09:00 | National Anthem of South Africa and African Union Anthem |
| 09:00-09:05 | **Official Opening:** Mr Charlie Molepo (LIASA President) |
| 09:05-09:20 | **Welcome Address: Dr Buhle Mbambo-Thata** (20 min) |
| 09:20-10:00 | **Santiago Villegas-Ceballos** (40 min) |
| 10:00-10:20 | **Chair: Cossy Ndumela**<br>Nomkonwana — Artificial intelligence as tools to access library services and sources among undergraduate students at a South African University |
| 10:20-10:40 | Lawal — Emerging trends in library and information services: the impact of artificial intelligence |
| 11:40-11:00 | Mosa — The trajectory of artificial intelligence |
| **11:00 – 11:30** | **Tea Break** |
| 11:30-12:30 | Vendor: SABINET (60 min) |
| *12:30-13:00* | *Lunch (30 min)* |
| 13:00-13:20 | **Chair: Nokuthula Musa**<br>Radebe & Mokoena — From awareness to readiness: assessing artificial intelligence competencies and training needs among public library staff in Bethlehem libraries, Free State |
| 13:20-13:40 | Sephoko — Upholding academic Integrity through information literacy: ethical engagement with artificial intelligence in higher education |
| 13:40-14:00 | Mrwashu — AI literacy for library staff: designing a practical “in-house” training program |
| 14:00-14:20 | Mdanyana — Developing a library AI agent for 24/7 patron support to enhance user experience: reflections from an academic library experience |
| 14:20-14:50 | IATUL (President) Kate Robbinson introduced by Dr Matthew Moyo |
| 14:50-15:10 | Chisita |
| 15:10-15:30 | Souza — Living library: Cartonera Books and AI for inclusive learning |
| | **SUNSET BOAT CRUISE** |

**Day 2: 11 November 2026 | Programme Director: Jan Moeketsi**

| Time | Session / Presentation Details |
|---|---|
| 08:30-08:40 | Welcome and registration |
| 08:40-09:25 | **Dr Ruth Wario** - Enhancing assessment quality through generative AI: a comparative study of human and AI-assisted essay grading at the University of the Free State, QwaQwa Campus (45 min) |
| 09:25-09:45 | **Chair: Santiago Villegas-Ceballos**<br>Paulsen & Suliaman — Bridging the AI literacy gap: developing a consistent skills framework for academic librarians at UCT Libraries |
| 09:45-10:05 | Blomerus — SamplingForML: a web-based AI-ready data preparation and deep neural network training platform for structured regression problems |
| 10:05-10:25 | Abdulla & Zingapan — Reimagining library services with humanoid robotics: AI applications in cataloguing, discovery, and reference services in academic libraries |
| *10:25-10:35* | *Tea Break (10 min)* |
| 10:35-10:55 | **Chair: Mapasane Lephoto**<br>Chuma, Van Staden & Brown — A comparative evaluation of multi-task and single-task architectures for object detection and semantic segmentation in autonomous driving |
| 10:55-11:15 | Browne — Building sustainable AI futures: climate justice, digital infrastructure, and the Global South |
| 11:15-11:35 | Ramabina — Enhancing inclusive services in academic libraries: the role of artificial intelligence in supporting users with special needs |
| 11:35-12:35 | Vendor: EBSCO (60 min) |
| *12:35-13:05* | *Lunch (30 min)* |
| 13:05-13:25 | **Chair: Annamarie du Preez**<br>Nair — Designing for the reviewer: a human-in-the-loop AI pipeline for news-driven knowledge base maintenance at the National Library Board Singapore |
| 13:25-13:45 | Netshakhuma — Management records in the age of artificial intelligence in South Africa |
| 13:45-14:05 | Muftic — From prompt to pipeline: AI-assisted coding for metadata and file management in libraries |
| 14:05-14:25 | Zvakafa & Kandira — Co-creating value with AI: collaborative workflows in the Zimbabwe Universities Libraries Consortium |
| 14:25-14:45 | Mathope — Human–AI collaboration in records management: insights from the Road Accident Fund's readiness for an AI-empowered future |
| 14:45-15:45 | **Prof Jacobs** - When AI becomes the student: reimagining teaching, learning and libraries in higher education |
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**Day 3: 12 November 2026 | Programme Director: Larshan Naicker**

| Time | Session / Presentation Details |
|---|---|
| 08:30-08:40 | Welcome & registration |
| 08:40-09:25 | **Van den Berg -** From chalkboards to chatbots: facts, frictions and future possibilities of AI to reimage teaching, learning and assessment in higher education (45 min) |
| 09:25-09:45 | **Chair: Nthabiseng Kotsokoane**<br>McCormack — Mediating the AI–scholarship interface: libraries as active architects of generative AI access to research |
| 09:45-10:05 | Lekhooa — AI-powered metadata and knowledge discovery in African academic libraries: a practical framework for responsible implementation |
| 10:05-10:25 | Modise — Reimagining archival workflows: embedding artificial technologies into digitisation and metadata practices at the University of the Free State Archives |
| *10:25-10:35* | *Tea Break (10 min)* |
| 10:35-10:55 | **Chair: Lindile Nhlapho**<br>Odularu — Human–AI synergy in academic libraries: systematic review of policy frameworks for ethical human-in-the-loop governance |
| 10:55-11:15 | Mpikashe — AI-enhanced research visibility services at North-West University |
| 11:15-11:35 | Kleinveldt — Lessons learned about AI integration into the LIS curriculum towards workplace preparedness: lessons learned |
| 11:35-12:35 | Vendor: Clarivate/WWIS (60 min) |
| *12:35-13:05* | *Lunch (30 min)* |
| 13:05-13:25 | **Chair: Dr Sabelo Chizwina**<br>Dabengwa — Artificial intelligence in Zimbabwean media: ethical concerns, governance issues, and societal impact (2016-2025) |
| 13:25-13:45 | Radebe, Van der Walt & Havenga— Ethical and responsible integration of Large Language Models in higher education: a qualitative study of strategies employed in a South African university of technology |
| 13:45-14:05 | Maimela — AI governance framework for academic libraries |
| 14:05-14:25 | Zeraatkar & Vatanpour — Designing ethical AI models for minority knowledge systems using the Yārsān case study |
| 14:25-15:25 | Panel Discussion. Moderator: Prof van den Berg. Panelists: K. Madumo, Prof L. Jacobs, S. Villegas-Ceballos, C. Molepo & May. |
| 15:25-15:45 | Closing remarks and vote of thanks: **Ms. Jeannet Molopyane** |
| | **WINE TASTING AND MAKING** |

Speaker biographies:

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