

Enduring purpose, perpetual evolution

Nick Poole, Chief Executive

Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP)

12th March 2023

We are CILIP

Information, Knowledge, Libraries
changing lives together

125 years of leadership

Our impact

CILIP promotes education and literacy by raising standards in libraries, information and knowledge management.

Our Charitable purpose (since 1898!)

The objects of the institute shall be to work for the benefit of the public to promote education and knowledge through the establishment and development of libraries and information services and to advance information science (being the science and practice of the collection, collation, evaluation and organised dissemination of information).

Vision, mission, values

We are a professional community, dedicated to changing lives through quality information, services and expertise.

Mission

Our mission is to be the leading professional membership association for people working in information, knowledge, libraries and related sectors.

Values

We will stand for and actively champion the values that unite our profession:

- Social justice
- Intellectual freedom
- Evidence-based practice

Working together for people and planet



#GreenLibraries



<http://www.cilip.org.uk/greenlibraries>



<https://www.cilip.org.uk/digital-leadership-course>

The impact
of AI, machine
learning, automation
and robotics on
the information
professions

Research Report



<https://www.cilip.org.uk/researchreport>

“Libraries are defined by an enduring purpose and values (our ‘why’), alongside a perpetual process of evolution and reinvention in the formats, materials and services we provide (our ‘how’).”

Liz Jolly, Chief Librarian, The British Library

6 ideas for our dialogue at IATUL 2023

1. The crucible of knowledge and learning
2. Embracing slow librarianship
3. The library in society
4. Our global profession
5. From information managers to information leaders
6. The way ahead

Idea 1. The crucible of knowledge and learning

In the beginning...

The story of writing – recording information using a standard system of marks – begins in an area of Southwest Asia known as the ‘Fertile Crescent’ before 3,000 BC

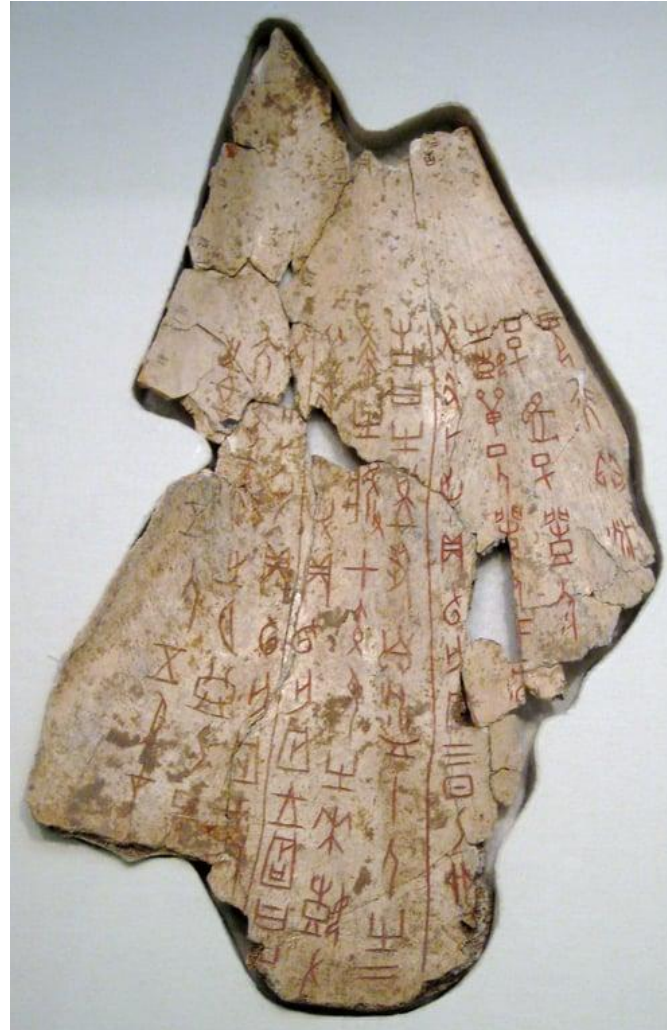
The earliest known written records are cuneiform – impressions made into wet clay. They are mostly records of transactions, inventories and bills of sale.

The first identifiable ‘libraries’ in this Region emerged as collections of clay tablets in Sumeria around 2,600 BC



Libraries of scholarship and learning

The earliest 'scholastic' libraries emerged in China from the Shang Dynasty (C16 – 11 BC) as part of the shift from manual labour to more specialised roles, including particularly administrative/Governmental records and laws.



Shang-era inscribed bone scapula, representing one of the earliest forms of Chinese writing. Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#)

Early Islamic Libraries

From the earliest period of Islamic teaching, Mosques played a central role in daily life as repositories of books and documents.

They held a special role in the preservation of the Qur'an and the Teachings of the Prophet Muhammad – in turn driving literacy and scholarship as an act of worship.



The House of Wisdom (also known as the Great Library of Baghdad), founded as a library for the collections of the Caliph Harun al-Rashid in the late 8th century.

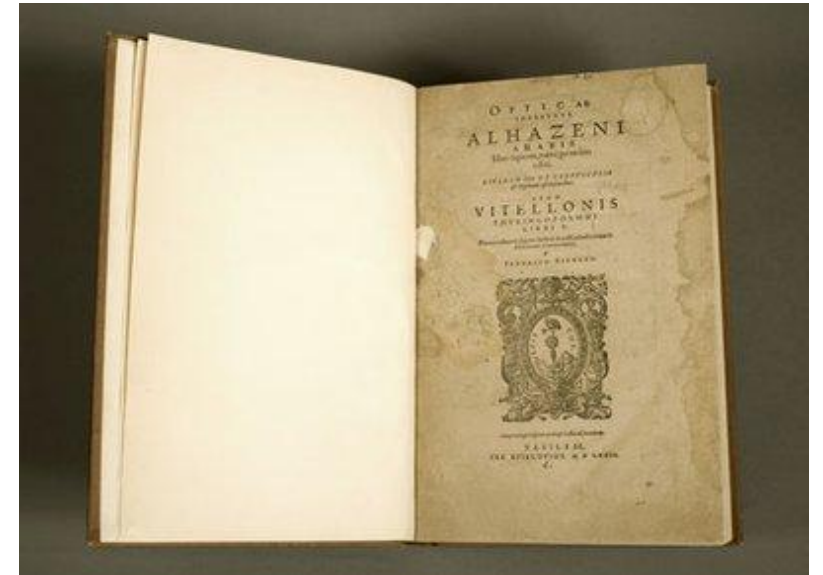
Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#)

The Arabic world

Throughout much of history, Islamic teachings and teachers have stressed the importance of literacy, education and knowledge. As a result, many of the greatest libraries of the medieval period emerged in the Arabic world.

Early Muslim librarians included:

- Ibn Rushd (known in the Western world as Avencienna), who developed the first identifiable 'encyclopedia'
- Ibn Miskawayah, one of the earliest historians and philosophers to assemble collections of knowledge from antiquity
- Humayun Ibn Ishaq, the translator, who facilitated the flow of knowledge around the world



The Latin translation of Alhazen, the first scientific treatise, which set out the science of optics. Image copyright © University of Chicago

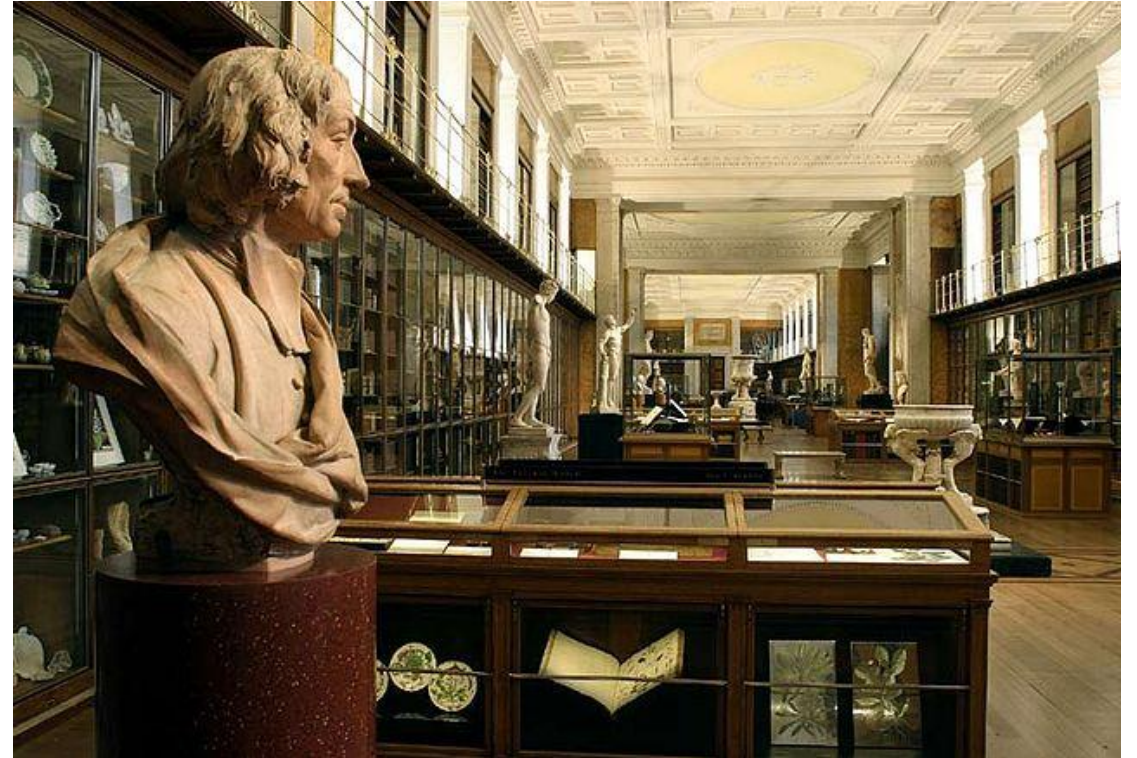
Let there be light – libraries and the Enlightenment

Between the 5th and 15th Centuries in the West, the role of Nation States in assembling libraries as an expression of administrative power gave way to the emergence of libraries of Religious doctrine.

Over time, the great Church Libraries began to be supplanted by the new Universities, academies and schools springing up across Europe

Collections broadened from scripture to philosophy, mathematics, science and practical daily affairs

During the Enlightenment, we saw the emergence of the early ideas of the ‘public’ library – a place of knowledge and learning accessible to a wider social class.



The Enlightenment Library at the British Museum (formerly the King's Library)

The enduring purpose of libraries

Throughout the history of the ancient world, from Ashburnipal to Alexandria and into modernity, libraries have served four enduring functions:

- A place of scholarship and learning
- Enabling business and industry
- A public record of the affairs of state
- A crucible of research and new knowledge



Copyright © Manchester Central Library, Manchester (2019)

Librarianship through the ages

The role and functions of the librarian have also remained remarkably consistent:

- Understanding the information needs of group of users
- Acquiring and developing collections over time
- Organising and cataloguing collections so they can be discovered and used
- Safeguarding and preserving collections against the ravages of time
- Protecting collections from undue external influence or censorship
- Ensuring continuity of knowledge between formats

Idea 2. Embracing slow librarianship



In praise of 'slow librarianship'

The idea of 'slow librarianship' was explored by US librarian Meredith Farkas in her 2018 essay 'Slow Life, Slow Librarianship'¹, stating:

"Slow librarianship is an antiracist, responsive, and values-driven practice that stands in opposition to neoliberal values.

Workers in slow libraries are focused on relationship-building, deeply understanding and meeting patron needs, and providing equitable services to their communities. Internally, slow library culture is focused on learning and reflection, collaboration and solidarity, valuing all kinds of contributions, and supporting staff as whole people.

Slow librarianship is a process, not a destination; it is an orientation towards our work, ourselves, and others that creates positive change. It is an organizational philosophy that supports workers and builds stronger relationships with our communities."



¹ <https://meredith.wolfwater.com/wordpress/2021/09/08/slow-life-slow-librarianship/>

In praise of 'slow librarianship'

The librarian needs the time and the liberty to build connections – both with their users and their collections. To learn the unique ways of both, and to forge a real understanding of how each can serve and develop the other.

'Slow' in 'slow librarianship' is not the opposite of 'fast'. It is the same concept as the Slow Food Movement – taking the time and care to understand where and how our information is produced, by whom and for what purpose:

“Slow food — as both a movement and an organisation - seeks to promote a more thoughtful, informed and engaged mode of consumption which prioritises a sense of connection and community. It emphasises the idea that consumption and production are all part of a continuum, the goal of which is to live more sustainably and harmoniously.”

Perhaps the best response to the dynamic and disruptive change happening all around us is to slow down, reflect, and build connections?

Idea 3. The library in society

“In the Netherlands, we do not just say “the authorities must fund libraries”. We have a mutual contract which says “here is how libraries and the authorities will work together to address our big societal challenges.”

Lily Knibbeler, Historian and Director General, National Library of the Netherlands

Our 5 key aspirations for people living in an information society



Be healthy



Be informed



Be empowered



Be connected

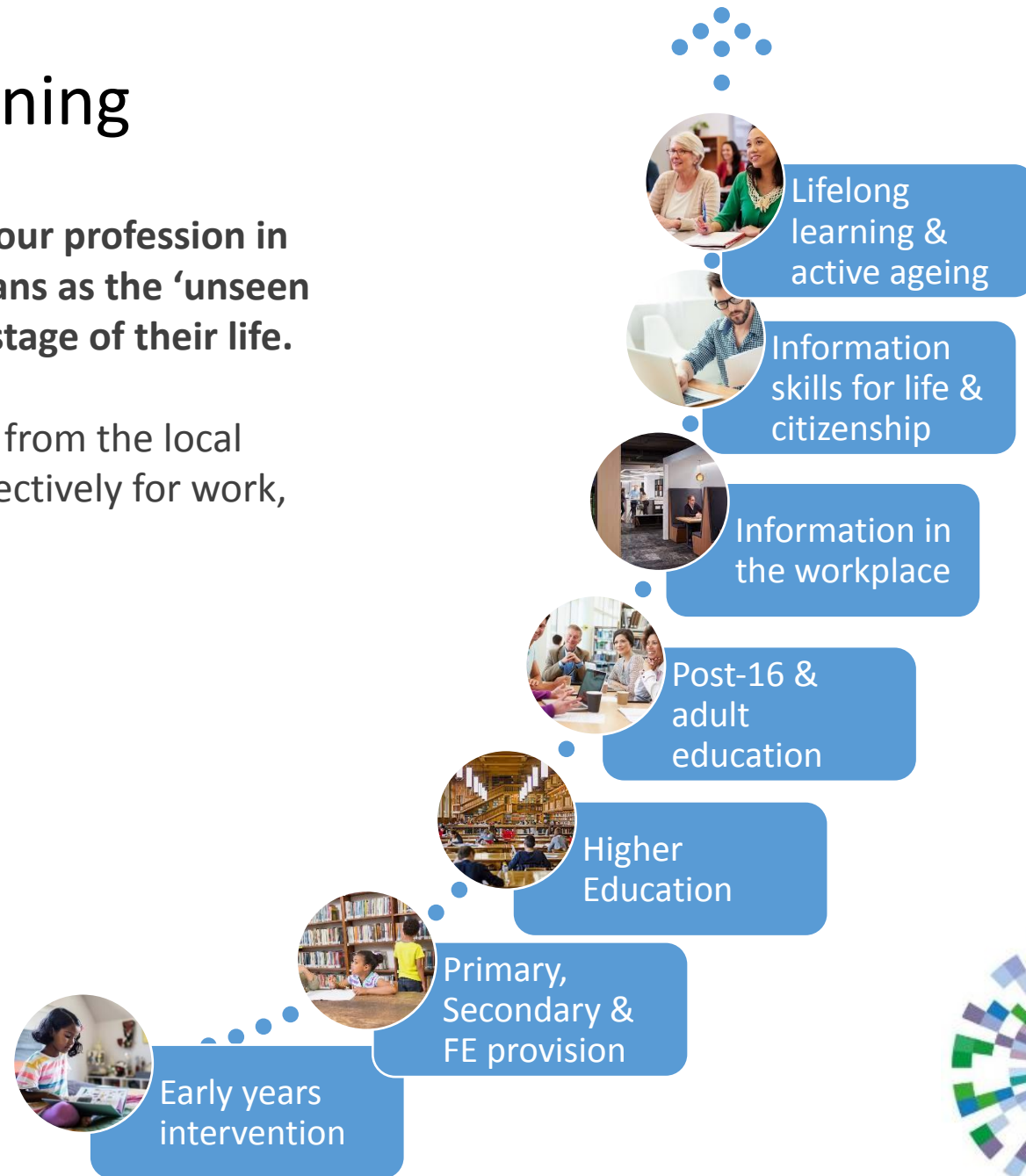


Be socially conscious

A continuum of lifelong learning

Rather than thinking about, and advocating for, our profession in terms of sector silos, we see libraries and librarians as the ‘unseen hand’ that rises up to support learners at every stage of their life.

From reading at home to using the school library, from the local public library to being able to use information effectively for work, self-directed learning and research,

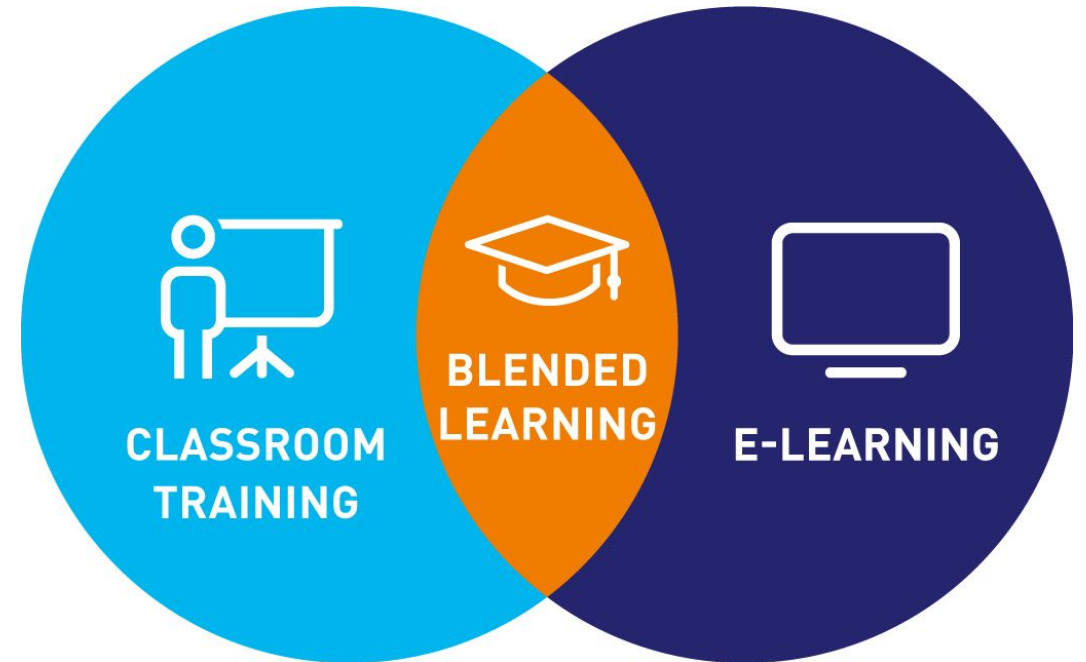


Transforming approaches to learning

The global pandemic has accelerated the digital transformation of the Campus, ushering an age of blended and hybrid learning.

As we move further and further towards a world of 'frictionless' experiences – with the distinction between 'online' and 'real life' becoming ever less meaningful, the role of the librarian is shifting fundamentally from empowering students to know *what* to learn to helping them understand *how* to learn.

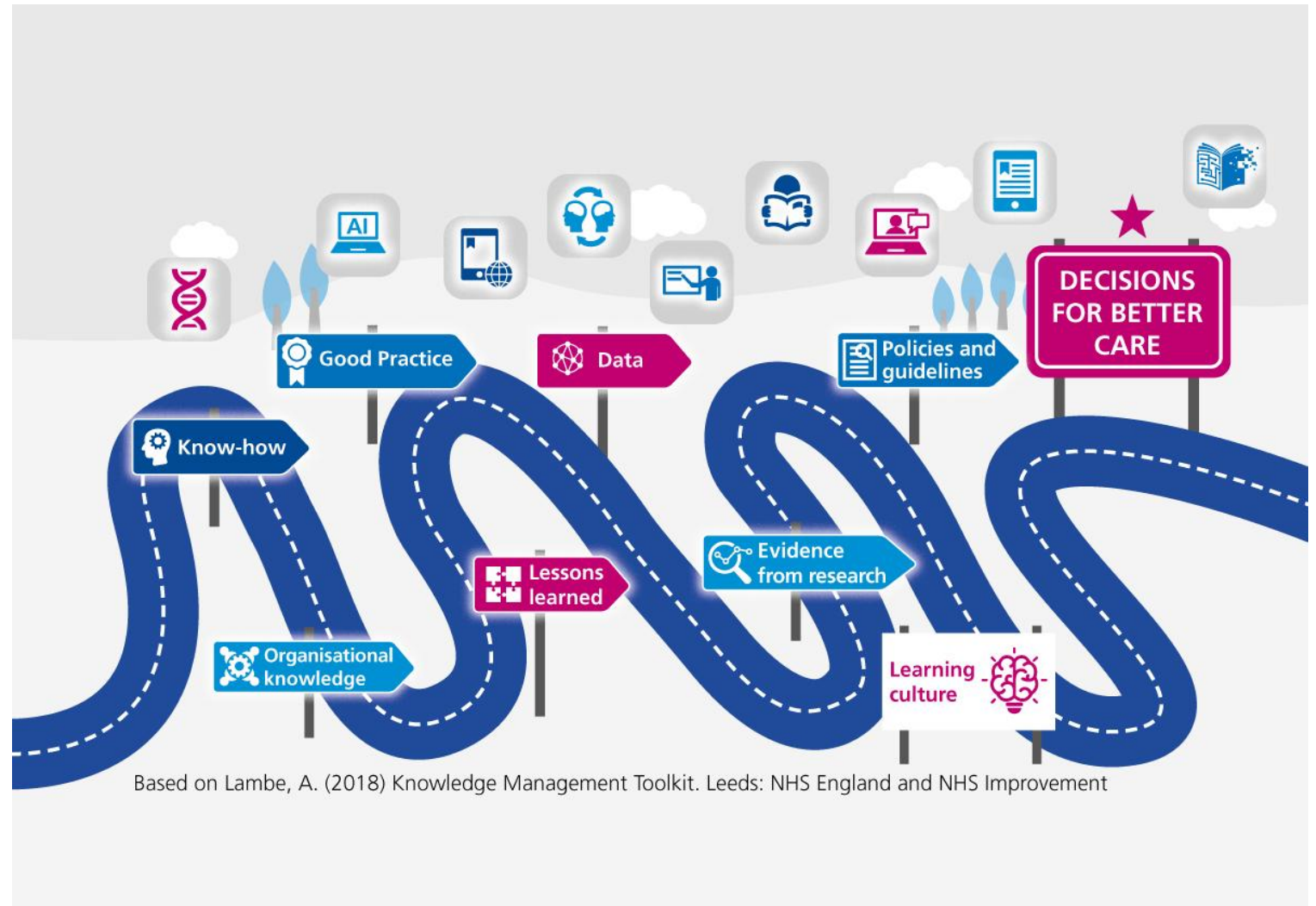
Working with students, academics and researchers, the role of the librarian is more central than ever in curating the shifting body of knowledge and content needed to support the future of learning.



Mobilising knowledge for healthcare

Technology is reinventing healthcare for populations all over the world. Our approach focuses on two key areas:

- Promoting health literacy, so that individuals can manage their own long-term conditions, and;
- Mobilising knowledge, so that clinical decisions are based on the best currently-available knowledge and evidence

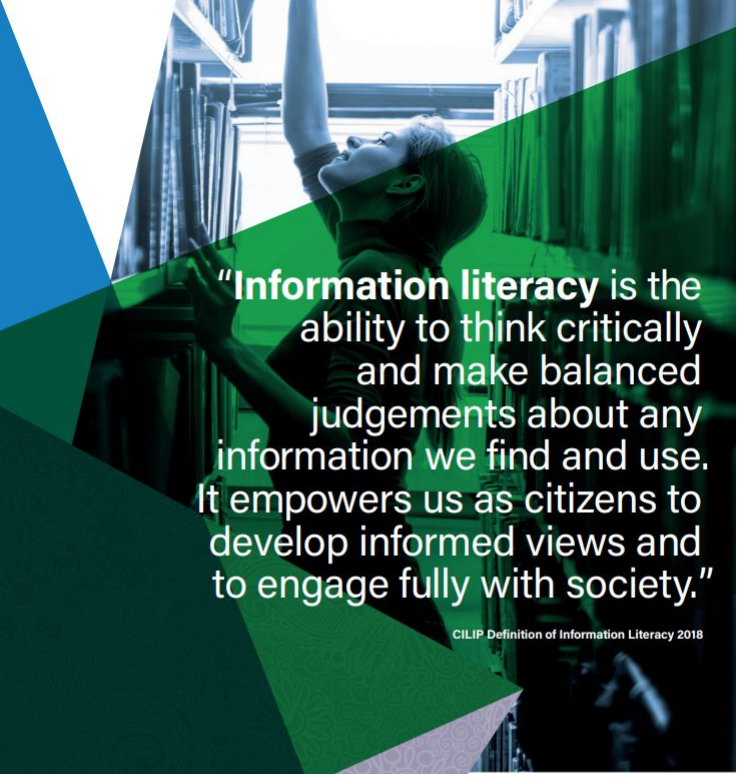


New forms of literacy

The widespread promotion of 'reading' literacy was one of humanity's greatest projects. It empowered populations, built democracies, accelerated innovation and the exchange of ideas.



Today, whether we know it or not, we are all engaged in the 2nd 'great literacy project' – to empower entire populations with the complex literacies (media, information, algorithmic and data literacy) needed to prosper in a connected world.

www.mila.org.uk



"Information literacy is the ability to think critically and make balanced judgements about any information we find and use. It empowers us as citizens to develop informed views and to engage fully with society."

CILIP Definition of Information Literacy 2018



For more information please visit infolit.org.uk
Follow us on Twitter [@infolitgroup](https://twitter.com/infolitgroup)

Idea 4. Our global profession

“We are the guardians of memory. The custodians of truth.
What could be more important than that?”

Reynold Leming, Chair, Information & Records Management Society (IRMS)

Our evolving skills

CILIP's professional knowledge and skills base is used around the world as the *de facto* standard for the skills of librarians, information and knowledge management professionals.

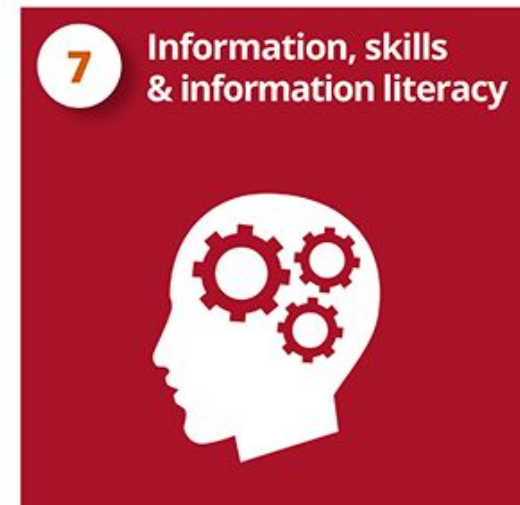
At the heart of the standard is our professional ethics, supported by a combination of 'technical professional' skills and softer, more generic skills.

We revised and updated the standard in 2021 to include digital and data skills and 'computational awareness'.

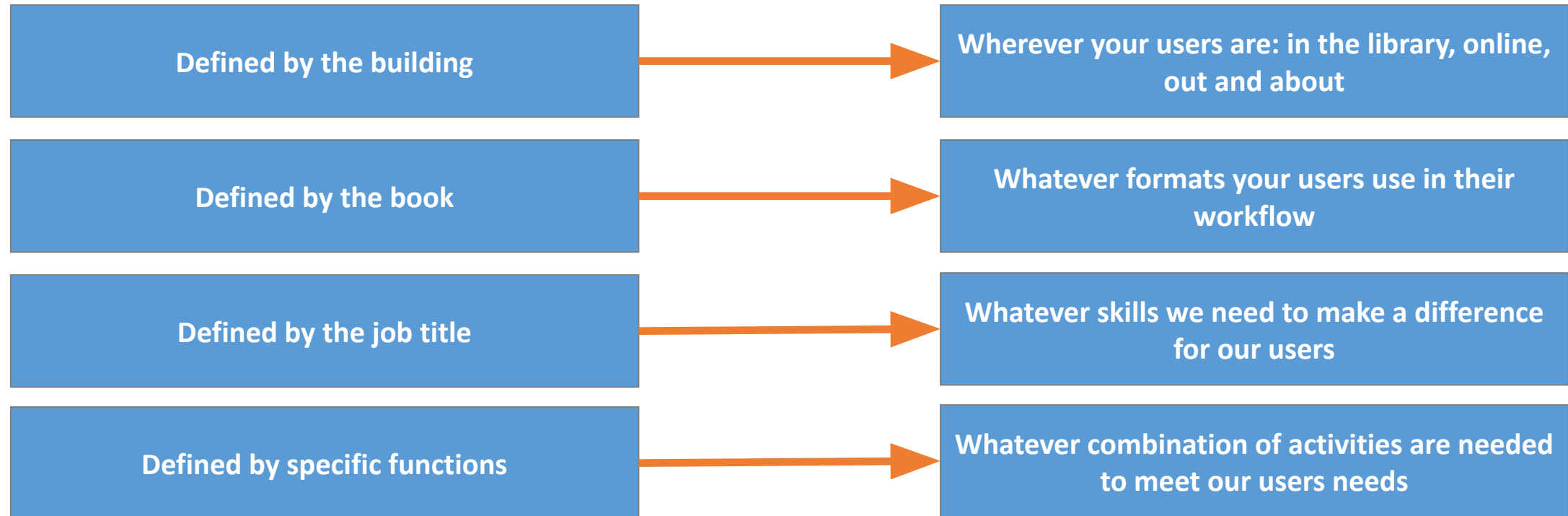
www.cilip.org.uk/pksb

The screenshot shows the CILIP Sector Skills Standard Professional Knowledge and Skills Base assessment tool interface. The header includes the CILIP logo, navigation links (Home, Press Esc to exit full screen, Ratings key, Edit Profile), and user information (Hello Test SIGN OUT). The main content area features a large circular diagram representing the skills base, with a central orange circle labeled 'Ethics and values'. The diagram is divided into two main sections: 'Professional Expertise' (outer ring) and 'Generic Skills' (inner ring). The 'Professional Expertise' section includes: Information Governance and Compliance, Information Management, Knowledge Management, Literacies and Learning, Records Management and Archiving, Research, and Organisation and Environmental context. The 'Generic Skills' section includes: Information Exploitation and Use, Data Management, Collection Management and Development, Technology and Communication, Strategy, Planning and Management, Leadership, Advocacy, Influencing and Personal Effectiveness, Customer Focus, Service Design and Marketing, and Wider library, data, information and knowledge sector context. A button labeled 'Select a PKSB section' is visible below the diagram. The footer contains the text 'Your PKSB progress'.

Our professional ethics...



Becoming an 'embedded' profession



A truly global community of practice

The values and purpose of librarianship (our 'why') are the same wherever we work, whatever the nature of the societies we serve.

Our values and purpose are the same, whether we work in academic and research libraries, schools, prisons, hospitals, National, specialist, corporate or community libraries.

www.ifla.org.uk



Addressing global priorities

As a global profession, our shared values and the trust that our users place in us, mean that we are ideally-positioned to take collective action to address global challenges.

We are committed to supporting libraries and librarians everywhere in addressing the urgent societal challenges set out in the UN 2030 Global Goals.

<https://sdgs.un.org/goals>



Idea 5. From information managers to information leaders

“Librarians face a choice. You can tend the metadata gardens while your robot overlords answer the questions for you, or you can be the bridge which makes these technologies safe and useful for your users.”

Sir Alan Wilson, Director of Special Projects of the Alan Turing Institute for AI & Machine Learning



Research Report

The impact of AI, machine learning, process automation
and robotics

A report for CILIP
on the information professions

Background and context

“The Fourth Industrial Revolution is of a scale, speed and complexity that is unprecedented. It is characterised by a fusion of technologies – such as artificial intelligence, gene editing and advanced robotics – that is blurring the lines between the physical, digital and biological worlds. It will disrupt nearly every industry in every country, creating new opportunities and challenges for people, places and businesses to which we must respond.”

HM Government White Paper: *Regulation for the Fourth Industrial Revolution*

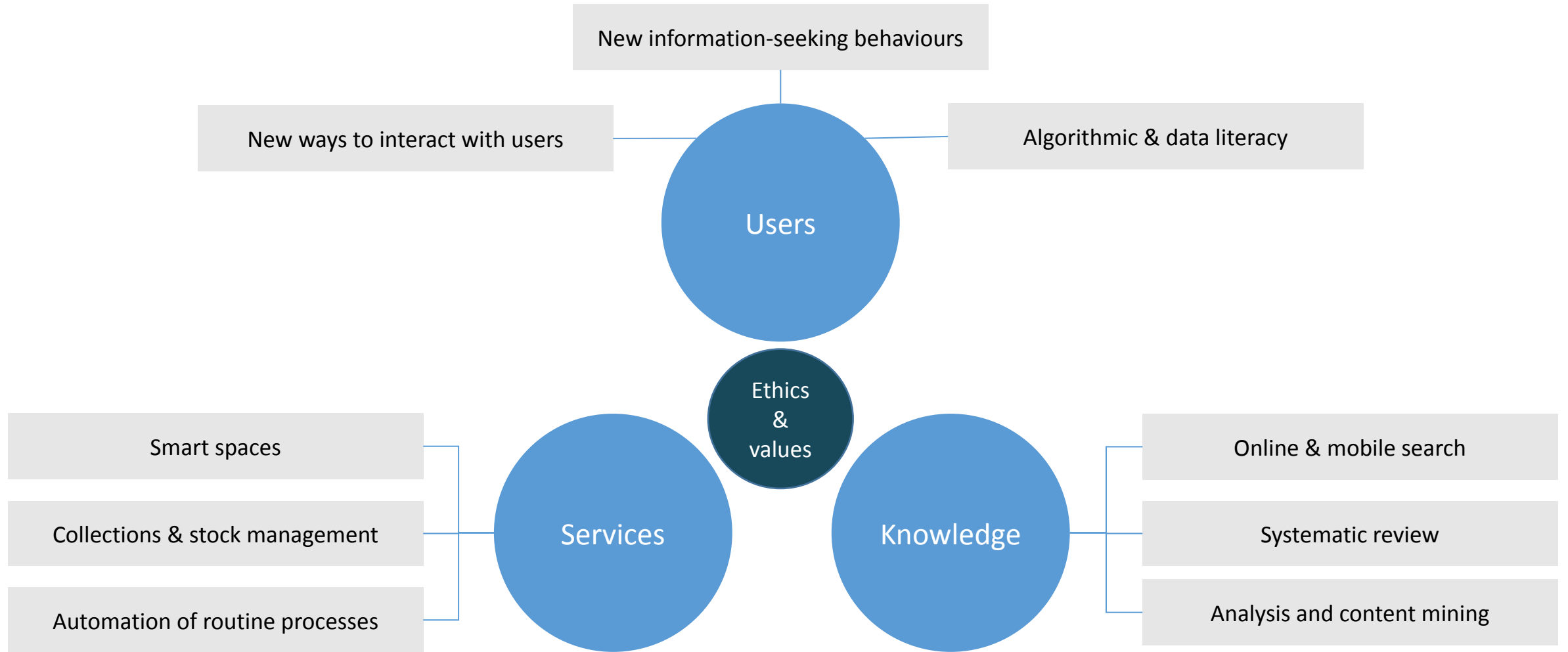
Key findings – seizing the opportunity

There is a huge opportunity for the information professions to position themselves at the heart of this process, not as technologists but rather as trusted information professionals holding a range of roles:

- In leadership positions, taking the driving seat as organisations apply AI, machine learning, automation and robotics to deliver on business objectives
- Offering authoritative support to employers in all sectors to harness these technologies while minimising the risks
- As a source of trusted and authoritative leadership for our users



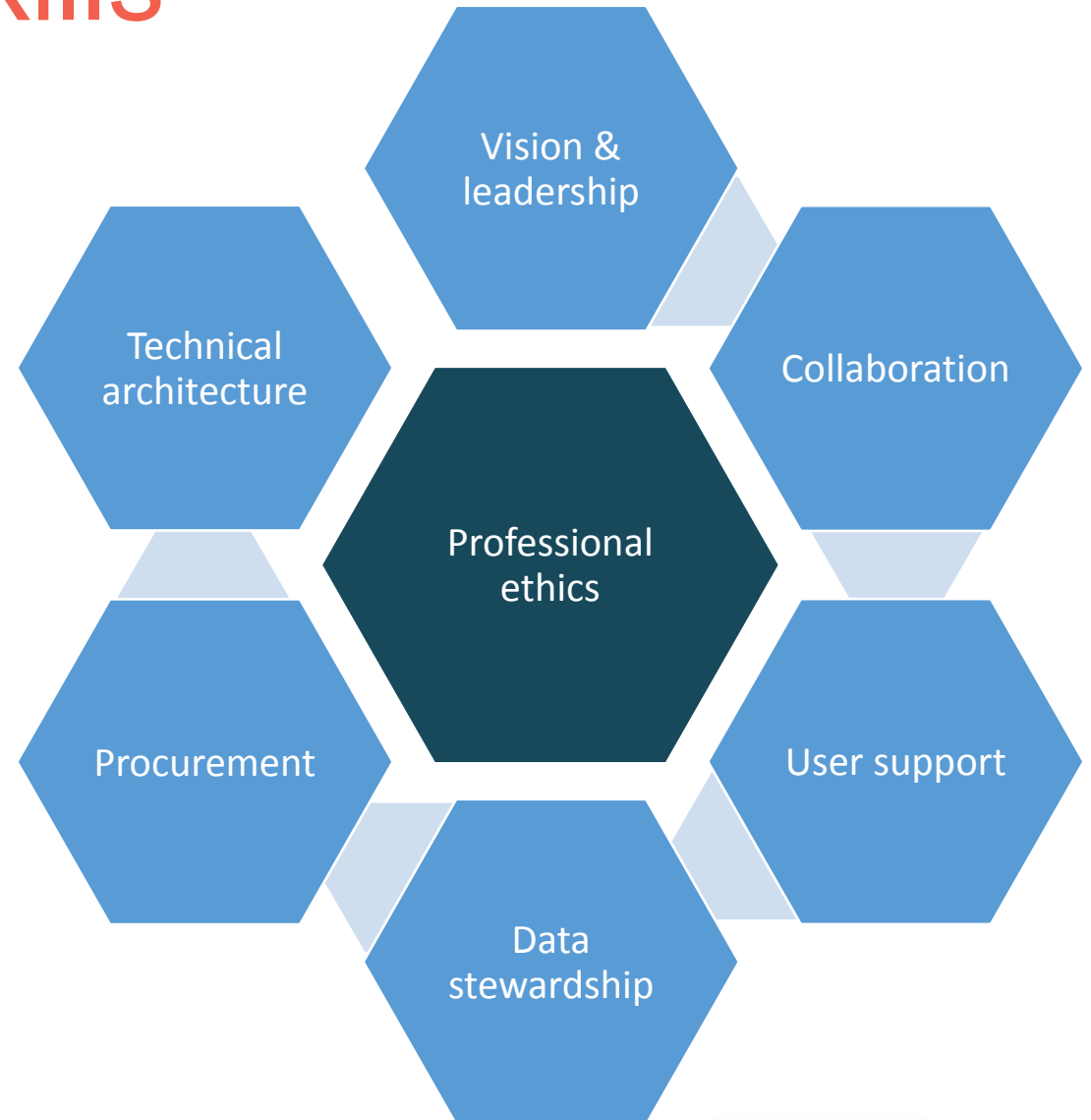
Key findings – impact and applications



Key findings – future skills

The research highlights three key sets of related findings for the future skills needs of the information professions:

- The existing ethical basis of the information professions is well-suited to addressing the ethical implications of AI, machine learning, process automation and robotics
- There is a strong alignment between the existing skillset of information professionals and the demands of new technologies
- There are some areas in which the information professions need to be supported to develop new skills



Idea 6. The way ahead

“The library was never finished. Because it was never meant to be finished”

Rolf Halpel, Affiliate Instructor, University of Washington iSchool

Librarianship is a continuum. It speaks to a fundamental need in all human societies and cultures for structured access to trusted information.

A focus on our ethics, on understanding the collections in our care, the nature of information and the needs of our users, will see us through not just *this* technological shift, but *all* future technology shifts.

We are defined, not by the places we work in or the materials we work with, but by a common set of values and a fundamental belief in the integrity of information and the rights of the information user.

Knowledge grows not by containment, but by *use*. In the future, our institutions will grow great not by what they contain, but by what we enable.

Thank you!

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#CILIP125



125 years
of
Royal
Charter

125

CILIP

The library
and information
association