Entrepreneurship and Stakeholder Engagement in Library and Information Services: an Integrated Perspective

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Abstract

The changing information environment requires libraries and information professionals to move beyond conventional service practices and embrace entrepreneurship and stakeholder collaboration. This opinion paper examines entrepreneurship in library and information services, focusing on entrepreneurial capacity, business planning, emerging opportunities, branding and rebranding, innovative business models, and the development and marketing of information products and services. It also examines librarians and information professionals as major stakeholders in the information industry, particularly their roles and contributions to information creation, organization, dissemination, preservation, and utilization. The paper argues that entrepreneurship in librarianship should not be understood solely as establishing private businesses or maximizing financial profit. Instead, it should be viewed as the capacity to recognize opportunities, mobilize resources, introduce innovations, create value, and sustain services that respond to changing user needs. Meaningful stakeholder engagement is equally necessary because libraries depend on authors, researchers, publishers, vendors, technology companies, governments, university authorities, professional associations, and users. The paper concludes that integrating entrepreneurial thinking with effective stakeholder engagement can strengthen the visibility, relevance, resilience, and sustainability of library and information services.

Keywords: entrepreneurship, stakeholder engagement, librarians, information industry, innovation, information services

Introduction

Libraries have traditionally acquired, organized, preserved, and provided access to information for teaching, learning, research, recreation, and informed decision-making. Although these responsibilities remain important, the environment in which they are performed has changed considerably. Information is increasingly created and disseminated through electronic databases, institutional repositories, social media, artificial intelligence platforms, mobile applications, open-access systems, and commercial search services. Users can obtain information through multiple channels without physically visiting a library, while publishers, database aggregators, technology companies, and online communities perform several functions previously associated mainly with libraries. Current trends in academic libraries show that artificial intelligence, digital scholarship, open science,

research-data services, changing learning spaces, and evolving user expectations are expanding professional responsibilities and transforming how libraries demonstrate their institutional value (Association of College and Research Libraries Research Planning and Review Committee, 2024; International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions [IFLA], 2023).

These changes do not necessarily make libraries irrelevant; rather, they require libraries to become more innovative, responsive, visible, and strategically positioned. Libraries can no longer depend solely on the assumption that users and institutional authorities will recognize their importance because they possess extensive collections and provide reading spaces. They must identify emerging information needs, design relevant products and services, communicate their benefits, mobilize resources, establish partnerships, and evaluate their contributions to institutional and community objectives. Otike and Kiszl (2024) argue that technological advancement, changing information-seeking behaviour, open access, financial pressures, and increasing competition require academic libraries to adopt entrepreneurial practices and develop adaptable service models. Similarly, Eroğlu and Çakmak (2025) maintain that libraries should move beyond passive resource provision and participate more actively in institutional innovation.

Entrepreneurship in library and information services should not be understood exclusively as establishing private businesses or maximizing financial profit. It encompasses creativity, opportunity recognition, calculated risk-taking, innovation, resource mobilization, service improvement, and the capacity to provide sustainable solutions to information problems. Entrepreneurial thinking can be applied within existing libraries through intrapreneurship or outside traditional institutions through independent information enterprises. In both contexts, it enables librarians to move beyond the passive maintenance of established routines towards the active creation of value. Entrepreneurship should also be connected with stakeholder engagement because libraries depend on the participation of users, librarians, researchers, authors, publishers, vendors, technology companies, governments, university authorities, funding agencies, and professional associations (Brundy et al., 2025; Eroğlu & Çakmak, 2025).

This paper offers an integrated opinion on how entrepreneurship and stakeholder engagement can strengthen library and information services. It considers entrepreneurship as a professional orientation that enables libraries and information professionals to respond to changing social, academic, technological, and economic conditions. Librarians and information professionals are selected as the principal stakeholder group because they occupy a strategic position between information creators, information systems, institutions, and users. The discussion covers entrepreneurial capacity, business planning, opportunities in LIS, branding, innovative business models, information-product development, marketing, stakeholder participation, and the contributions of librarians to information creation and utilization.

Entrepreneurship in Library and Information Services

Entrepreneurship may be understood as the process through which individuals and institutions identify or create opportunities, evaluate their viability, mobilize resources, and develop products or services that deliver value. Contemporary entrepreneurship scholarship recognizes that opportunities may be discovered within existing environments or created through the knowledge, experimentation, actions, and relationships of entrepreneurial actors. Entrepreneurship therefore extends beyond establishing a private business to include innovation within existing organizations and the strategic reorganization of available resources to address emerging needs. Schlichte and Junge (2025) explain that entrepreneurial opportunities form part of a broader process

involving discovery or creation, evaluation, decision-making, and exploitation. An opportunity becomes meaningful when it is developed into a practical solution capable of meeting identifiable needs.

Within library and information services, entrepreneurship involves applying professional knowledge, creativity, technology, management, and business principles to unmet information needs. An entrepreneurial librarian studies the information environment, recognizes service gaps, develops appropriate products, attracts partners, mobilizes resources, promotes services, and evaluates outcomes. Such a professional does not merely preserve established procedures but continually considers how information services can be made more accessible, efficient, relevant, visible, and sustainable. This orientation is necessary because libraries no longer possess a monopoly over information access. Users can turn to search engines, commercial databases, social media, artificial intelligence applications, and other online sources. Entrepreneurial librarianship enables libraries to distinguish themselves through credible information, professional organization, personalised support, ethical guidance, digital preservation, and user-centred services (Otike & Kiszl, 2024; Association of College and Research Libraries Research Planning and Review Committee, 2024).

Entrepreneurial librarianship can take place within established libraries or through independent information enterprises. A librarian who develops a research-data service, institutional repository, virtual reference platform, entrepreneurship information centre, artificial intelligence literacy programme, digital archive, or specialised research-support service functions as an intrapreneur. The librarian introduces innovation within an existing institution rather than forming a separate business. Entrepreneurship may also occur outside conventional libraries through information consultancy, records management, publishing support, metadata creation, indexing, database development, information brokerage, digital curation, and professional training. Both approaches require the ability to recognize information problems, design suitable responses, communicate value, manage resources, and sustain the resulting services (Mohammed et al., 2022; Friday & Sawyer-George, 2023).

This broader understanding is especially important in contexts where LIS graduates face limited conventional employment opportunities. Mohammed et al. (2022) identify information brokerage, database design, information-systems consultancy, web development, blogging, digital-content production, and other technology-supported activities as viable entrepreneurial opportunities for LIS professionals. Friday and Sawyer-George (2023) also found that librarians in public university libraries in South-South Nigeria engage in information brokerage, reprographic services, research assistance, internet services, and book vending. Such ventures can promote self-employment, create additional jobs, expand professional visibility, and contribute to socioeconomic development. However, successful participation requires more than a qualification in librarianship; it demands business competence, digital skills, confidence, capital, infrastructure, market awareness, and the ability to attract and retain clients.

Entrepreneurship must nevertheless remain consistent with the ethical foundations of librarianship. The pursuit of financial sustainability should not undermine intellectual freedom, equitable access, privacy, confidentiality, professional integrity, or the social responsibilities of libraries. Not every service should be commercialized, and users should not be denied access to essential information merely because they cannot pay. Libraries may provide core services without charge while recovering the additional costs associated with specialised consultancy, advanced digitization, document delivery, printing, or professional training. The objective should be to create and sustain value rather than convert every interaction into a commercial

transaction. Entrepreneurial library practice must therefore balance innovation and financial responsibility with the educational and public-interest mission of librarianship (IFLA, 2023; UNESCO, 2021a).

Entrepreneurial Capacity and Business Planning

Entrepreneurial capacity comprises the knowledge, attitudes, and practical abilities required to recognize opportunities and transform them into sustainable services. These abilities include creativity, digital competence, communication, financial literacy, negotiation, networking, leadership, marketing, resilience, ethical judgement, and calculated risk management. An LIS professional may possess strong cataloguing, research, or information-retrieval skills but still struggle to establish a successful service if unable to identify clients, estimate costs, communicate benefits, manage relationships, or adapt to changing conditions. Mohammed et al. (2022) observe that limited skills, inadequate capital, weak infrastructure, fear of competition, and poor patronage can prevent LIS professionals from participating effectively in infopreneurship.

Friday and Sawyer-George (2023) similarly found that inadequate finance, limited business infrastructure, insufficient technical competence, and competition from nonprofessional information providers restrict librarians' participation in information enterprises. These findings indicate that entrepreneurial capacity cannot be developed through theoretical instruction alone. LIS education must provide opportunities for students to identify real information problems, design products, conduct market assessments, prepare budgets, and interact with practising entrepreneurs. Professional associations and libraries should also provide mentoring, business-development workshops, incubation support, and continuing professional education. Such initiatives can strengthen the confidence and competence required to transform professional LIS knowledge into viable information services.

Opportunity recognition is particularly important because entrepreneurship begins with identifying an unresolved problem or emerging demand. Opportunities in LIS may arise from poorly managed organizational records, limited research visibility, inadequate digital literacy, inaccessible local publications, weak research-data practices, or insufficient business-information services. Schlichte and Junge (2025) emphasize that entrepreneurial opportunities may be discovered within existing environments or created through experimentation and interaction. A librarian might recognize that postgraduate students struggle with systematic literature searching and develop a research-support consultancy. Another may observe that small businesses cannot manage their digital records and establish a records-management service. The value of the opportunity depends on whether the proposed solution is useful, feasible, ethically sound, and sustainable.

Innovation is another central component of entrepreneurial capacity. It may involve developing an entirely new service or improving an existing process to make it more efficient, accessible, or relevant. In libraries, innovation can include replacing manual procedures with automated systems, introducing virtual reference, developing digital repositories, supporting open science, creating makerspaces, or delivering information-literacy instruction through online platforms. Eroğlu and Çakmak (2025) found that academic libraries contribute to innovation mainly through resource provision and professional guidance, although financial constraints, limited staffing, and inadequate technological infrastructure restrict their participation in wider innovation activities. Otike and Kiszl (2024) similarly argue that entrepreneurial transformation requires libraries to become adaptable, opportunity-oriented, and responsive to their changing environments.

Business planning translates an entrepreneurial idea into a coherent and workable service. A business plan should explain the problem, target users, value

proposition, required resources, operating procedures, marketing strategy, risks, financial expectations, and measures of success. A business proposal is usually narrower and is prepared to obtain approval, funding, partnership, or a contract for a particular project. A library may prepare a business plan for a fee-based information consultancy but submit a proposal to secure support for a digital archive, institutional repository, entrepreneurship centre, or community information programme. Both documents should be evidence-based, realistic, persuasive, and aligned with professional standards.

A sound business plan should begin with evidence that a particular information problem exists. The target users should be identified, while their needs, behaviour, existing alternatives, and willingness to use or support the proposed service should be assessed. The value proposition should clearly explain how the service will help users and what distinguishes it from available alternatives. Operational planning should identify personnel, technologies, workflows, facilities, quality standards, partners, and responsibilities. Financial planning should estimate start-up costs, recurring expenditure, possible revenue, funding sources, pricing, and long-term sustainability. Risk assessment should also consider weak demand, technological failure, copyright disputes, data breaches, unreliable vendors, and inadequate staff competence (Schlichte & Junge, 2025; Otike & Kiszl, 2024).

Legal and ethical requirements must form part of business planning, especially when services involve personal information, digitization, publishing, institutional records, or intellectual property. Information businesses operating in Nigeria must process personal data lawfully and securely in accordance with the Nigeria Data Protection Act 2023 (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2023). They must also respect the rights of authors and other creators when reproducing, digitizing, licensing, or distributing protected works in accordance with the Copyright Act 2022 (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2022). A successful information business should therefore be assessed not only by the income it generates but also by the accuracy, confidentiality, legality, security, and professional quality of its services.

Entrepreneurial Opportunities in Library and Information Science

The expansion of the information economy has created numerous opportunities for LIS professionals beyond conventional employment in academic, public, school, and special libraries. Information consultancy is one major area in which professionals can conduct literature searches, verify facts, compile industry profiles, develop bibliographies, organize evidence, and prepare information packages for researchers, businesses, government agencies, and nonprofit organizations. The value of such services lies not simply in locating large quantities of information because considerable information is freely available online. Their value lies in selecting reliable sources, evaluating credibility, organizing findings, interpreting relevance, protecting confidentiality, and delivering information in a form that supports decisions (Brundy et al., 2025; Mohammed et al., 2022).

Records and archives management represent another important entrepreneurial opportunity. Many schools, businesses, healthcare institutions, religious organizations, public offices, and nongovernmental organizations create large volumes of physical and electronic records without effective systems for classification, retention, retrieval, security, and disposal. LIS professionals can conduct records audits, design filing systems, develop retention schedules, digitize documents, organize archives, and establish electronic records-management procedures. Related opportunities exist in knowledge management, digital preservation, content management, and institutional-memory projects. These services are increasingly relevant as organizations recognize that poorly managed information can produce inefficiency, regulatory problems, security

risks, and loss of institutional knowledge (Mohammed et al., 2022; Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2023).

Other entrepreneurial opportunities include indexing and abstracting, cataloguing services, metadata creation, proofreading, digital publishing, reference-management training, research-data organization, website content architecture, digital curation, and database development. LIS professionals may also establish private libraries, reading centres, book-distribution businesses, mobile libraries, and educational-resource services. Mohammed et al. (2022) maintain that digital technologies have widened the scope of infopreneurship and allow information professionals to engage in information brokerage, database design, online content production, and consultancy without depending entirely on government employment. Friday and Sawyer-George (2023), however, found that advanced activities such as information consultancy, publishing, abstracting, indexing, records management, cataloguing, and library automation were not yet widely practised by the librarians studied.

Training and business-information services provide additional possibilities. Students, researchers, employees, entrepreneurs, and community members increasingly require instruction in digital literacy, database searching, referencing, research visibility, artificial intelligence, cybersecurity awareness, and misinformation detection. Libraries can also support external entrepreneurs by providing market information, business directories, funding opportunities, government regulations, patent information, and competitive intelligence. Brundy et al. (2025) emphasize that librarians can assist entrepreneurs by helping them organize and synthesize secondary information for business planning and decision-making. Such support positions libraries as contributors to enterprise development rather than institutions concerned only with academic reading.

Open science and research-data services also create new professional opportunities. Libraries can establish institutional repositories, advise researchers on data-management plans, support metadata creation, facilitate access to open publications, and promote responsible research sharing. UNESCO (2021b) maintains that open science can improve the accessibility, transparency, quality, and societal value of scientific knowledge. IFLA (2022) similarly emphasizes the important role of libraries in supporting open-access infrastructure and research-data services. LIS professionals who develop competence in data stewardship, open licensing, repository management, and digital preservation can consequently provide valuable services within universities, research institutes, funding organizations, and independent consultancies.

Entrepreneurial opportunities should be selected according to genuine needs, professional competence, ethical requirements, available resources, and market conditions. Entering a field simply because it appears profitable can produce unsustainable services and poor professional outcomes. LIS entrepreneurs should conduct needs assessments, acquire the required skills, begin with manageable projects, evaluate client satisfaction, and develop reputations through reliable service. Collaboration may be necessary where a project requires expertise beyond librarianship. Information professionals can work with specialists in technology, law, finance, publishing, communication, and subject disciplines to provide comprehensive services while maintaining professional standards (Eroğlu & Çakmak, 2025; Otike & Kiszl, 2024).

Branding and Rebranding Library and Information Services

A library's brand represents the identity, values, reputation, and expectations associated with its resources and services. Branding extends beyond logos, colours, slogans, and social-media pages to include collection quality, staff behaviour, accessibility, communication, digital platforms, service reliability, and users'

overall experience. Every interaction between users and the library contributes to its brand. A library that presents itself as innovative but operates unreliable digital platforms, offers outdated resources, or provides unresponsive services creates a contradiction between its promotional claims and users' actual experiences. Branding must therefore communicate a service identity that is supported by consistent professional practice (Isiaka et al., 2026; Otike & Kiszl, 2024).

Rebranding becomes necessary when the public image of the library no longer reflects its contemporary functions or strategic direction. Many users still perceive libraries primarily as quiet buildings where books are stored, read, and borrowed. This image does not adequately represent contemporary involvement in digital scholarship, open access, research-data management, artificial intelligence literacy, entrepreneurship support, digital preservation, and scholarly communication. Otike and Kiszl (2024) argue that academic libraries must transform and redefine their relevance because technological change and competition have weakened their traditional position as dominant information providers. Rebranding can help communicate the library's expanded role as a partner in learning, research, innovation, entrepreneurship, and knowledge creation.

Rebranding should be supported by substantive improvement rather than cosmetic change. A new logo cannot correct outdated collections, poor staff attitudes, inaccessible platforms, or unreliable services. Libraries should first clarify the problems they solve, the users they serve, their distinctive strengths, and the experience they intend to provide. This value should then be communicated consistently through websites, social media, orientation programmes, workshops, exhibitions, institutional reports, newsletters, and engagement with academic departments. Branding becomes credible when stakeholders encounter a clear connection between what the library promises and what it delivers. Isiaka et al. (2026) argue that effective digital marketing can position academic libraries as visible, proactive, and reliable strategic partners within their institutions.

Innovative Business Models for Libraries

A business model explains how an organization creates, delivers, and sustains value. Although most academic and public libraries operate as nonprofit institutions, they still require viable models for identifying users, defining value, securing resources, building partnerships, controlling costs, and sustaining services. Entrepreneurial library management encourages institutions to consider who benefits from a service, what resources are required, how access will be provided, how costs will be covered, and how outcomes will be demonstrated. Otike and Kiszl (2024) maintain that entrepreneurial academic libraries need adaptable models that enable them to respond to technological disruption, competition, financial pressure, and changing user expectations.

Institutional or government funding remains essential because it enables libraries to provide core services without directly charging users. Its major weakness is that dependence on a single funding source can make the library vulnerable to budget reductions and administrative changes. Libraries can supplement regular allocations through grants, donations, alumni support, partnerships, consultancy, subscriptions, and reasonable cost-recovery services. Cost recovery may be applied to specialised activities such as advanced digitization, printing, document delivery, customised research, professional training, and data processing. Charges should remain transparent and reasonable, while essential services should remain accessible to users regardless of their financial circumstances.

Partnership and collaborative models also offer considerable value. Libraries may work with publishers, vendors, technology companies, businesses, foundations, professional associations, government agencies, and other libraries to develop services that would be difficult to provide independently. Partnerships can support

consortium purchasing, digitization, staff development, entrepreneurship programmes, research-data services, and technological infrastructure. Eroğlu and Çakmak (2025) argue that academic libraries can strengthen their contributions to innovation by collaborating with university research units and participating in patent and innovation-related activities. However, partnerships should include clear responsibilities, cost arrangements, privacy protection, intellectual-property provisions, and continuity plans.

Open-access and collective-funding models provide additional possibilities for scholarly communication. Through these approaches, libraries and institutions share costs to make publications openly accessible. Seale and Waters (2025) identify initiatives such as Direct to Open, Opening the Future, and Path to Open as promising alternatives within the academic e-book environment, although questions of scale and long-term sustainability remain. UNESCO (2021b) also encourages institutions to strengthen open infrastructures and expand access to scientific knowledge. Libraries may therefore require hybrid models combining institutional funding, grants, partnerships, donations, open-access arrangements, and carefully designed cost recovery. The selected model should reflect the library's mission, users' needs, available resources, and responsibility to promote equitable access.

Developing and Marketing Information Products and Services

Information products and services should be developed in response to identified user needs rather than merely because particular technologies are available. Libraries can use surveys, interviews, focus groups, usage statistics, reference enquiries, website analytics, and consultation with departments to identify service gaps. Possible products include bibliographies, subject guides, databases, research alerts, directories, policy briefs, tutorials, digital archives, institutional repositories, and market-intelligence reports. Services may include research consultations, literature searching, data-management support, digitization, citation analysis, current-awareness services, records-management consultancy, and information-literacy training (Association of College and Research Libraries Research Planning and Review Committee, 2024; Brundy et al., 2025).

Development should involve needs assessment, design, prototyping, testing, feedback, revision, implementation, and evaluation. Each product must be accurate, accessible, user-friendly, legally compliant, and sustainable. Copyright, privacy, ownership, security, maintenance, staffing, and financial requirements should be considered before a product is launched. Where artificial intelligence is used, libraries should ensure human oversight, verify outputs, protect confidential information, and assess possible bias. IFLA (2023) recommends that libraries develop strategic responses to artificial intelligence that consider institutional goals, professional values, user needs, staff competence, and the wider implications of emerging technologies. UNESCO (2021a) similarly emphasizes transparency, fairness, safety, accountability, privacy, and human oversight in AI use.

Libraries should establish clear measures for assessing information products and services. Relevant indicators may include frequency of use, user satisfaction, service speed, learning outcomes, research visibility, cost efficiency, accessibility, and contribution to institutional objectives. Products that attract limited use should be reviewed rather than maintained indefinitely simply because substantial resources were invested in them. Entrepreneurial practice requires a willingness to improve, reposition, replace, or discontinue services where evidence demonstrates that they no longer provide sufficient value. Evaluation should therefore be treated as a component of product development rather than an activity conducted only after problems emerge (Otike & Kiszl, 2024; Eroğlu & Çakmak, 2025).

Marketing involves identifying users' needs, designing appropriate services,

communicating their benefits, delivering them conveniently, and sustaining relationships. It should not be reduced to publicity after a service has been developed. Libraries can use websites, social media, newsletters, webinars, orientation programmes, exhibitions, departmental visits, and personalised alerts to reach different user groups. Marketing messages should emphasize benefits rather than internal procedures. An institutional repository can be promoted as a means of improving research visibility and preservation, while research-data services can be presented in relation to organization, security, compliance, and reuse. Isiaka et al. (2026) maintain that digital marketing can position academic libraries as visible and reliable partners in achieving institutional objectives.

Relationship marketing is especially important because library use depends considerably on trust and repeated interaction. Staff behaviour, response time, service reliability, accessibility, and follow-up influence whether users return or recommend the library to others. Promotional messages cannot compensate for poor service because users compare communication claims with their actual experiences. Libraries should also segment their audiences because undergraduates, postgraduate students, lecturers, researchers, entrepreneurs, administrators, and members of the public possess different information needs. Effective marketing combines needs assessment, user-centred design, targeted communication, service quality, and continuous engagement (Isiaka et al., 2026; Friday & Sawyer-George, 2023).

Stakeholder Engagement in the Information Industry

The information industry includes individuals and organizations involved in creating, organizing, storing, preserving, distributing, regulating, and using information. Its stakeholders include authors, researchers, librarians, publishers, booksellers, database providers, archives, technology companies, government agencies, universities, professional associations, funding bodies, and users. Each stakeholder contributes to a stage of the information lifecycle. Authors and researchers create intellectual content; publishers validate and distribute it; technology companies provide systems and platforms; governments establish regulations; libraries organize and preserve resources; while users transform information into knowledge, decisions, innovation, and further research (UNESCO, 2021b; Eroğlu & Çakmak, 2025).

Stakeholder engagement involves identifying relevant parties, understanding their interests, involving them in decisions, and developing mutually beneficial relationships. Libraries should engage stakeholders during needs assessment, planning, product development, implementation, evaluation, and service review. Consultation undertaken only after decisions have been finalized cannot be considered meaningful engagement. Early participation allows users to explain their needs, enables librarians to identify access and preservation implications, helps technology providers clarify capabilities, and permits institutional authorities to understand financial and operational requirements. Stakeholder engagement can therefore reduce the risk of investing in services that are technically impressive but poorly aligned with users' needs.

Effective stakeholder relationships can support consortium purchasing, resource sharing, digitization, staff development, research services, entrepreneurship programmes, and community information initiatives. Academic libraries can work with research offices to support data management and research visibility, collaborate with business-development centres to provide entrepreneurial information, and partner with technology units to develop digital services. Eroğlu and Çakmak (2025) argue that stronger collaboration can position academic libraries as active participants in university innovation ecosystems. Brundy et al. (2025) also demonstrate how librarians' research expertise can support entrepreneurs and business-development programmes.

Commercial partnerships should nevertheless be carefully managed because they may create risks relating to cost escalation, vendor dependence, privacy, data ownership, intellectual property, and continuity of access. Libraries must assess whether collaborations protect users' interests and remain consistent with institutional objectives and professional ethics. Agreements should clearly state responsibilities, costs, ownership, privacy requirements, service standards, and termination procedures. Stakeholder engagement should strengthen library services without compromising confidentiality, equitable access, professional independence, or long-term sustainability (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2023; IFLA, 2023).

Librarians as Stakeholders in the Information Industry

Librarians and information professionals are central stakeholders because they connect information creators, systems, institutions, and users. Their responsibilities include identifying information needs, selecting resources, creating metadata, organizing collections, facilitating retrieval, preserving knowledge, teaching information skills, and supporting research. Through these activities, librarians influence what information is acquired, how it is described, whether it can be discovered, how long it remains accessible, and the conditions under which it can be used. Their role is consequently intellectual, technical, educational, managerial, and ethical rather than merely custodial (Association of College and Research Libraries Research Planning and Review Committee, 2024; Otike & Kiszl, 2024).

Contemporary librarians are increasingly involved in digital repositories, research-data management, scholarly communication, copyright guidance, artificial intelligence literacy, open access, publishing support, entrepreneurship, bibliometrics, and research-impact assessment. The Association of College and Research Libraries Research Planning and Review Committee (2024) identifies artificial intelligence, open science, data services, and changing learning environments among the developments expanding academic-library responsibilities. These roles require librarians to develop competencies in technology, teaching, research, communication, project management, and stakeholder engagement while retaining their established expertise in organization, preservation, access, and professional ethics (IFLA, 2022, 2023).

Librarians contribute to information creation by producing catalogues, bibliographies, indexes, abstracts, metadata, subject guides, databases, tutorials, digital collections, research reports, and institutional repositories. These products add structure, context, and discoverability to information that might otherwise remain scattered or inaccessible. Librarians also contribute to new knowledge through research, publication, professional presentations, data curation, and collaboration with scholars. Their participation therefore extends beyond managing information created by others to producing intellectual resources that support education, research, policymaking, entrepreneurship, and professional practice (UNESCO, 2021b; Eroğlu & Çakmak, 2025).

Their contribution to information utilization is equally significant. Access alone does not guarantee meaningful use because individuals must identify relevant sources, evaluate credibility, interpret evidence, and apply information ethically. Librarians facilitate these processes through reference services, information-literacy programmes, current-awareness services, research consultations, and digital tools. They help students use evidence in academic work, assist researchers in identifying literature, support entrepreneurs seeking market information, and enable decision-makers to locate reliable evidence. Brundy et al. (2025) demonstrate that librarians can strengthen entrepreneurship by helping users organize and synthesize secondary information for business planning and decisions.

The extent to which librarians perform these roles differs across institutions. Some information professionals actively develop

digital resources, data services, publishing programmes, and entrepreneurial initiatives, while others remain concentrated on routine circulation and collection maintenance. Their participation is influenced by funding, infrastructure, workload, leadership, professional development, and institutional recognition. Eroğlu and Çakmak (2025) found that limited funding, inadequate technological infrastructure, and insufficient staffing can restrict libraries' involvement in innovation. Friday and Sawyer-George (2023) similarly identified limited finance, inadequate infrastructure, technical deficiencies, and competition from nonprofessionals as obstacles to librarians' infopreneurial activities.

For librarians to function effectively as stakeholders, they should be involved in institutional decisions concerning teaching, research, technology, scholarly communication, and information governance. Their participation should begin during planning rather than after major systems and services have been selected. Early involvement allows their professional knowledge of users, metadata, access, licensing, preservation, privacy, and long-term sustainability to inform institutional decisions. Librarians must also strengthen their advocacy and communication skills so that their contributions are understood by university administrators, researchers, funders, technology providers, and members of the public (Otike & Kiszl, 2024; Eroğlu & Çakmak, 2025).

Implications for LIS Education and Practice

LIS education should treat entrepreneurship as a practical competence rather than a purely theoretical subject. Students should identify genuine information problems, conduct needs assessments, design products, prepare business plans, develop budgets, create prototypes, and present proposals. These activities can strengthen creativity, confidence, financial awareness, communication, opportunity recognition, and problem-solving. Mohammed et al. (2022) recommend that LIS curricula deliberately develop infopreneurial awareness and equip graduates to explore employment and enterprise opportunities within the information industry. Friday and Sawyer-George (2023) also demonstrate the need to strengthen technical and business competencies among practising librarians.

Curricula should integrate entrepreneurship with digital technologies, artificial intelligence, marketing, project management, research-data services, cybersecurity, publishing, and intellectual-property awareness. Entrepreneurship should not displace professional ethics; students must learn how to develop sustainable services while protecting privacy, confidentiality, intellectual freedom, equitable access, and research integrity. Universities can support this approach through internships, incubation programmes, supervised consultancies, mentorship, interdisciplinary collaboration, and competitive innovation projects that enable students to apply professional knowledge to real information problems (IFLA, 2023; UNESCO, 2021a).

Libraries should encourage intrapreneurship by allowing employees to propose, test, evaluate, and improve new services. Small pilot projects can reduce financial risk and provide evidence before an innovation is implemented on a larger scale. Management should recognize that responsible experimentation may sometimes produce unsuccessful outcomes. An organizational culture that punishes every unsuccessful attempt discourages creativity and encourages employees to preserve outdated routines. Otike and Kiszl (2024) emphasize that entrepreneurial transformation requires flexible leadership, staff development, service innovation, and openness to change.

Professional associations should support information entrepreneurs through mentoring, workshops, networking opportunities, professional standards, and directories of consultants. Universities, libraries, funding bodies, publishers, technology companies, and government agencies should develop partnerships that

promote innovation while protecting professional independence and users' interests. Continuing professional development is necessary because entrepreneurial opportunities and information technologies change rapidly. LIS professionals who fail to update their competencies may find it difficult to participate meaningfully in new information markets and institutional innovation programmes (Association of College and Research Libraries Research Planning and Review Committee, 2024; Eroğlu & Çakmak, 2025).

Conclusion

Entrepreneurship provides libraries and LIS professionals with a framework for recognizing opportunities, mobilizing resources, managing uncertainty, and developing products and services that create value. Its relevance extends beyond private enterprise and profit-making to include institutional innovation, problem-solving, strategic communication, partnership development, and sustainable service delivery. Entrepreneurial activity must nevertheless remain guided by privacy, intellectual freedom, equitable access, professional integrity, and the wider social responsibilities of libraries.

Stakeholder engagement connects libraries with the individuals and organizations that create, supply, organize, fund, regulate, and use information. Librarians are particularly important stakeholders because they mediate between information creation and utilization. Their contributions include organizing knowledge, developing information products, supporting research, preserving intellectual outputs, teaching information skills, and facilitating informed decisions. Their early involvement in institutional planning is essential to developing services that are useful, ethical, accessible, and sustainable.

Integrating entrepreneurship with meaningful stakeholder engagement can reposition libraries as active partners in education, research, innovation, enterprise development, and socioeconomic transformation. Achieving this repositioning requires entrepreneurial LIS education, continuing professional development, supportive leadership, ethical business practices, strategic partnerships, effective marketing, and evidence-based service design. Libraries will remain relevant not simply because they possess information but because they continually demonstrate their capacity to transform information into accessible, trustworthy, and socially valuable knowledge.

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