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Librarian Innovation in Developing Digital Services at the UPA Library of the University of Bengkulu

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ABSTRACT

The transition of university libraries from conventional services to digital services requires innovation to meet the needs of the digital generation of students. This study aims to analyze the forms of innovation employed by librarians in developing digital services at the UPA Library of Bengkulu University and to identify the barriers encountered in this innovation process. The novelty of this study lies in its focus on the role of librarians as the primary agents of innovation in the development of digital services and the readiness to implement Artificial Intelligence (AI) in university libraries. The research framework encompasses librarian innovation, technology utilization, and information management. This study employs a descriptive qualitative method. The results of the study indicate that librarian innovation is realized through the implementation of SLiMS 9 Bulian as a service automation system that supports collection management. The development of an institutional repository, e-book services, and e-clippings has expanded students' access to learning information sources. Self-service membership features and the development of the library website have improved ease of access. Meanwhile, the QR Tree and Visitor QR innovations offer more interactive and modern services, reinforced through active promotion via the website and social media. Innovations at the Bengkulu University Library have proven capable of improving service efficiency, expanding access to information, and encouraging user independence in utilizing library information resources. However, the development of digital services still faces various obstacles, such as budget constraints, suboptimal technological infrastructure, unstable internet connectivity, and librarians' technological competencies. These findings indicate that although the library has begun planning the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI), its implementation has not yet been optimal.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The evolution of libraries from traditional models to digital libraries reflects a transformation that extends not only to information service systems but also to patterns of social interaction and the learning behaviors of library users within the higher education environment. University libraries no longer function merely as providers of print collections; instead, they have evolved into learning resource centers that support student learning, research, and the enhancement of information literacy. In this context, digital library services play a crucial role in expanding access to information, enhancing digital literacy, and fostering academic self-directed learning. Therefore, university libraries are required to provide services that are fast, accurate, easily accessible, and adaptable to technological advancements. This transformation is inseparable from the role of librarians as key actors in designing and implementing library service innovations. Librarians are required to possess the ability to adapt to technological advancements so they can create services that meet the needs of the digital generation of library users.

At the UPA Library of Bengkulu University, there are 11 librarians with educational backgrounds ranging from associate's (D3), bachelor's (S1), and master's (S2) degrees, who serve as vital resources in the development of technology based services. Librarians not only act as collection managers but also as innovators driving the transformation of library services. Librarian innovation is a key factor in adapting to digital services (Paul et al., 2024). Additionally, innovation in managing digital services is necessary to expand access to information and enhance service efficiency (Ahnaffaiz & Utami, 2024). Various innovations have been developed at the UPA Library of Bengkulu University. These innovations include the development of an E-Prints-based repository as a means of storing and disseminating academic works by the university community, the utilization of the OPAC (Online Public Access Catalog) via SLiMS 9 Bulian. SLiMS 9 Bulian is a development version of the Senayan Library Management System (SLiMS), an open-source library automation application used to assist integrated library management for collection search, circulation services, and the development of a library website with various service features. These features include book suggestions, service promotions, self-service member registration and membership card renewal, e-clipping services, and access to library profile information and digital services.

Additionally, librarians have developed the QR Code Tree innovation, which enables user to access digital services quickly and conveniently. Nevertheless, the development of digital services still faces several obstacles, such as budget constraints, inadequate computer facilities, and an unstable internet connection. These conditions indicate that library innovation depends not only on the creativity of librarians but also on institutional support and technological infrastructure. In the context of library innovation plays a crucial role in enhancing service efficiency and expanding access to information through digital systems (Daratista et al., 2024). Library innovation can be realized through service development in accordance with the adjustment of service models that are more oriented towards the needs of library users (Winastwan et al., 2024). Innovation can also be realized through adapting service models that are more oriented toward user needs. The success of service innovations heavily depends on librarians' capacity as agents of change. Librarian innovation reflects the ability to create and implement new ideas through the use of technology and adaptive service strategies (Wulandari & Tupan, 2022).

This aligns with Regulation of the National Library of the Republic of Indonesia No. 2 of on the Indonesian National (2021). Qualifications Framework for the Library Sector, which emphasizes the

importance of information technology competencies, service management, effective communication, and creativity for professional librarians. Thus, librarians are no longer merely positioned as information managers but also as innovators capable of adapting library services to changes in the environment A number of previous studies have highlighted the importance of librarians innovation in the development of library services. (Hermawan et al., 2025) state that librarians ability to develop and promote digital services has a positive impact on enhancing user information-searching skills. (Ginanjar et al., 2025) highlight librarians' managerial innovations that contribute to the efficient utilization of resources to support institutional accreditation. Meanwhile, **(**Budyman et al., 2024) emphasize the role of librarians as information literacy educators, particularly in reference services.

However, previous studies still leave several research gaps. First, most studies focus more on the impact of innovation on service quality or user satisfaction. Second, prior research tends to discuss service innovation in general without linking it to digital services and librarians' readiness to face developments in Artificial Intelligence (AI). Third, this study aims to analyze the forms of librarian innovation in the development of digital services, identify the barriers faced, and examine librarians' perspectives and readiness regarding Artificial Intelligence (AI). This study employs the framework proposed by (Novitasari & Handayani, 2022) which encompasses three main components: librarian innovation, technology utilization, and information management. This framework is used to analyze the forms of librarian innovation, barriers to digital service development, and librarians' readiness to address service transformation driven by Artificial Intelligence (AI) at the UPA Library of Bengkulu University.

2. METHODE

The research method used was a descriptive qualitative research design to examine librarian innovation in developing digital services at the UPA Library of Bengkulu University. According to (Creswell, 2019). Qualitative research aims to explore and understand the meaning of social phenomena through an in-depth and contextual approach. this approach allows researchers to explore in detail the forms iinovation digital, as well as the perspectives and readiness of librarians regarding the utilization of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in library services. A descriptive approach is used because this study seeks to describe phenomena systematically, factually, and accurately in accordance with field conditions. This approach allows researchers to explore in detail the forms, as well as the perspectives and readiness of librarians regarding the utilization of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in library services. The research subjects consisted of informants who were directly involved in the development of digital services and who experienced the impact of these services. The sampling technique used purposive sampling, which involves the deliberate selection of informants based on specific criteria relevant to the research objectives. These criteria include: (1) holding a position or role in managing digital services, (2) understanding the operational processes of library services, (3) being involved in innovation or the development of digital systems, and (4) being willing to provide information openly. Based on these criteria, the study included 6 informants, consisting of 4 library service coordinators and 2 library user. Data collection was conducted using three primary techniques: observation, interviews, and documentation.

Observations were conducted directly on digital service activities, the use of library information systems, and interactions between librarians and user in utilizing online services, with field notes used to ensure the data collected was systematic. Interviews were conducted to obtain in-depth information regarding the forms and barriers to innovation faced by librarians, and were supplemented with documentation to collect supporting data such as screenshots of digital services implemented by

librarians at the UPA Library of Bengkulu University and other relevant documentation. The data were analyzed using the (Miles & Huberman, 1992) interactive analysis model which includes data reduction, data presentation, and continuous drawing of conclusions. The data reduction phase involved selecting, focusing, and simplifying the raw data by transcribing the interview results using the God.Tape application, followed by a coding process to group the data into themes such as service innovation, barriers, and planning for Artificial Intelligence (AI) readiness.

The data presentation stage was conducted in the form of descriptive narratives, thematic matrices, and direct quotes from informants to facilitate interpretation. In the final stage, conclusions were drawn by identifying patterns of relationships between themes and the meanings emerging from the research data. Data validity testing is the process of ensuring that the data obtained in the research is truly valid, accurate, and reliable as a representation of the reality being studied (Husnullai et.al, 2024). Data validity testing was conducted more specifically through several strategies. First, source triangulation, which involves comparing information from the six informants who hold different positions. Second, technical triangulation, which involves matching interview results with observations and documentation. Third, member checking, which involves reconfirming the summary of interview results with the informants to prevent misinterpretation. Through these steps, data validity is not merely general but is tested through systematic and accountable procedures.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the results and findings of a study on librarians' innovations in developing digital services, planning the implementation of Artificial Intelligence (AI)-based technologies, and the various challenges librarians face in their implementation. These findings were obtained through in-depth interviews with librarians and library users, observations of available digital services, and a review of supporting research documents. This analysis is structured descriptively and analytically based on the research problem formulation and examined using a research framework. The presentation of these results aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the forms of librarian innovation, the readiness and planning for the development of AI-based services, as well as the obstacles faced in the development of digital services at the UPA Library of Bengkulu University.

3.1 Forms of Librarian Innovation

The Bengkulu University Library (UPA) plays a strategic role in supporting academic activities, particularly through the provision of information services and the implementation of technology in the library system. UPA has 11 librarians with diverse educational backgrounds, ranging from diplomas to master's degrees. The presence of competent librarians is a key factor in driving the advancement of services and the development of digital-based innovations. Librarians are expected not only to master the technical aspects of library management but also to possess skills in managing digital information systems, meeting users' information needs, and developing services oriented toward the needs of library patrons. In addition to carrying out their primary duties in circulation management and collection processing, librarians also play an active role in managing electronic information, managing institutional repositories, and developing library services through digital platforms.

The synergy between these competencies fosters the creation of a more adaptive collaboration model enabling libraries to continue transforming and remain relevant amid the rapid developments of the digital age. This aligns with the vision of the UPA Bengkulu University Library of to become an information service provider capable of making a tangible contribution to the advancement of knowledge within the academic community. Strengthening human resources in the field of librarianship is not merely an operational necessity, but an integral part of a long-term strategy to

realize an outstanding and competitive university library. Diversity in educational backgrounds is essential in supporting the implementation and development of innovation.

Table 1. Librarian at the Bengkulu University Library

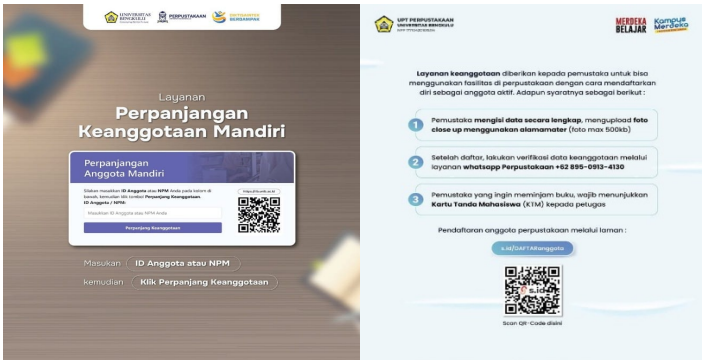
Name	Position
Librarian 1	Senior Librarian
Librarian 2	Senior Librarian
Librarian 3	Senior Librarian
Librarian 4	Senior Librarian
Librarian 5	Senior Librarian
Librarian 6	Young Librarian
Librarian 7	Young Librarian
Librarian 8	Young Librarian
Librarian 9	Skilled Librarian
Librarian 10	First Expert Librarian
Librarian 11	First Expert Librarian

Source : Research Documentation (2026)

Librarians with varying educational levels possess varying experiences, perspectives, and expertise. This allows librarians to complement each other by collaborating in service management, digital service development, and responding to the evolving needs of users. This finding strengthens the view (Shaleha et al., 2023) which emphasizes that the quality of digital library services is greatly influenced by the role of librarians in designing service system interfaces that focus on ease of use, efficiency, and user satisfaction based on the principles of usability and user experience.With this combination, the library can become a place that is free to be creative and ready to adapt to changes in the digital era. Furthermore, librarian innovation in developing digital services at the UPA Library of the University of Bengkulu is not only limited to the application of technology, but also reflects changes in service patterns and social interactions between librarians and users.

This innovation developed gradually and was adapted to the needs of library users and the conditions within the library (Cahyono, 2024). Utilization of service automation using SliMS 9 Bulian. As a service automation system, it is the main foundation for digital service transformation. This system is used for transactional activities in circulation services, but also serves as a central integration center for various library services. Through this system, librarians can centrally process collection data, member data, and borrowing and return activities (Setiawan et al., 2022). The findings of this study indicate that this data integration helps librarians in monitoring service activities and minimizing errors in recording, which previously often occurred in manual services.

Figure 1. Self-Service Renewal and Membership Services

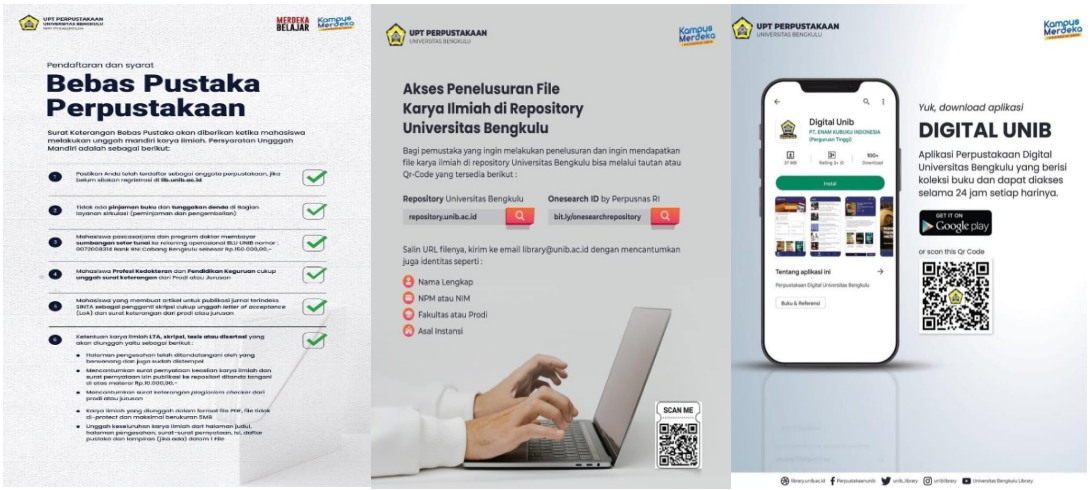


Source : Research Documentation (2026)

Furthermore, the use of the self-registration and self-renewal features for membership cards has significantly improved service efficiency. Users no longer have to manually complete forms or wait for staff to process their registration. Field findings indicate that this feature is widely utilized by new students, as the process is considered faster and more convenient. This also reduces the workload of librarians during certain periods, such as the beginning of the academic semester. This research is in line with research (Ramadani & Rodin, 2025) and strengthened by (Andrianto et al., 2025) which states that the implementation of SLiMS 9 Bulian can increase efficiency in membership and circulation management and simplify the library service process so that access to information is faster and easier for users. From the information management side, the SliMS 9 Bulian display development on the website (https://lib.unib.ac.id/) and (https://library.unib.ac.id/). This demonstrates the librarian's attention to user convenience. The website isn't just a monotonous display of collection browsing, but is also designed to be more communic ative and easier for users to understand. The addition of colour, icons, and collection status markers helps users identify collection information more quickly. These findings demonstrate that librarian innovation is not only oriented toward technological functionality but also toward the user experience.

Innovation in the form of book suggestions and proposal features that can be accessed via the lib.unib.ac.id. This is also an important finding in this study. Through this feature, users can convey their reading needs and interests directly to librarians. Furthermore, this feature is used as a consideration in the development and procurement of library materials collections once a year by librarians so that the collections provided are more relevant to meeting user needs. This feature also strengthens the relationship between librarians and users, allowing them to interact with users to find out what books they need. An e-clipping feature has also been added to the website.library.unib.ac. id, which is a form of digital reference service developed by librarians to collect, manage, and disseminate up-to-date information from various electronic media sources in a structured manner. The implementation of e-clipping provides benefits for the development of library services because it can strengthen the function of librarians as managers and providers of information, not just guardians of collections.

Figure 2. Unib Digital Services and Academic Repository



Source : Research Documentation (2026)

Another prominent form of innovation is the provision of e-books digi.unib, which can be uploaded via the Play Store. This collection can be accessed by users through the Kubuku application

(https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=id.kubuku.kbk38695cb). In addition, librarians also provide collections ranging from 000 to 900 scientific classifications. E-book collections are an important alternative for users who cannot access physical collections in person. According to (Nurhikmah et al., 2023) digital library applications are needed to enhance the learning and teaching process. This means that the existence of these digital collections helps support students' information needs for learning. Furthermore, the digitization of collections through e-books also contributes to reducing the rate of damage to printed collections due to high borrowing intensity. Librarians are also developing institutional repositories by providing independent scientific work upload services, allowing students and lecturers to upload their work through the website lib.unib.ac.id. Next, the academic papers uploaded by students are verified by the administrative services librarian. Once the verification process is complete, the librarian issues a library clearance letter.

The uploaded papers are then processed using Google Sheets and Google Drive as temporary storage before being disseminated via the website. (https://repository.unib.ac.id./). The dissemination process is carried out through collaboration between librarians, where each librarian is responsible for uploading scientific works according to their respective faculties at the University of Bengkulu. This mechanism aims to simplify and expedite the process of uploading scientific works to the library (https://repository.unib.ac.id./)This service is also used by the academic community to upload theses, dissertations, scientific articles, and other academic works. The institutional repository not only facilitates the management of scientific works but also increases the visibility of the University of Bengkulu's research results. This demonstrates that the library is not only responsible for storing, managing, and organizing scientific works (such as these, journals, or digital repositories), but also ensuring that these scientific works can be accessed and utilized by users widely, safely, and sustainably, and can be used as a learning resource for students.

Figure 3. Tree QR and Visitor QR

Source : Research Documentation (2026)

To support easy access to information, librarians have introduced the innovative QR Tree as a means of quickly accessing information. Furthermore, the QR Tree offers benefits as an information medium and promotes innovative, digital-technology-based services. but also encourages librarians' independence in searching for information. By transferring the QR code, users can easily and quickly access various important information. Such as online catalogues, e-book and e-journal collections, and online and independent member registration. The existence of the QR tree also encourages librarian

independence in searching for information, increasing librarian independence in searching for information, and improving librarian digital literacy. Field findings indicate that QR Trees are strategically placed in library areas and contain various links to digital services, e-book collections, repositories, and other service information. This innovation is considered effective because it aligns with the habits of library users who are familiar with using mobile devices.

This aligns with research (Daratista et al., 2024) which emphasizes that the development of library services based on technological innovation is designed to make it easier for library users to access information more smoothly and efficiently without being limited by time and location. In addition to the QR Tree, the implementation of Visitor QR in reference services is an innovation in recording library visits. Research findings indicate that the visit data generated by this system is used as a basis for service evaluation, such as determining visit intensity and reference service needs. This data serves as a crucial source of information for planning future library service development. In order to make it easier for UPA library users, the University of Bengkulu Library can carry out promotion of digital services, which is also part of librarian innovation where librarians promote digital services by actively utilizing (https://lib.unib.ac.id/) to convey information about services and collections digitally. This promotion aims to raise awareness among library users that libraries provide not only conventional services but also digital services that can be accessed flexibly. Instagram has become one of librarians' innovations in promoting digital services because it can convey information quickly, engagingly, and easily understood by users. Through visual content such as images and short captions, librarians can introduce the library's digital services, latest collections, and various activities in a more intimate and interactive way, thereby increasing interest in and utilization of library services.

3.2 AI Planning and Its Obtacles

The UPA Library of Bengkulu University has introduced the Library AI Assistant on the lib.unib.ac.id website as one of its digital service innovations. The Library AI Assistant functions as a virtual library assistant that provides information services and answers questions from users online. However, based on observations, the Library AI Assistant often experiences technical problems (errors). As a result, its function has not been running optimally and has not fully met the information needs of users. In addition to implementing the Library AI Assistant, the library also plans to develop artificial intelligence (AI)-based services to support faster collection searches, especially for users who experience difficulties in searching for information due to not knowing the title or author of a book, as well as to support research activities of lecturers and students, through a system that allows users to ask questions based on topics or information needs so that they can obtain recommendations for relevant collections and references. According to (Bifakhlina, 2024).

AI integration has a significant impact on the role of librarians, but librarians remain an important component in the digital library ecosystem if they are able to adapt and develop competencies according to the demands of the times.Meanwhile, efforts to provide better and more sophisticated AI applications have not been optimally realized due to budget constraints, which are also reinforced by various other obstacles in the development of digital services in the form of infrastructure obstacles such as power outages and internet network instability, limited infrastructure such as inadequate computer facilities, limited human resources in mastering technology, as well as managerial and financial obstacles that limit the development and maintenance of services. Although its implementation has not been optimal due to budget, infrastructure, and human resource limitations, this initial step reflects the determination of the direction of innovative services within the library.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology also has the potential to be implemented in libraries to improve service quality and address user needs. AI can help accelerate information retrieval and provide recommendations for library collections tailored to user interests and needs. However, its implementation requires adequate technological readiness and human resources (Aliwijaya & Suyono, 2023). In this case, theoretically, this research enriches the study of librarianship by presenting an empirical description of the innovation practices of librarians in university libraries and practically, this research provides an overview of the role of librarians as the main actors in the development of digital services, so that it can be a reference for librarians in improving competence, creativity, and readiness to face technology-based service transformation, including the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the university library environment.

4. CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that the UPA librarians of the Bengkulu University Library have developed various digital service innovations based on user needs. These innovations include the use of SLiMS 9 Bulian as an automation system, the development of a library website with self-service features, institutional repository management, the provision of e-book collections, digital e-clipping services, as well as the QR Tree and Visitor QR innovations. These innovations increase service efficiency, expand access to information, and encourage user independence in utilizing library services. The library has also begun to utilize Artificial Intelligence (AI) through the development of the Library AI Assistant. However, its implementation has not been optimal due to technical constraints, budget limitations, inadequate technological infrastructure, and human resource competencies that still need to be improved.

Therefore, librarians play a key role in supporting the development of digital-based library services. Socially, these digital service innovations increase learning independence and strengthen the pattern of digital learning resource utilization by students in higher education environments. Furthermore, these innovations also function as learning resource centres and support the learning process. This study recommends strengthening information technology infrastructure, improving librarian competency through technology and AI training, and providing institutional policy and budget support to ensure the sustainability of digital service innovations in libraries. Furthermore, libraries need to improve the socialization of digital services to optimize their utilization. The limitations of this study are that it was conducted at a single institution and used a qualitative approach with a limited number of informants. Therefore, further research is recommended to be conducted in university libraries and use a mixed methods approach to measure the impact of digital service innovations and the readiness of AI implementation in libraries.

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