Editorial

This year marks the fifth anniversary of the *Reflective Professional* journal, continuing to provide students with a platform to publish their own research in a fully open accessible format, amplifying the reach and relevance of their work to the wider scholarly and practitioner community. Since *Reflective Professional* was launched back in 2021, we have published eighteen student research projects and six short papers focusing on different libraries, countries and methods reflecting a diversity of foci, contexts and approaches to research. For the preparation of the 5th Volume, we are appreciative of Elizabeth Montgomerie for her valuable contribution and commitment to the journal, as Student Editorial Intern. Elizabeth's support has been important in shaping the editorial process and enhancing the quality of this Volume.

This year's research papers, written by MSc Information and Library Studies students at the Robert Gordon University, address a number of areas that align with the university research vision, which centres on generating high-quality, interdisciplinary, and impactful research. Research that addresses global challenges, contributes to societal and economic benefits, fosters collaboration with external stakeholders and conveys a research culture that supports inclusivity and cooperation.

The research projects featured in this Volume, contribute to a number of research focus areas and themes of interest to the University, including '**Living in a Digital World'**, examining the impact of technology and digital transformations, '**Inclusive and Creative Societies'**, addressing social issues such as truth, justice, and public trust within the context of public libraries, '**Health and Wellbeing'**, investigating the lasting impact of COVID-19 and other health issues and '**Pedagogy',** researching effective teaching and learning practices.

The Volume includes six research projects that have both practical and theoretical contributions and are impactful in different ways. In a research project that directly addresses the digital divide and the balance between screen-based and real-world learning, Felix Aitchison explores how outdoor programming in libraries can support digital literacy, bridging the gap between technology and community engagement. This research is highly relevant to how digital transformations affect our lives and learning environments, as part of the theme of 'Living in a Digital World'. In a similar vein, the research conducted by Olivia Burford-Taylor, focuses on digital inclusion, but specifically, for the senior members of the community, evaluating how digital literacy programmes meet their diverse needs. The work addresses the societal impact of digital transformation on an aging population and the importance of accessible digital education.

The theme of 'Inclusive and Creative Societies' is addressed in the research project by Alan Evans. Alan explored political neutrality in public libraries and the intersection with truth, justice, and public trust, critically examining, via staff and user perspectives, the role of institutions in shaping civic discourse. Following an interpretivist, qualitative and contextualized approach, the research places emphasis on reflection, critical thinking, and ethical enquiry.

Two additional research projects, included in this Volume, explore the theme of 'Health and Wellbeing' from different library perspectives and geographical contexts. In a practical research project, Fi Johnston, investigates the mental health benefits of 'zinemaking' for young people in Scotland, exploring how librarians implement creative practices, emphasising emotional wellbeing, community building, and creative expression as tools for mental health support. Engaging library professionals of the Swiss Group of International Schools, Anne Labussiere, explores how they perceive, support, and promote the holistic well-being of their students, highlighting the role of school librarians in supporting students' emotional and social wellbeing, within diverse international school settings. This study showcases the pastoral and emotional support function of libraries, with a focus on mental health, emotional support, and community care.

Aligning more closely with the theme of 'Pedagogy', Janine Murphy, in a research study into library design and signage support for children's navigation and wayfinding within international primary school libraries, focuses on how children interact with library spaces and the ways in which design and signage influence their ability to navigate and learn independently. The research contributes to understanding how physical learning environments support educational outcomes, particularly in early education.

This Volume also includes a short reflective paper on The School of Law and Social Sciences (SLSS) International Research Conference 2025, written by Palika Vithana. Palika is currently undertaking PhD research at Robert Gordon University, on 'A User-Based Study of Mobile Augmented Reality Applications for Academic Library Services' and has also been recently awarded the 'Bronze Denis Law RGUplus Award', as a recognition for her participation in activities that benefit the community through volunteering. The Award "recognises the commitment and social responsibility of people making a positive difference and lasting impact to both themselves and others through volunteering and other activities that add value to communities" https://www.denislawlegacytrust.org/denis-law-rgu-plus-award

The School of Law and Social Sciences (SLSS) International Research Conference 2025, entitled 'Law as a Catalyst for Social Development' took place on 27–28 February 2025 at Robert Gordon University. It was organised and led by doctoral researchers and presented cutting-edge international research papers, demonstrating the role of the law as a tool for driving positive social change and providing innovative solutions to challenges, fostering sustainable development and inclusive societies. It aimed to:

> I. Analyse innovative legal approaches that drive social progress and address emerging societal needs.
>
> II. Facilitate interdisciplinary dialogue on the synergy between law and social development, as well as synergy between research and policy-making.
>
> III. Critically examine the catalytic potential of law in navigating complex global challenges of the 21st century.

The conference facilitated interdisciplinary collaborations, discussions, knowledge sharing, and critical debates, encompassing the five core research areas of the Robert Gordon University: Health and Wellbeing; Environment and Energy Sustainability; Creative & Inclusive society; Living in a Digital World; Pedagogy. It featured two plenary sessions, alongside five symposia and a policy engagement session—a roundtable discussion with policymakers. Symposium 4, focused on 'Digital Communities', with five though-provoking presentations on children's rights and digital freedom, misinformation on social media, the use of "emoticons" in contract formation, data protection and the role of law and virtue ethics in Data Science health research. Palika's article examines these research presentation, revealing the interdisciplinary connections between law and information and library science, making an interesting reflective piece that would be of interest to both professional and researchers.

Other student related work this year has included the well-received, 'New Voices RGU Series': organised by the Students & New Professionals Community of the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP) in Scotland. The theme addressed how Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) is transforming the process of information seeking and use and the emerging role of information professionals. The series of the blog posts can be found via this link: https://www.cilips.org.uk/category/new-voices/ Additionally, a number of student subject bibliographies, exploring generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) within different library contexts and services, were again, published this academic year, via 'OneHE Mindsets: Information, Digital, Media Literacy community of practice', which is accessible via the global network, OneHE (2025).

We hope that readers will find the fifth edition of *Reflective Professional* both interesting and thought-provoking.

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