

## Editorial

This year marks another milestone for *Reflective Professional*, continuing its mission to showcase the diverse research produced by MSc Information and Library Studies students at Robert Gordon University. The journal remains committed to amplifying student scholarship through open access publishing, ensuring that emerging voices contribute meaningfully to contemporary debates within the information professions.

We would like to extend our sincere thanks to this year's Editorial Intern, Denise O'Riordan, for her dedication and professionalism throughout the publication process. Denise was instrumental in ensuring the smooth and timely production of this volume, from manuscript submission to final publication, supporting authors and strengthening the editorial workflow. As part of this volume, Denise has written a short reflective article, offering an overview of her experience of collaborating with the editorial team and her engagement with the technical publishing system of the journal, developing key editorial, teamwork and communication skills.

A commemorative note prepared by Professor Simon Burnett is also included in this volume, reflecting on the professional contributions and the personal qualities of Jacqueline Geekie, who, sadly passed away on Sunday 15th March 2026. It offers an overview of Jacqueline's life and professional legacy, honouring the warmth, dedication and quiet strength she brought to her work and to those around her. Jacqueline will be very fondly remembered by the iSchool team with respect and appreciation.

The research articles featured in this volume reflect the breadth and interdisciplinary nature of the Library and Information Science (LIS) field. Each research project engages with themes that connect strongly with the Robert Gordon University research priorities, including global cultural exchange, inclusive and equitable societies, digital ecosystems and the evolving role of libraries as community anchors. The student research projects demonstrate how information research can illuminate complex social issues, challenge assumptions and inform professional practice.

The first article presented in this volume by Colbe Moe offers 'An Investigation into the Impacts of Globalism on Diversity Representations in Children's Picture Book Literature Across the Western Anglosphere'. It presents a comparative study of children's picture books, interrogating how diversity is depicted within different national publishing landscapes and revealing regional contrasts in the influence of globalism. The findings highlight the cultural significance of children's literature as both a mirror and a mechanism of identity formation, raising important questions about whose stories are told, circulated and valued.

The theme of inclusive and creative societies is further reflected in a study by Iona Bishop titled 'You're alone, but you're not technically alone: Exploring the benefits and barriers to an inclusive library service for autistic users on the Scottish isles'. The research explored the benefits and barriers to an inclusive library service for autistic users through interviews with autistic adults, parents and library staff. This research uncovers both the strengths and limitations of small island libraries as inclusive community spaces and identifies a clear need for structured staff training to ensure that services genuinely meet the diverse needs of neurodivergent users. The work highlights the importance of equitable access and the role of libraries in fostering belonging, particularly in geographically remote communities.

The third paper of the volume addresses learning environments and participatory design. In this work titled 'A Case Study: The Application of the Danish Four-Space Model to the Irish Academic Environment', Nuala Murray used photo elicitation to capture students' perceptions of library spaces. The research highlights the value of user-centred design in creating environments that support inspiration, collaboration, performance and learning. Academic libraries must evolve beyond traditional functions, embracing multidimensional spaces that reflect the lived experiences and expectations of their users.

The final contribution in this volume, 'Two Lives: Creating a Limited Podcast Series in Partnership with the Okanagan Historical Society' by Alix Hawley, highlights the creative potential of practice-based research. The project was produced in partnership with the Okanagan Historical Society (OHS) in British Columbia, Canada. The work reimagines local settler and Indigenous histories through an accessible and community-centred podcast. It involves curating 19th-century narratives, with each episode offering a balanced portrait of two people, one Syilx Okanagan or Métis and one settler, whose paths crossed in some way. The podcast broadened access to local history, centring on outreach, community building and digital engagement. In addition to this excellent contribution, Alix, last year, also received the CILIP Scotland Medal for best student in the PG Diploma stage of the MSc Information and Library Studies course.

Students' research projects are contributing not only to academic discourse but also to practical insights for professionals working across libraries and within diverse community settings. They remind us that information work is inherently interdisciplinary and the topics directly address the evolving challenges and responsibilities of the information profession. Alongside these research contributions,, this year, the RGU iSchool offered several other professional development practical opportunities to students as part of the MSc Information and Library Science course, expanding international collaborations with the Czech National Library of Technology, AZM School in Lebanon and the University of Macedonia Library & Information Centre. The positive feedback received from several UK-based and international external hosts is a testimonial to the mutually enriching nature of these placements, demonstrating clear benefits for both our students and the organisations who supported them. External project hosts indicated that our students "approached the placement with genuine enthusiasm and a clear commitment to producing useful, practical work for an early-stage project with real complexity", "proved to be exceptionally hard-working, diligent, and very enthusiastic about the task" and had "genuine enthusiasm and a clear commitment to producing useful, practical work for an early-stage project with real complexity". Among these reflections, one of our international hosts also shared:

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"This year, I had the wonderful opportunity to mentor MSc Information & Library Studies students from Robert Gordon University (UK). It was a fantastic creative exchange. I shared my vision for gamifying our school's digital reading platform and provided the technical expertise on how it would be used with students. From there, the university students brought their design skills to find innovative ways to implement it."

(Nisrine Shaarani, School Librarian, AZM School).

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The positive feedback received from these organisations highlights the reciprocal value of our partnership and the impact our students can make when given opportunities to apply their skills in real-world contexts. The RGU iSchool team would like to extend a warm thank you to all the external hosts for offering these excellent practical opportunities to our students during the 2025-6 academic session.

Overall, the work presented in this volume reflects not only the academic strengths of our students but also the values that underpin the RGU iSchool: curiosity, inclusivity, collaboration and a commitment to meaningful professional practice. They remind us that the future of the information professions will be shaped by graduates who are not only technically skilled and intellectually rigorous but also empathetic, globally minded and committed to fostering equitable access to information.

We hope that this year's volume inspires readers, sparks new conversations and continues to affirm the essential role of information professionals in an increasingly complex information environment.

**Dr Konstantina Martzoukou**  
**Professor Peter Reid**