Preface

The iConference is a testimony to the resilience, adaptability, and innovation of the information community. As digital infrastructures increasingly shape how we learn, communicate, govern, and remember, the iConference offers a space to explore what it means to be digitally literate and ethically informed. At iConference 2026, the iSchools community has examined the ethical, social, political, and cultural dimensions of information to inspire and explore new areas of research.

The 21st iConference advances critical conversations around, '*Information Literacies, Authenticity and Use: The Move Towards a Digitally Enlightened Society*', a vision for a more inclusive and enlightened digital future. Drawing inspiration from the Scottish Enlightenment, a movement that championed reason, education, inquiry, and civic progress, the theme challenges us to critically reflect on both the promise and limitations of these ideals. As we present these proceedings, we invite readers to immerse themselves in the Enlightenment's commitment to learning and justice while confronting and redressing its embedded inequalities and to consider information systems beyond efficiency and access, towards authenticity, trust, equity, and inclusion.

The virtual iConference 2026 took place from 23–26 March 2026, prior to the physical conference held from 29 March to 2 April 2026 in Edinburgh, Scotland, United Kingdom. The host institution was Edinburgh Napier University.

The conference theme attracted a total of 389 submissions with 185 Full Research Papers, 188 Short Research Papers and 16 Spanish/Portuguese Research Papers.

In a double-blind review process by 360 internationally recognised experts, 124 entries were accepted, including 46 Full Research Papers and 78 Short Research Papers. The acceptance rate was 25% for the Full Research Papers and 42% for the Short Research Papers. Additional submissions were selected for the workshops and panels, the doctoral colloquium, the early career colloquium, the student symposium, posters, and the Chinese language paper sessions.

The Full, Short and Spanish/Portuguese Research Papers are published open access in Information Research. These proceedings are organised into twenty-one categories, reflecting the diversity of the information research areas: '*behavioural research*', '*AI and machine learning*', '*information science and data science*', '*information and digital literacies*', '*cultural heritage, archives and museums*', '*information science education*', '*digital information economy*' '*information governance and ethics*', '*knowledge management*', '*open access and open science*', '*digital humanities*', '*bibliometrics and metadata*', '*disinformation and misinformation*', '*social media and digital networks*', '*libraries and users*', '*health informatics*', '*human-AI collaboration*', '*information retrieval*', '*community informatics*', and '*scholarly communication*'.

We are deeply thankful to the reviewers for their expertise and invaluable contributions to the review process, and to the track chairs for their dedication and expert knowledge. We wish to extend our gratitude to the chairs and volume editors: Full Research Papers chairs **Hanna Carlsson** from Linnaeus University (Sweden), **Yuxiang (Chris) Zhao** from Nanjing University (China), and **Douglas W. Oard** from University of Maryland (United States); Short Research Papers chairs **Jennifer Campbell-Meier** from Victoria University of Wellington (New Zealand), **Heinz Pampel** from Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin (Germany), and **Jessica Barfield** from University of Kentucky (United States); Spanish and Portuguese Research Papers chairs **Julián D. Cortés** from Universidad del Rosario (Colombia), **Fernanda Ribeiro** from University of Porto (Portugal), **Eduardo Vendrell Vidal** from Universitat Politècnica de València, UPV (Spain), and **Brasilina Passarelli** from Universidade de São Paulo (Brazil).

The iConference successfully reflected the global representation of iSchools and strengthened the integration between research and teaching in information studies, reinforcing our shared commitment to information literacies, authenticity, and an inclusive digital society.

February 2026

Isaac Sserwanga
Hanna Carlsson
Yuxiang (Chris) Zhao
Douglas W. Oard
Jennifer Campbell-Meier
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