**SECOND UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA BIENNIAL INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE RESEARCH IN AFRICA (UNILISA)**

**MARCH 2021**

IMPORTANT NOTICE

The UNILISA conference will be held virtually in 2021, due to the prevailing uncertainty associated with the Covid-19 pandemic. Despite the change of format and mode of hosting the conference, the Department of Information Science is dedicated to offering an exciting, innovative and enriching experience to virtual attendees and presenters alike. Details about the specific dates of the conference and the doctoral forum, as well as the online platform(s) and conference fees, will be made available on the conference website in due course.

**CONFERENCE ORGANISER**

The conference is organised and hosted by the Department of Information Science at the University of South Africa (Unisa), in Pretoria, South Africa.

**About UNILISA**

Library and Information Science (LIS) plays an important role in transforming society. In line with Unisa’s mission of being *the* African university shaping futures in the service of humanity, UNILISA strives to establish a forum which encourages scholars from different countries to reflect on original and innovative ways of enhancing the role of Information Science, and libraries and information services, in transforming society and promoting the achievement of sustainable development goals (SDGs).

This is envisaged as one of a series of UNILISA conferences aimed at creating opportunities to establish a research network of academics and information professionals who strive to support the creation, storage and dissemination of information. The need for a comprehensive, comparative analysis of LIS from national and global perspectives cannot be underestimated. To this end, the envisaged UNILISA forum will foster the sharing of experiences aimed at directing future research in LIS worldwide.

The UNILISA conference series also seeks to create an opportunity for capacity building, while granting senior LIS academics a supportive setting in which to offer feedback to, and mentor, doctoral students.

The first successful UNILISA conference, held in 2019, was attended by academics and information professionals from across Africa and further afield. Conference papers were peer reviewed and subsequently published in *Mousaion*, an accredited journal devoted to Information Science. Research papers presented at the UNILISA 2021 conference will similarly be peer reviewed and published in a special issue of *Mousaion*, while others will appear in a peer-reviewed edited book.

**CONFERENCE THEME FOR 2021**

The theme of the second biennial UNILISA conference is:

**Information services for a sustainable society in an era of information disorder**

In the digital age, information serves as a key resource in addressing a multitude of contemporary societal challenges. Although the digital age has significantly sped up the dissemination of information, it has also exposed humankind to all sorts of information disorder (both solicited and unsolicited), from diverse sources. Information disorder is characterised by misinformation (false information which someone shares without knowing it is untrue); disinformation (false information that is shared with the intention to harm) and malinformation (true information that is used to harm). Information disorder not only distorts the information ecology, but also presents a fundamental global threat, sowing confusion and hampering the realisation of a sustainable society. The use of disinformation has an impact on attitudes and policies related to crucial ecological, social and political issues that may alter perceptions and decision making at the national, regional and global levels. Research shows that information disorder spreads significantly faster, deeper and more broadly than accurate information – a notion which has prompted references to a ‘disinfodemic’ (unreliable and false information accompanying the Covid-19 pandemic).

In the battle for truth, information professionals have been promoting ethics and integrity, while de-incentivising the production and publication of false information and results. To achieve this, they make their voices heard at conferences, in publications and by using other resources which work to combat all forms of untruths. In effect, Goal 16 of the United Nations’ SDGs seeks to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development; provide access to justice for all; and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels. Supporting the achievement of this and other SDGs implies that information professionals are, more than ever before, challenged to intensify their efforts to enhance access to those information services that will mitigate the communication of accurate information, in ways that facilitate the realisation of a sustainable society.

Bearing this in mind, the question then is: What role do information professionals, information enterprises and researchers play in an era of information disorder?

In light of the above, the organisers of UNILISA 2021 call for the submission of abstracts from all interested persons, including librarians, researchers, archivists, records managers, information professionals and other practitioners, to address issues within the following sub-themes:

* **Archives, data curation and preservation**
  + archives, records, cultural heritage materials
  + digital data curation
  + digital libraries
  + archival diplomacy
  + digital preservation
  + digital forensics
* **Data science, analytics and visualisation**
  + big data analytics
  + data science, data analytics, data mining, social analytics
  + data and information management
  + open data movement
  + open access
  + personal data protection
  + data curatorship
  + block chain technology
  + cloud and grid computing
  + open health data
* **Ethical and privacy concerns, and scholarly communication** 
  + emergency remote learning
  + information dissemination
  + information disinformation and the post-truth era
  + governance accountability and transparency in information
  + information ethics, computing ethics
  + information policy
  + open access
  + information and society
  + information security
  + information privacy
  + international information issues
  + copyright and intellectual property
  + disinformation and the Covid-19 pandemic
  + health information research online (esp. during a pandemic)
  + misinformation
  + malinformation
* **Information and knowledge management**
  + information theory
  + knowledge economy, evaluating and sourcing knowledge
  + the history, theory and philosophy of information
  + information organisation, knowledge organisation, knowledge representation, metadata, classification
  + learning organisation
  + intellectual capital
  + information architecture, information design
  + information retrieval, social information retrieval
  + information visualisation, images and sound
* **Fourth Industrial Revolution**
  + artificial intelligence
  + virtual reality
  + smart technologies
  + cybersecurity
  + voice computing
  + robotics
  + information and knowledge for sustainable development
* **Library and Information Science**
  + altmetrics, bibliometrics, infometrics, scientometrics
  + e-learning, e-books, education in information sciences
  + digital literacy, multiple literacies, information literacy
  + health information-seeking and health information use
  + health information literacy
  + health information behaviour on social media
  + health information disclosure (privacy concerns, privacy paradox)
  + libraries, museums, and other cultural institutions, information services
  + scholarly communication and new modes of publishing
  + current trends in LIS research
  + disability and inclusiveness
  + bioinformatics
  + business informatics
  + medical informatics
  + social and community informatics
  + user and information services
  + research methods in library and information science

**DOCTORAL FORUM MARCH 2021)**

A critically important and integral part of the UNILISA conference series is the doctoral forum, which provides a platform for doctoral students to share their research experiences and learn from one another. The doctoral forum also affords senior academics an opportunity for mentorship and capacity building.

**PROGRAMME COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

Prof Madeleine Fombad, [fombamc@unisa.ac.za](mailto:fombamc@unisa.ac.za)

Prof Mable Majanja, [majanmk@unisa.ac.za](mailto:majanmk@unisa.ac.za)

Prof Bosire Onyancha, [onyanob@unisa.ac.za](mailto:onyanob@unisa.ac.za)

Dr Lorette Jacobs, [ejacobl1@unisa.ac.za](mailto:ejacobl1@unisa.ac.za)

Dr Nicoline Wessels, [wessen@unisa.ac.za](mailto:wessen@unisa.ac.za)

**ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

Prof Mpho Ngoepe, University of South Africa, South Africa

Prof Luyanda Dube, University of South Africa, South Africa

Dr Daisy Selematsela, University of South Africa, South Africa

Prof Patrick Ngulube, University of South Africa, South Africa

Prof Denis Ocholla, University of Zululand, South Africa

Prof Ina Fourie, University of Pretoria, South Africa

Prof Cyprain Ugwu, University of Nigeria Nsukka, Nigeria

Prof Nathan Mnjama, University of Botswana, Botswana

Dr Paul Laughton, University of Johannesburg, South Africa

Prof Edda Lwoga, Muhimbili Medical University, Tanzania

Prof Tom Kwanya, Technical University of Kenya, Kenya

Dr James Lowry, University of Liverpool, United Kingdom

Prof Kelvin Bwalya, University of Johannesburg, South Africa

Dr Tella Adeyinka, University of South Africa, South Africa

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  |  |