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The impact of artificial intelligence on modern records and archives management practices

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Abstract

This paper investigates the profound influence of artificial intelligence (AI) on contemporary records management practices. As AI technologies such as automation, digital preservation, precise data forecasting, and data analysis gain traction globally, traditional records management approaches are transitioning into digital environments. This paper analyses the effects of these transformations on the implementation of records management practices throughout the record's entire lifecycle, from creation to disposition. Additionally, it addresses both the beneficial and adverse consequences of AI, focusing on its impact on collaboration, information retrieval and access, information sharing, data privacy and security, as well as ethical considerations. The study used a secondary data collection methodology, which involves gathering information that already exists in published form, such as textbooks, journal articles, conference papers, and reputable online resources and using a qualitative research approach, a review of the existing literature to assess AI's contributions and the impact in records and archives management. Findings showed AI has emerged as a fundamental component of everyday life, impacting numerous aspects of human interaction and practices, thereby facilitating service delivery. It has transitioned from the realm of science fiction to a reality where humans may share decision-making capabilities with digital entities. AI now serves as a platform for achieving objectives and streamlining business processes. Unlike earlier technologies, AI is not merely a tool for use; it possesses the ability to make decisions autonomously. The paper concludes that while AI has significant advantages for records and archives management, its effective and lasting integration requires careful planning and well-defined ethical standards. Without responsible implementation and clear policies, the potential risks could outweigh the benefits.

Keywords: artificial intelligence, records management, archives management, digital transformation, records and information management

Introduction

Traditional practices that focused on manual and physical handling of records are giving way to automated, intelligent systems that facilitate efficiency, accuracy, and enhanced decision making. Conventional records management systems can be complex and usually require the specialised skills and expertise of records managers to effectively organise, store, index,

archive, and retrieve documents for administrative and research purposes. However, according to Canning & Jaillant (2025), the rapid advancement of technology has led to the development of innovative software solutions designed to enhance the efficiency of records and archives management in organisations across the globe. Despite the adoption of some of these applications by many organisations, studies and observation surveys have indicated widespread non-compliance among public institutions. Today, with increasingly more technology advancements, a new era of AI has emerged, offering a more efficient and effective approach to records and archival management.

AI is a specialised software system designed to perform tasks typically carried out by humans, but with enhanced efficiency and security, particularly in production and management processes. It represents a virtual simulation of human intelligence, created to behave and respond in ways similar to human cognitive patterns when solving problems. Essentially, AI is an advanced computer-based system, often resembling a human-like robot that can mimic and execute human cognitive functions with ease. According to Frankenfield (2022), AI operates on the principle of embedding human intelligence into machines, enabling them to replicate and perform a wide range of human tasks, from the simplest to the most complex.

AI is a collection of technologies that allow computer systems to perform tasks or make decisions that would usually require some level of human intelligence. AI is a broad and expanding field that encompasses many sub-fields like deep learning, machine learning, natural language processing (NLP) and robotic process automation (RPA). All these are transforming how records are classified, stored, retrieved, and preserved, among other things. Machine learning is essentially the idea that computers will learn to use algorithms to become more creative and predictive in order to resemble human thinking processes.

Ghosh &Arunachalam (2021) affirm that AI is a domain of computer science that deals with the development of intelligent computer systems, which are capable of perceiving, analysing, and reacting accordingly to the inputs. It is a well-known fact that humans are considered the most intelligent and smart species on earth. The features that have helped them to bag this title include the ability to think, apply logic, do reasoning, understand complexity, and make decisions on their own. They can also do planning, innovation, and solve problems to a greater extent. Since the era of the invention of fire to reaching Mars, man has invented many things for the benefit of human life, including AI

However, these advancements bring significant implications for governance, ethics, and professional practices. This paper, therefore, investigates AI's impact on records and archives management, providing a balanced analysis of its potential, pitfalls, and future implications. By exploring case studies and scholarly literature, the study provides insights into how AI can enhance efficiency while addressing potential risks in the management of records and archives.

Historical background

According to ISO 15489-1:2001, records and archives management is the field of management responsible for the efficient and systematic control of the creation, receipt, maintenance, use, and disposition of records. The integration of AI in records management has evolved gradually over the decades, and this ranges from the 1950s, when the concept of AI emerged with pioneers like Alan Turing, who proposed the idea of machines simulating human intelligence (Muggleton, 2014).

Omigie, Krubu, & Solomon (2023) highlight that before the advent of AI in records management, the process was primarily manual and relied heavily on human effort for tasks like data entry, organisation, and retrieval. This involved a significant amount of time spent on filing, indexing, and searching through physical or digital records, which could be time-consuming and prone to errors.

The advent of digital technologies in the late 20th century marked a pivotal shift, allowing for electronic document management systems (EDMS) and digital repositories. However, the exponential growth of data necessitated more intelligent and adaptive solutions, paving the way for AI integration in records management and enabling intelligent automation and predictive analytics.

AI technologies such as machine learning, NLP, and RPA are now being employed to manage the growing need for big data management and compliance with regulatory requirements and improve decision-making processes. In the realm of traditional records and archives management, a record or archival document is any document that contains information attached to a medium, has stable content and a fixed form, and is created or received during a business transaction to be retained for future reference. A record or archive naturally results from a business transaction or a specific activity and is connected to other records of a similar nature. By their very nature, records must be trustworthy, impartial, and authentic sources reflecting the unique activities conducted by governments, organisations, and individuals as they perform their business operations. Based on how they are created, records must have reliable content that is both accurate and authentic, and their identity and integrity must be preserved

Objectives of the study

The main objective of this study was to review literature perspectives on the impact of AI in the management of modern records and archives, the concept and proficiency of AI machines in organisations and the benefits associated with the application of AI in the field of records and archives management. The secondary objectives of this study were:

- To examine the role of AI on modern records and archives management practices.
- To assess the impact of AI technologies on the management of records and archives.
- To identify key challenges associated with AI adoption in records and archives and propose practical solutions for overcoming these challenges.

Method of the study

The study used literature from the internet and print-based resources, textbooks, journals, conference papers, and scholarly web-based resources. The literature review was conducted using academic databases, such as Google Scholar and ResearchGate, with a focus on peer-reviewed journal articles, conference papers, and other scholarly publications to ensure academic integrity. Only English-language sources were included, and publications printed before 2013 were excluded to emphasise recent advancements. This research was based solely on secondary data; ethical considerations primarily involved the accurate representation and proper attribution of the original authors' work. All sources were accurately cited to acknowledge the contributions of the original authors. Since the study did not involve human participants, issues such as informed consent and confidentiality were not applicable. This method allowed for a comprehensive synthesis of current knowledge and for identifying trends, gaps, and best practices. Key themes explored included AI applications in classification and retrieval, ethical and legal implications of AI in archives, and comparative studies on traditional

vs AI-enhanced records management. Therefore, the review highlights trends, gaps, and best practices in AI-driven archival systems.

Role and benefits of the application of AI on records and archives management practices

AI plays a transformative and key role in the life cycle of records and information. Modern records administration is revolutionised by AI, which improves decision making, accuracy, efficiency, and compliance. AI aids in automating and streamlining several parts of the records life cycle as organisations cope with the growing volumes of digital documents. According to Modiba (2022), AI significantly enhances the automation and intelligent classification of records and archives management, enabling faster processing, improved accuracy, and more efficient information management. Automation involves the use of AI-driven systems and software to perform repetitive, rule-based tasks with minimal human intervention. In records and archives management, automation enhances efficiency, accuracy, and consistency across various stages of the records lifecycle – from creation and classification to preservation and disposal. AI algorithms, particularly machine learning models and NLP, can automatically classify records based on their content, metadata, and context. For example, AI can identify invoice records, legal documents, or correspondence, tagging them appropriately for easy retrieval and management – reducing manual effort and errors.

Brown & Davis (2022) assert that AI-powered solutions have automated various aspects of RIM, enabling organisations to handle massive volumes of data with minimal human intervention. Through machine learning algorithms, AI in records management systems can classify, categorise, and sort information, eliminating the need for manual tagging and filing. This automation not only reduces the time and effort required for RIM tasks but also minimises the risk of errors and inconsistencies, ensuring a higher level of accuracy and efficiency**.** Automation systems can monitor records' lifecycle stages, enforcing retention policies and automating disposal procedures when records reach the end of their life, ensuring compliance with legal and organisational requirements. According to Das (2022) Optical Character Recognition (OCR) and Intelligent Document Recognition (IDR) enable automated entry of physical records into digital systems, making digitisation more efficient and accurate.

Teel (2024) indicates that AI supports the digital preservation of archives and records. Digital preservation involves a series of processes and activities aimed at ensuring that digital records remain accessible, authentic, and usable over the long term. Given the rapid growth of digital formats, hardware, and software, implementing effective preservation strategies is vital for safeguarding digital information for future access and research. AI has become an integral component in modern digital preservation, augmenting traditional techniques with predictive analytics, automation, and intelligent monitoring systems. AI models analyse technological trends, file format usage statistics, and software renewal cycles to predict when certain digital formats might become outdated. Machine learning algorithms can then recommend migration or emulation strategies proactively, minimising data loss, for example, using predictive analytics. According to Modiba (2022), AI models forecast the future accessibility of specific digital formats, aiding archivists in planning migrations before formats become unreadable. AI facilitates automated, batch migration of digital records from outdated formats to current, accessible formats. For example, machine learning algorithms can identify and convert varied file types swiftly, reducing manual intervention. Hernández & Rockembach (2025), clarify that AI systems perform continuous integrity checks using anomaly detection techniques to identify corruption or tampering within digital records. They can automatically flag inconsistencies or potential security breaches, ensuring long-term authenticity.

Thirdly, AI enhances search and retrieval capabilities through advanced, intelligent methods. Traditionally, searching for specific information within a large dataset is a time-consuming and tedious process. However, AI-driven search and retrieval systems have transformed this aspect of RIM. AI document management systems have NLP algorithms that enable these systems to understand user queries and extract relevant information from structured and unstructured data sources. As a result, users can now find the desired information quickly and accurately, leading to improved productivity and decision making.

More so, AI supports intelligent data governance and compliance by streamlining policy enforcement, improving the accuracy of record classification, and ensuring consistent adherence to regulatory requirements. Data governance and compliance are crucial components of records management, particularly in highly regulated industries. AI offers significant advancements in this realm by providing intelligent solutions for data governance and compliance management. AI algorithms can analyse data repositories, identify sensitive or confidential information, detect anomalies and ensure compliance with regulatory requirements. This capability not only reduces the risk of data breaches and non-compliance but also enables organisations to proactively address potential issues

Additionally, AI facilitates the intelligent automation of records' retention and disposition schedules, promoting timely handling, regulatory compliance, and effective lifecycle management. Retention and disposition schedules are critical to maintaining compliance and reducing storage costs. AI in records management can automate the process of determining the appropriate retention period for different types of records, based on factors such as legal requirements and business value. AI algorithms can also identify records that have reached their disposition date and automate the disposal process, ensuring timely and secure data destruction. This automation streamlines the disposition process, reducing administrative burden and improving compliance.

Notably, AI enhances security and access control in records management by enabling real-time threat detection, automating user authentication, and ensuring that only authorised personnel can access sensitive information. AI systems can implement intelligent access controls and monitor usage patterns to prevent unauthorised access or data breaches. AI improves cybersecurity through detecting anomalies and automated threat responses. Through automation of classification, retention, and access control, as well as support for compliance and efficient information retrieval, AI enables organisations to manage records with greater intelligence and effectiveness. As data continues to expand, AI will play a vital role in maintaining control and supporting informed, compliant decision making.

The impact of AI on records and archives management practices

AI has increasingly become a transformative force in records management, reshaping how organisations create, handle, and disseminate information. Its integration affects various aspects of the records lifecycle, improving efficiency but also introducing new challenges to the stakeholders in organisations. According to Yeo & Kachra (2018), AI automates routine labour-intensive tasks such as classification, tagging, and indexing, significantly reducing manual effort and errors while enhancing efficiency and accuracy. Machine learning models can automatically classify incoming records into predefined categories, streamlining workflows and accelerating processing times. The enhanced accuracy and consistency of AI reduces human error in data entry, classification and metadata generation, leading to more

accurate record keeping. Smith and Jones (2021) state that AI has enhanced information retrieval and accessibility through NLP and other AI techniques, enabling more precise, context-aware search and retrieval capabilities, making large-scale digital archives easily accessible to users. AI-powered search engines can interpret complex queries, returning highly relevant results from vast datasets. Faster information retrieval is guaranteed because advanced AI search capabilities enable users to retrieve needed information rapidly and accurately.

Thirdly, AI enhances decision making and policy enforcement in records management by delivering data-driven insights, automating the implementation of rules, and maintaining consistent regulatory compliance. AI systems analyse data to support strategic decisions and ensure compliance with retention policies, automating routines like notifications for records due for review or disposal (Osagie & Oladokun, 2024). Through data analysis by means of AI and identifying records patterns, trends, and anomalies, records managers can make informed decisions about retention, access, archiving, and disposal.

AI facilitates automated lifecycle management by intelligently overseeing each stage of a record's lifecycle from creation and classification to retention and final disposition, ensuring efficient handling, compliance, and reduced manual intervention. AI can monitor records throughout their lifecycle classification at creation, automated retention scheduling, and disposition at the end of their -life, ensuring adherence to policies and reducing legal risks. AI algorithms can flag records nearing their retention expiry for automatic archiving or disposal, reducing backlog and manual oversight (Brown & Davis, 2022).

Furthermore, AI enhances data security and privacy in records management by identifying potential threats, enforcing access controls, detecting anomalies, and ensuring that sensitive information is protected in compliance with data protection regulations. AI enhances security through anomaly detection, monitoring of unauthorised access, or identifying suspicious activities and safeguarding sensitive records. AI-driven cybersecurity tools can detect unusual data access patterns that may indicate breaches (Hernández & Rockembach, 2025). With its compliance, AI ensures adherence to data protection laws like the Data Protection and Privacy Act, 2019 in Uganda.

AI facilitates digital preservation by automating the identification, classification, and long-term storage of records, ensuring their integrity, accessibility, and usability over time while protecting against data loss or degradation. AI supports digital preservation strategies by predicting format obsolescence, automating data migration, and creating emulation environments to ensure long-term access (Bray & Mikkelson, 2020). AI contributes to cost savings in records management processes by reducing manual labour, minimising errors, optimising storage use, and automating repetitive tasks, leading to greater operational efficiency and lower administrative expenses. Digital storage reduces physical infrastructure costs, decreases the space needed compared to paper archives, and minimises expenses related to material handling, preservation, and maintenance of physical records.

AI greatly enhances efficiency and productivity in records management by taking over routine and repetitive tasks such as sorting, tagging, and indexing. When done manually, these functions often require significant time and are susceptible to human error. With AI handling these tasks, organisations can optimise their workflows, lower operational costs, and allow records managers and archivists to dedicate their efforts to more strategic and analytical roles (Modiba, 2022). This transition not only boosts overall productivity but also empowers human professionals to engage in higher-level decision-making and oversight activities.

In addition, AI offers scalability and predictive capabilities that are essential for contemporary digital transformation efforts. These systems are capable of managing growing volumes of records efficiently and maintaining high levels of speed and accuracy, which makes them particularly beneficial for large organisations with expanding digital archives (Dhamija & Bag, 2020). Furthermore, AI-powered predictive preservation tools can detect early signs of digital decay or flag documents that are at greater risk of deterioration or loss. This allows archivists to implement timely preservation strategies, helping to safeguard important records and ensuring their long-term accessibility and regulatory compliance (Filipova & Shelestova, 2024).

Negative impacts

The integration of AI into records and archives management presents several financial and infrastructural challenges. Implementing AI systems requires substantial investment in technology infrastructure, software licensing, and workforce training. These costs can be particularly burdensome for public institutions or small organisations with limited budgets (Tsabedze, 2023). Additionally, the implementation process often involves restructuring existing workflows and upgrading digital systems to accommodate AI functionalities, which further increases expenditure and operational complexity.

AI adoption also brings concerns related to workforce dynamics and technological capability. Automation of routine records management tasks can lead to job displacement, particularly among lower-level roles, as AI systems take over functions such as classification, retrieval, and appraisal (Duggal, 2023). At the same time, a significant skill gap exists, as many organisations lack personnel trained in both records management and AI technologies (Akhawmen, 2022). This shortage complicates efforts to supervise, interpret, and maintain AI systems effectively, limiting the technology's potential benefits.

Furthermore, Hernández & Rockembach (2025), state that ethical, legal, and technical risks accompany the use of AI in records management. If AI systems are trained on biased or incomplete datasets, they may produce inaccurate or discriminatory results, thereby compromising records classification or appraisal processes. AI's ability to access and process sensitive data also raises concerns about privacy, surveillance, and potential breaches of confidentiality. Over-dependence on such systems may pose serious risks if technological failures occur, particularly in the absence of robust human oversight or backup protocols. Moreover, the deployment of AI in both public and private recordkeeping environments must align with legal and regulatory frameworks, which may not yet fully account for AI's unique capabilities and risks, creating issues of accountability and transparency (Duggal, 2023).

AI and its challenges in records archives management practices

While AI offers numerous operational benefits and efficiencies, several scholars have also highlighted its potential drawbacks. Eliacik (2022) identified several possible negative impacts of AI on the economy, including but not limited to increased unemployment, high installation and operational costs, a lack of independent thinking and creativity, reduced human activity, emotional detachment, and the potential for dominance over human roles. Similarly, Akhawmen (2022) argues that AI is fundamentally limited when compared to the human brain,

which possesses unparalleled capacity and resilience. He emphasises that AI, being a human creation, can never surpass the intelligence of the human mind that designed it.

Furthermore, Omigie et al (2023) pointed out that AI has the potential to replace records management professionals, as it is capable of performing tasks traditionally carried out by records specialists – and often with greater precision. There is also a valid concern regarding data security and system integrity, as AI systems rely on data and algorithms programmed by humans, who might intentionally introduce bias or manipulate processes to undermine organisational progress.

Nonetheless, despite these concerns, the advantages of AI still largely outweigh its limitations. In developed countries, AI technologies are increasingly employed to support human workers in supervisory and executive roles within manufacturing, business, and administrative sectors. Moreover, AI has been recognised as a highly effective, secure, and reliable tool for records and archival management, particularly in reducing the risks associated with records vulnerability.

Many institutions lack in-house AI proficiency or experts who can manage the use of AI. One of the key challenges in implementing AI in records management is the lack of expertise among professionals. This refers to the shortage of skilled personnel who have the knowledge and technical ability to effectively develop, operate, manage, and maintain AI-based systems within the context of records and information governance. Many records management professionals have a background in information science, library science, or administrative roles, but lack training in AI, machine learning, or data science. This gap can prevent them from fully understanding how AI systems work, how to train AI models, or how to interpret AI-generated outcomes, which are crucial for maintaining the accuracy and reliability of recordkeeping processes.

Possible solutions to the challenges

- *Promoting system compatibility and capacity building*: One of the main problems with using AI in records management is making sure it works well with the systems already in place. Creating and using open standards and shared rules can help AI tools fit smoothly into current records systems. This also makes it easier for organisations to grow and update their digital tools over time (ISO, 2016). It is also important to train records managers and staff. By improving their digital skills and helping them understand how AI works, the adoption process becomes easier and more effective (UNESCO, 2021). Training also helps reduce fear or resistance to new technology and keeps people involved in important decision making.

- *Ethical frameworks and incremental adoption*: To address ethical concerns, it is critical to develop and enforce clear policies that guide the responsible and transparent use of AI in handling records. These ethical frameworks should cover areas such as data privacy, accountability, and bias mitigation (Floridi, 2023). By implementing AI technologies gradually, organisations can evaluate performance, detect potential risks, and make timely adjustments. This phased approach reduces the chances of system disruption and ensures that AI tools align with organisational goals and ethical standards. Incremental adoption also supports continuous learning, allowing both the technology and its users to adapt in parallel.

According to Van Haong (2023), combining human collaboration with AI in hybrid systems enhances cybersecurity systems and helps solve problems related to accuracy and responsibility. AI can do tasks quickly and efficiently, but humans add important knowledge and judgement to make better decisions. As more records are stored and shared digitally, it is also very important to keep them safe. Organisations should use strong security tools like encryption, secure logins, and constant system checks to stop data leaks or hacking. These steps help people trust AI systems and make sure the organisation follows laws and rules.

Conclusions and recommendations

AI holds immense promise for revolutionising records and archives management. Its ability to enhance efficiency, accuracy, and accessibility marks a new chapter in information governance. However, the successful integration of AI depends on addressing challenges related to ethics, cost, and skills. By adopting a strategic and inclusive approach, institutions can harness AI's full potential while preserving the core values of archival integrity and public trust.

With the current trends in records management and the transition from hardcopy or physical records to digitalisation or born digital records and the risks associated with information security, especially considering the area of electronic records, systems security management, and policy, AI is very significant due to the abilities it provides in processing information or content, understanding the audience, and moderations as well which redefine the process of sharing information. This paper has established that an AI records and archiving management system (AIRAMS) is essential in the management of records and archives in organisations. An AI machine is durable and easy to use for effective storage, preservation, archiving, and retrieval of records. AI records and archiving management system machine software have the capacity to identify records and objects, catalogue, schedule, colour code, index, backup, upload, and update records into archives by using a secure private code. This calls for governments, professionals, and all stakeholders to embrace it in records management practices to meet the current trends in information management.

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