



Artificial Intelligence in Finnish Public Libraries

Survey Report 2026

A national survey of AI skills, use, opportunities and concerns.



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1. Executive Summary

Artificial intelligence has become part of everyday library work at a remarkable pace, although its role still varies across the sector. For some library professionals, AI is already an established part of their daily work, while for others it remains new or is used only occasionally. As AI becomes more widespread, the discussion shifts away from the technology itself toward the practical questions surrounding its use: how it can be applied responsibly, safely and in ways that support the library's core mission. AI is increasingly not only a tool for library staff but also a topic that arises in customer service, digital guidance, and information literacy work.

This report is based on responses from 575 library professionals across Finland. Respondents represent every Regional Library Development Service (AKE) area, as well as a broad range of library types, from small one-person libraries to large urban library systems. Together, their responses provide a comprehensive picture of how AI is currently used in Finnish libraries across different workplaces and professional roles.

The purpose of this report is not to argue for or against the use of AI, but to examine its current role in Finnish libraries through the experiences of library professionals. The findings highlight both the opportunities and the challenges associated with AI, while showing that the sector is still in transition. AI is no longer a novelty, yet it has not become an established part of everyday work for everyone. Interest is widespread, but significant differences remain in levels of experience, working practices and the organizational support available.

One theme runs consistently throughout the responses: AI is evaluated through the professional values that have long shaped library work. Questions of reliability, professional ethics, data protection, copyright and environmental sustainability strongly influence how respondents view the adoption of AI. Rather than asking whether AI should be used, many focus on where it genuinely adds value and where human expertise remains essential. At present, ChatGPT and Microsoft Copilot are the most widely used AI tools, while AI-assisted translation has become an important everyday resource, particularly in bilingual and multilingual environments.

In practice, AI is most used to support writing, editing, brainstorming, translation, and the preparation of various kinds of materials. Respondents describe it as a helpful assistant rather than a replacement for professional expertise. It supports tasks such as event planning, communication, and information services, but responsibility for decisions, quality and professional judgement remains firmly with library staff. AI is also becoming an increasingly important aspect of customer services, as library professionals are expected to help users understand both the possibilities and the limitations of AI-generated content. As a result, AI literacy is emerging as a natural extension of libraries' long-standing role in promoting information literacy, digital literacy, and critical thinking.

The survey also highlights several concerns. Information reliability, data protection, ethics, and copyright were among the issues most frequently mentioned, while environmental sustainability emerged as one of the survey's most distinctive themes. At the same time, the responses reveal a wide range of attitudes toward AI. Some respondents actively explore new ways of using it, others proceed cautiously, and some choose not to use generative AI at all because of ethical or practical concerns. Regardless of their perspective, many expressed a need for clearer organizational guidance, practical examples, well-defined policies and more opportunities to gain experience from colleagues.

Overall, the findings suggest that the future of AI in Finnish libraries will depend not only on technological development, but also on shared practices, organizational support, and opportunities for professional learning. AI is becoming part of everyday library work, but its long-term role will be shaped by how well it can support the values, expertise and public mission that define libraries.

Overall, the findings suggest that the success of AI in libraries depends less on any individual technology than on how it is introduced into everyday work. Clear guidance, shared practices, and ongoing support will be essential if AI is to become a useful complement to professional expertise, allowing library staff to spend more time on the work where human knowledge, judgement and interaction remain indispensable.

2. Introduction

In recent years, artificial intelligence (AI) has become one of the fastest-growing technologies shaping working life. The rapid development of generative AI has created new opportunities for information retrieval, writing, brainstorming, translation, and a wide range of other knowledge-intensive tasks. At the same time, it has raised important questions about how AI should be used, where its limitations lie and what new skills people need to work with it effectively.

These questions are particularly relevant for libraries. Libraries play a central role in providing reliable information, promoting reading, supporting learning and strengthening information, media and AI literacy. AI has implications for all of these responsibilities. It can streamline many everyday tasks, but it also creates new challenges as customers increasingly seek guidance on using AI and evaluating the information it produces. Library professionals are therefore helping users not only find information but also assess whether AI-generated answers are accurate and trustworthy.

Libraries are, however, no strangers to technological change. The introduction of the internet, digital services, e-materials and self-service libraries all transformed library work and required staff to develop new skills and ways of working. AI represents the latest stage in this ongoing development. At the same time, it has prompted particularly wide-ranging discussions about information reliability, copyright, data protection, environmental sustainability and the evolving nature of professional work.

Successfully integrating AI into library services is about far more than adopting new technology. It also depends on organizational policies, staff skills, opportunities for learning and clear guidance on how AI can be used responsibly. Understanding how library professionals themselves experience this transition is therefore essential. Their experiences provide valuable insight into both the opportunities AI offers and the support still needed for its wider adoption.

This report presents an overview of the current state of AI use in Finnish public libraries. It is based on responses from 575 library professionals representing all nine Regional Library Development Services (AKE) areas across Finland. AKE libraries are responsible for supporting the development of public library services through professional training, competence development and regional cooperation. Respondents represent a wide variety of library environments, ranging from small one-person libraries to large city libraries, and work in many different professional roles.

Rather than evaluating whether AI should or should not be used, the report aims to describe how AI is currently being used, how library professionals perceive its opportunities and challenges, and what kinds of support they need. The survey explored current patterns of AI use, perceived benefits and risks, training needs and the organizational factors that influence the adoption of AI in everyday library work.

The report combines quantitative survey results with qualitative analysis of the open-ended responses. The survey data provides an overview of broader trends, while the qualitative responses add context by illustrating how these issues appear in everyday practice and how library professionals interpret their experiences. Together, these perspectives offer a comprehensive picture of the current state of AI adoption in Finnish libraries and the questions that are likely to shape its future development.

3. Survey Data and Respondents

A total of 575 library professionals from across Finland responded to the survey. Respondents represented all nine Regional Library Development Services (AKE) areas and a wide range of library environments, from small rural libraries, where a single staff member may be responsible for everything from customer service and collections to communications, to large city libraries with more specialized roles and organizational structures. This diversity is important, as the role and perceived value of AI vary depending on the size of the library, available resources and the nature of the work.

3.1 Regional Distribution of Respondents

As shown in the table below, respondents represented all nine AKE regions. The number of responses from each region broadly reflects the regional distribution of the Finnish library workforce, providing a balanced picture of the sector nationwide.

AKE region	Respondents (n)	Share (%)
Porvoo	121	21.0%
Turku	109	19.0%
Lahti	94	16.4%
Vaasa	87	15.1%
Tampere	72	12.5%
Rovaniemi	34	5.9%
Oulu	27	4.7%
Kuopio	17	3.0%
Joensuu	14	2.4%
Total	575	100%

3.2 Library Location and Municipality Size

Almost half of the respondents work in municipalities with more than 50,000 inhabitants, while the remainder are employed in small and medium-sized municipalities. This provides a broad perspective on AI use across different types of library environments.

Municipality size	Respondents (n)	Share (%)
Under 5 000 residents	51	8.9%
5 000–10 000 residents	76	13.2%
10 000–50 000 residents	175	30.4%
Over 50 000 residents	273	47.5%

More than one fifth of the respondents work in municipalities with fewer than 10 000 inhabitants. In smaller libraries, a single staff member may be responsible for a wide range of tasks, including customer service, collection management, communications, events and digital support. In these settings, the role of AI differs from that in larger libraries, where work is more specialized and support structures are often better established.

Staff in smaller libraries may have fewer opportunities for training, guidance and peer learning, making the adoption of recent technologies more dependent on individual interest and initiative. Uncertainty about which AI tools are approved for use and how they can be used safely may also be more pronounced in these environments.

3.3 Professional Experience in Libraries

Respondents represented all stages of professional experience, from those who had only recently entered the library sector to those with long careers. Slightly more than half had worked in libraries for over ten years, and around one third had more than twenty years of experience. This broad range of experience suggests that AI is relevant across the profession rather than being an issue primarily for newer or younger employees. The findings also indicate that opportunities for learning, discussion and professional development are needed throughout the sector, regardless of career stage.

Experience in the library field	Respondents (n)	Share (%)
Under 5 years	121	21.0%
5–10 years	120	20.9%
11–20 years	159	27.7%
Over 20 years	175	30.4%

3.4 Respondents' Areas of Work

Respondents were able to select all the tasks that form part of their work, meaning that each person could be represented in several categories. This reflects the varied nature of library work, where job

roles often combine multiple responsibilities rather than focusing on a single area. In addition to customer service, many respondents participate in collection management, communications, event planning, digital guidance, development work or supervisory duties.

The most common responsibilities relate to the core functions of public libraries, including customer service, user guidance, shelving, and collection work. At the same time, a substantial proportion of respondents also work in roles that involve creating content, organizing events and supporting customers' digital skills.

This diversity of roles also helps explain why experiences of AI differ across the sector. The potential uses of AI depend on the nature of everyday work. For example, staff working in communications or event planning may use AI to generate ideas or draft and edit text, while those working primarily in customer service or collection management face diverse needs and opportunities. As a result, the perceived value of AI is linked to the tasks that make up each person's work.

Job task	Respondents (n)	Share (%)
Customer Service	512	89.0%
Information and Reader Advisory Services	484	84.2%
Shelving and Materials Handling	450	78.3%
Collection Management (Weeding and Storage)	414	72.0%
Reference and Information Services	413	71.8%
Event Planning and Delivery	294	51.1%
Digital Skills Support	294	51.1%
Partnerships and Community Engagement	277	48.2%
Communications and Marketing	273	47.5%
Development and Project Work	234	40.7%
Collection Development (Selection and Acquisition)	233	40.5%
School and Early Childhood Education Partnerships	219	38.1%
Children's Library Services	206	35.8%
Reader Advisory	192	33.4%
Young Adult Library Services	186	32.3%
Services for Special User Groups	117	20.3%
Management and Supervisory Responsibilities	114	19.8%
Cataloguing and Metadata	112	19.5%
Other	61	10.6%

The open-ended responses also highlighted several responsibilities that were not included among the predefined answer options. These included mobile library services, ICT and library systems support,

home library services for older adults and people with reduced mobility, the management of local heritage collections, literacy promotion, interlibrary services, and language cafés for multilingual communities.

These responses illustrate the breadth and diversity of contemporary library work. They also reinforce the finding that there is no single way to use AI in libraries. Its relevance and potential applications depend on the nature of each person's role and the practical needs of their everyday work.

4. AI Familiarity and Skills

AI is already a familiar topic for most respondents. Almost nine out of ten reported at least some level of familiarity with AI, suggesting that it has become an established part of discussions within the library sector. It is no longer seen simply as an emerging technology, but as something that increasingly features in everyday work, professional training, and public debate.

However, familiarity does not necessarily translate into confident use. Although most respondents understand the basic principles of AI, practical skills and firsthand experience vary considerably. Some use AI regularly in their work and have integrated it into a range of tasks, while for others it remains something they have only experimented with occasionally or encountered through discussion.

4.1 AI Is Familiar to Most Library Professionals

More than half of the respondents described their knowledge of AI as moderate, suggesting that technology has become familiar to most library professionals at a general level, even if many still consider their practical skills to be basic. The findings also indicate that AI is relevant across the profession. Interest in AI and the need to understand its potential are evident among respondents at all career stages, from those who have recently entered the field to experienced professionals with decades of library work behind them.

Level of familiarity	Respondents (n)	Share (%)
Not at all	16	2.8%
A little	308	53.6%
Fairly well	203	35.3%
Very well	48	8.3%

4.2 Self-assessed AI Skills

When respondents were asked to assess their own AI skills, the results painted a similar picture. Most felt they had a basic understanding of AI and at least some firsthand experience, while only a small proportion considered themselves confident or highly skilled users. At the same time, very few respondents reported having no experience with AI at all.

Overall, the findings suggest that the library sector is in a transitional phase. AI is already widely recognized and understood at a general level, but its confidence and routine use in everyday work is still developing.

Skill level	Respondents (n)	Share (%)
No skills yet	32	5.6%
Basic understanding (I know what it is)	216	37.5%
I can use some tools	292	50.8%
I use AI fluently in my work	35	6.1%

One of the clearest findings is that while most respondents are familiar with AI, it has not yet become an established part of everyday work. Only a small minority reported having no ability to use AI at all. Around half have experimented with one or more AI tools, but for many their use remains occasional rather than an integrated part of their daily work. Only about six percent of respondents described themselves as confident and regular users who apply AI across a range of work tasks.

The findings suggest that the greatest potential for wider adoption lies among those who already understand the basics of AI and have some practical experience but have not yet incorporated it into their everyday work. For this group, the main need is not introductory training but practical support, concrete examples and opportunities to experiment in a safe and supported environment. Such support could help move AI from occasional use to becoming a natural part of everyday library work.

4.3 Access to AI Training

Respondents reported considerable variation in access to AI training. More than one third had not received any AI-related training, whereas just over 40% had participated in training organized by Regional Library Development Services (AKE libraries), their own organization, or external providers. This uneven distribution of training opportunities suggests that support for developing AI-related competencies varies across the library sector.

Source of training	Respondents (n)	Share (%)
No AI Training Received	204	35.5%
Received AI Training (AKE, Municipality or Other Provider)	246	42.8%
Self-Taught	125	21.7%

The findings also suggest that many respondents have developed their AI skills independently. This group includes many of the most active AI users, whose skills appear to have been built largely through personal interest, experimentation, and a willingness to explore new tools.

At the other end of the spectrum, around one third of respondents reported having received no AI-related training. The differences between these groups appear to reflect variations in access to learning

opportunities rather than differences in motivation or ability. This is an encouraging finding, as organizational support, training and opportunities for practical experimentation have the potential to reduce these gaps.

The survey also indicates a clear relationship between confidence and use. Respondents who rated their AI skills more highly were more likely to use AI in their everyday work. This suggests that limited use often stems from uncertainty rather than reluctance, and that confidence tends to grow with experience.

By contrast, neither municipality size nor length of professional experience has a strong association with AI use. Respondents from both small and large libraries, and from all career stages, reported using AI. The findings therefore suggest that workplace culture and opportunities to experiment may be more important than organizational size or years of experience in shaping AI adoption.

5. Use of AI at Work

5.1 Prevalence of AI Use

AI is becoming part of everyday library work, but for many respondents its use remains occasional. Almost one third reported that they had never used AI in their work, while around two thirds had used it at least once. This suggests that awareness of AI is widespread and that many library professionals are interested in exploring its potential, even if regular use is not yet well established.

For many respondents, the transition from initial experimentation to everyday use appears to depend on having opportunities to explore AI in a practical and supportive environment. Making it easier to take those first steps may encourage wider and more confident adoption.

Level of use	Respondents (n)	Share (%)
Have Not Used AI	183	31.8%
Have Tried AI	175	30.5%
Use AI Occasionally	156	27.1%
Use AI Regularly	61	10.6%

The most noticeable difference lies in the frequency of AI use. While many respondents have experimented with AI or use it occasionally, only just over one in ten reported using it regularly in their work. For many, tools such as ChatGPT and Microsoft Copilot are already familiar, but their use has not yet become an established part of everyday working practices.

The survey suggests several reasons for this. Some respondents remain cautious about the reliability of AI-generated content, while others are uncertain about how AI should be used or whether its use is supported within their organization. As a result, trying AI for the first time is often easier than incorporating it into everyday work. Moving from occasional experimentation to regular use appears to be a gradual process that depends on growing confidence, practical experience and organizational support.

5.2 Most Common AI Tools

Respondents mentioned dozens of different AI tools in the open-ended responses, but two clearly stood out from the rest. Microsoft Copilot and ChatGPT are currently the AI tools with which most library professionals have practical experience, and they shape respondents' perceptions of AI in everyday work.

The most frequently mentioned tools

- Microsoft Copilot was by far the most mentioned tool used at work. In many municipalities, it is the only AI application officially approved for workplace use.
- ChatGPT was frequently described as a tool that respondents explore independently, often outside working hours. In many organizations, its use at work is either unofficial or restricted.
- Translation tools, particularly DeepL, Google Translate and Google Lens, were regarded as some of the most valuable AI-assisted tools for everyday work, especially in multilingual customer service.
- Canva's AI features were commonly used to create images, presentations and communication materials.
- Google Gemini and Perplexity were also mentioned by a growing number of respondents, with Perplexity being used particularly for information retrieval.
- Several respondents also referred to specialized AI tools developed for library and research contexts, including NotebookLM, Finto AI and Annif, which is designed to support subject indexing.
- DeepSeek was mentioned by a small number of respondents, although several noted that it is prohibited for workplace use in their municipalities.

Microsoft Copilot's prominent role is explained by its availability. In many municipalities, it is integrated into the Microsoft 365 environment and is the only AI tool officially approved for workplace use. By contrast, ChatGPT is often something respondents have explored independently, outside their work environment. As a result, the choice of AI tools is frequently shaped by organizational policies and access rather than by the specific requirements of the task.

The widespread use of AI-assisted translation tools also reflects the realities of everyday library work. Library staff increasingly serve customers with diverse linguistic backgrounds, and situations where there is no shared language are common. In these contexts, tools such as DeepL and Google Translate provide practical support for day-to-day communication. Their outputs are also relatively easy to review and verify, which may make them feel like a lower-risk way of using AI.

For many respondents, translation tools are a natural introduction to AI. Compared with tasks such as generating text or images, AI-assisted translation is often perceived as more straightforward and easier to evaluate. At the same time, respondents recognized that machine translations are not always fully accurate or contextually appropriate, making human review an essential part of the process.

5.3 Use of AI in Library Work

Where AI has been adopted, it is used primarily as a practical support tool rather than a substitute for professional expertise. Respondents most reported using AI to assist with translation and with drafting, editing, and refining several types of written content. Overall, AI is seen to improve efficiency in everyday tasks while leaving responsibility for final decisions with library professionals.

Area of use	Respondents (n)	Share (%)
Translation	329	57.2%
Brainstorming and Text Editing	306	53.2%
Content Creation and Design	214	37.2%
Information Retrieval and Summarization	207	36.0%
Communications and Marketing	164	28.5%
No Current Use in My Work	114	19.8%
Customer Service Support	110	19.1%
Other	64	11.1%

Overall, respondents viewed the potential of AI positively. The benefits mentioned most frequently were greater efficiency, time savings and support with routine tasks. Many reported using AI to assist with drafting and editing text, organizing information and generating ideas, helping them complete everyday tasks more efficiently.

At the same time, respondents consistently described AI as a tool that supports professional work rather than replaces it. They emphasized that responsibility for evaluating information, making decisions and ensuring the quality of the final output remains with the library professional. AI is therefore seen as an assistant that complements, rather than replaces, human expertise.

Many respondents expect AI to play a growing role in library work over the coming years, but relatively few see it as a threat to professional expertise. Instead, they believe it reinforces the importance of skills that remain uniquely human, including critical evaluation of information, professional judgement, information management and meaningful interaction with customers.

Overall, the findings suggest that AI is valued for its potential to improve efficiency and reduce the time spent on routine tasks, allowing library professionals to focus more on work that requires human expertise. Respondents also recognized that these benefits depend on using AI appropriately, with sufficient skills, clear guidance and an understanding of both its capabilities and its limitations.

5.4 Information Retrieval and Summarization

When it comes to information retrieval, respondents expressed more caution than they did about using AI for writing and content creation. This reflects the core values of library work, where evaluating sources and assessing the reliability of information are fundamental professional responsibilities. While AI is seen as a useful tool for summarizing and organizing information, it is much less likely to be used as a substitute for information retrieval itself because of the risk of inaccurate or fabricated content.

In practice, respondents most commonly use AI to process large amounts of text. Typical applications include summarizing reports, meeting minutes, survey responses and strategy documents, making lengthy material easier to review and analyses. AI is also used to help locate difficult-to-find information, identify books or authors that may not appear in traditional searches, and generate reading lists based on different themes or customer interests. In customer service, some respondents described AI as a useful reference tool that can provide quick background information on unfamiliar topics. Smaller everyday tasks, such as proofreading, language editing and generating Excel formulas, were also frequently mentioned.

Across these different applications, one common theme stands out: respondents emphasized the importance of verifying AI-generated content. AI outputs are rarely accepted without review and are checked before being used. A small number of respondents reported more advanced uses, such as developing Microsoft Copilot agents to support metadata work or using NotebookLM to analyses and summarize documents. Although these examples remain uncommon, they demonstrate growing interest in exploring more specialized applications of AI.

The greatest reservations relate to information retrieval. Many respondents felt that AI-generated answers could not always be relied upon and often required careful verification, sometimes making the process more time-consuming than conducting a conventional search. Overall, the findings suggest that respondents see AI as a valuable tool for organizing information, generating ideas and supporting routine tasks, but not yet as a reliable source of information.

6. Organizational Role and Guidelines

This chapter examines the organizational factors that shape how AI is used in everyday library work. The adoption of AI depends not only on individual skills, confidence and attitudes, but also on the policies, practices and workplace culture within each organization.

Respondents' experiences suggest that organizational support plays a significant role in determining whether AI becomes part of everyday work. Clear policies, access to approved tools, opportunities for training and practical guidance all influence how confidently staff use AI. Equally important is whether employees feel able to experiment with new tools in a supportive environment where learning and responsible exploration are encouraged.

6.1 Municipal Attitudes Toward AI

Most respondents described their municipality's attitude towards AI as positive or fairly positive. However, a substantial proportion were uncertain about their organization's overall position on AI. This suggests that, even where attitudes are generally supportive, organizational policies and expectations may not always be clearly communicated.

Attitude	Respondents (n)	Share (%)
Very positive	54	9.4%
Fairly positive	206	35.8%
Neutral	148	25.7%
Cautious	62	10.8%
Negative	12	2.1%
Cannot say	93	16.2%

Only around two percent of respondents described their municipality's attitude towards AI as clearly negative. A more significant finding is the level of uncertainty: approximately one sixth reported that they did not know their organization's position on the use of AI.

This uncertainty may influence adoption in practice. When staff are unsure about their organization's expectations or policies, they may be reluctant to use AI, even if there is no explicit restriction. The findings therefore suggest that a lack of clear guidance can be just as important a barrier to AI adoption as formal limitations on its use.

6.2 Policies and Guidelines on AI Use

The availability of organizational guidance on AI varies considerably. The largest group of respondents reported that they were unsure whether their municipality had any guidance on the use of AI. Only just over one quarter said that clear guidance was already in place, while almost as many reported that no guidance existed or that it was still being developed.

These findings suggest that many library professionals are working in environments where expectations and policies regarding AI have not yet been clearly communicated.

State of guidance	Respondents (n)	Share (%)
Yes, clear guidance	156	27.2%
Guidance is in progress	102	17.8%
There is no guidance	96	16.8%
Cannot say	219	38.2%

The findings suggest that organizational guidance on AI remains unclear in many workplaces, with "cannot say" being the most common response. This may reflect communication challenges rather than the complete absence of guidance. In some organizations, policies may already exist but have not been effectively communicated or embedded in everyday practice.

Where no guidance is available, responsibility is more likely to fall on individual employees. In these situations, staff are left to make their own decisions about which AI tools can be used, what types of information can be entered into them, and how AI-generated content can be used appropriately in their

work. The findings highlight the importance of clear organizational policies in supporting the safe and consistent use of AI.

6.3 Permission to Use AI at Work

The question of whether AI is permitted in the workplace provides further insight into organizational readiness. Just over half of the respondents reported that they had clear permission to use AI in their work. For more than 40%, however, the situation was less clear: some were unsure whether AI use was permitted, while others reported that they had not been given permission to use it.

Experience of permission	Respondents (n)	Share (%)
Yes, I have permission	325	56.5%
Yes, but I'm not quite sure	152	26.4%
I don't know	88	15.3%
I Do Not Feel AI Use Is Permitted	10	1.8%

These findings highlight an important practical challenge. Even among respondents who are interested in using AI and feel confident in their skills, uncertainty about organizational policies may discourage its use. Few employees are willing to invest time in workplace tools if it is unclear whether their use is supported or permitted.

The findings suggest that clear organizational guidance, whether it permits or restricts the use of AI, would reduce much of this uncertainty. The greatest challenge appears to arise where expectations are not communicated at all, leaving individual employees to interpret organizational policy for themselves.

6.4 Prohibited AI Tools

Around one in ten respondents reported that their municipality had prohibited the use of at least one AI tool they considered useful for their work. The open-ended responses suggest that organizational policies vary considerably between municipalities and that the distinction between approved and prohibited tools is not always clear to employees.

The most described approach is to allow the use of Microsoft Copilot while restricting or discouraging the use of tools such as ChatGPT and similar services. Respondents most frequently associated these restrictions with concerns about information security, data protection and uncertainty about how organizational data is processed or stored by external AI services.

Some respondents also reported that their organizations had prohibited the use of DeepSeek, typically citing information security or geopolitical concerns. In addition, several organizations have placed restrictions on AI-generated images because of concerns related to authenticity in communications and ethical considerations.

Restrictions on Canva were mentioned by a smaller number of respondents, again mainly in relation to information security. Some respondents described working in environments where several AI tools they

considered useful were unavailable because of organizational policies. In these cases, uncertainty about which tools were permitted and under what conditions appeared to be a significant challenge.

7. Areas Where AI Is Most Useful

7.1 Supporting Everyday Work

When respondents were asked where AI could make everyday library work easier, the most common theme was support for routine tasks. Many saw AI improve efficiency, save time and reduce the administrative workload associated with everyday work. Communications was another area where respondents identified clear potential for AI support.

These are tasks that often require a considerable amount of staff time but are not unique to library work. Respondents therefore saw AI as a practical tool for handling routine activities more efficiently, allowing more time for tasks that depend on professional expertise, customer interaction and specialist knowledge.

Area of benefit	Respondents (n)	Share (%)
Routine Tasks	260	46.3%
Time Management	221	39.4%
Communications	214	38.1%
No Significant Benefits Yet	175	31.2%
Supporting Staff Skills	169	30.1%
Service Development	106	18.9%
Other	37	6.6%

One finding stands out clearly from the results: almost one third of respondents do not yet see a clear role for AI in their own work. Rather than reflecting resistance to AI, however, this represents caution and uncertainty about where it can genuinely add value.

Many respondents indicated that they need practical examples before they can see the benefits of AI in their own everyday work. General discussions about the potential of AI were seen as less persuasive than concrete examples from colleagues demonstrating how a specific task had become easier or more efficient through its use. These findings suggest that peer learning and the sharing of practical experiences may play an important role in supporting wider adoption of AI in libraries.

7.2 Benefits in Library Work

The open-ended responses provide a more detailed picture of how AI is supporting everyday library work. Although respondents described a wide range of applications, several recurring themes emerged across separate roles and library settings.



Translation was one of the clearest and most widely recognized benefits. In bilingual municipalities, producing the same content in both national languages has traditionally been a time-consuming task. Many respondents reported that AI-assisted translation had made this work significantly faster. Translation tools were also seen as valuable in customer service, helping staff communicate with customers when no shared language was available. Respondents appreciated that translations could be reviewed and corrected relatively easily, making them a practical and low-risk application of AI.

Another prominent area was writing and content development. Respondents commonly used AI to draft, edit and refine texts, generate ideas and structure longer documents. Rather than producing finished content, AI was typically used to create a first draft or outline, which library professionals then revised and adapted. This division of labor was widely seen as effective, with AI supporting the writing process while responsibility for accuracy, tone and quality remained with the user.

The benefits of AI were also evident in a range of routine administrative tasks. Respondents described using AI to summarize meeting notes, prepare response templates, generate Excel formulas and assist with staff scheduling. Across these examples, the perceived value of AI lies in reducing the time spent on repetitive tasks, allowing more time for work that relies on professional expertise and interaction with customers.

Some respondents also identified opportunities to use AI in core library functions. In collection management, AI was reported to support tasks such as analyzing collections, preparing weeding lists and assisting with acquisitions. Specialized tools, including Annif for subject indexing, were mentioned by a small number of respondents. In readers' advisory work, AI was seen as a useful source of ideas, particularly for developing recommendations around specific themes or genres. At the same time, respondents consistently emphasized that professional knowledge of literature and an understanding of customers' needs remain central to this work.

Media and AI literacy also emerged as an important theme. Many respondents saw a growing role for libraries in helping customers understand how AI works, recognize its limitations and critically evaluate AI-generated information. As AI becomes increasingly common in everyday life, supporting these skills was seen as a natural extension of libraries' existing work in information and media literacy.

7.3 Three Perspectives on the Benefits of AI

The responses suggest three broad perspectives on the benefits of AI, although the boundaries between these groups are not always clear-cut.

Around 40% of respondents already see clear benefits in using AI. They most frequently highlighted time savings, more efficient communication, faster translation and support with routine tasks. For these respondents, AI has become a practical tool that is integrated into at least some aspects of their everyday work.

Approximately 30% of respondents could be described as cautiously interested. While they recognized the potential of AI, they had not yet identified clear benefits in their own work. Many indicated that they needed practical examples and opportunities to see how AI could support everyday library tasks before adopting it more actively. Their responses suggest curiosity rather than resistance.

The remaining respondents expressed more critical or reserved views. For this group, the perceived benefits of AI were limited or outweighed by concerns about its wider implications. Environmental impact was the issue mentioned most frequently, alongside ethical considerations and questions about how AI aligns with the values and core mission of public libraries.

8. Risks and concerns

8.1 Key Concerns About AI

Respondents expressed a remarkably consistent view of the risks associated with AI. All of the potential concerns included in the survey received substantial support, but the reliability of AI-generated information emerged as the most significant concern by a clear margin.

Risk or concern	Respondents (n)	Share (%)
Reliability	500	88.0%
Data Protection and Information Security	427	75.2%
Ethical Concerns	408	71.8%
Environmental Impact and Energy Use	396	69.7%
Differences in Staff Competencies	260	45.8%
Changing Job Roles	165	29.0%
Other	45	7.9%

Concerns about the reliability of AI-generated information were expressed by almost nine out of ten respondents, making this the most widely shared concern. This is unsurprising in a profession where evaluating information and assessing the credibility of sources are core responsibilities.

A particularly notable finding is the level of concern about AI's environmental impact. 70% of respondents highlighted the energy consumption and use of natural resources associated with AI technologies. This is a high proportion compared with findings from many other sectors. The responses suggest that environmental sustainability is an important consideration in the library profession and plays a significant role in how AI is perceived.

By contrast, concerns about job displacement were much less common. Fewer than one third of respondents considered the potential impact of AI on their own employment to be a significant concern. While many recognized that AI is likely to change the nature of library work, few viewed it as a direct threat to their jobs.

8.2 Additional Themes Emerging from the Open-Ended Responses

The open-ended responses also highlighted several concerns that were not fully captured by the survey's predefined response options. Although these themes were mentioned less frequently than the main survey items, they provide valuable insight into how library professionals view the broader implications of AI.

Copyright emerged as one of the most prominent additional concerns. Respondents questioned the use of AI image generators, expressing concern that they are trained in artists' work in ways that raise ethical and legal questions.

Several respondents also reflected on the potential impact of AI on people's own skills. Some were concerned that relying too heavily on AI could weaken writing skills, reduce creativity or discourage independent thinking among both library staff and customers. Others questioned the growing influence of large technology companies, asking who shapes the development of AI technologies and how user data are collected, managed and used.

Concerns about the reliability of AI-generated information also appeared frequently in the open-ended responses. Respondents worried that inaccurate AI-generated content could become increasingly difficult to distinguish from reliable information. Several described practical examples of AI "hallucinations", such as customers searching for books or references that did not exist because AI had generated them. These experiences illustrate that the challenges associated with AI are already becoming part of everyday library work.

Finally, some respondents expressed concern that increasing automation could reduce opportunities for meaningful human interaction. For many, personal encounters and conversations with customers are seen as a fundamental part of library work, and there was concern that greater reliance on AI could diminish this aspect of the profession.

8.3 Critical Perspectives

Although AI has become part of everyday work in many libraries, it has not yet become an established part of everyone's working practices. The survey responses suggest that this is not primarily due to opposition to AI. More often, respondents described uncertainty about when AI should be used, how much its output can be trusted and, most importantly, what is expected or permitted within their own organization. Where policies and expectations are unclear, staff are understandably more cautious about adopting new tools.

The findings also indicate that successful adoption of AI depends on more than individual skills. Organizational support plays a significant role. Clear guidance, opportunities to experiment in a supportive environment and the ability to learn from colleagues all appear to make staff more confident in using AI. By contrast, where employees are left to interpret policies for themselves, many choose not to use AI at all.

The open-ended responses further show that critical views of AI are rarely rooted in a fear of technology or a lack of interest. Instead, respondents tended to consider AI in relation to the values and responsibilities of library work.

Environmental sustainability emerged as one of the most distinctive themes in the survey. Respondents frequently raised concerns about the energy and water consumption associated with AI, as well as the environmental impact of data centers. Many questioned whether the benefits of AI always justify the resources required to support it. This perspective appeared so consistently across the responses that it became one of the defining characteristics of the dataset.

Ethical considerations were also prominent. Many respondents questioned the use of generative AI systems trained on copyrighted material and reflected on whether it is appropriate to rely on technologies that may have been developed using the work of authors, artists and other creators without their consent or compensation.

The reliability of AI-generated information remained the most immediate practical concern. As evaluating information is a core part of library professionals' work, respondents were understandably cautious about relying on AI-generated content. Several described situations in which AI had produced fictitious books, incorrect references or other misleading information. These experiences demonstrate that the limitations of AI are no longer theoretical but are already affecting everyday customer service.

Many respondents also considered AI in the context of the library's broader mission. If libraries are expected to provide reliable information, promote literacy and strengthen information, media and AI literacy, then the role of generative AI deserves careful consideration. Respondents also expressed concern about the growing influence of large technology companies, the collection and use of user data, and the interests shaping the development of AI technologies.

Some respondents reflected on AI's longer-term effects on people's own skills. They questioned whether an increasing reliance on AI could gradually weaken writing, creativity and independent thinking among both library professionals and library users.

Overall, the findings suggest that a critical perspective on AI does not necessarily imply opposition to it. Many respondents recognized AI's potential while simultaneously expressing concerns about its environmental impact, reliability and ethical implications. Interest and caution often coexisted. This suggests that the successful adoption of AI will depend not only on access to technology and training but also on creating opportunities for open discussion within organizations. Such discussions can help ensure that AI is adopted in ways that are consistent with the values, responsibilities and professional practices of public libraries.

9. Training needs and wishes

9.1 Organizational Guidance as a Training Need

The responses suggest that training needs extend well beyond learning how to use AI tools. While many respondents want to develop their practical AI skills, they placed equal importance on understanding the ethical, legal and data protection issues associated with AI. Respondents also emphasized the need for clear guidance on when AI is appropriate to use, what should be considered when using it, and how organizational policies and professional principles should guide its use in library work.

Training topic	Respondents (n)	Share (%)
Practical AI Tools	350	66.7%
Ethical and Legal Issues	335	63.8%
Municipal Policies and Guidelines	258	49.1%
AI Fundamentals	176	33.5%
AI in Customer Service	166	31.6%
Other	37	7.0%

The open-ended responses highlight that many of the challenges surrounding AI are organizational rather than technical. Almost half of respondents expressed a need for clearer information about their organization's policies and guidance on AI. For many, uncertainty stems not from a lack of skills but from not knowing what is permitted, what has been agreed within the organization, or how AI is expected to be used in everyday work.

Addressing this need does not necessarily require additional technical training. Instead, respondents emphasized the importance of clear communication, accessible guidance and consistent organizational policies that provide staff with the confidence to use AI appropriately and responsibly.

9.2 Development Needs Identified in the Open-Ended Responses

The open-ended responses provide a clear picture of what library professionals feel they need as AI becomes more established in their work. Rather than calling for more AI tools, respondents primarily expressed a need to better understand how AI can be used effectively, responsibly and appropriately in everyday library work. Many wanted clearer guidance on where AI adds value, where caution is needed and how it can be used in ways that align with professional practice.

One topic that emerged particularly strongly was the environmental impact of AI. Respondents frequently commented that the public discussion is often shaped by opinions rather than evidence. Many expressed a wish for balanced, research-based information about the environmental consequences of AI and how these should be understood in the context of library work.

Many respondents also wanted a better understanding of how large language models work. They felt that knowing why AI sometimes produces inaccurate or misleading information would help them use these tools more confidently and critically. For many, this kind of conceptual understanding was seen as just as important as learning how to use individual AI applications.

The responses also highlighted the value of learning from colleagues. Rather than focusing solely on new features or technical capabilities, respondents wanted opportunities to hear how AI is being used in other libraries and what practical lessons have been learned. Concrete examples from everyday library work were often viewed as the most useful source of inspiration because they could be readily adapted to local practice.

Customer services emerged as another major area for development. As AI becomes increasingly common in everyday life, library staff are expected not only to use AI themselves but also to help customers understand its capabilities and limitations and evaluate AI-generated information critically. Many re-



spondents therefore identified AI literacy, media literacy and critical evaluation of information as key areas for future learning.

Finally, the responses make it clear that training needs vary across the profession. Some respondents are still looking for basic knowledge and encouragement to begin using AI, while others are ready to explore more advanced applications. Despite these differences, one message was remarkably consistent: training is most valuable when it is connected to the realities of library work. General introductions to AI provide a useful foundation, but respondents particularly valued practical examples, case studies and guidance that reflect the everyday tasks and challenges faced in libraries.

9.3 Preferred Training Formats

Short webinars were by far the most popular training format. This preference reflects the realities of everyday library work, where customer service responsibilities often make it difficult to attend lengthy training sessions. Short online events are easier to fit into a normal working day and require less time away from daily duties.

The findings suggest that the format of training is as important as its content. Flexible, easily accessible learning opportunities are the best fit for library staff, allowing professional development to take place alongside everyday work.

Form of training	Respondents (n)	Share (%)
Short webinars	454	79.0%
Self-study materials	251	43.7%
Liboppi	204	35.5%
Morning coffees with an AI theme	179	31.1%
Workshops	121	21.0%
Peer learning	108	18.8%
Seminars	84	14.6%
Learning circles	49	8.5%
Other	38	6.6%

Liboppi is already a familiar learning platform for many respondents, and its existing AI-related content is widely seen as a useful starting point. However, many would like to see the range of materials expanded. In addition to introductory content, respondents expressed a need for more practical examples and case studies that demonstrate how AI can be applied in different areas of library work.

The open-ended responses also highlighted interest in AI cafés and other informal discussion-based learning opportunities. Respondents valued these formats because they provide a relaxed, low-threshold environment where colleagues can exchange experiences without needing prior knowledge or experience with AI. Such sessions were seen as an opportunity to gain experience how AI is being used in other libraries, discuss both successful and challenging experiences, and explore practical applications



together. For many respondents, learning from colleagues' everyday experiences was viewed as one of the most effective ways to build confidence and encourage the adoption of AI in their own work.

10. Support for the Use of AI

The responses show that support needs vary across the library sector. Some respondents already use AI regularly and are looking for ways to deepen their skills, while others have yet to begin experimenting with it. As a result, there is no single type of support that meets everyone's needs.

One of the clearest findings is that not every barrier can be addressed through training alone. For some respondents, limited use of AI is not a question of skills but a deliberate choice. Around 15–20% expressed reservations about generative AI based on concerns such as ethics, environmental sustainability, copyright or personal values. These perspectives should not be viewed as obstacles to overcome, but as part of the broader professional discussion within the library sector.

For most respondents, however, the main need is not access to more AI tools but greater confidence in using them appropriately. Practical questions appeared repeatedly throughout the responses: Which AI tools are approved for use at work? What kinds of information can safely be entered into them? In which situations do AI genuinely add value, and when should it be used with caution?

Many respondents also emphasized that learning is an ongoing process rather than something achieved through a single training session. While formal training remains important, respondents highlighted the value of clear organizational policies, support from supervisors and opportunities to learn from colleagues. Sharing practical experiences, discussing both successes and challenges, and seeing how others have integrated AI into their work were all seen as valuable ways to build confidence.

Overall, the responses point to the same conclusion. Libraries need clear guidance, practical training and opportunities for collaborative learning. Developing technical skills is only one part of successful adoption. Equally important is knowing what is permitted within one's own organization, where support is available when questions arise and how colleagues can learn from one another's experiences.

11. Additional Reflections and Concerns

The final open-ended question invited respondents to share any additional thoughts in their own words. These responses provide some of the clearest insights into everyday library work. They reveal not only how library professionals view AI, but also the practical situations they encounter, the uncertainties they face and their hopes for the future. Although the comments vary widely, several common themes emerge.

One recurring topic is the growing impact of AI-generated misinformation in customer service. Respondents described situations in which customers ask for books that do not exist because an AI tool has invented a title or author, or students submit assignments containing references to sources that cannot be verified because AI generated them. Many felt that these cases are no longer isolated incidents but an increasingly familiar part of everyday library work. Rather than changing the library's mission, however, they reinforce it. Helping people find reliable information, evaluate sources and think

critically remains at the heart of library work, while AI literacy is becoming an increasingly important extension of those responsibilities.

Another strong theme is the value of professional expertise. Respondents consistently emphasized that AI could support library work, but it cannot replace the knowledge, judgement and interpersonal skills of library professionals. Expertise in literature, information retrieval and customer service depends on experience, context and human interaction. Several respondents also expressed concern that public discussions about AI sometimes oversimplify library work, creating unrealistic expectations about what technology can replace. As one respondent put it, library work is, above all, human work.

Many comments also focused on how AI should be introduced into workplaces. Respondents stressed that successful adoption requires more than simply providing access to new tools. They called for clear organizational guidance, shared practices, opportunities for discussion and sufficient time to develop new skills. While attitudes towards AI differ, ranging from enthusiastic early adopters to cautious sceptics, most respondents fall somewhere in between. They are interested in exploring AI but want to do so thoughtfully and at a pace that allows confidence and experience to develop.

Several respondents reflected on the library's broader role in an AI-driven society. Rather than trying to be among the first to adopt every recent technology, many felt that libraries should focus on helping customers understand how AI works, when its output can be trusted and when they should be questioned. This was widely seen as a natural continuation of libraries' long-standing work in information literacy, media literacy and digital skills.

Some respondents placed AI within a wider strategic context. They pointed out that libraries have limited resources and many competing priorities. AI is only one area of development and should not come at the expense of other core responsibilities, such as promoting reading, supporting digital inclusion and providing traditional library services. At the same time, several respondents expressed interest in European and open-source AI solutions that better align with public-sector values, particularly regarding transparency, privacy and data governance.

Taken together, the responses suggest three broad perspectives on AI. For some, AI has already become a practical and valuable part of everyday work, helping with tasks such as drafting text, translation, planning and administrative work. In these cases, AI is viewed simply as another professional tool, provided it is used responsibly and human judgement remains central.

A second group approaches AI much more critically. Their concerns center on environmental sustainability, copyright, data protection, information reliability and the growing influence of large technology companies. Some also questioned whether generative AI is fully compatible with the core values of libraries, particularly their commitment to trustworthy information and critical thinking.

Most respondents, however, occupy space between these two positions. They neither reject AI nor embrace it uncritically. Instead, they prefer a gradual approach: following developments, experimenting where AI offers genuine benefits and forming opinions through practical experience. Many emphasized that libraries do not need to adopt every recent technology immediately, but neither should uncertainty prevent thoughtful experimentation.

Overall, the responses do not reveal a profession divided into opposing camps. Instead, they reflect a community of library professionals carefully considering how AI can be integrated into their work while remaining true to the values that define the profession. The discussion is not primarily about AI itself,

but about safeguarding reliable information, supporting learning, promoting equality and maintaining human relationships that have always been at the core of library work.

12. Conclusions

Based on the survey, AI has already become part of everyday library work, but its adoption remains uneven. While some library professionals use AI regularly, others have not incorporated it into their work at all. Basic awareness of AI is widespread, but confident and routine use is still less common, and there is no shared approach across the sector.

Overall, attitudes towards AI are open and curious, but also cautious. Respondents see AI as a useful assistant rather than something that can replace professional judgement. Many expressed a need for clearer guidance, practical training and shared policies to help define where AI is appropriate and where its limitations lie. For many, uncertainty is not primarily about technical skills but about whether uses are permitted.

The survey also highlights how organizational structures influence adoption. In many municipalities, Microsoft Copilot is the default AI tool because it is available through existing workplace systems, while ChatGPT often remains something employees experiment with on their own time. As a result, access and organizational policies often shape AI use more than individual preferences or work-related needs. Questions about permission and organizational support appear throughout the responses. Around half of the respondents feel that using AI is allowed in their work, while many others remain uncertain or believe its use is restricted. This uncertainty alone is often enough to discourage experimentation, even where no formal prohibition exists.

The values traditionally associated with libraries are strongly reflected in respondents' views. Environmental sustainability, data protection, information reliability and ethical concerns were among the most frequently mentioned topics. Respondents also noted practical challenges, such as AI producing convincing but inaccurate or fabricated information. These issues are particularly relevant in customer service and information literacy work, where staff need to help users critically evaluate AI-generated content. As library users increasingly rely on AI, supporting AI literacy is becoming a natural extension of the library's educational role.

Among Swedish-speaking respondents, bilingual work brings an additional perspective. AI-assisted translation has become an important practical tool in daily work, making AI less of an experiment and more of a necessity. At the same time, some respondents expressed concern that relying heavily on machine translation could gradually weaken their own language skills. Trust in AI is also influenced by the varying quality of language models across different languages.

The need for training was one of the clearest findings. Respondents wanted both introductory guidance and more advanced training covering practical applications, ethics and legislation. Learning how to use AI tools was seen as only part of the challenge; equally important is understanding when AI genuinely adds value and when traditional methods remain the better choice. Many also highlighted the importance of peer learning and opportunities to see how colleagues use AI in their everyday work.

The survey suggests that the field is not divided into simple groups of supporters and opponents. Instead, respondents represent a broad spectrum of approaches. Some actively integrate AI into their work and even develop new ways of using it, while others remain cautious or avoid it altogether because of environmental, ethical or copyright concerns. These differing perspectives often coexist within the same workplace.

Where AI is already being used, it most commonly supports brainstorming, communication, text editing, translation and routine administrative tasks. In event planning, it helps generate ideas and prepare materials, while in readers' advisory work it can provide inspiration for book recommendations. Nevertheless, respondents consistently emphasized that professional expertise, personal reading experience and interaction with customers remain at the heart of library services.

One of the report's clearest findings is that permission alone does not lead to adoption. Although most respondents believe AI can be used in their work, only a small proportion use it regularly. This suggests that the main barriers are not technological but practical and organizational. Wider adoption depends on having time to experiment, access to concrete examples and confidence that AI can be used responsibly and appropriately.

Overall, the findings describe a sector in transition. AI is no longer a novelty, but it has not yet become an established part of everyday library work. Skills, confidence and working practices continue to vary across organizations and individuals. The challenge is therefore not simply learning to use a recent technology but adapting professional practices to a changing information environment.

The question is no longer whether AI belongs in libraries, but how can it best support the library's core mission. The results suggest that successful adoption will depend on clear guidance, organizational support and opportunities for continuous learning, enabling AI to become a practical and well-integrated part of everyday library work rather than remaining an occasional experiment or a source of uncertainty.

13. Methodological notes

Survey design

The survey combined multiple-choice questions with open-ended responses. The multiple-choice questions provided comparable numerical data, while the open responses added context, explanations and different perspectives that numbers alone cannot show. Many of the report's main findings are based on examining these two types of data together.

The respondents

A total of 575 library professionals responded to the survey, providing a broad view of the Finnish library field. Respondents came from all AKE regions, and their regional distribution closely reflects the actual distribution of library staff across Finland. This means the data offers a balanced and representative picture of the field rather than reflecting the views of only a few groups.

Analysis of the open responses

The open responses were analyzed using thematic coding. Given the large amount of qualitative data, the report focuses on the themes that appeared most often and best illustrate the experiences and views expressed by respondents. Individual comments and less common perspectives are not presented separately, but they are reflected in the overall picture.

Points to consider when interpreting the results

As with any survey, the results should be interpreted with a few limitations in mind. Some questions relied on self-assessment, meaning the responses reflect how participants perceive their own skills rather than providing an objective measure. Open-ended questions also tend to attract respondents with stronger opinions, who are often more motivated to write detailed comments. These factors do not undermine the findings, but they provide useful context for interpreting the results.

Use of AI in preparing the report

Anthropic's Claude and ChatGPT were used during the preparation of this report to support data organization, identify recurring themes, assist with translation and language editing, and help organize the large amount of material. These tools contributed to improving the clarity and readability of the report, while also making the translation process more efficient. All interpretations, conclusions and final editorial decisions remain the responsibility of the author.