



Uganda Library and Information Association

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Office of the ULIA President

Monday October 06, 2025

MUBS Library Week – Speech by the President, ULIA

Event: MUBS Library Week Opening Ceremony

Date: Monday, 6th October 2025

Venue: Library, Makerere University Business School (MUBS)

Occasion: Library Week under the theme: “**Informed Readers, Empowered Communities**”

Speaker: Dr. Fredrick Kiwuwa Lugya, President, Uganda Library and Information Association

[Salutation]

The Top Administration of Makerere University Business School,
The Acting School Librarian, Mr. David Ochari,
Distinguished Academic Staff, Researchers, and Librarians,
Dear Students,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

All protocols respectfully observed.

Good morning!

It is with immense pleasure and a deep sense of honour that I stand before you today, at the invitation of the MUBS Library, to officially open this year’s Library Week. I extend my sincere gratitude to Mr. David Ochari and the entire library team for this kind invitation and for organizing what promises to be a week of insightful engagement. The theme, “**Informed Readers, Empowered Communities,**” is not only timely but profoundly critical as we navigate the complexities of the 21st century.

As we gather here—a confluence of administrators, knowledge creators (our faculty and researchers), knowledge navigators (our librarians), and knowledge seekers (our students)—we are all united by a common purpose: the transformative power of information.

Today, I wish to reflect on this theme through a dual lens: the unchanging value of a strong reading culture and the evolving, critical role of libraries and librarians in the era of Artificial Intelligence.

The Bedrock: The Enduring Power of a Reading Culture

In a world of fleeting social media snippets and AI-generated summaries, the act of deep, focused reading is more revolutionary than ever. An **informed reader** is not merely someone who has scanned a headline or asked a chatbot for a quick answer. An informed reader is one who has cultivated the patience to engage with complex arguments, the critical thinking to analyse subtext and bias, and the empathy to step into another person's worldview through literature.

This is the bedrock of an **empowered community**. A community of students who can discern credible sources from misinformation is empowered to excel academically. A community of researchers and academics who are widely read is empowered to push the boundaries of knowledge and innovation. A community of business leaders and citizens who are grounded in a culture of reading is empowered to make sound decisions, foster economic growth, and strengthen our social fabric. The library, therefore, is not just a repository of books; it is the gymnasium where we exercise and strengthen our minds.

The Catalyst: Libraries and Librarians in the Age of AI

Now, some may ask: "In an era where AI can summon the world's knowledge in seconds, what is the role of a physical library or a human librarian?"

This is a crucial question, and my answer is this: **AI makes librarians more important, not less.**

Artificial Intelligence is a powerful tool, but it is not a panacea. It excels at processing vast datasets and finding patterns, but it lacks human judgment, ethical understanding, and contextual wisdom. We are already witnessing challenges like AI "hallucinations," embedded biases, and the creation of sophisticated misinformation.

This is where the modern librarian, your guides here at the MUBS Library, transforms from a keeper of collections to a **crucial interpreter and guide in the digital wilderness**. Their role is evolving in three key ways:

1. **From Curators to Sense-Makers:** Librarians are no longer just curating physical books. They are curating digital resources, teaching digital literacy, and helping you, the users, to navigate the complex information ecosystem. They teach you how to ask the right questions, how to verify AI-generated content, and how to use these new tools in your research and studies ethically. They serve as the human bridge between raw data and genuine understanding.
2. **Champions of Critical Literacy:** In an AI-driven world, the ability to critically evaluate information is the most valuable skill. Librarians are at the forefront of instilling this skill. They empower you to be not just consumers of information, but critical thinkers who can interrogate sources, understand algorithms, and recognize digital manipulation.

3. **Guardians of Equity and Inclusivity:** As AI systems often reflect the biases of their creators, there is a risk of deepening the digital divide. Libraries stand as democratizing forces. They provide free and equitable access to both traditional and cutting-edge AI tools, ensuring that every student, regardless of their background, has the opportunity to become an informed reader and an empowered professional.

A Call to Action

Therefore, to our **students**, I urge you: see this library not as a silent, archaic building, but as a dynamic command centre for your intellectual and professional development. Engage with the librarians. Let them teach you how to harness AI responsibly while deepening your reading culture.

To the **academic staff and researchers**, collaborate with our librarians. Integrate information literacy and AI ethics into your curricula. They are your partners in cultivating the next generation of critical thinkers.

To the **administration**, continue to invest in our libraries and our librarians. Supporting their professional development in this digital age is not an overhead cost; it is a direct investment in the quality of education and research at MUBS.

And to my fellow **librarians**, I say: wear your new roles with pride. You are the stewards of our reading culture and the navigators of our digital future. Your work has never been more vital.

As I conclude, the path to “**Informed Readers, Empowered Communities**” runs directly through our libraries. It is a path paved with the timeless bricks of a deep reading culture and illuminated by the guiding light of skilled librarians who can help us harness the power of AI with wisdom and discernment.

Let us use this Library Week to celebrate this powerful synergy. Let us engage in the discussions, explore the resources, and reaffirm our commitment to making MUBS a beacon of information, knowledge, and empowerment.

I hereby declare the MUBS Library Week, 2025, officially open!

Thank you, and may you have an enlightening and productive week.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Fredrick Kiwuwa Lugya (PhD)
PRESIDENT
Uganda Library and Information Association