

## PERSONAL LIBRARIES AND AI-ASSISTED READING: OPPORTUNITIES, RISKS, AND RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

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**Abstract:** The article investigates how artificial intelligence (AI) can be integrated into the study, organization, and reinterpretation of personal book collections. The aim is to explore how AI transforms personal libraries from static archives into dynamic, self-reflexive systems capable of generating meaning, predicting reading needs, and personalizing intellectual experiences. The research uses a qualitative case study based on the author’s own library, focusing on a corpus of over thirty titles related to Homer. Through algorithmic analysis and structuring, the initial accumulation of books was transformed into a coherent reading itinerary, guided by thematic, chronological, and interpretative connections. The methodology combines bibliographic mapping, AI-assisted data structuring, and hermeneutic interpretation. Findings reveal that AI tools can optimize reading time, enhance comparative comprehension, and support cognitive retention, turning the library into an intellectual laboratory. However, the study also identifies risks: algorithmic uniformity, the loss of material engagement with the book, and reduced reader autonomy. The article proposes hybrid models where AI complements rather than replaces human discernment, envisioning reading as a co-creative process between human and machine. Thus, personal libraries become predictive and affective archives that reflect both cultural memory and cognitive identity.

**Keywords:** Personal libraries, artificial intelligence, AI-assisted reading, algorithms, cognitive mapping, reader autonomy, cultural memory.

**JEL Classification:** D83, L86, O33, Z11, Z18

### 1 Introduction

The personal library can be viewed as a material embodiment of the educational endeavor centered on the competence of “learning to learn” (lifelong learning). Evoking the idea that listening to a lecture “is in many respects like reading a book”, Mortimer J. Adler and Charles Van Doren develop the analogy between a teacher present in the classroom and a book as an absent teacher – one that nevertheless encourages independent inquiry: “If you ask a living teacher a question, he will probably answer you.

If you do not understand something he says, you can save yourself the trouble of thinking by asking him what he means. But if you ask a question of a book, you must answer it yourself. In this respect, a book is like nature or the world: if you question it, it will only answer you to the extent that you think and reason for yourself” (Adler and Doren, 2014).

Within this perspective, the personal library becomes not merely a repository of books, but a space of continuous learning – an adaptive environment shaped by changing intellectual and professional needs that extend beyond formal education.

Reading, understood as a form of intellectual labor that requires discipline, specific skills, and sustained attention, also becomes a form of solitary inquiry and self-dialogue. It acquires the

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value of meditation or introspection, a dialogue with oneself or with the text of the book, helping one to preserve integrity, strengthen mental resilience, and reaffirm one's value orientation in a turbulent world. It is not necessarily about building an ivory tower of comfort from books, but rather about maintaining an individual culture or art of solitary reading, in which active focus and analytical assimilation of ideas become the main instruments of intellectual development. This, in turn, does not isolate us from the world, but rather makes our relationship with it more conscious, deliberate, wise, active, and responsible.

In 2019, a group of twelve artificial intelligence experts convened to analyze, within a scenario-based workshop, the results of an extensive Delphi study dedicated to the future of artificial intelligence.

The meeting aimed to address three fundamental questions: which AI-based applications would be desirable in a decade's time; what technological and social crossroads could determine the direction of AI development – toward progress or risk; and, finally, how national policies and European regulations could contribute to making an optimistic future for Europe by 2030 more likely. From this discussion emerged a complex yet coherent picture of the aspirations related to AI use.

Among the most notable outcomes of the reflection were ideas such as the development of personalized medicine capable of revolutionizing diagnosis and treatment through precision and anticipation; the emergence of intelligent tutors that accelerate learning processes by adapting to each learner's rhythm and style; and the design of digital assistants able to take over repetitive tasks – from routine shopping to the automatic completion of tax returns.

At the same time, the experts emphasized the importance of “intelligent support for individual work organization (for example, prioritizing tasks) and for scheduling. Such a system should also include sufficient leisure, rest, and quality time” (Ramge, 2020).

The encounter between personal libraries and artificial intelligence tools opens a promising field of research, situated at the intersection of bibliology, information science, and reading studies. The personal library today expands its functionalities and takes shape as a dynamic archive that can be reconfigured through algorithms for organizing, classifying, and contextualizing readings.

This reconceptualization implies not only a change in perspective on the material object of the book, but also a shift in the hermeneutic paradigm: reading becomes simultaneously an individual and a technologically assisted act, in which the interaction between human and algorithm produces new forms of textual (informational) comprehension.

We may assume that artificial intelligence can assist the reader in two fundamental directions. The first concerns the structure of the collection: through automatic indexing, metadata generation, identification of thematic connections, and the elaboration of personalized recommendations (reading itineraries, conceptual maps, interpretive patterns, etc.), the personal library becomes a self-reflexive system capable of suggesting alternative reading paths.

The second direction concerns the reading process itself: digital tools allow the optimization of reading time, the stimulation of memory and retention capacity, and the intensification of interpretations and comparative connections. Algorithms can signal correspondences, recurring themes, stylistic evolutions, or intertextual dialogues (in the case, for example, of literary texts), but the responsibility for critical judgment and value selection remains with the reader.

## **2 Rethinking the Personal Library in the Age of AI-Assisted Reading**

AI-assisted reading thus acquires an interdisciplinary dimension, as it can integrate linguistic, thematic, and quantitative analyses applicable to the corpus of a personal library. The advantages of this model are many: rapid access to information, personalization of reading paths, increased cognitive comfort, and the possibility of extending the volume of assimilated knowledge. However, risks must also be assessed.

Among these are the danger of interpretive uniformity (by reducing hermeneutic diversity to a few algorithmic patterns), the diminishing of direct contact with the materiality of the book (an essential dimension of the reading experience), and the risk of excessive dependence on technological tools, which can erode the reader’s critical autonomy.

Nick Bostrom proposes a well-known typology: AI as “oracles, genies, sovereigns, and tools” (Bostrom, 2016). In the context of the personal library, while AI may serve as a useful tool (a classifier, a recommender), it can also become a “sovereign” monopolizing access to knowledge. If the reader relies exclusively on the algorithm, the personal library ceases to be a space of intellectual freedom and becomes a territory governed by opaque logics. Hence the paradox: the more “intelligent” the personal library becomes, the greater the risk of diminishing the reader’s autonomy.

Consequently, a relevant research direction in this field lies in developing hybrid models for organizing personal libraries, in which artificial intelligence does not substitute but rather complements the reader’s discernment. AI-assisted reading should be understood as a process of intellectual co-creation rather than a simple externalization of memory – a process in which the algorithm and the human subject collaborate in generating meaning and expanding the horizon of knowledge.

Kissinger, Schmidt, and Mundie warn that AI is transforming not only science but also global relations: “the development of AI systems is capable of radically transforming our perception of reality and truth; the very process of cognition; and the biological evolution of humankind” (Kissinger et al., 2025). A predictive, AI-assisted library could anticipate the reader’s needs, with the algorithm suggesting volumes from the collection based on biographical contexts (age, career, social events).

Likewise, AI can detect in an individual’s readings patterns of preference, thematic obsessions, and cognitive gaps. As a result, a “textual portrait” of the library owner – a kind of intellectual radiography – can be created, which in turn becomes a valuable research source.

Bibliographic sources in the field of AI suggest several research directions regarding the relationship between the collection of a personal library and AI tools: the affective mapping of reading, the transformation of the reader’s intellectual portrait under the influence of AI, and the algorithmic anticipation of reading and research trajectories.

### **3 Case Study**

In the current context, marked by the rapid development of AI, a new paradigm is taking shape: the library is no longer merely a collection, but a dynamic network of sources that can be reconfigured through digital tools into genuine maps of reading. A striking example is the way in which a list of titles dedicated to Homer from our own library was transformed, with the help of AI, into a coherent itinerary of research and reading.

The corpus (the list of books from the personal library) that we have offered to the AI algorithm for qualitative and quantitative reading analysis included over thirty titles: major monographs, multiple translations of the “Iliad” and the “Odyssey” in Russian, Romanian, and German, thematic studies (on the myth of Helen, the topography of Ulysses, the relationship between Homer and Hesiod), as well as editions of the “Homeric Hymns” and the parodic poem “The Battle of Frogs and Mice”. Such diversity risked becoming overwhelming: instead of a guiding thread, the reader faced an almost chaotic list. The intervention of AI radically changed this situation.

First, the algorithm proposed a phased structuring. Instead of starting directly with the epics, it recommended a preliminary stage of historical and archaeological context, followed by monographs on Homer’s life and era. Only then did it proceed to the “Iliad” and “Odyssey”, beginning with a “canonical” translator and later comparing multiple versions.

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In parallel, auxiliary texts – the hymns, apocrypha, and scholarly commentaries – were distributed across later stages to strengthen analysis. This sequencing produced a clear epistemic effect: from the chaos of accumulation emerged a reading map in which each volume had its place and function.

A second level involved the qualitative analysis of connections. AI suggested correlations between studies on the Trojan War and translations of the epics, between research on Ulysses’ journeys and literary commentaries.

Thus, the library began to take shape not as a list but as a network of meanings, in which the reader could trace themes such as historical memory, the image of the journey, and the structure of myth. Highlighting these internal links stimulated a comparative reading, richer than mere linear progression.

A third level was the quantitative dimension. The algorithm estimated the time required to read the corpus – about thirteen months at a rate of two to three hours of daily reading – dividing the plan into two- to three-month phases. This temporal concretization transformed the project into a realistic program, with measurable goals and a sustained rhythm. The personal library thus became a pedagogical laboratory, where reading was not only a pleasure but also an exercise in intellectual discipline.

This case study shows how AI can enhance the value of a personal library. From a simple corpus of disparate titles, digital tools can construct a coherent reading strategy: logical sequencing, thematic connections, temporal quantification, geographical extension. The risk of interpretive uniformity and the illusion of exhaustiveness remain, yet the reader’s critical responsibility is not diminished but, on the contrary, reinforced. The choice of path belongs to the human being, while AI provides maps, compasses, and instruments of orientation.

In conclusion, the personal experience of reading Homer through one’s own library, reconfigured with the support of AI, exemplifies how technologies can reshape our relationship with books.

The personal library becomes an augmented space – a living archive, a matrix of knowledge, a laboratory of reflection. In this sense, the case study dedicated to books by and about Homer (and his fictional universes) is not merely an individual experience, but also an argument for reconsidering the role of AI in managing private cultural heritage for purposes of self-education, professionalization, and lifelong learning.

#### **4 Conclusions**

The integration of artificial intelligence into the management of personal libraries and the construction of reading plans opens an interdisciplinary field of research at the intersection of bibliology, reading studies, and information science.

The AI-assisted personal library occupies a frontier zone between memory and prediction, between the owner’s identity and a network of interconnected meanings. On one hand, it promises numerous advantages related to the qualitative and quantitative organization of reading. On the other, it raises profound dilemmas concerning the autonomy of the reader, algorithmic control, and the very nature of knowledge itself.

In this context, the philosophical reflection on the limits of artificial intelligence becomes essential. As the researcher Yvonne Hofstetter observes, “it certainly seems that intelligent machines, in the long run, will only be able to imitate human emotions, creativity, and instinct. What will remain, in the long term, as a distinguishing feature for us are precisely those Kantian qualities of conscience, sense of responsibility, and the capacity for moral action.

These are precisely the cause and purpose of the human being as the ‘crown of creation’. In the long run, it is hard to see why machines – no matter how intelligent and human-like they may appear – should ever be anything other than created objects, nothing more than a new repertoire

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of instruments: perfected and more advanced, indeed, but still a set of tools that serve humanity and remain under human control. One simply needs to make that clear” (Hofstetter, 2014).

This perspective reinforces the idea that, even within algorithmic environments, personal libraries retain their anthropocentric core: they remain extensions of human consciousness and moral agency rather than its substitutes. Artificial intelligence can enhance the organization and accessibility of knowledge, but the ethical and existential dimensions of reading continue to belong to the human domain.

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