Libraries have faced massive changes since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic forced Government to implement various levels of lockdown. The impact on our services is at present still not fully comprehensible as libraries across South Africa, and indeed the world, are still attempting to get back to a measure of their former selves. Inequalities that have plagued us for decades played out exponentially in this regard making it harder for some communities to bounce back to offer services of an acceptable standard. The ability therefore to provide library services during the lockdown period has also varied, not only between sectors of the profession, but also within sectors, dependent on the Province, Municipality or institution in which a library operates.

The LIASA Conference 2021 will examine LIASA and the LIS profession through the lens of the pandemic and the effect that it has had on our profession and services. The upcoming Conference seeks to explore this by having academic papers, discussions, conversational presentations and electronic posters/lightning sessions on the following themes:

- Measuring the impact and value of libraries in providing services during the various levels of lockdown, including its use (or not) of 4IR technologies;
- Libraries and librarians as providers of equitable access to credible information, thereby advancing social justice, among others, in society, with particular regard to current circumstances;
- The new role of LIASA as a partner in the changed LIS sector including in the broader Galleries, Libraries, Archives and Museums (GLAM) environment;
- The future role of LIS and LIS Education in a post COVID world

The theme, **LIBRARIES MATTER! - REFLECTING ON A YEAR OF CHANGE**, paves the way for us to reflect on the current state of libraries and librarianship, and the envisioned future for the sector, while setting down steps on how this evolution should happen. Such a reflective process should provide an honest look at what is and what can be; it requires visionary leadership and strategic thinking, and most importantly, a willingness to change.
LIASA Conference 2021 gives you the opportunity to share your experiences, best practices, challenges and innovative solutions towards a LIS sector and LIASA that can demonstrate why Libraries Matter despite the massive changes wrought on our profession.

Sub-Themes:

1. Innovation, reinvention and renovation

   COVID-19 has forced libraries to re-evaluate their roles in the communities that they serve, be they academic, school, public or specialist. This evaluation has emphasised the need to innovate and reinvent the library to fit the “new normal” idea of what a library is. It has also required the renovation and rethinking of library spaces to accommodate these new roles. This theme continues the examination started in previous conferences around aspects of:

   - New services
   - Innovative services and spaces
   - Repackaging traditional services
   - Reskilling the LIS professional
   - Reinventing the LIS curriculum
   - Libraries in the 4th Industrial Revolution

2. Librarians and the LIS profession in the current landscape

   Along with the introspection LIS has to do in relation to its role in society, so too do we have to grapple with uncomfortable ideas about our roles as librarians and the impact that this has on our profession. Never more than now do we have to answer the age-old question of why we are needed in a world where Google is king. This theme explores the idea of:

   - What does the future hold for the profession within this changing environment in which we have to operate?
   - Where is the office and where is the client? How do we remain relevant and efficient?
   - Managing our well-being in the complexities of the current situation;
   - What role should the Professional Body play to strengthen the LIS profession in South Africa?
3. **Impact and influence**

   It is our assertion that society needs libraries and librarians, especially in an age of fake news and the rapid proliferation of information. The pandemic has further highlighted the need for libraries to act as providers of credible information. Yet despite this assertion, we are still grappling with basic misconceptions of libraries and librarians / information workers. This theme explores the idea of:

   - What impact are we really having on society and the communities we serve?
   - What stories are we telling to change the misconceptions about libraries and librarians?
   - What success stories can we share?
   - How are we contributing to global conversations?

The deadline for receipt of abstracts is **12 July 2021**. Authors of successful submissions will be notified by no later than **26 July 2021**.

Navigate to the [Abstract Submission Portal](#) on the LIASA website.

For general queries contact: [conference@liasa.org.za](mailto:conference@liasa.org.za)

**IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT THE SUBMISSION OF ABSTRACTS**

1. Authors are invited to submit abstracts for:
   a. Oral, research based presentations (15 min), or
   b. Viewpoint papers (firmly supported by the literature, careful analysis and sound arguments (15 min), or
   c. Conversational presentations (practical experience, cases studies and best practice) (15 min), or
   d. Lightning talks (5 min, accompanied by an electronic poster on a single slide)

2. Abstracts for research-based papers should include an introduction, statement of the research problem, methodology, findings (could be preliminary), and implications of the study. Reviewers are looking for studies that relate to the theme, that are original, and well-written.

3. All contributions must be presented in English.

4. Abstracts, including references (where applicable) must not exceed 500 words.

5. The abstracts of accepted papers and posters, as well as the speaker bios and photos, will be published on the LIASA and conference websites. Speaker bios and photos will be obtained from authors of accepted
papers. By submitting your abstract, you agree to it being published on the LIASA and conference websites. Selected papers might be considered for publication in an edition of the South African Journal for Libraries and Information Sciences (SAJLIS).

6. The final version of the presentation (on the conference PowerPoint template) must be submitted in electronic format before the conference and full text document of the presentation must be submitted in electronic format on or before a date that will be communicated to authors of accepted papers. The presentations and full text documents will be uploaded to the LIASA website after the conference. Dates for papers that might be considered for publication in the South African Journal of Libraries and Information Sciences will be communicated with the relevant authors.

7. All accepted presentations will be pre-recorded on a date and time that will be communicated to the authors. It is mandatory for presenters to register and attend the conference, and especially to be present during their session for live discussions.

8. **Please note that all presenters must be registered for the conference by 31 August 2021 and they are responsible for their own expenses to attend the conference.**

9. No correspondence will be entered into about acceptance or non-acceptance of papers.

**Timeline**

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>17 June 2021</td>
<td>First Call for papers circulated</td>
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<tr>
<td>12 July 2021</td>
<td>Submission of abstracts close</td>
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<tr>
<td>26 July 2021</td>
<td>Last day for authors of accepted papers and posters to be notified</td>
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<tr>
<td>31 August 2021</td>
<td>Last day for registration of presenters of accepted papers and posters</td>
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<tr>
<td>13-16 September 2021</td>
<td>Recording of presentations</td>
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<td>21–22 September 2021</td>
<td>Test runs for presenters and moderators of the Q&amp;A sessions</td>
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<tr>
<td>27-30 September 2021</td>
<td>21st LIASA Annual Conference</td>
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<tr>
<td>08 October 2021</td>
<td>Final date for submitting PowerPoint presentations and full text documents of the presentations</td>
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