

Bridging the Digital Divide: Romania's Academic Publishing at a Crossroads

Editorial

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In the shifting terrain of scholarly communication, Romania's academic publishing ecosystem stands at a critical juncture. This issue of the Romanian Journal of Library and Information Science offers a panoramic view of the challenges and aspirations shaping the digital society and scientific publishing in Eastern Europe. What emerges is a portrait of a system striving to modernize, yet constrained by structural inertia and uneven digital integration.

The editorial voices of Nelly Țurcan and Elena Țîrziman converge on a shared diagnosis: while Romanian and Moldovan institutions have made commendable strides in digitizing resources and formalizing editorial policies, the path to international visibility remains steep. The Republic of Moldova, for instance, boasts high indexing rates in national platforms like IBN, yet only a fraction of its journals appear in Scopus or Web of Science. Editors cite limited funding, outdated infrastructure, and a lack of strategic policy support as persistent barriers.

Romania's own digital society, as dissected by Țîrziman, reveals a layered complexity. The concept of "Society 5.0" — a techno-integrated vision of human life — remains aspirational. Despite the proliferation of e-Governance, e-Learning, and smart technologies, the human dimension of digital interaction is often underdeveloped. Ethical frameworks, digital rights, and equitable access lag behind the pace of technological adoption.

Perhaps most telling is Ștefan-Cristian Ciortan's granular analysis of the University of Bucharest's digital infrastructure. His audit of faculty websites exposes a fragmented landscape: inconsistent interfaces, outdated links, and uneven access to resources. Some faculties offer robust digital libraries and Moodle integration; others barely mention their library services. In a post-pandemic world where digital access is no longer optional, such disparities are more than cosmetic — they are symptomatic of deeper institutional neglect.

What Romania's academic community needs is not just more technology, but better governance. Editorial independence, transparent peer review, and responsible AI integration must be matched by coherent national strategies. Funding must be tied to performance, but also to inclusion. The digital society must be human-centered, not merely data-driven.

The editorial challenge is clear: to transform digital ambition into sustainable infrastructure, and to elevate local scholarship onto the global stage without sacrificing its cultural specificity. Romania has the intellectual capital. What it needs now is political will, institutional coordination, and a renewed commitment to editorial excellence.