

The integral role of systematic reviews in the Information and Knowledge Management field

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One of the adverse outcomes of the modern information age is the overabundance of available information and data. This is especially noticeable within the academic research domain, where the flood of information, to the point of information overload, has become inescapable, as research scholars frequently find it challenging to select the most relevant information from this ever-expanding body of scholarly literature.

The Information Sciences field classifies information resources into three overarching categories: (1) Primary resources that comprise the original materials and data generated via research. (2) Secondary resources draw upon primary resources as units of analysis to review, analyse, interpret, and/or synthesise findings. (3) Tertiary resources provide comprehensive overviews by summarising and indexing primary and/or secondary sources, thereby assisting researchers to find and understand what already exists in the body of knowledge.

Central to the development of secondary and tertiary information resources are systematic reviews, both scoping and literature reviews. These reviews are characterised by their rigour, comprehensiveness, transparency, replicability, using predefined procedures and protocols designed to minimise bias and thereby strengthening methodological integrity. By synthesising findings across multiple studies, systematic reviews reveal prevailing trends and research gaps, providing a foundation for future research.

In my role as Editor-in-Chief, over the last few years I have observed a marked increase in research employing systematic scoping and/or literature reviews. This trend highlights the important role of systematic reviews in strengthening research methodology in the field.

This year's collection of articles in the *South African Journal of Information Management* (SAJIM) reflects how digital transformation is reshaping both public and private sectors in Southern Africa. From frameworks on cloud-computing readiness, digitalisation in insurance operations, Artificial Intelligence (AI)-driven personalisation in the retail sector, chatbots in customer query resolution to FinTech usage in underserved communities. These contributions highlight the adoption of emerging and disruptive technologies as well as the need for models that guide their integration. The research demonstrates how South Africa, and the broader region, is dealing with questions of efficiency, service delivery, and customer engagement in an increasingly digital world.

Equally noteworthy are the studies looking at the integration of knowledge management, governance, and ethics. The articles on knowledge management strategies, Big Data governance, and indigenous knowledge for sustainability remind us that these innovations are only as valuable as the human and information technology systems that support them. The articles on cybersecurity awareness among students, phishing attack frameworks, and ethical considerations in AI-driven higher education underscore the inherent responsibilities that accompany technological adoption.

Finally, this issue extends beyond South Africa's borders, offering comparative perspectives such as digital health interventions in Kenya and records management practices in Lesotho. Whether focused on augmented and virtual reality in e-commerce, social media cognition, or competitive intelligence in the Public Relations industry, the research affirms that digital transformation is no longer a peripheral concern but now central to organisational strategy, public policy, and societal well-being. Collectively, the articles reflect both the diversity, depth and rigour of the scholarship in the field, setting the stage for further dialogue and innovation across the African digital landscape.

In closing, I extend my sincere appreciation to all the authors for publishing in the *South African Journal of Information Management* (SAJIM). I am equally grateful to the reviewers for their rigorous evaluations and valuable

insights throughout the peer-review process. Lastly, a word of thanks to AOSIS for their professionalism and dedication to ensuring the highest standards in the publication of this journal.
