



Editorial: The Integration of Artificial Intelligence into the African Humanities Scholarship

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The rapid increase of internet connectivity has resulted in 5.52 billion global internet users in 2024, including approximately 570 million in Africa (Kemp). This exponential growth has catalysed significant sociocultural transformations and computationally-assisted studies, forming the foundation for contemporary African digital culture. African users, in particular, leverage platforms such as TikTok, Facebook, and X (formerly Twitter) as tools for liberation and social activism, often operating beyond the direct influence of global powers, including the United Nations (Waliya 23). Notable examples include the socio-political upheavals of the Arab Spring in Egypt, Tunisia, and Libya; the #EndSARS protests in Nigeria; and the recent Gen Z-led protests in Kenya.

African digital culture, undoubtedly, has become an enduring phenomenon, yielding substantial benefits. These include enabling digital activism, providing pathways to stardom through video content creation, and compelling governments to address pressing societal issues. The youth, in particular, have embraced digital technologies for their socio-technological and socioeconomic advantages, fostering a collective sense of empowerment and social responsibility. While challenges inherent to these digital transformations

exist, this discourse emphasises their positive impacts.

Unlike traditional African cultural practices—such as the communal decision-making that required a market-day assembly—modern digital platforms like WhatsApp forums, Facebook Village Groups, Zoom, and Google Meet now facilitate instantaneous interactions and conversations. These tools have reshaped social exchanges, fostering sustainable and harmonious environments, physically or virtually.

Moreover, the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) into African digital ecosystems has further transformed its socioeconomic dynamics. Platforms such as Facebook Reels, YouTube, and TikTok have enabled Gen Z creators to achieve financial independence through their innovative digital skits and content creation. These advancements underscore the transformative potential of AI in alleviating poverty and redefining African digital culture.

The transformative landscape of African digital humanities inspired the theme of Volume 2, Number 1 of the *Multilingual African Digital Semiotics and e-Lit Journal (MADSEJ)*, October 2024: *The Integration of Artificial Intelligence into the African Humanities scholarship*. This edition

deliberately highlights the role of AI in African humanities scholarship, focusing on digital humanities, literary production, algorithmic vernaculars, and the linguistic practices of African Gen Z on platforms like TikTok, X, and Facebook, reemphasising the different roles that virtual spaces have played “in vulgarising African digital contents” (Ajah 59) .

One significant contribution to this Number is the work of Odili and Mabude, who explore the application of algorithmic models in preserving African digital culture through the African Buffalo Optimisation (ABO) algorithm. Their study demonstrates how ABO can fine-tune algorithmic Djembe, digital Griot narratives, optimised Adinkra symbols, cultural heritage analytics, and African digital art generation, while safeguarding the African identity in the digital age.

Ajah's article advances the discourse by employing stylometry and computational literary studies (CLS) tools such as AntConc to analyse Ahmadou Kourouma's *Quand on refuse on dit non (QOR)*. His research elucidates the author's artistic engagement with interethnic conflict in Côte d'Ivoire, showcasing how CLS methods give insights into postcolonial dynamics, otherness, and identity that elude traditional literary analysis.

Ugwumbo and Egbe's contribution focuses on digital poetics and the climate crisis through their analysis of Waliya's *Climatophosis*, a digital eco-poem. By applying Halliday's systemic meta-function of ideation and Di Rosario's Entax theory, they argue for the eco-poem's efficacy as a medium for climate advocacy, emphasising its potential to inspire environmental stewardship.

Similarly, Waliya and Mbey examine the dynamics of sentiment polarity within a WhatsApp group of lecturers and administrative staff in the Department of Modern Languages and Translation Studies, University of Calabar. Using Jacques Derrida's concept of "pharmakon" to analyse 5,727 messages, their study uncovers the coexistence of positive and negative sentiments, highlighting the nuanced

interplay of human emotions in digital communication.

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