

Foreword

The book, *Handbook of Research on Managing Intellectual Property in Digital Libraries*, could not have come at a better time. Libraries, especially, those associated with institutions of higher learning in developing countries, are increasingly metamorphosing into digital libraries, thereby inadvertently creating information environments that necessitate discussions revolving around intellectual property and ethical issues in the usage of information and other digital objects. The book and its authors describe the current status of digital libraries in various contexts as well as offer information providers, and more particularly libraries, and users with tips on how to navigate the digital terrain that has characterized the 21st century. The authors have discussed a variety of issues spanning 20 chapters, and focusing on such broad topics as social media and/or networking, open access, development of digital libraries, information use in the digital libraries, copyright, information management systems and tools, and managing intellectual property rights in the digital era. These issues are not only pertinent to information consumers but also information providers who would want to update their knowledge on the best practices associated with the ethical usage of information as well as the management of intellectual property in digital libraries. The emergence of information and communication technologies (ICTs) has ushered in an era whereby intellectual products are widely disseminated and consumed through a variety of technologies including mobile phones, tablets, kindles, e-readers, laptop computers, and other similar portable technologies. As a result, the 21st century has witnessed an increase in the number of lawsuits associated with intellectual property rights infringements. These have cost companies and other intellectual property consumers huge sums of money in settlements. As key players in their intermediary role between producers of intellectual digital products and users, the libraries have a bigger role to play in the 21st century and beyond. The book and its authors, while focusing on the readers' ethical usage of intellectual products, provide the libraries with foundational knowledge on how to manage intellectual property in the digital era in their support for users of intellectual products. Although the authors are drawn from the library and information science field, its multi-disciplinary nature endears it to scholars from other fields. The book may also be a valuable resource for publishers, intellectual property agencies such as the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) and other United Nations agencies, other information professionals, and vendors, among others.

Omwoyo Bosire Onyancha
University of South Africa, South Africa