

News from the
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News from the MIT Libraries, an official publication of the MIT Libraries, is published twice a year, in the fall and spring.

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Design

Pentagram

From the Director

A great privilege of working at MIT is seeing how the Institute serves as a launch pad for new generations of scholars, researchers, leading thinkers, and problem-solvers. At the MIT Libraries, everything we do to increase access to information is driven by our mission to empower and inspire humanity.

- The MIT Prize for Open Data, presented jointly by the Libraries and the School of Science, is aimed at trainees to encourage open data practices with the next generation of researchers. As the 10 winning projects from 2023 (p. 4) demonstrate, the future looks very bright.
- Sylvia Figueroa-Ortiz shares her experiences as our inaugural MIT Libraries-ACRL Diversity Alliance Administrative Fellow (p. 8). Through mentorship with Associate Director Alexia Hudson-Ward and contributions to our Community Engagement program, Sylvia gained firsthand experience of leadership in practice, equipping her to succeed as an upcoming academic library leader.
- The goals of our Women@MIT archival initiative (p. 10) are manifold — to elevate the work of marginalized individuals, to provide rich resources for researchers, and to enhance understanding of the history of science and technology. Hopefully these stories will also “encourage more women to become engaged in science, technology, and engineering,” in the words of Shirley Sontheimer, whose generous gift helped launch the initiative.

Your support allows the Libraries to impact generations to come and to continue to supply one of the greatest resources a library can provide: inspiration. Thank you.



All my best,
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Photo
Shawn Henry



Rewarding Excellence in Open Data

MIT researchers recognized at second annual awards celebration

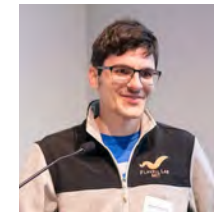
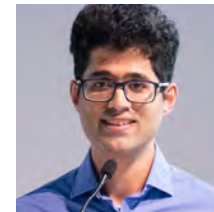


The second annual MIT Prize for Open Data, which included a \$2,500 cash prize, was awarded to 10 individual and group research projects in October. Presented jointly by the School of Science and the MIT Libraries, the prize recognizes MIT-affiliated researchers who use or share open data, create infrastructure for open data sharing, or theorize about open data.

“The prize is explicitly aimed at early-career researchers,” says MIT Libraries Director Chris Bourg, who spearheaded the prize program along with Rebecca Saxe, associate dean of the School of Science and the John W. Jarve (1978) Professor of Brain and Cognitive Sciences. “Supporting and encouraging the next generation of researchers will help ensure that the future of scholarship is characterized by a norm of open sharing.”

Winners were chosen from more than 80 nominees, representing all five MIT schools, the MIT Schwarzman College of Computing, and several research centers across the Institute. Learn more about the following winning projects, as well as honorable mentions, and see links to all the projects’ research data, at libraries.mit.edu/opendata.

- Hammaad Adam, graduate student in the Institute for Data, Systems, and Society, accepted on behalf of the team behind Organ Retrieval and Collection of Health Information for Donation (ORCHID), the first ever multi-center dataset dedicated to the organ procurement process. ORCHID provides the first opportunity to quantitatively analyze organ procurement organization decisions and identify operational inefficiencies.



- Adam Atanas, postdoc in the Department of Brain and Cognitive Sciences (BCS), and Jungsoo Kim, graduate student in BCS, created WormWideWeb.org. The site, allowing researchers to easily browse and download *C. elegans* whole-brain datasets, will be useful to *C. elegans* neuroscientists and theoretical/computational neuroscientists.
- Paul Berube, research scientist in Civil and Environmental Engineering, and Steven Biller, assistant professor of biological sciences at Wellesley College, won for “Unlocking Marine Microbiomes with Open Data.” Open data of genomes and metagenomes for marine ecosystems, with a focus on cyanobacteria, leverage the power of contemporaneous data from GEOTRACES and other long-standing ocean time-series programs to provide underlying information to answer questions about marine ecosystem function.
- Jack Cavanagh, Sarah Kopper, and Diana Horvath of the Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL) were recognized for J-PAL’s Data Publication Infrastructure, which includes a trusted repository of open-access datasets, a dedicated team of data curators, and coding tools and training materials to help other teams publish data in an efficient and ethical manner.
- Jerome Patrick Cruz, graduate student in political science, won for OpenAudit, leveraging advances in natural language processing and machine learning to make data in public audit reports more usable for academics and policy researchers, as well as governance practitioners, watchdogs, and reformers. This work was done in collaboration with colleagues at Ateneo de Manila University in the Philippines.

Images
Left to Right
Hammaad Adam, Adam Atanas, Paul Berube, Jack Cavanagh, Jerome Patrick Cruz

Opposite: Honorees at the 2023 Open Data@MIT event.

All photos: Bryce Vickmark

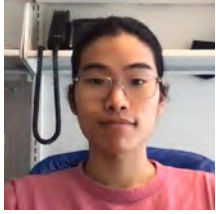


Photo
 Left to Right
 Daniel Kurlander, Halie
 Olson, Thomas González
 Roberts, Melissa Kline
 Struhl, JS Tan

Event photos: Bryce
 Vickmark

- Undergraduate student Daniel Kurlander created a tool for planetary scientists to rapidly access and filter images of the comet 67P/Churyumov-Gerasimenko. The web-based tool enables searches by location and other properties, does not require a time-intensive download of a massive dataset, allows analysis of the data independent of the speed of one’s computer, and does not require installation of a complex set of programs.
- Halie Olson, postdoc in BCS, was recognized for sharing data from a functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) study on language processing. The study used video clips from “Sesame Street” in which researchers manipulated the comprehensibility of the speech stream, allowing them to isolate a “language response” in the brain.
- Thomas González Roberts, graduate student in aeronautics and astronautics, won for the International Telecommunication Union Compliance Assessment Monitor. This tool combats the heritage of secrecy in outer space operations by creating human- and machine-readable datasets that succinctly describe the international agreements that govern satellite operations.
- Melissa Kline Struhl, research scientist in BCS, was recognized for Children Helping Science, a free, open-source platform for remote studies with babies and children that makes it possible for researchers at more than 100 institutions to conduct reproducible studies.
- JS Tan, graduate student in urban studies and planning, developed the Collective Action in Tech Archive in collaboration with Nataliya Nedzhvetskaya of the University of California at Berkeley. It is an open database of all publicly recorded collective actions taken by workers in the global tech industry.



Meet Sylvia Figueroa-Ortiz

A Q&A with the Libraries' administrative fellow on mentorship and community building

Sylvia Figueroa-Ortiz joined the Libraries in 2022 as the inaugural MIT Libraries-ACRL Diversity Alliance Administrative Fellow. The Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) Diversity Alliance program unites academic libraries committed to increasing the hiring pipeline of qualified and talented individuals from underrepresented racial and ethnic groups. As Figueroa-Ortiz nears the end of her two-year fellowship this summer, she shares with *Bibliotech* some of the key lessons she takes away from her experience at MIT Libraries.

What interested you about this fellowship opportunity?

The program is designed to prepare fellows for a career in librarianship by bringing them into close contact with the lived experiences of leaders in an academic library at a high-ranking university. This makes it unique among the various diversity residencies across the country.

What have you been working on during the fellowship?

During my time at the MIT Libraries, I have been mentored by Alexia Hudson-Ward, Associate Director for Research, Learning, and Strategic Partnerships, in organizational and management skills as well as leadership theory, concepts, and applications. As a member of the Community Engagement team, I have worked on MIT Reads [an Institute-wide reading and discussion program], helping build a program of outreach to student groups and other units at the Institute and working to increase our program's visibility to the MIT community.

What have you learned during your time at MIT Libraries?

Most of my work with Alexia is rooted in academic discourse around leadership theory, concepts, and practice. Alexia and I would discuss how these theories and concepts applied to



the library profession and how she applied them to her work as an administrator. I also found Alexia's mentorship really valuable due to her professional trajectory as a woman of color in administration and her willingness to share with raw honesty her experiences as a leader.

As a member of the Community Engagement team, I was able to experience firsthand what it means to implement an outreach and engagement program that spans months of planning, involves complex partnerships with other units and groups in the MIT community, and that culminates in a campus-wide public event. Working on MIT Reads provided an excellent platform for me to closely see leadership theory in practice and the ability to reflect on these findings in an environment that encouraged questions and valued my input.

How do you think this experience has prepared you for the next phases of your career in librarianship?

It's in understanding people that I feel the fellowship has served me the best. I used to have a professor whose favorite saying was, "Bloom where you are planted, and recognize it in others when they do." Seeing the extraordinary work that my colleagues do and how they embody these words is something I will take with me for years to come. Leadership doesn't have to be a top-down process. It can come from the most unexpected places when nurtured properly. Wherever my career takes me next, I am grateful for the experiences my fellowship provided and the wonderful people I had the opportunity to learn from.

Showcasing Trailblazing MIT Women

New exhibits highlight stories of women at the Institute

The Women@MIT archival initiative collects records of women faculty, staff, students, and alumnae to illuminate and elevate their stories. The project was launched in 2017 with the generous support of Barbara Ostrom '78 and Shirley Sontheimer. Alongside efforts to collect and preserve materials from MIT women, the initiative seeks to share their lives and work with both MIT and global audiences. See how several recent events shine a light on the critical contributions of these pathbreaking women.



New Exhibit Spotlights Women Biologists and Chemists

Under the Lens: Women Biologists and Chemists at MIT 1865-2024 examines the work of women scientists at MIT beginning with Ellen Swallow Richards, MIT's first woman student, through the present day, when many women scientists hold leadership positions at the Institute.

"The title of this exhibit has a double meaning," writes exhibit curator Thera Webb, Women@MIT Project archivist. "The women featured in *Under the Lens* are scientists whose work

engages with the materials of our world on a molecular level, using the lens of a microscope. At the same time, women's ability to work as scientists and academics has been scrutinized through the lens of public opinion since Victorian-era debates about co-education."

Items for the exhibit, selected from Distinctive Collections, focus on women students and faculty in biology, biological engineering, chemistry, and chemical engineering to trace the lineage of women scientists at MIT. See the exhibition in the Maihaugen Gallery (14N-130) through June 21.

Quilt Honors Katharine Dexter McCormick

One of the Women@MIT collections' latest acquisitions is a quilted portrait of McCormick (1904), biologist, suffragist, philanthropist, and champion of women's reproductive rights. The quilt is a gift from the Association of MIT Alumnae (AMITA), arranged by Carol Shattles Hooker '67. It was created by the Pixeladies, Kris Sazaki and Deb Cashatt, who create painstaking collages from magazine and newspaper clippings which are printed onto fabric to make their elaborate quilts.



Image
This page: "Katharine Dexter McCormick: Making Her Mark" by the Pixeladies (Deb Cashatt and Kris Sazaki).

Opposite page:
Left: Maha Aljuhani, photo by Barbra Gilley Williams, courtesy Ibn Khaldun Fellowship, 2021. Right: Anne Serby '82, photo by Calvin Campbell, courtesy MIT Museum, circa 1980.



Images

Top: Margaret Nichols, ca. 1905. Courtesy Nichols House Museum.

Opposite: Doris Lawson Eshun-Dadzie '76, photo by Margaret Foote, courtesy MIT Museum, circa 1976.

Panel Explores MIT Women's Experiences Across Four Distinct Eras

In September, the Libraries partnered with the Nichols House Museum for “Skirts and Slide Rules: Women at MIT from the Nichols Sisters to Now,” a panel discussion exploring Tech women’s experiences over 150 years. Panelists included Coleen Smith ‘87, archivist for AMITA, speaking on early women students; Linda Sharpe ‘69, PhD ‘75, co-founder of the MIT Black Students’ Union and the first Black woman to serve as president of the MIT Alumni Association; Lulu Tsao ‘86, president of the MIT Club of Beijing; and Mahati Chintapalli ‘11, student chair of MIT’s branch of the Society of Women Engineers.

2023 Women@MIT Fellows Debut Projects

Women@MIT Fellowships invite scholars, artists, and others to showcase the collections in engaging ways. The 2023 fellows created two new projects using archival materials and technology. “Sisters in Making,” by Deborah Tsogbe and Soala Ajenka spotlights the women who built the core rope memory and magnetic core memory for the Apollo Guidance Computer. The exhibit was on view in Rotch Library this spring. “Mapping Migration at MIT: Eighteen Stories of International Women at MIT,” by Rachel Lane explores how women’s work in science crossed international borders through an online story map; see the project at bit.ly/MITmigration. Watch a video of all the 2023 fellows presenting their work on our YouTube channel at youtube.com/MITLibraries.



By the Numbers: Resource Sharing

Data for fiscal year 2023

Staff in Resource Sharing, part of the Information Delivery & Library Access department, provide MIT faculty, students, and staff access to materials not available at the MIT Libraries and lend our materials to other institutions. MIT users can request and rapidly receive materials through document delivery, interlibrary loan, and BorrowDirect, a service that shares resources between 13 leading academic libraries in the Ivy Plus Libraries Confederation.

1,778

Articles and chapters scanned from our collections and delivered to the MIT community

19,320

Articles borrowed from other institutions

3,352

Books borrowed from other institutions

5,052

Books lent to other institutions

News from the MIT Press

MIT Open Publishing Services publishes An MIT Exploration of Generative AI: From Novel Chemicals to Opera this spring



In July 2023, MIT President Sally Kornbluth and Provost Cynthia Barnhart issued a call for papers to “articulate effective roadmaps, policy recommendations, and calls for action across the broad domain of generative AI.” This collection of impact papers, *An MIT Exploration of Generative AI: From Novel Chemicals to Opera*, will be openly published through MIT Press’ MIT Open Publishing Services (MITops) program this spring.

Coauthored by interdisciplinary teams of faculty and researchers across the Institute, the papers explore the transformative potential of generative AI, in both positive and negative directions, across a wide range of applications. Topics covered include climate and sustainability; human health, medicine, and the life sciences; education and the future of work; cybersecurity and privacy; and the global economy. For a full list of topics and contributors, please visit mit-genai.pubpub.org.

MITops is a scholar-focused, MIT-branded hosting and publishing services operation from the MIT Press. MITops projects include Case Studies in Social and Ethical Responsibilities of Computing from the Schwarzman College of Computing, Computing the Future: A Decade of Innovation at MIT CSAIL, and the MIT Emerging Technology Case Studies.

Staff News

New Appointments

Lana Bashir
Human Resources Assistant

Rebecca Bramlett
*Instruction and Outreach
Archivist*

Anna Britton
Digitization Associate

Olivia De Lisle
*Annex Services and Scanning
Assistant*

Liz Francis
Institute Records Manager

Kevin Grant
*Scholarly Communications
Associate*

Jacob Lewis
Access Services Associate

Liz Muller
Lead Metadata Strategist

Marry Ann Orfanos
Resource Sharing Assistant

Will Ricigliano
Acquisitions Associate

Kassia Roberts
Access Services Associate

Katie Rusin
Project Coordinator

Retirements

Nina Davis-Millis
*Director of Community
Engagement*

What's New

Richard Ovenden inaugurates a new campus series on academic freedom and expression

Ovenden, Bodley's Librarian at the University of Oxford, spoke about the willful destruction of recorded knowledge for an October event at Hayden Library titled "Book Wars." The author of *Burning the Books: A History of the Deliberate Destruction of Knowledge*, Ovenden provided a historical overview of attacks on libraries — from the library of Ashurbanipal destroyed by fire in 612 BC, to book burning under the Nazi regime, to current efforts across the United States to remove or restrict access to books. The talk was the inaugural event in a new series called Conversations on Academic Freedom and Expression (CAFE), a collaboration between the MIT Libraries and History at MIT. "At this moment in our history, we should try to encourage discussion, and not debate," said Ovenden. "We must try to move away from this idea that it's a contest, that it's a battle, and encourage and foster the idea of listening and discussion. And that's all part of the deliberation that I think is necessary for a healthy society."

**"At this moment in our history, we should try to encourage discussion, and not debate."
— Richard Ovenden**



Image
Professor Malick Ghachem (left), Richard Ovenden

Photo: Bryce Vickmark



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