AN LEABHARLANN : THE IRISH LIBRARY

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- Manuscripts will be reviewed by the Editorial Board.
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- Manuscripts should be submitted by email attachment or on disc as Rich Text File (RTF). Text should be formatted in Times New Roman 12 pt., double-spaced, with margins of 2.54cm (i.e. standard A4 margins). Formatting of text (e.g. italics and bold) should be kept to a minimum.
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- Microsoft Word and other word processing programs allow for a language to be selected. Please ensure that the language selected is either UK or Ireland English (i.e. NOT United States English).
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Editorial

Nobody expected the COVID-19 pandemic. Public health doctors are aware that epidemics are to be expected. As librarians we would easily direct readers to material on the Bubonic Plague, Black Death (1348-1349), Cholera (1832) and Spanish Flu (1918-1919). Nobody has experience of these but many families in Ireland will have had relatives who died during the Spanish Flu. It was real to our fathers' and grandfathers' generation. Older generations also lived through a TB epidemic in the 1940s and Polio (1956, Cork) and 1957 (Northern Ireland). Thankfully, all these diseases now have vaccines and treatments.

An interesting and very timely read is Emma Donoghue's latest novel *The Pull of the Stars*[1] which is set during the Spanish Flu.

The articles in this issue all consider how different sectors of the library world have responded to the pandemic. There are similarities between the articles which consider the response from academic libraries, the HSE libraries and public libraries in Northern Ireland. The first article, by Meadhbh Haceid and Stuart Hamilton, gives an overview of the public library across Europe. How to respond to a pandemic is not something that has been on library school curricula thus far.

Common to all library sectors is the upheaval that was caused, and indeed, continues to be cause. Like all sectors of the economy, organisations and staff had to change the way they work. Restaurants have pivoted to Click and Collect services. Libraries also changed the way in which they connect with their public. While public library buildings remain closed, most libraries offered expanded digital services. When libraries here

had limited opening during the summer months, many offered a Click and Collect service also. Some libraries in Northern Ireland have reopened but those in the Derry area are closed because of public health restrictions.

COVID-19 has changed the way in which we work in libraries. The sector has pivoted to increased use of digital resources and technology. Meetings are conducted using Zoom, Google Hangouts and Skype among other videoconferencing facilities. Librarians have been seen as agile and flexible in continuing to deliver services to our users. Academic librarians facilitated the switch to digital and remote learning for staff and students. Academic libraries remain open now as they are deemed essential to supporting research. In both academic and public libraries, the range of available digital resources was expanded.

Services provided during lockdown included eBooks, eMagazines/periodicals, eAudiobooks and databases. In public libraries some storytelling and other services suitable for children are provided through Instagram, You Tube and other social media platforms.

Staff development was a winner during the lockdown. There was an opportunity to learn from local, national and international colleagues. Several articles give examples of how there was increased buy-in to CPD. Managers were aware of communicating with staff and more formal systems were put in place to encourage better communication and inform staff of any relevant developments. Webinars were provided and hopefully attendance at CPD webinars will continue. Across all sectors it would seem that skill sets were improved.

It should be acknowledged that several National Health Library and Knowledge Service staff, public library staff and colleagues from the National Library of Ireland and other national cultural institutions, were all involved in contact tracing.

The library sector's response has meant that the profile of library services and their staff has been raised. Examples are given especially in articles by Allison Kavanagh and Aoife Lawton. Strategic leadership is evident throughout all the articles. There is also much evidence of innovation.

Many library staff were in a position to work from home. However, for some this was not possible because of no or inadequate broadband coverage. While this showed IT inequality which has long been part of life in rural Ireland, it also highlighted a greater inequality. Many children in DEIS schools depend on their local public library for access to the internet.

As we approach Christmas and hopefully people think about shopping when we come out of lockdown in December, I would urge colleagues to support their local bookshop. Over many decades these shops have generously supported local library events and the Joint Conference.

At the time of writing there are two good news stories from Cork. Firstly, Douglas Library will re-open before Christmas. Secondly, the *Book of Lismore* has been donated to the Boole Library, University College Cork. Details here: https://www.ucc.ie/en/news/one-of-the-great-books-of-ireland-returns-home.html

Marjory Sliney, Editor, editor@libraryassociation.ie

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1   Donoghue, Emma. **The Pull of the Stars.** London: Picador, 2020.
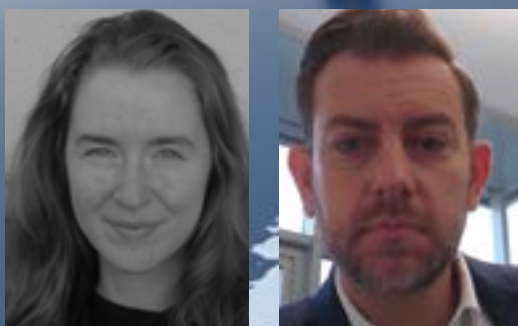
PUBLIC LIBRARIES and COVID-19:
Tour of Europe

Meadhbh Haiceid and Stuart Hamilton

Abstract

No sector of the economy was left untouched by COVID-19. The response from public libraries across Europe as collated and researched by NAPLE is considered in this article. The importance of digital services during the first phase of the pandemic is also described.

Keywords: *National Authorities on Public Libraries in Europe, COVID-19*

Introduction

Across Europe, public library buildings closed to users at the start of March 2020, either because of national or regional decisions in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. From the start of the pandemic the member countries of the National Authorities on Public Libraries in Europe (NAPLE) Forum began to enter their experiences in a shared spreadsheet, coordinated by Libraries Development, Local Government Management Agency (LGMA), which currently holds the NAPLE Presidency.

The spreadsheet showed the variety of approaches public libraries across Europe were taking to respond to the pandemic. Often NAPLE members took the same approach, such as a quick pivot to provision of expanded online services, but at other points there were clear differences – such as the way that countries approached the quarantining of books.

The spreadsheet enabled the production of two 'snapshot' reports which offered an overview of the situation in each country. The first report, issued in May 2020, set out the immediate responses to the pandemic. The second report, from July 2020, concentrated on the measures being taken to re-open the public library sector all over Europe.

NAPLE members met regularly via Zoom during this period. The ability to bring together public library experts quickly and easily via online platforms was something that existed prior to the pandemic. Since the start of March, however, the value of being able to swiftly check approaches with peers in Europe has greatly increased, and the regular updating of the shared spreadsheet informed many members' re-opening plans.

The following paper summarises one main area of the NAPLE reports – the emerging-from-lockdown period in summer 2020 when libraries were once again opening up their buildings to users - before briefly discussing the pivot to provision of online services during the period when buildings were closed and beyond. It utilises responses from 20 NAPLE member countries from mid-March to mid-July 2020[1]. Readers interested in more detail can access the actual reports themselves which cover additional topics such as the engagement of staff during closures; quarantining of books and other health and safety measures; efforts by libraries to support national healthcare initiatives; and library efforts to address misinformation about the COVID-19 virus[2].

One observation from NAPLE members is crucial. The narrative around libraries closing was misplaced. Public libraries across Europe never stopped their services, they only temporarily closed their doors. As the reports show, the ability of public libraries to quickly adapt their online and offline services to the 'new normal' is something that needs to be celebrated and analysed in greater detail in future.

Emerging from Lockdown: Reopening of Library Buildings

Public library buildings across Europe closed to the public in March 2020 and began re-opening in most countries between April and May. In most cases, reopening was a phased process, and plans were fluid and adjusted in response to evolving situations.

Not all library buildings closed completely to the public, however. In **Flanders (Belgium)**, for example, public libraries were categorised as an essential service by a national guideline and expected to remain open during lockdown. This applied on weekdays only and for a limited 'take-away' service in which patrons came to collect materials on reserve only. Still, many municipalities had decided to close their libraries completely by decree of local mayors, but as time went on more of them partially opened to offer a 'take-away' service.

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1   Many thanks to NAPLE members and colleagues from the following countries: Belgium (Flanders); Croatia; Czech Republic; Denmark; Estonia; Finland; France; Germany; Greece; Ireland; Lithuania; Norway; Netherlands; Poland, Portugal, Scotland; Slovenia; Spain; Sweden; Switzerland.
2   https://www.culturaydeporte.gob.es/dam/jcr:fce29ea1-1b83-479b-b674-a592b255f7e4/naple-narrative-report---european-library-services-during-covid19.pdf and https://www.culturaydeporte.gob.es/dam/jcr:55d18a18-f4e6-40a9-86a7-9d67994f087c/european-library-services-during-covid19---part-two-may---july-2020.pdf

The Belgian National Security Council produced a phased exit strategy whereby public libraries could reopen to the public from May 18. The Flemish Library Association published guidelines for reopening in accordance with the National Guidelines from the National Security Council, and a basic protocol for the culture sector was published on June 10. Almost all public libraries have been open since July 1.

Libraries in the **Czech Republic** were called on, along with all other cultural institutions and companies, to close their doors during the third phase of combating COVID19. According to the national plan on reopening institutions, libraries were to open on June 8. However, at a press conference on the evening of Thursday April 23 it was announced that libraries would be allowed to reopen on April 27. With such a short time to prepare, 20-30% of libraries managed to open that day, with more opening over the following weeks. The National Library reopened on May 4. By May 11, about 90% of libraries had opened to provide basic lending and returning services. Quarantining of books ceased at the end of May and events for the public in some libraries resumed. The general obligation to wear face masks in public premises was cancelled on July 1st as well as the need to keep social distance.

In **Denmark** public libraries closed on March 13 but began re-opening from May 18 as part of the second phase of the country's reopening plan. From this date libraries could open for lending and returning of books and other materials. The Danish Ministry of Culture released guidelines for opening libraries considering several service aspects, including social distancing requirements. In the third phase, the libraries could as of July 22 open for further services for the public, e.g. browsing of bookshelves, usage of computers and staffless open libraries.

After a long wait, the government in **England** finally confirmed that libraries could reopen from July 4. Services returned in a phased process, with many starting with Order and Collect and Home Library Services, but some immediately reopening their doors for browsing and access to computers. However, with only 24 hours to go before re-opening, the UK government issued guidance that libraries need to record the name and phone number of everyone visiting the library for browsing and IT access. This was intended to support the UK's Test & Trace system, as libraries will need to share the records with the Health Service if one of their users or staff tests positive. Yet it was quite a complex process to plan and deliver and the short period added to the burden of re-opening.

Libraries in **Wales** also re-opened in July with a full range of protective measures in place and a focus on maintaining a 2 metre social distancing requirement, hand sanitising and removing staff from the library floor to behind plastic screens where possible. A particular issue was availability of toilets, and libraries used local risk assessments to decide if they should open them, and whether they have the required levels of cleaning available.

In **Scotland**, the First Minister announced on June 24 that libraries may open from July 15 2020 with appropriate Health and Safety advice being observed. Library authorities opened their venues in a phased manner, and offered a "call and collect" service in the first instance. During lockdown, in addition to providing a home delivery service to people who were housebound or shielding, Scottish public library staff developed their online offer to include virtual storytimes, chattychat craft sessions, techyteabreaks, quizzes, book groups and more. Many staff were redeployed within council areas to support the Community Hubs.

Libraries Connected, which is the body representing the public library sector in the UK, published service recovery guidance with input from the government public health departments[3]. They have also run many webinars to share ideas on how to run a COVID-secure library service.

A phased approach was also taken to reopening library buildings in **Estonia**. Services could be expanded gradually based on the analysis of local risks and the decision of the municipality, if all were

3   https://www.librariesconnected.org.uk/news/new-guide-help-libraries-reopen

in keeping with the instructions of the Ministry of Culture. From May 15 libraries could offer visitors contactless lending and returning of publications, and outdoor reading room spaces. From May 25, libraries could add indoor lending and returns, indoor reading rooms, use of PCs, and outdoor public library events according to public meetings restrictions.

In **France**, libraries began reopening from May 11, in accordance with a national guideline. Reopening was different in every region but followed three phases. Phase 1 saw book deliveries, or one or two people coming at a time to collect books. In Phase 2 (from July) buildings reopened to more people, but only for book collection, and then in Phase 3 (from September) groups were allowed back to the library and programmed activities restarted. In addition, school groups of up to 10 children aged 6-10 years were able to visit the library from May, in line with the reopening of schools.

In **Germany**, a common Federal Chancellery / Regional Ministers decision stated that libraries could reopen as of April 20. There was some confusion about what kinds of libraries were covered by the decision, and it was interpreted differently by different federal states. However, 13 out of 16 federal states decided that public libraries could reopen and the first libraries opened with strict hygiene measures for the lending and returning of books and media between April 20 – April 27. It was expected that most libraries would reopen at the beginning of May, as they needed some time to prepare.

While all libraries re-opened on June 1 in **Greece**, supported by guidelines from the Association of Greek Librarians and Information Scientists, there was a degree of confusion for staff as libraries were the only industry that reopened after the lockdown with no specific government measures or guidelines. Each library delivered services based on the decision of each library's administration or local authorities. Generally, public libraries offered e-services and lending but no reading rooms, with reduced hours. Some offered services only by appointment, while letting patrons drop in, encouraging the use of masks and gloves.

In **Ireland** a five-stage government re-opening roadmap was published on May 1 and the country's public libraries began to re-open some services soon after. Libraries Development at the Local Government Management Agency (LGMA) prepared health and safety guidance for physical lending services, which was approved by the Department of Health. By May 11 about 1/3 of Ireland's library authorities were offering some form of physical lending by delivery service.

Libraries increased service offerings at the start of the second phase, which began on June 8. In addition to the continuation of housebound and delivery services, 181 branches out of 330 across the country opened their doors to accept returns and provide a contact and collect service. Almost immediately, however, the Government increased the speed of re-opening, and from June 9 the sector began preparing to offer browsing facilities at branches, either by appointment or drop-in. At the end of June, 158 branches were offering browsing, with another 40 continuing to offer contact and collect only. The national delivery service, which enables users to borrow books from any library in the country, resumed in the week beginning July 6.

All physical libraries in **Northern Ireland** were closed on March 20. On June 25 the Northern Ireland Executive announced that public libraries would be allowed to reopen from July 16. Libraries Northern Ireland supported a plan for all libraries to reopen for a 'Book and Collect' service during the week beginning July 20, alongside a phased programme of reopening libraries to offer limited browsing and IT services, and the introduction of a temporary BookBox service which is an extension of the Homecall service for people who are unable to visit a branch library. In advance of this customers were encouraged to return the books that they borrowed prior to lockdown.

Public library buildings in **Norway** closed on March 13. By mid-May, a phased reopening of was underway led by the municipalities in line with general advice from national authorities. On May 8, the Library Association and the Union of Librarians published guidelines for

reopening. The brand-new main library of Oslo could finally open to the public on June 18, with near-normal services but under general measures for infection control. Originally it should have opened on March 28.

Poland's Prime Minister announced at the end of April that public libraries could reopen from May 4, in line with national health and safety standards. Directly after reopening, public libraries provided only limited return and collection services which were gradually broadened. In mid-June major public libraries reopened reading rooms with advance booking and reduced numbers, with more local public libraries joining as the month went on. However, patron numbers were limited, as well as the scope of available materials and services e.g. board games, newspapers and periodicals, playing computer games, children's playing rooms were unavailable.

Libraries in **Portugal** began closing from March 10 and by the time a state of emergency was declared on March 20, all libraries were closed. Some library services resumed at the beginning of April and by May 11, 20-30% of libraries offered physical loan services by takeaway, drive-through or home delivery. At the end of April, the state of emergency ended and a reopening plan was approved by the Ministry of Culture and Ministry of Health. Most Portuguese public library buildings have now been open to the public since May 4 with all open libraries offering borrowing services (take-away), but not allowing users to use the reading rooms or access the shelves. Initially libraries experienced very few local users who mostly used the library only for take away services.

Slovenia was the first EU member state to declare the end of lockdown. At the beginning of May, the plan was to cancel most restrictions by the end of the month, with some preventative measures still in force e.g. wearing face protection, practicing hand hygiene and social distancing. On April 28 at 7.45pm, there was a government announcement that libraries could open the following morning. This was not mandatory but later it was said that all libraries had to offer at least some services by May 18, and that all libraries were to open by May 28 at the latest.

The National Library reopened on April 30, along with some academic libraries. Public libraries reopened on Monday May 4, with three phases that began with click and collect services and returns, then offered gradual re-opening of buildings and services.

In **Spain**, the government published recommendations on the reopening of libraries on May 9. Reopening was expected to have three phases, with reopening for physical services in Phase 2. A four-phase government plan for exiting lockdown included certain criteria that had to be achieved in each Autonomous Region before moving from one phase to the next. By May 11, some regions had moved from Phase 0 to Phase 1 and some remained in Phase 0. About half the population were thought to be in Phase 1 at that point. By June 21, after several extensions, the government ended the State of Emergency and all the measures allowed by it and taken at a national scale were abolished. In future, the different Autonomous Regions will take the measures they consider necessary in their territories. In Catalonia, the Basque Country and Madrid for example, the quarantine time for books was reduced to 72 hours from an initial government recommendation of 14 days.

Reopening was a little different in **Sweden**, where there was no lockdown. 290 municipal web pages (library page, municipal page, and Facebook page) were surveyed weekly by the library authorities and in the first survey, only five libraries were closed totally. By early May, four out of those five were open for pick-up and delivery of books, with a phone service in place for delivery by library staff. Outreach services were expanded so that high risk groups and the over 70s could get home delivery. Libraries had moved furniture and shut down some, but not all, computers. Digital services were made more accessible, even while library buildings remained open for the most part.

Libraries in **Switzerland** began re-opening buildings on May 11. This was almost one month earlier than the original date on June 8, leaving little time to prepare. Reopening guidelines were published

on May 1. Swiss policy allowed a lot of freedom for each institution to work out its own way of reopening, if safety standards (notably social distancing and hygiene) were guaranteed. Events with more than five people were not allowed as of May 11. As from June 22 on, social distancing was reduced from 2 to 1.5m and events with maximum of 1000 participants were allowed again.

The New Normal – Digital to the Forefront

While this paper has focused on summarising the physical re-emergence of the European public library sector after periods of COVID lockdown, the real story is that libraries never stopped offering services to their users. An immediate switch to the provision of digital information throughout was evident from the responses to the NAPLE surveys, and this will shape the sector in the coming years.

Digital services fell into a range of categories. In most responses, promoting and increasing access to eBooks and other digital content provided through vendor platforms was a key service objective during lockdown. Many countries removed restrictions on new joiners having to physically visit the library to start using services and consequently nearly all respondents reported significantly increased engagement with digital content. In Ireland alone new library memberships during the COVID19 crisis exploded - over 30,000 new members joined the library in March 2020 compared to just over 17,000 in March 2019. The week commencing 29 March saw a 313% increase in new users of eBooks and eAudiobooks service, a 467% increase in e-learning courses being taken, a 227% increase in language courses being taken and a 246% increase in usage of the

online newspapers/e-magazines[4]. Other countries reported similar figures, and in Sweden, Norway and Ireland additional funding was allocated to the library sector to license more electronic resources. Estonia was particularly active in extending its services –Tallinn Central Library established a second e-book platform (ELLU) and allowed all Estonians to access their pre-existing platform (OverDrive). All countries reported extensive promotion of online services via traditional and social media and on library websites.

Locational barriers to access content were removed in a number of countries. Students and teachers of public and private universities in the Czech Republic have temporary access to 59 million pages from the collections of the National Library and public universities since March 17, thanks to an agreement between the director of the National Library and DILIA, the collective copyright administrator. In Norway the Ministry of Culture and the National Library launched a number of support measures including better access to national online resources for the educational sector and public digital access to legal deposit content which previously was only available onsite. Sweden also managed to negotiate free access to all digitised Swedish newspapers for a limited time. Usually the libraries have to buy licenses for a dedicated computer in the library, but during April, the National Library released the entire service online for everyone.

Online information provision was also a crucial service through libraries. Library websites and social media were updated with relevant information about COVID19 and the libraries' online services, electronic

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4   https://www.gov.ie/en/press-release/090bca-use-of-online-public-library-service-soars-during-covid-19-crisis-mi/

resources, and databases. Many libraries in Finland opened call centres and issued guidance regarding e-material via websites and social media, as well as continuing to run the "ask a librarian" web service. Some Slovenian libraries also offered a Q&A with a librarian service in the form of video chats, with information on resources that users can access digitally. In Portugal, the Public Library Network curated online information on a Flipboard account and invited public libraries to submit their own resources and links, which garnered national media attention.

Events and activities also quickly went digital. In Ireland an agreement was reached with Irish publishers to temporarily waive licence fees for the reading of certain books and posting or streaming videos online – something which was replicated around Europe as library staff began to deliver virtual storytimes, lectures, makerspace lessons, book clubs, poetry readings, video chats and authors talks. These activities have been viewed hundreds of thousands of times and open a new frontier for library activities in the future.

A final note is that the shift to online was not just focused on users. NAPLE members reported that during lockdown and beyond professional development for staff moved online with a variety of webinars and activities. Organised programmes were reported in Switzerland, Sweden and Spain, and informal learning opportunities were offered to allcomers by organisations such as PL2030, Libraries Connected and others. NAPLE itself benefitted from the ability to convene regularly during the period, to share information about challenges and approach. The two NAPLE reports contain the benefits of this sharing which shines a light on how the sector addressed the first five months of the pandemic. A further report will be forthcoming that looks at where we have travelled since.

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HSE Library Response to Covid-19:
The pandemic that shook the world

Aoife Lawton

Abstract

This article is an account of how the HSE National Library & Knowledge Service (NHLKS) has responded so far to the global pandemic that is Covid-19. A brief introduction and background to the service is given, followed by a provision of the context. The context describes the library strategy and how the service is organised. The challenges presented by Covid-19 to the service are defined as well as opportunities for growth and development with new services described. Finally, a summary of what worked well, what could be improved and what potentially lies ahead is given at the end.

Background

The HSE Library service has been rebranded the "National Health Library & Knowledge Service" since it became a national service in 2017. From a positioning perspective NHLKS sits as one of three components which make up Research and Evidence, part of Strategic Planning and Transformation in the Health Service Executive (HSE). The other two components are Health Intelligence and Research and Development. Research and Evidence is a relatively new entity in the HSE, which was set up in 2018 with the appointment of Assistant National Director, Dr. Ana Terres. Positioning of library services within any organisation is important for many reasons. As highlighted by Cox it may affect resource allocation, influence, stakeholder perception and location in hierarchy.[1] The NHLKS is made up of a network of 25 HSE libraries based in acute hospitals. A further 4 satellite libraries are based in community or non-acute hospitals where outreach services are provided. The NHLKS consists of 54 staff with a whole time equivalent of 48.02.

Strategy

In 2018 a five-year NHLKS strategy was launched entitled "Turning knowledge into action: enabling care, improving health 2018 – 2023" by the former Director General of the HSE, Mr. Tony O'Brien. The strategy sets the direction of travel for the entire service for the future. The vision is that: *"Everyone working in Ireland's health service will have access to knowledge, and will apply it whenever and wherever they need it, to deliver the best possible health and care"[2].* The mission is:

> **"By 2023 we will be a fully integrated and quality assured National service, recognised by healthcare professionals for adding value by using knowledge to deliver safe, effective person centred healthcare, accessible to all on an equitable basis offering standardised service provision nationally."**

Having a strategy for NHLKS was important because when the pandemic hit, there was an immediate requirement to assess what elements of the library and knowledge service was absolutely 'core' to the HSE and what could be

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1 Cox, J (2018) "Positioning the academic library within the institution: Changes and Challenges" [PDF] *Dublin Business School Annual Seminar Proceedings*, Dublin 2018. Available from: https://esource.dbs.ie/bitstream/handle/10788/3396/John%20 Cox%2C%20DBS%20Library%20Seminar%202018.%20Positioning%20the%20 academic%20library%20within%20the%20institution%20changes%20and%20 challenges.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y [Accessed 28 Aug. 2020].

2 SMCI Associates (2018) "Turning knowledge into action: enabling care; improving health 2018-2023: a call to collective action for users and providers of knowledge in the health service in Ireland". P.1 Dublin: Health Service Executive, 2018. 978-1-78602-076-5. http://hselibrary.ie/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Turning-Knowledge-into-Action-Enabling-Care-Improving-Health-2018-2023.pdf

paused until further notice. Elements of the strategy that had been implemented assisted with this decision -making process. For example, there were already six national virtual teams in place:

1
Evidence team
(Knowledge Search and Summary Service)

This team is made up of qualified librarians with extensive experience of complex searching across a range of specialised health related resources for example PubMed, the Cochrane Library, etc.

2
Digital team
(Digital Knowledge Service)

This team is made up of library staff across the HSE with technical expertise who manage all of the digital resources, including for example: KOHA the national HSE library management system, Lenus, the Irish health repository, the hselibrary.ie website, as well as all platforms and third party software and hardware services.

3
Knowledge Broker Team

This team was made up of professional and para-professional library staff across the HSE but was revisited in terms of its make up during Covid-19. The remit of this team is to broker knowledge across priority HSE programmes and generally to help others put knowledge into action.

4
Information Skills Team

This team is made up of a mixture of professional and para-professional library staff across the HSE with defined terms of reference. The remit broadly put is to standardise the training and educational offering provided by NHLKS to our users.

5
Estates Team

The Lead of this team moved to a new position with the HSE Health Protection Surveillance Centre (HPSC) at the end of 2019. Effectively this team was in a holding position when Covid-19 hit. A new lead is in place since June 2020. The remit of this team is to implement recommendations from an independent audit of HSE physical library sites that was carried out in 2018. Since June, the emphasis has been on a phased reopening of HSE libraries with guidance aligned to public health advice. An important development was a virtual townhall meeting that was held in June to explain the guidance and offer reassurance to all NHLKS staff.

6
Procurement Team

The work of this team was completed in 2019 for 2020 as procurement generally happens at least six months in advance of the following financial year. Procurement will be a renewed priority with many challenges as we face into a time of severe financial difficulties globally. Much progress was made despite circumstances on rolling out access to core electronic resources to health service providers.

Core Services

During the week beginning March 9th, 2020 it became evident that the Coronavirus was a serious threat to our country and our nation's health and wellbeing. In consultation with management, a decision had to be reached about what the library service could offer as a core service to assist the HSE with the new national mission to protect the health of our nation against Covid-19. It was very clear that both the Evidence and Digital teams were key to what the HSE needed in the weeks and months ahead. The strategy during the pandemic was to redirect resources where they were needed the most via redeployment while keeping core library services operational and aligned to the revised core mission of the HSE.

In the early months of the pandemic, we were effectively operating in an 'Evidence Free-Zone' as one senior clinician remarked to me. There was a renewed emphasis on the importance of evidence-informed decision- making and evidence based medicine, something in which health science librarians excel. More than that, there was a global media spotlight on evidence or more accurately, the lack of evidence that caused a parallel pandemic of its own 'misinformation'. This remains a challenge today, particularly in relation to social media. Knowing that healthcare professionals would need access to emerging quality information via online digital platforms was something that the Digital team were in charge of, so a team needed to remain in place. However, there was a request for all staff to be redeployed to Public Health with immediate effect and this message was communicated to all NHLKS staff on Friday, the 13th March 2020. A directive was issued by the National Health Service Librarian to close all HSE libraries from this date until further notice.

Redeployment

Staff who were available and able to be redeployed were redeployed from March until June 2020 to new roles in Public Health, entering and verifying data, working as part of contact tracing, working with the HPSC and assisting with the HSE Information telephone line. Staff were assigned to new locations and everyone's experience of redeployment is individual to them. Some were released back to library services in June, others were not. Some will remain redeployed until the end of 2020 and after that it is currently unclear what the requirement will be. This is an ongoing challenge from a staffing, morale, planning and management perspective. The leads of both the Digital and Evidence teams were kept in place, although both members of staff were redeployed partially at different stages.

Guidance and Evidence

A skeleton Digital team was kept in place and a scaled down Evidence team. Both teams operated at accelerated levels with heavy workloads and long hours and days, particularly in the first three months from March to June. The transition from working in a library to working from a home office had mixed results and was very much an individual experience. Laptops and VPN or MIFI devices were made available to all staff, with some locations getting them faster than others. Rural broadband remains a challenge. External volunteers were needed to support the demands on the Evidence team. A call was put out via the Library Association of Ireland and the Health Science Libraries Group for any librarians who were available to assist with the Evidence team. This call was answered and librarians from other health, academic and public sector organisations came on board. The positive responses received from librarians is a real credit to our profession in Ireland. The Digital team already had a social business platform in place called 'SLACK' and this became a life saver system in terms of ease of communications across organisational and geographic boundaries. At the early stages, staff were not set up with relevant VPN, remote access or with any immediate web conferencing tools, so it was a business decision that returned dividends during this time. It kept all staff connected, all anyone needed was a mobile phone with Internet access to access SLACK and everyone has at least a personal smartphone. SLACK remains in use today and is a very effective tool for collaboration and communication.

The Evidence team evolved over time and received requests for evidence and summaries of evidence which were triaged during daily and then weekly calls. A Covid-19 search protocol was developed and published on hselibrary.ie. An editorial meeting for each summary produced was held with rigorous peer-

review and subject matter expertise on hand. It was an accelerated learning process and has benefited librarians as their skillset and knowledge has expanded as well as users of the summaries. The summaries are housed in several online places, besides the hse library website and the Covid-19 repository, version control is in place as they are updated and replaced with a permanent access point available at www.lenus.ie. Usage statistics for the Covid-19 Summaries of Evidence collection show 6225 file downloads in five months[3].

Covid-19 HSE Clinical Guidance and Evidence Repository

The Clinical Design and Innovation (CDI) team of the HSE which operates under the Chief Clinical Officer, Dr. Colm Henry had a requirement for a digital repository of Covid-19 Clinical Guidance and Evidence. The repository needed to have seamless access on any device from any location with a '3 click' rule, i.e. a maximum of 3 clicks should bring the user to the information they need. The audience for the repository was primarily frontline practitioners, national clinical programmes and clinical decision makers. Operational multidisciplinary teams were set up under the leadership of Dr. Ana Terres with library staff on three of the four teams: Technical team, Guidance Content team, Evidence team. The fourth team was CDI who were responsible for the submission and governance of any published guidance. The repository was set up in record time, using the platform 'Libguides' and went live on the 2nd April 2020. It is available at https://hselibrary.ie/covid. It received 73,656 visits in first 20 days and averages 5,000 visits a week at the time of writing. The repository received a mention at the Irish Government Covid-19 Briefing Easter Monday which was broadcast on national television. The mention was promoting the fact that guidance was available 24/7 to all healthcare workers. The summaries of evidence produced by the Evidence team are a core part of the repository with the added benefit of informing the guidance. The summaries produced by the Evidence team were reported on a weekly basis to the NPHET subgroup on Guidance and Evidence Synthesis. This subgroup was disbanded in July 2020.

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3   Usage Statistics available from Lenus the Irish Health Repository. https://www.lenus.ie/displaygastats?handle=10147/627286 [Accessed 28 Aug. 2020].

HSE Library Response to Covid-19: the pandemic that shook the world

The Digital team

The Digital team put together a virtual desk service made up of library assistants and senior library assistants who work remotely and have good experience of dealing with reference queries in person under normal circumstances. Their work effectively translated to an online environment and assisted with the standardisation of responses to users across the service. It was also a shared learning opportunity as library staff learned from each other and the responses they gave to users. It was particularly useful when NHLKS staff were redeployed and physical HSE libraries closed. Frequently asked questions were then fed to the Library virtual assistant, or Chatbot. A competition was run to find a name for the Library Chatbot, users entered and the virtual service desk team choose the winning entry, which was 'LAMA' – 'Library Ask Me Anything'. The technology behind this is IBM's Watson. It is artificial intelligence and the first type of AI that has been introduced in our service. The Bot learns overtime through the receipt of queries with input from both library staff and users.

Communication

Communication became more important than ever during the pandemic. There is nothing worse than 'mixed messages' or lack of communication. It is a challenging time for all, in terms of managing it is also challenging, with competing demands on both time and resources becoming the norm. Weekly management team meetings were held and daily calls with specialised teams during the first three months. After that daily calls became weekly or monthly and management team calls remain consistent every two weeks. Communication increased during this time and this is something that has improved overall. When people are physically distant with no opportunity to meet in person, communication must increase and be crystal clear.

Communicating value

From early April, a value statement was published on the hselibary.ie website to make public the value that the national service was bringing to our stakeholders during the pandemic. Other libraries internationally have done this. It is a good strategy from the perspective of marketing, increasing visibility, being transparent and advocating for the service. It is not something to be taken for granted, all libraries must communicate their value on an ongoing basis, no less important during times of national emergencies. The statement is accessible online at Value Statement: How the HSE National Health Library & Knowledge Service is responding to Covid-19.

Wellness

Under normal conditions the NHLKS host an annual staff engagement day in May each year. In 2020 this was reimagined as a staff wellness day and took place in June virtually. With some advice gratefully received from colleagues at Maynooth University Library, Zoom was the technology used. The day was hosted by three senior library assistants based in Drogheda, Cork and Mullingar. There was something in it for everyone, with Yoga, Baking, Organic Gardening and Music on the agenda. It was a special day and personally speaking, probably the best engagement day we have had. There was more attendance than normal, it was a unique coming together of staff, we were working alone but together.

Leadership

Pandemics call for strong leadership. It is a time when leaders are in the spotlight more than ever. Two events that helped during this pandemic were online knowledge exchanges. The NHLKS is part of a '5 Nation' Knowledge Exchange community, made up of Library leads from Ireland, England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales. An online knowledge exchange was held on May 5th 2020 and another one scheduled for September which was hugely beneficial. Maynooth University Library hosted a Covid-19 webinar "Irish Libraries and Covid-19: First Reflections"[4] on May 14th 2020 which gave the NHLKS the opportunity to share our experience so far as well as learn from other librarians. It was well planned, timed and executed with good attendance from across the Irish Library community. In a time when nobody can have definitive answers about the future or the best way of doing things, it is

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4   Maynooth University. (2020). "Irish Libraries and Covid-19: First Reflections". *Online Webinar proceedings*. Available from: https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/library/events/irish-libraries-and-covid-19-first-reflections. [Accessed 28 Aug. 2020].

comforting, reassuring and enlightening to exchange ideas with peers in similar leadership positions and settings but in different jurisdictions. There is no 'one-size fits all' approach to date during Covid-19, with countries adopting varying approaches to international guidance. In democracies we have seen radically different responses from Sweden for example and New Zealand. No strategy translates exactly to Ireland, because as a Republic with a part of our island under a different jurisdiction and law, it makes us unique as a country. Our battles against Covid-19 are our own. This is no different when it comes to library guidance during Covid-19. Public health guidance provided by the Irish Government under the advice from the National Public Health Emergency Team (NPHET) is followed. When applied to a library setting, the guidance may vary from libraries in other countries. One distinct advantage of working in the HSE at this time is having unique access to Public Health experts who are working on a national level who have provided advice to library services.

What worked well

Elements that worked well during this pandemic extend to the normal course of library work. Having a strategic plan in place worked well. Having national virtual teams already in place accelerated the pace of change and implementation of core strands of the strategy. For example, pre-Covid-19 there was a hesitancy to deliver a 'Knowledge Search and Summary Service'. Within the first few weeks of March, this became an organisational imperative and the existing Evidence team had to go from first to fourth gear in a matter of weeks.

Once Covid-19 hit the health service, working from home became the norm for those in administrative jobs. As our service was already used to working virtually and across geographic boundaries the only transitional challenge was to work from home instead of working from a library. For others, the transition was much more significant. Having the technical infrastructure in place through SLACK gave our service an edge. We extended access to this platform to colleagues across Research and Evidence which helped them communicate in real-time. It had the added benefit of bringing the 3 units of the division closer together, working together in new and existing virtual teams.   Having highly experienced staff working in NHLKS worked well and helped connect

people to each other across the HSE. In terms of knowledge management, the skills of librarians were used in the early stages of the pandemic to help Public Health Doctors manage some of the influx of information and questions they were receiving. The NHLKS made strategic connections both internally and externally during the course of the pandemic. These partnerships will last into the future. The value of our service and our staff has been highlighted and recognised at many levels in our organisation. The timing of the former Taoiseach's address to the Nation on St. Patrick's Day could not have been better. It helped win hearts and minds and motivated staff who were redeployed. It was the first time that our profession was mentioned and acknowledged publicly by the leader of our nation:

> **"I am also grateful to the many people who have joined this great national effort. Not just our healthcare staff but also our army cadets… librarians and civil servants who are learning how to do contact tracing."[5]**

Finally, being a consolidated, national library service was an advantage. If Covid-19 happened pre-2017, it is conceivable that all staff would have been redeployed and the unique skills of our staff would not have been used to their best advantage for both the organisation and the public.

What could be improved

The reality is that many things could be improved. No disaster or emergency plan for libraries could prepare anyone for this. Everyone is trying to do the best that they can in unprecedented times. It is the willingness, participation and having a positive outlook that counts. Redeployment remains an operational challenge as well as having a potentially negative impact of staff morale. Nobody has an issue per se with doing the most important work they can at this moment in time to help everyone in the wake of the coronavirus. However some of the operational elements surrounding this including for example a skills match could be improved. The technical infrastructure could be improved. CISCO's WebEx is only recently available to all staff. Also rural broadband and lack of WIFI in all of our libraries remain a challenge. Dealing with misinformation in a coordinated way on a global scale needs to be improved for all our sakes.

Conclusion

At the time of writing, we are still learning more about Covid-19. It is a pandemic that has invaded every corner of the earth and is leaving its ubiquitous mark on all of our lives. The full effects of this will not be realised until a date in the future. The explosion of information on the Internet and particularly on Twitter has both positive and negative consequences for libraries. On the one hand, verified quality information from experts is instantly available, on the other hand, misinformation is rife. The problem arises when misinformation becomes accepted alternative facts. Perhaps this is something that we as librarians can combat as a profession. Pandemics allow pause for thought and deep reflection. When you take the entire physical library structure away, what is left? What is your core mission and how is it relevant to the current crisis? When you finish your working day how can you be sure that you are doing the most important thing that you can to help our country right now? These are the questions that keep us awake at night.

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5   Department of the Taoiseach (2020). "National Address by the Taoiseach, St Patrick's Day" [online]. Available from https://www.gov.ie/en/speech/72f0d9-national-address-by-the-taoiseach-st-patricks-day/ [Accessed 31 Aug.2020].

ReConnect –
How Libraries NI is responding, recovering and seeking to thrive after the COVID-19 pandemic

Trisha Ward

Abstract

Abstract

This article describes how public libraries in Northern Ireland responded to the challenges of the pandemic. Practical arrangements for the continuation of services are outlined. Measures taken for a safe re-opening after the lifting of restrictions are also considered.

Keywords: *Public Libraries, Northern Ireland, COVID-19*

Introduction

The doyen of leadership management Peter Drucker said that the greatest danger in times of turbulence is not the turbulence - it is to act with yesterday's logic. Libraries, in common with other public service organisations, faced an unprecedented upheaval as a result of the pandemic. This article provides an insight into how Libraries NI dealt with this 'turbulence' and identifies some of the lessons learned.

Libraries NI has responsibility for library services in Northern Ireland (NI). It is an arms-length body of the NI government's Department for Communities and, unlike libraries in much of the UK and Ireland, is not a function of councils. Services are delivered through 96 branch libraries, mobile libraries, a 'homecall' service to people who are housebound and through an online offer. In March 2020, as a result of a Coronavirus (COVID -19) almost all services stopped suddenly.

Starting Lockdown

From the beginning of March, Libraries NI management started to take steps to raise staff awareness of the emerging situation. Given the range and numbers of people who come to and use public libraries we introduced measures to reduce risk to both staff and the public.

At a meeting on 18 March 2020 senior management took the decision, in line with public health advice at that time, to reduce programming and other activities. This was endorsed by the Chairperson of the Board. It was also proposed that all public libraries should close with effect from 17:00 hours on Friday, 20 March. The purpose of this delay was to enable us to prepare for an orderly closure and to make arrangements to inform library users. The decision pre-empted any government decision to close libraries but was in line with actions other public bodies were taking. Northern Ireland was effectively moving into lockdown.

Government legislation requiring libraries to close came into place on 28 March - The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020.

Arrangements were put in place to facilitate as many staff as possible working from home remotely including providing laptops, and iPads. All staff are able to access their Libraries NI email account remotely and this has remained a key communication channel. However, a significant number of frontline staff could not work effectively from home, either because of their role or lack of IT access.

Lockdown Services

There was a palpable sense of shock and relief amongst staff when libraries turned out the lights. Most customers were experiencing the same concerns as staff. The first few days were a blur of making arrangements. However, within just a few days of closing library buildings, there was a strong sense that the library service had not closed.

In March 2020, thanks to an additional funding allocation from the Department for Communities, Libraries NI spent almost £800,000 on eBooks. A significant proportion was spent on children's stock. This placed us in a good position to promote eBooks, eMagazines and audio books in the aftermath of the closure of physical libraries and we have seen the use of this service increase substantially (by more than 50% on March to August 2019). The website eBook/eMagazine landing pages for example had almost 270,000 page views.

Apparently most change management efforts fail according to Rick Maurer (2010)[1]. There are lots of reasons change is so challenging (cultural conflict, organisations do not agree the need or the vision) but COVID 19 created the need and the vision, finding a way to continue to provide a library service, was also apparent.

The most remarkable change was the way frontline staff responded by adapting existing programmes in innovative and interesting ways. Within a few weeks of closure, a number of library staff were delivering Rhythm and Rhyme on branch library Facebook pages. Story times were a daily YouTube event[2].

Some library staff hosted reading groups using IT such as Zoom or WhatsApp. There was a significant increase in activity on social media channels (Facebook, Twitter and Instagram). For example, a post before Easter about storytelling on our corporate Facebook account had a reach of over 270,000 people, with over 14,000 people engaging with the post, more than 1,800 shares and just under 400 comments.

The website was re-purposed to highlight the available services but the flexibility of social media came to the fore.

Management and Governance

Libraries NI is a dispersed organisation – managers are located throughout the country with a management structure of frontline services based on a geographical basis. Professional zoom accounts were used regularly by managers from early 2019. This familiarity allowed senior and middle managers to move seamlessly to working from home.

Within the Services directorate –i.e. managers who have responsibility for library service delivery, senior managers 'huddled' virtually for 30 minutes every morning. There were regular virtual Business Continuity meetings by Zoom twice a week from the beginning of the lockdown, attended by the Senior Leadership Group. This provided a forum to share current

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1   Maurer, R. (2010) *Why 70% of Changes Fail* accessed online 16 September 2020 at reply_mc.com/2010/09/19/why-70-of-changes-fail-by-rick-maurer
2   Libraries NI 2020 https://www.youtube.com/user/LibrariesNI.

departmental and public health advice, to ensure appropriate governance and to continually evaluate the changes which were being made and communicate new ways of working. It gave the Senior Management Team (SMT) confidence that they were aware of any potential issues. It also supported a strong working relationship between library managers and colleagues in Business Support (HR, Procurement, Building Assets) which was of critical importance in responding to issues as they arose (and stopping problems arising).

SMT held regular meetings with the government department's Sponsor Team. This on-going communication meant Libraries NI had some insight into how the NI Executive were dealing with issues and allowed the organisation to prepare for the announcements about re-opening. It has also, as an unintended consequence increased the level of formal communication with the Department and improved informal relations.

There were also weekly meetings with Trade Union colleagues. They were fully involved in discussions about re-opening and risk assessments were shared with them at an early stage.

The Board of Libraries NI is a key part of governance. It is comprised of local councillors and library interest members and is appointed by the Minister. It met virtually five times over the lockdown period, approving the plans to re-open. Many Board Members were active in promoting Libraries NI to other stakeholders and customers though their own social media.

Communications and Staff

Realistically branch library staff working from home were constrained in what they were able to do but consequently we placed an emphasis on staff taking part in staff development activities and engaging if they could in delivering services online. For some staff, for example those without access to IT and staff with caring responsibilities, this was difficult.

The Chief Executive provided a weekly briefing by email which set a tone – sharing important information but also re-enforcing the message that the pandemic was having an impact on everyone.

Managers were encouraged to keep in touch – by email, video or through social media such as WhatsApp. There was definitely a feeling of collegiality –we're all in this together.

Connecting with other professionals

One of the greatest opportunities realised during lockdown was communication with other library professionals. There was an unprecedented level of contact with colleagues across Europe. As part of the National Association on Public Libraries in Europe (NAPLE) we contributed to reports about how European libraries are safely re-opening[3] and learned from the experience of libraries in countries who were 'ahead' of Libraries NI in the timeline of the pandemic.

Taking part in webinars hosted by Libraries Connected and discussions with colleagues throughout UK and Ireland helped us formulate our own plans. Most countries shared some frustration at changing advice or lack of advice available.

Zoom calls are a very different way of working for the profession. However, the experience of dealing with the pandemic and rebuilding the service created a sense of community which builds on the existing partnerships but is strengthened by the fact we are all facing the same issues. Indeed, distance becomes irrelevant when everyone is working from home. This is one of the positives coming out of the last three months and one we intend to build on.

ReConnect

Libraries NI began preparing for resuming services from the doors closed without any indication of a date for re-opening. It was agreed to brand this re-opening as 'ReConnect' to make it clear to customers and staff that it was about reconnecting with customers.

On 12 May the NI Executive published its 'CORONAVIRUS Executive Guide to Decision Making' - a five step plan which identified re-opening of libraries in Steps 2 and 3.

From 16 July, library buildings in Northern Ireland were allowed to re-open and in a phased programme (beginning 21 July and ending on 2 September). All libraries

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3   National Authorities on Public Libraries In Europe (2020) *Public Libraries in Europe and COVID-19: Findings from NAPLE Members, April-July 2020* accessed online 16 September 2020. http://www.culturaydeporte.gob.es/cultura/areas/bibliotecas/mc/napleweb/presentation.html

have now re-opened to the public. In all cases the service offer was initially restricted to services requiring minimal staff intervention i.e. book return, limited browsing, self-service borrowing, unsupported time-limited IT access (no printing). Within weeks we started to re-introduce services such as printing.

In order to re-open there were a series of arrangements put in place to facilitate social distancing, quarantine stock, and protect staff using protective equipment for individuals and buildings.

One key aspect of communicating this change to customers was through a Customer Charter.

There were two new models of service developed to complement the re-opening process.

BookBox is similar to and an extension of the Libraries NI 'normal' Homecall service. It is a delivery of a selection of books on a four weekly basis to customers who are currently unable to visit their local library. Library staff contacted customers who they believed would meet the criteria and the response was very positive. Delivery of the service began in July.

Book and Collect (providing a staff chosen selection of books for collection from the local library at a pre-arranged time) provided an option for customers who might be reluctant to come in and browse. It also allowed

Libraries NI ReConnect Charter

To keep you, your families and our staff safe we're:
- installing screens and customer signage
- increasing cleaning
- providing hand sanitiser
- storing books for 72 hours before putting them back on shelves.

Please:
- keep a social distance
- use hand sanitiser (even on gloves)
- follow the one way system
- limit use on computers (60 minutes)
- use self service machines where available
- bring or replace your library card
- wear a face covering if you can (13+ years)
- be accompanied by an adult if you are under 12.

Remember, anyone who feels unwell should stay at home.

Please be kind, we're in this together.

We cannot offer access to toilet facilities

libraries ni

Libraries NI to offer a service whilst a phased re-opening of libraries was in progress. It permitted us to manage a service with unknown staff capacity. It has been a very popular service and has continued as libraries opened.

Online services have continued. There were almost 20,838 new virtual members in the six-month period of lockdown (March to August 2020). Prior to the pandemic fewer than a thousand additional virtual users would have registered each month. It is clear that some customers who have enjoyed eBooks will continue in the short term to only use this area of the service.

There have been steps to try and build on the online service delivery with a move to have a more corporate and consistent approach to the programming. Online programming such as Rhythm and Rhyme, craft sessions and book groups will continue and will expand as and when staff capacity allows. A phone helpline has been established for customers with difficulties getting online. A wider range of IT support via Zoom classes is now being delivered. Other community based organisations are approaching Libraries NI to support their users especially with IT support.

A dual or 'blended' approach combining virtual and physical services will continue throughout the next period of reconnecting with customers. The balance between the two strands will shift to take account of prevailing circumstances in the coming months and new approaches to the delivery of physical services will be introduced in order to maximise access to library services.

Lessons learned

Identifying stakeholders was critical to minimise the negative impact of lockdown. The ongoing engagement with the Department was important to securing their support and this has been reflected by the very positive way the Minister has recognised the work done by Libraries NI throughout lockdown.

Recognising the emotional impact on staff, both those who were working from home and those who could not contribute from home has been really important. The Chief Executive's message, regular Zoom meetings and the informal WhatsApp group set up by managers helped keep everyone involved. However, the slow drip feed of information about how we would re-open and engagement with Unions were probably the most critical factors in getting people back to work.

The experienced management team in Libraries NI, like many managers, are continually looking at change management –it is challenging in the public sector. COVID 19 literally changed everything. It illustrated the Lewin change model (unfreeze, change, freeze) in action. All staff were forced into the change and the challenge now is to ensure this change continues. Strategies such as regular huddles helped ensure managers knew what was happening. There was a specific issue about the divide between staff who had literally worked from home as if in an office throughout lockdown and those who couldn't (because of their role or lack of connectivity). The return of staff to libraries, welcoming them back, and an induction process was a significant step in helping everyone recognise the importance of their role.

The top priority at the moment is to protect people and find new ways to serve customers. Our staff helped us do that by taking the chance to be innovative, but it has been difficult to reconnect with customers. We have leveraged alternative online channels with some success as exemplified with this comment from a parent.

I am a father of two children and using the library has always been a big part of our routine. The fact that my daughters have had the opportunity to be fully engaged with the library's offer throughout the lockdown period is testament to the creativity and dedication of your staff.

It became somewhat of a "new normal" for us to do rhythm and rhyme on Facebook live and we regularly tuned in for afternoon story time. Finally, it appears that you are reopening your branches in a sensible and proportionate manner and it's good to have you back. So just a big thank you from me and on behalf of my girls."

What started out as a promotional tool has quickly transitioned into an effective engagement tool for customer support, influencer marketing, and in more recent months, service provision. In fact, the Covid-19 pandemic has shown just how important Facebook is for connecting people with their social and information needs.

For example, the audience growth rate across all Facebook pages from March until August 2020 was 15%.

Respond, recover and thrive

A library colleague has pointed out that the challenge of the pandemic is not over when libraries re-open. The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has caused substantial disruption to the normal operations of Libraries NI and the provision of the library service. We have successfully opened the doors of all branch libraries but there are lots of challenges.

Libraries need to provide an approach to service delivery which blends the physical reopening of libraries with virtual resources for those who cannot use a local library and moving flexibly between the two. This becomes even more important as Northern Ireland starts to impose new localised restrictions.

The long term impact of the pandemic on libraries has to be viewed strategically. There will be a real and potentially long lasting impact on the social and economic health of Northern Ireland society. We have a reputation for tackling digital exclusion which is obviously an important skill for economic recovery. Schools and the local Education Authority have pointed to how the eBook resource supported parents and children through the lockdown.

Constrained budgets inevitably mean competition between expenditure priorities, with the NI Executive balancing choices. In order to achieve sustainable funding levels, Libraries NI will need to continue to make the case for how it will contribute to recovery.

The Royal Society for Public Health[4] commissioned research on the return of people to high streets and found that libraries were less likely to be affected (only 23% of people said they were unlikely to return soon compared to 46% of customers of restaurants.) They also said it would take three to four months for people to feel comfortable to come back to the high street. Libraries as trusted safe spaces can become the anchors for high streets, driving footfall back into town centres.

But the strength of libraries is in relation to social inclusion. Through programming, we can also help societal recovery -encouraging people to safely engage with their own communities. Even more importantly we know the benefits that reading and talking about books has on mental health. Libraries have also engaged with the Public Health Agency to share information about the virus and how to stay safe.

The pandemic has possibly given Libraries NI an opportunity to make a change which truly reconnects us with our communities. It's not about using yesterday's logic but about reframing yesterday's strengths and taking this opportunity.

Trisha Ward, BLib, MBA is Head of Service, Libraries NI

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4   Royal Society for Public Health (2020) *Post-lockdown Covid concerns to have 'chilling effect' on UK high streets* accessed online 16 September 2020 https://www.rsph.org.uk/about-us/news/post-lockdown-covid-concerns-to-have-chilling-effect-on-uk-high-streets.html

Going Digital:
Academic Libraries' Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic

Allison Kavanagh

Abstract

This article outlines the response by Irish academic libraries to the COVID-19 pandemic, and the resulting closure of higher education institutions and their libraries for an extended period beginning in March 2020. Academic libraries have responded by accelerating their shift to digital collections and services, by supporting and participating in remote teaching and by offering new services. The article discusses the potential longer term consequences of the pandemic for academic libraries, including budgetary constraints, an impact on the shift to Open Access, changes in library design, and new work practices. Examples of initiatives by Technological University Dublin and other academic library members of the Consortium of National and University Libraries are included.

Keywords: *COVID-19; coronavirus; pandemic; academic libraries; higher education; digital services; digital collections; open access; library design; work practices*

Introduction

On the morning of 12th March 2020, following the World Health Organisation's formally describing COVID-19 as a pandemic, the Taoiseach (Irish Prime Minister) Leo Varadkar announced that schools, colleges and childcare facilities would close from 6pm that day. The closure was initially to remain in place until 29th March 2020. Teaching was to be done remotely, where possible.

Academic libraries, along with their parent institutions, then embarked on what evolved to be a closure of unprecedented duration, with many library buildings only reopening to the wider student population in September 2020, some five months later. Higher education institutions' research and teaching continued throughout the closure, and summer examinations proceeded as originally scheduled, albeit remotely. This required academic libraries to proactively support and enable these activities without access to two of their key assets and services: the physical libraries and their print collections. It necessitated a focus on providing digital solutions to support universities' and colleges' teaching and learning and research activities, some of which were already in place, others which required rapid development.

Following the WHO's formal description of COVID-19 as a pandemic, this article outlines the response by Technological University Dublin's (TU Dublin) Library Services and other academic library members of the Consortium of National and University Libraries (CONUL).

TU Dublin is Ireland's first technological university, with campuses in Dublin City, Tallaght and Blanchardstown. Building on the rich heritage of its founding organisations, Dublin Institute of Technology, IT Blanchardstown and IT Tallaght, TU Dublin offers students pathways to graduation ranging from apprenticeship to PhD.

CONUL is the representative body of research libraries on the island of Ireland. Its members are Dublin City University (DCU); Maynooth University (MU); National Library of Ireland (NLI); National University of Ireland, Galway, (NUIG); Queens University Belfast, (QUB); the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI); the Royal Irish Academy (RIA); Technological University Dublin (TU Dublin); Trinity College Dublin (TCD); University College Cork (UCC); University College Dublin (UCD); University of Limerick (UL); and Ulster University (UU).

Immediate Response

In the days and weeks preceding the Taoiseach's announcement, higher education institutions had already begun planning for the possibility of the closure of their physical campuses in order to support the containment of COVID-19.

Academic libraries had similarly begun reviewing and developing business continuity plans in light of the pandemic. These plans included anticipating the possibility of a phased shutdown, planning for the delivery of library services online, allocating libraries' stock of student loan laptops to university and library staff to support remote working, and minimising attendance at external meetings. Reciprocal library access schemes such as CONUL's Academic Libraries Cooperating in Ireland (ALCID) scheme and the Society of College, National and University Libraries' (SCONUL) Access scheme, in which most Irish university libraries participate, were suspended until further notice.

Following the closure announcement on 12th March 2020, academic libraries' immediate steps included increasing loan allowances and extending loan periods. Libraries swiftly moved to providing their services entirely online: library websites replaced physical libraries as the embodiment of 'the library'. Academic libraries updated their websites with guides to services available during the closure, highlighting the breadth of electronic databases, journals and e-books available to students, academic staff and researchers studying and working remotely.

In parallel, academic library staff were themselves learning to work remotely with all the hardware and software challenges that shift entailed. Higher education institutions quickly turned to previously little used, but now ubiquitous, resources such as Microsoft Teams and Zoom. Library staff mastered these tools to enable them to meet and communicate to advance the work of their libraries, and to provide support to students, staff and researchers. The closure also provided an opportunity for library staff to avail of online training opportunities. At TU Dublin, academic liaison librarians offered live, online training in specialist, subject resources to each other and to other library staff, many of whom, due to the frontline nature of their usual role, would normally find attending training courses logistically difficult. This cross training by liaison librarians aligned to preparations for the partial consolidation of five of TU Dublin's seven City Centre library units into an interim library at the university's Grangegorman campus, scheduled for later in 2020, and also reduced the risk of single points of knowledge with regard to specialist subject knowledge.

Supporting the Switch to Remote Teaching

Once university buildings closed, the need for academic libraries to support the overnight switch by their parent institutions to remote teaching was of paramount importance. University and college libraries provided this support to their institutions' learning and teaching activities in several ways.

Libraries updated, developed and promoted existing online tools and guides in areas such as research skills and teaching support (Maynooth University, 2020, for example). This support was welcomed by library users: a survey of Research Libraries UK (RLUK) members reported a large increase in traffic to library webpages containing research guidance (Greenhall, 2020), and anecdotal evidence from Irish academic libraries echoes this experience.

Liaison librarians also offered their expertise and support in the area of copyright to academic colleagues migrating to remote teaching by providing advice on the use of materials within institutions' Virtual Learning Environments (VLEs) against the backdrop of ongoing negotiations with the Irish Copyright Licencing Association regarding renewal of the higher education sector's licence.

Academic libraries forged and strengthened partnerships with other function areas in their institutions to further support the shift to remote teaching and learning. TU Dublin Library Services, for example, collaborated with the university's Learning, Teaching and Technology Centre to deliver a well-attended webinar to support academic colleagues engaged in remote teaching, and librarians developed suites of reusable learning objects and made them available in the VLE. In addition, a number of university libraries (NUIG, MU and UCD, for example) have collated and promoted the use of Open Educational Resources (teaching, learning and research resources that are freely available to anyone to use, adapt and redistribute without restriction (UNESCO, n.d.) to their academic communities.

And throughout higher education institutions' closure due to the COVID-19 pandemic, liaison librarians offered one-to-one consultations to researchers, academic colleagues and students by phone, chat and video calls.

Library Collections – Accelerating the Digital Trend

Despite academic libraries' extensive digital collections, the loss of access to print collections was a significant loss to users. Undergraduate students and, to a lesser extent, taught postgraduate students, rely heavily on print textbooks and the loss of access to them during university closures posed challenges to their learning.

Academic libraries reallocated collections budgets to e-books to address this issue, prioritising the purchase of e-books over print. While a necessary move, this highlighted pre-existing issues in relation to e-book versions of textbooks.

First, in certain disciplines, particularly in the humanities, e-book versions of textbooks are not available. Secondly, unlike fiction, academic e-books generally cost more than the print equivalent. This is partly due to the higher rate of VAT that applies to e-books (9% rather than 0%), but a number of

publishers' prices for e-books are considerably higher than the print equivalent. For example, an exercise conducted by NUIG library found that the average price per textbook for an institutional licence was €13,000 per annum (James Hardiman Library, 2020) – clearly an unaffordable and unsustainable price. Thirdly, e-books often have limits in terms of the proportion of the text that can be downloaded or printed. Finally, while research indicates that students prefer digital texts to print, their comprehension has been shown to be better when they read printed texts (Singer & Alexander, 2017). Nevertheless, while libraries remained closed due to COVID-19, diverting budgets to the purchase of e-books offered students and staff continued access to essential texts to support the remote learning and teaching environment.

Publishers Response to COVID-19 and Open Access

Publishers developed their own response to the pandemic. In March 2020, more than 30 publishers made all of their COVID-19 related publications available in public repositories such as PubMed Central (Wellcome, 2020). Numerous publishers in other disciplines also made some or all of their collections freely available. Many academic libraries' Collections teams undertook to collate these resources, enable access to them and to promote them to library users, thereby broadening further the range of digital resources available to students, staff and researchers.

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, and publishers' response to it, on the transition to Open Access publishing will be interesting to observe in the coming months and years. This transition has already been accelerated by Plan S, a European initiative which requires that, from 2021, all scholarly publications arising from scientific research funded by public agencies must be published in Open Access journals, platforms or repositories (Coalition S, 2018). As researchers and funders become increasingly acclimatised during the pandemic to research outputs being freely available, their tolerance for the re-imposition of paywalls and embargos will likely decline. Not all commentators believe that the path to open research will run completely smoothly, however, with some believing that the financial impact of the

COVID-19 pandemic is likely to stall progress to widespread Open Access publishing (Crotty, 2020). Librarians, funders, researchers and publishers will watch this issue with interest as it evolves.

Old Habits, New Services

Despite the increased focus on the growing electronic resources available to researchers, students and staff, demand remained strong amongst academic libraries' users for access to print collections. Students and academics alike missed access to the general collections, while researchers particularly missed access to Archives and Special Collections. Once the easing by the Irish Government of COVID-19 restrictions and institutional policy permitted library staff to return to working on-campus, a number of academic libraries began offering a 'Scan and Deliver' service (University College Cork Library, 2020, for example) providing fully copyright compliant scanning and electronic delivery of book chapters and journal articles to library users on request. Prior to campuses reopening fully, some academic libraries (for example, NUIG and UCD) offered access by appointment to Archives and Special Collections Reading Rooms.

Perhaps the most wide-spread new service offered by academic libraries during the summer was a Click-and-Collect service. This service was similar to that offered by public libraries following their reopening. It provided library users the opportunity to request books via the library catalogue from academic libraries' general collections and collect them by appointment. This initiative allowed academic library users continued access to the general collections throughout a time when the wider campuses, and often even the physical libraries, remained closed.

Reopening for the 2020/21 Academic Year

Once it became apparent that universities and colleges would remain closed for longer than the initial two week period referenced in the Taoiseach's announcement on 12th March 2020, academic libraries began planning for a phased reopening of their services. While each academic library operates within its own institution's parameters, the exchange of ideas, updates and

best practice between academic libraries proved invaluable to all concerned. Collaborative organisations such as CONUL facilitated the sharing of plans in a collegiate manner.

Third level academic programmes for the 2020/21 academic year began over a two week period from 21st September 2020. For Dublin institutions, this coincided with the escalation of restrictive measures for Dublin city and county on 18th September 2020 to Risk Level 3 on the National Framework for Living with COVID-19 (Government of Ireland, 2020). While the recommencement of teaching activities proceeded as planned, returning students found their experience of academic libraries much changed. Library websites played a more significant role. Study space capacity was reduced, accessible by appointment only, and time limited. Digital literacy classes were primarily online, as was most interaction with library staff, using chat and video conferencing tools. Academic librarians rose to the challenge, however, to engage with students as creatively as possible in the digital environment.

Impact on Library Buildings

The COVID-19 pandemic will also have an impact on the design and use of library buildings. In recent years, the design of academic library buildings has

prioritised the allocation of space to library users rather than collections (White, 2016). This trend has been reflected in capital projects in Irish university libraries, including RCSI and UL, where the use of the Automated Reserve Collection (ARC), an automated storage and retrieval system, has released floor space to enable a greater footprint allocation to library users.

Much of this additional user space has enabled libraries to provide access to highly popular (in pre-COVID times) collaborative study spaces, maker spaces and wellness areas. As libraries reopened for the 2020/21 academic year, this trend towards collaborative spaces was – hopefully temporarily – reversed, with such spaces being decommissioned or repurposed as individual study spaces. Soft furnishings were removed and group study rooms were repurposed for physically distant individual study.

The acceleration due to the COVID-19 pandemic of the shift to electronic resources in preference to print further calls into question whether the reverence with which academic libraries' print collections are regarded, and the floor space which they therefore occupy, will continue. As we are being told we must learn to 'live with the virus' – and the question remains for how long that might be – we must consider the potential impact on future library building projects, such as NUIG's €39 million regeneration of the James Hardiman library (Andrews, 2020) and TU Dublin's Academic Hub library complex, which is scheduled for delivery in 2023.

On a positive note, it is heartening that planning at TU Dublin for the Academic Hub, the library for the university at Grangegorman, is continuing apace, despite the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, work which was ongoing at Grangegorman on a number of buildings prior to the closure of all construction sites in Ireland due to COVID-19 in March 2020, recommenced in May 2020. This included two new academic buildings and an interim library to support those buildings' occupants prior to the completion of the Academic Hub in 2023.

While delayed somewhat by the closure, relocation to the new academic buildings and the consolidation of five of TU Dublin's City Centre library units

into a temporary interim library is still planned to take place during the 2020/21 academic year. TU Dublin library staff have continued to plan for the re-sequenced moves to the interim library while working remotely throughout the university's closure due to COVID-19.

Budgetary Impact

COVID-19 is expected to have a significant financial impact on the third level sector. A Higher Education Authority report released in May 2020 anticipated a €500 million shortfall for the sector in 2020 and 2021 due to a combination of loss of revenues from international students, student accommodation and commercial sources (Irish Times, Jun 2020; RTE, May 2020). Some academic libraries have already had indications of the impact on library budgets of this change in their parent institutions' fortunes, and others are likely to do so in the coming years. This, at a time when the migration to more expensive electronic rather than print resources is accelerating, increases the pressure on academic libraries to ensure value for money in their negotiations with publishers. Consortia such as IReL can play a leading role in this regard. IReL is a nationally funded e-resource licensing consortium providing access to leading Science Technology and Medicine, and Humanities and Social Sciences resources on behalf of participating Irish publicly funded higher education institutions.

Internationally, there is speculation that growing budgetary constraints facing academic libraries could accelerate the trend, which had begun before COVID-19, of academic libraries cancelling their Big Deal subscriptions (Aiwuyor, 2020; Cox, 2020). It certainly seems to be accelerating the change in tone of libraries' and library consortia's negotiations with publishers. In the UK, RLUK, SCONUL and JISC have joined together to put pressure on publishers to reduce prices for journal subscriptions, threatening to cancel subscriptions if publishers do not respond favourably to the current financial pressures facing universities (JISC, 2020) – a strategy which Irish academic libraries will watch with interest.

Impact of Changing Work Practices

Technology posed challenges and opportunities in the overnight shift to remote working thrust upon academic libraries by the closure of Irish higher education institutions in March 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Challenges included shortages of hardware for library staff, gaining Virtual Private Network access to allow access to library systems, and a digital divide which meant not all library staff had internet access at home. Once these issues were resolved, however, these same tools allowed academic libraries to respond rapidly and effectively to the crisis, developing new and innovative services in a short space of time. Web conferencing tools such as MS Teams and Zoom enabled collaborative work to continue. Due to the elimination of commuting to meetings, these tools made it easier to collaborate with colleagues normally located on other campuses, or in other institutions. Web conferencing tools also helped to mitigate the impact of isolation and lack of social interaction on academic library teams, with virtual coffee breaks becoming a regular feature for many.

Remote working saves commuting time and provides the opportunity to balance work and caring responsibilities. It therefore seems likely that the experience of remote working during the COVID-19 pandemic will influence future work practices in academic libraries, even in the post-COVID world which we all hope is on the horizon.

Conclusion

The closure of third level institutions and their libraries in March 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic posed significant challenges to academic libraries. These included an upheaval in work practices, operational issues, and an inability to offer access to key services such as print collections and study and collaborative spaces. Academic libraries have responded by accelerating their shift to digital collections and services, by supporting and participating in remote teaching and by offering new services. As third level institutions enter the 2020/21 academic year, academic libraries can expect to need to continue to innovate and adapt to the changing environment. Longer term impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on academic libraries may also begin to materialise in the form of budgetary constraints, changed relationships with publishers, a lasting influence on the design and use of library buildings, and changes in work practices.

We are in the foothills of a period of significant change in academic libraries and wider society. While this will be challenging, it also presents academic libraries with a unique opportunity to adapt and respond courageously and innovatively to better lead, collaborate and provide support in the delivery of their institutions' academic missions.

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Chair, CONUL and Head of Library Services - City Campus at TU, Dublin

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Connecting and Empowering Library Publishers: An International Knowledge Exchange

IFLA Special Interest Group on Library Publishing Mid-Term Conference, Oslo Metropolitan University, Norway, March 5th - 6th 2020

Jane Buggle and Marie O'Neill

The Library Publishing Coalition defines library publishing as "the set of activities led by college and university libraries to support the creation, dissemination, and curation of scholarly, creative, and/or educational works." (https://librarypublishing.org/)

The IFLA Special Interest Group (SIG) on Library Publishing was formed to strengthen networks, to exchange knowledge and best practice, and to advocate for and drive further developments in the area. The IFLA SIG held its inaugural mid-term meeting at Dublin Business School at the end of February 2019 which included presentations from library publishing programmes and experts from around the world. Themes explored in the conference included standards, platforms, funding models and societal impact. Please see the conference review by Suzanne Stapleton, University of Florida Libraries, (https://librarypublishing.org/reflections-on-ifla-midterm-2019/). Jane Buggle, Dublin Business School, and Marie O Neill, CCT College Dublin, chaired this conference with the support of Ann Okerson and the IFLA SIG Committee.

Following on from the success of this meeting, the 2020 mid-term meeting was held at Oslo Metropolitan University in Norway in March 2020, chaired by Lars Egeland. This event explored in greater depth themes discussed in Dublin whilst also introducing newer topics. The full programme, including recording of all presentations, is available at https://blogg.hioa.no/ifla/program/. The event comprised four themes: Publishing Platforms, Case Studies, Library Publishing Services and Library Publishing Collaborations. The event also incorporated a valuable and thought-provoking panel session as well as parallel workshops.

In the Publishing Platforms Section, there were interesting discussions about a variety of powerful open source publishing platforms such as Drupal and Vega. A key benefit of the presentations and discussions in this section were the insights from PKP in relation to the importance of librarians engaging in the communities that develop these publishing infrastructures. A fascinating presentation from the University of Amsterdam described a consortium in which fourteen university libraries from five countries have established a platform entitled UJ (University Journals) https://universityjournals.eu/index.php/for-universities/ based on their combined institutional repositories. The platform aims to reduce the barriers around publishing pertaining to access to expertise and experience and to leverage economies of scale to lower publishing costs. Costs are shared by the participating universities from their budgets; there are no APCs, there is no need for transfer of copyrights and UJ fully complies with open access mandates and supports DORA. The Royal

Danish Library provided interesting insights into using OJS as the Danish National Open Access platform (tidsskrift.dk) which showcases high-quality open access journals that may not have access, expertise or funding for such a sophisticated platform.

The Case Studies section was particularly informative about library publishing in the public library environment with a presentation from the City Library of Pančevo, Serbia, on its long publishing tradition. There were presentations on successful library publishing programmes at the University of Lublin Technology, Poland, and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Nebraska-Lincoln, with a prodigious library publishing output, highlighted the potency of the Digital Commons Platform for publishing purposes. The choice of a robust publishing platform as well the development and retention of a small library publishing team with a broad skill set were positioned as being key determinants of the success of library publishing programs. The Vienna University Press (VUP) discussed a commercial publishing approach that also incorporates an element of open access.

In the Library Services section, library publishers highlighted approaches in relation to project evaluation, peer-review process, video abstracts for marketing, and accessibility of publications by a diverse range of institutions including our hosts, OsloMet, the Arctic University of Norway, the University of Queensland and Washington State University.

In the Collaboration and Networks section, OsloMet described a collaborative initiative (Activity-Based Libraries) in which the universities of Norway co-produce open educational resources for use in particular subject areas, eliminating duplications of funds and efforts in the compiling of the shared world-class resources. Talks by Virginia Commonwealth and Penn State University on behalf of the Library Publishing Coalition focused on the Library Publishing Directory and Library Publishing Coalition Mentorship Programme. The authors also attended an interesting parallel session on the Library

Publishing Directory. The session concluded with a presentation on the library publishing landscape in Ireland and developments in the Irish library publishing sphere which include the establishment of a national Library Publishing Group under the aegis of the Library Association of Ireland and the embedding of the Library Publishing Curriculum into the MSc in Information and Library Management at Dublin Business School.

The event concluded with a panel discussion on the role of library publishing in advancing open access which also focussed on the tensions between small publishing houses and library publishers. Diminishing academic library budgets places further pressure on libraries to publish scholarly output in-house. Speakers included Jesper Boserup Thestrup, The Royal Danish Library; Marte Ericsson Ryste, Cappelen Damm Akademisk, Publisher, Norway; Jan Erik Frantsvåg, UiT The Arctic University of Norway; and Jane Buggle, Dublin Business School; with Lars Egeland as moderator.

The event highlighted the global community of practice that now exists in relation to library publishing as well as the importance of information sharing and education. Mikael Böök made a strong case for the expansion of the definition of library publishing to incorporate public libraries. He also highlighted the powerful role that public libraries must take in promoting social justice and peace. Lars reiterated the theme of social justice by also highlighting the role of library publishing in meeting the UN's sustainable development goals. He articulated the power of library publishing programmes to provide an outlet for scholarly output free from proprietary models.

Ann Okerson conducted an uplifting IFLA SIG on Library Publishing business meeting which captured exciting developments and future plans. The authors would like to congratulate Lars Egeland, his team at OsloMet, Ann Okerson and the IFLA SIG Committee on this empowering and inspiring international knowledge exchange.

The authors would also like to invite interested parties to join the Library Publishing Group (LPG) of the LAI. Members of the LPG are currently undertaking the four modules of the Library Publishing Curriculum online over this period of lockdown. All welcome.

Jane Buggle, Deputy Librarian, DBS and Chair,
LAI Library Publishing Group, member IFLA SIG on Library Publishing

Marie O'Neill, Head of Enhancement, CCT College Dublin,
LAI Library Publishing Group and IFLA SIG on Library Publishing

NEWS from the STACKS

People

Recent Appointments:

Michelle Dalton (Head of Research Services, UCD Library),

Barbara McCormack (Academy Librarian, RIA)

Recent Retirements:

Julie Barrett, Marie Bourke, Siobhan Fitzpatrick and **Liam Ronayne**

Aoife Lawton has been elected to the Executive Board of EAHIL from 2021

Daren Tang is the new Director General of WIPO: https://www.ifla.org/node/92949

Library Developments

https://www.tcd.ie/library/news/trinity-unveils-new-book-of-kells-treasury-and-display-case/

https://www.tcd.ie/library/news/college-townhall-meeting-on-the-old-library-redevelopment-project/

Recent announcements for Academic libraries:

https://hea.ie/2020/10/07/minister-harris-announces-allocation-of-e34-33m-in-transformation-funding-for-technological-universities/

Recent announcements for public library developments:

https://www.gov.ie/en/press-release/b473b-ministers-humphreys-and-obrien-announce-713500-funding-for-library-supports/

https://www.gov.ie/en/press-release/21233-minister-humphreys-approves-3-million-funding-for-public-library-upgrades-and-measures-to-respond-and-adapt-to-covid-19/ Specific developments are listed here: https://www.gov.ie/pdf/?file=https://assets.gov.ie/88553/af7e315d-fde4-4d97-9c76-30d3222f9fa8.pdf#page=null

International News

http://www.eblida.org/index.php?page=home

https://www.ifla.org/

Copyright News

http://www.eblida.org/activities/copyright-reform2.html

EU and Brexit: https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/brexit_files/info_site/copyright_en_0.pdf

Forthcoming Events

Global Media and Information Literacy Week: https://en.unesco.org/commemorations/globalmilweek

Science Week: https://www.sfi.ie/engagement/science-week/

HSLG: https://hslgblog.wpcomstaging.com/

Library Ireland Week 2020: https://www.libraryassociation.ie/save-the-date-library-ireland-week-30th-november-to-6th-december/

https://www.cilip.org.uk/events/EventDetails.aspx?id=1410805&group=201287

https://www.dbs.ie/online-open-event

Conferences

https://biall.org.uk/event-directory/

http://conference.conul.ie/ Conference postponed until 2022

https://www.iaml.info/news/iaml-congress-prague-2021-call-papers-and-posters

https://www.lilacconference.com/lilac-2021/call-for-presentations

Literary Awards 2020

An Post Irish Book Awards shortlist:

https://www.irishbookawards.irish/2020/10/20/shortlist-unveiled-for-the-an-post-irish-national-book-awards-2020/

Booker Prize shortlist:

Diane Cook (USA), *The New Wilderness* (Oneworld Publications)
Tsitsi Dangarembga (Zimbabwe), *This Mournable Body* (Faber & Faber)
Avni Doshi (USA), *Burnt Sugar* (Hamish Hamilton, Penguin Random House)
Maaza Mengiste (Ethiopia/USA), *The Shadow King* (Canongate Books)
Douglas Stuart (Scotland/USA), *Shuggie Bain* (Picador, Pan Macmillan)
Brandon Taylor (USA), *Real Life* (Originals, Daunt Books Publishing)

The winner will be announced on 19th November.

International Dublin Literary Award:

http://www.dublincity.ie/story/dublin-literary-award-winner-2020-milkman-anna-burns

Nobel Prize in Literature:

https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/literature/2020/summary/

Women's Prize for Fiction:

https://bookriot.com/2020-womens-prize-winner/

Chambers Ireland Excellence in Local Government Awards 2020
The following library services have been shortlisted in the Best Library Service category:

Clare County Council – Connections: Stories by Syrian Families in County Clare
Cork County Council – Full STEAM Ahead: Delivering Digital Opportunities to Rural Communities
Kildare County Council – Kildare Library Service's STEAM programme
Meath County Council – Traveller Genealogy
Wicklow County Council – Wicklow County Council Library Service Literacy Supports – Home Schooling

The winner will be announced on 26th November.

CPD

https://libereurope.eu/blog/2020/10/14/30-nov-2020-webinar-new-challenges-and-leading-into-the-post-covid-19-recovery-for-research-libraries/

https://www.uksg.org/event/NovemberConference2020

https://www.ifla.org/node/93398

Interesting Websites

http://www.culturalequity.org/ace/about-ace

Contributors wanted for next issue of An Leabharlann: the Irish Library, Volume 30(1).

The Editor would be interested in receiving short articles (1,500 words) from librarians in corporate, legal, not for profit, school, voluntary sectors outlining how you provided services during the lock down.

Did you do something innovative?

This call is open to all libraries on the island. If you are interested, please let the editor know by 15th November 2020.