

# Librarians Information Literacy Annual Conference (LILAC) 2016

University College Dublin: March 21 - 23, 2016

## Lessons learned at LILAC 2016

Librarians Information Literacy Annual Conference (LILAC) is organised by CILIP's Information Literacy Group and is the biggest gathering of information literacy librarians in the UK. This year it was hosted by UCD in the O'Brien Centre for Science and some 300 delegates attended.

Over three days delegates enjoyed very different keynotes, multiple workshops, papers, interactive posters, a networking evening in the Chester Beatty Library and a Conference Dinner at Royal Hospital, Kilmainham. Key themes included the role of evidence-based research in librarianship; engaging learners through games; and the strategic importance of digital literacy to library and information services.

## Research

I attended a workshop with Jane Secker (LSE) and Mary Delaney (IT Carlow). Participants were encouraged to take on the researcher's identity to foster a deeper understanding of the research process while exploring the challenges faced by practicing librarians undertaking doctoral research. Other notable sessions which addressed the value of practitioner research included 'What can a user experience (UX) approach tell us about the undergraduate research process' (Siobhan Dunne, DCU) and Eamon Tewell, Natasha Tomlin and Kimberley Mullins (Long Island University) on 'What actually happens: an ethnographic investigation of student library use'. In their refreshing twist on traditional research methodologies, Alan Carbery and Lindsey Godwin (Champlain College, Vermont) explained how to go about advocating for positive change through research which utilises appreciative inquiry.

## Engaging learners through games

Nicola Whitton (Manchester Metropolitan University) and Alex Moseley's (University of Leicester) keynote on the first day actively demonstrated how gaming theory can be used to engage learners through creativity, collaboration, puzzle-solving, competition and narrative. A new feature of the conference this year was the *Lagadothon* where participants could showcase new and innovative information literacy games, products and tools. The winner was Andrew Walsh from the University of Huddersfield. He was awarded £500 by CILIP to enable him to turn his creation ('*Escaping the induction*') into a prototype which can be used by others in the information literacy community.

## Reflective practice

The relatively new ACRL Framework for Information Literacy - which shifts the focus from a 'skills' based approach to a more conceptual model has stimulated much innovation in American Higher Education by embracing critical pedagogy, collaboration and reflective practice. Many sessions grappled with how the Framework could be applied in practice. The keynote speech on the second day proved popular as Char Booth (California State

University, San Marcos) examined how asking reflective questions about perspective could transform the anxiety librarians often feel about their teaching role into insight about learning. She also addressed issues of social justice and how librarians can foster critical information literacy in students by applying a reflective lens to their own teaching and their assumptions about learners. This thread was picked up by Alan Carbery and Sean Leahy as they described an inquiry-based, sequential, and embedded information literacy programme (developed in Champlain College, Vermont) which raises student consciousness about the production, dissemination and consumption of information.

## Digital literacy

The third and final keynote was delivered by James Clay and focused on JISC's drive to improve digital capability across the Higher Education sector in the UK through a framework which allows institutions to map the skills required by different roles, and equip staff with the tools and resources they need to support learners. The importance of developing digital literacy was echoed in many of the other talks throughout the conference. The 'All Aboard' project to map digital skills in Irish Higher Education was described by Liz Dore (University of Limerick) and Blaneeth McSharry (NUIG). Further exploring the strategic importance of digital and other literacies for libraries in Ireland was the LAI Taskforce for Information Literacy. They emphasised the need for libraries to form collaborative partnerships with other key stakeholders and advocate for the crucial role that library and information services play in enhancing our communities through greater information and digital literacy.

Slides and further conference reports are available online at:

<http://www.lilacconference.com/lilac-archive/lilac-2016-1>

*Genevieve Larkin, Assistant Librarian, Marino Institute of Education and recipient of LAI Academic and Special libraries Section bursary.*