

# Together or Apart: Effective ways of Working

48th BIALL Annual Study Conference & Exhibition  
Manchester, 7 - 10 June 2017

 #BIALL2017



Here are just some of the highlights from the conference:

## Plenary sessions

The 8th of June was the date of the 2017 British General Election and the BIALL conference kicked off with a talk from [David Allen Green](#) - **Informing the debate about Brexit**. David (journalist and lawyer) has contributed extensively to the Brexit debate. He believes strongly in access to quality authoritative information and is concerned about how to better inform the Brexit debate. He discussed how access to reliable legal and policy information can make a difference. Ultimately Brexit is an enormous challenge for the legal information industry.

[Nick West](#), Mishcon de Reya's Chief Strategy Officer and director of their technology incubator [MDR LAB](#) is passionate about technology. During his talk, **Together or apart? Human vs machine or human and machine**, he discussed the impact of technology on the legal industry. There are many tools available for classifying documents, eDiscovery and reviewing contracts, but we need more in-house R&D programmes to investigate future technologies.

Michael Maher and Alice Tyson, ([Law Society of England & Wales](#)), are currently digitising their corporate archive. Their presentation was the last of the conference, the morning after the conference dinner and they kept the audience fully engaged with tales of solicitors and clerks held as prisoners of war, of slavery and women who fought to be accepted into the legal profession.

## Parallel sessions

Hilary Smith, [Shell](#)'s solo legal librarian, and Miriam Davies, Head of Library & Information Services at [Norton Rose Fulbright](#) presented an engaging case study on **Working together to provide an enquiry service to Shell's legal community: a story of collaboration between client and law firm**. Hilary faced a dilemma of how to provide an enquiry service to 700 lawyers in 45 countries. Hilary and Miriam are working together to create a new and innovative approach to running an enquiry service. Enquiries from Shell employees can now go directly to the law firm librarians and Hilary tracks the responses. Miriam sees this new way of working as a win-win situation. It is an added value service for the clients and within her firm this new initiative has enhanced the reputation of the library and information service.

## Trial, error and trouble...the trials and tribulations of everyday librarians developing a library website

The growing numbers of part-time, distance and online students is a challenge for the library at the [University of Law](#). Chris Walker and Sally Peat redesigned the library website to improve access to library services. They have introduced YouTube videos for instruction, WordPress for websites, Tumblr for current awareness, Captivate for online guides and Zopim for live chat.

## Knowledge Management: from zero to hero

Jon Beaumont, KM Systems Advisor at [Shearman & Sterling](#), is responsible for "Knowledge Centre" – the firm's access point to internal and external know-how. Pre-2013 there was no centralised method of storage or retrieval for know-how, lawyers had to search across many systems for document and matter information. "Knowledge Centre" was launched in 2015 following two years of planning aimed at consolidating the firm's systems and providing users with a single interface to access all know-how.

## Lightning Talks

### Information literacy: what it means to us as librarians and how to get it across to other people

Terence Dooley used to be a sales rep; he is now a librarian at the [University of Law](#) and very enthusiastic about the importance of digital literacy. To get the message across we need to adopt a clear approach, define our terms, sell our services, and adopt a sales technique.

### The increasing importance of competitive intelligence in law firms

Kristie Robertson (Director, Intelligence Services at [Manzama](#)) has developed a competitive intelligence programme for a Canadian law firm. She moved the firm from an ad hoc, on-demand, reactive, print based approach to intelligence gathering to a systematic process of collecting, gathering and analysing external information to make the firm more competitive.

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