

Reflection on the CILIP Conference Wednesday 3rd - Thursday 4th July 2019

This was my first time attending the CILIP conference, but having attended CILIP HLG last year and It's Great up North earlier this year I had some idea of what to expect from a library and information conference. However, I wasn't quite prepared for just how big the CILIP conference would be... it even had its own road sign!



After meeting new colleagues in the CILIP conference welcome area, chatting to exhibitors and catching up with colleagues from YOHLNet it was time for the conference to begin.

The first keynote speaker was Kriti Sharma, who spoke about using Artificial Intelligence (AI) to help create a fairer world. Within her keynote Kriti spoke about some of the past mistakes which had been made in relation to AI, including bias created by algorithms and issues around diversity. Kriti highlighted that there is a lot of potential and opportunity to use AI and that we can learn from the mistakes of the digital world to improve access for all.

It was soon time to head to our first seminar session, for me this was '25 years of Libraries Change Lives' seminar. This session focused on two Libraries Change Lives award winning initiatives, the first being The Mitchell Library Homeless In-Reach project with Citizen's Advice Bureau. Dan Monks and Iain Riley (Glasgow Libraries) spoke about how the initiative had first come to light, as a chance conversation with a member of the Council. With an open door policy the library had seen an increase in homelessness and the Citizen's Advice Bureau needed new premises within the city and so the two services came together to collaborate and through the partnership have helped to change the lives of some of their library customers.

The second award winning initiative which we heard about was Norfolk Libraries Healthy Libraries. Jan Holden (Norfolk Libraries) spoke about how Norfolk Libraries had worked with local public health teams to develop their libraries into 'healthy libraries'. Library staff were able to use the daily contact they had with customers to promote healthy lifestyles. The key message I took away from Jan's presentation was 'things can be piloted and abandoned if they don't work. Learn quickly and move on!'



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After a break for lunch & networking we're back in the theatre ready for the next keynote 😊 #CILIPConf19



5:35 am - 3 Jul 2019

After lunch it was time for the second keynote of the conference, Liz Jolly (Chief Librarian, British Library) 'Librarianship and identity: Professionalism in a changing world'. Within the keynote Liz spoke about her own career journey, which I found to be of particular interest.

For the second seminar session of the day I chose to attend 'Innovation in public libraries' where I found out about the LGBT archive collections at Manchester Central Library, 100% Digital Leeds (a cross sector collaboration led by Leeds Libraries), the potential of using open geographic intelligence with

library data and how Kirklees Libraries have used creative engagement to develop their library service.

The final seminar session of the day for me was 'Media and information literacy'. In this session I found out how the UK government is tackling disinformation through media and information literacy, the themes to address when developing digital literacies and digital wellbeing of children/young people and those that care for/support them. I also learned about the 'Be Media Smart' public awareness campaign which was launched in Ireland in 2019. The campaign aimed to encourage people of all ages to stop, look and check that the information they see, read or hear is reliable.

Day two of the conference started with keynote 3 - Questioning diversity. In this keynote Hong-Anh Nguyen (The Kings Fund) drew on lived personal and professional experiences to highlight what the library sector need to understand in order to move beyond good intentions and become an inclusive and diverse profession.



I was keen to find out more about diversity and inclusion within the profession, so I went along to the 'Diversity in the profession' session. In this session, members of the panel shared their personal and professional experiences whilst anonymous experiences from the wider profession were shared on a presentation. This session certainly gave me food for thought.

 **Natasha**
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Keynote 4: Patrick Lambe - People of the Book. #CILIPConf19



4:16 am - 4 Jul 2019

My final chosen session of the day was the Impact and influence workshop. In this session Kay Grieves (University of Sunderland) shared her bespoke engagement and impact model and how this has helped to demonstrate impact and value to academic staff and the University Executive. Anthony Hopkins (Library, Heritage and Adult Education Service, London Borough of Merton) spoke about his personal career journey from Library Assistant to Head of Service and highlighted the importance of building influence within a political environment.

Before the conference drew to a close there was time for one more keynote 'Libraries as a place: how public libraries can transform themselves as a third place for all' - Aat Vos (in partnership with Designing Libraries). Aat spoke about libraries becoming social places, the impact of this on the traditional library service and how libraries can transform into third places for all.

My aim for attending the CILIP conference was to try and broaden my knowledge of the wider library sector, outside of health. I feel that I achieved this and I'm very grateful to YOHLNet for allowing me the opportunity to attend.

Natasha Craigs
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