

CILIP Conference 2019
3rd – 4th July 2019
University Place, Manchester
#CILIPconf19

Rather than listing each session that I attended and reproducing key points from the slides, I'm following key headings that I've seen being used by colleagues awarded bursaries.

My conference highlight ...

Rather than a specific highlight, a general positive for me was developing an understanding of the roles and importance of other types of libraries. The conference was a perfect opportunity for me to attend sessions on topics that I previously knew nothing about and gave me a chance to explore other areas of librarianship.

One session I attended, which was a new area for me, was the 'Innovations in public libraries'. This saw speakers discuss creative and engaging ways of promoting their services and how they had all become important and necessary parts of their communities. Manchester Central Library talked about their living archive of the LGBT+ community in the city. Leeds Libraries discussed their 100% Digital campaign. Kirklees Libraries showed the vital work they do with the University of Huddersfield in bringing in young people through the door and using their resources. It was particularly warming to hear from two services local to mine.

Since the conference I have already began signposting our library's users to the great work that is being done locally and the ways in which it can have a positive impact on their own and their patients' health and welling. This, as well as talks from people from other sectors, left me very inspired as to the potential of what a library is and what it can offer.

One thing I will be changing at work following attendance at this conference will be ...

After Hong-Anh Nguyen's key note speech I attended the panel discussion she chaired on 'Diversity in the profession'. The panel shared

their lived experiences of being challenged, belittled and treated unfairly in a profession simply for being 'different'. Whilst this was happening there were also quotations from an anonymous survey which highlighted the systemic abuse, micro-aggressions, and inequalities other people had put up with.

Although upsetting to hear, it was very important these voices were heard, especially by people like myself with privilege who are largely unaware these things are happening on a daily basis. As well as this talk there was a CILIP BAME allies networking breakfast which I unfortunately could not attend.

I left feeling that I need to do more as an ally. I am going to commit to educating myself by reading more around the subject. I will also speak up, and question and try to ensure I make the library an inclusive space. Libraries are important for social change and as a profession we need to promote information, examples and role models that reflect the diversity of our world.

The presentation that really struck me was ...

As someone early in my library career it was inspiring to hear Liz Jolly discuss her own professional development. From her first role as a part-time Library Assistant on weekends, she gave an important and personal account of her experiences in the profession. Now I don't really have ambition to be the Chief Librarian at the British Library (well at least not any time soon), but her dedication to the role, even during difficult times, was inspiring and gave me confidence in knowing this is the profession for me.

She then went on to discuss her vision of the wider profession included the importance of developing as a reflective practitioner, greater collaboration with other professions, more focus on developing inclusive routes into the profession, and the urgent need to address the lack of diversity in the profession, including social class. It was encouraging to see these are the priorities of the British Library and to know they are taking

concrete steps in achieving this vision, thereby setting the standards for libraries nationwide.

The workshop I found most useful was ...

I think it can be easy in my day-to-day role at Leeds Community Healthcare to forget about who our library is for, but this was certainly clarified during my first workshop of the conference. On the panel for '25 Years of Libraries Change Lives' was Glasgow Central Library who work directly in supporting homeless people, and Norfolk Libraries who use the daily contact with customers to promote healthy lifestyles.

Hearing how each of the speakers' libraries had a direct impact on their users acted as a reminder that the heart of all we do at Leeds Community Healthcare is to improve patient care. We may not directly see them but all of our work - even if it is issuing a book from our health and wellbeing fiction collection to a member of staff - goes towards providing the best possible care in every community. It was nice to be reminded of our importance.

The most engaging speaker was ...

I found the most engaging keynote speaker to be Aat Vos, who wore quite a jazzy blazer and presented on 'Libraries as place: how public libraries can transform themselves as third places for all'.

Aat believed libraries are third places. First place being home and second place being work, third places are social surroundings important for democracy, learning and creative engagement. He spoke of how libraries are becoming increasingly social and dynamic places that have a larger role in society than ever before. The presentation focused primarily on how to best design public libraries with accompanying case studies of museums and other public spaces.

We are currently redesigning our library space and Aat has certainly left me many things to ponder. We need to make sure our users the heart of our

service and the Built Environment reflects this. (I also think I need to start wearing jazzy blazers).

I felt that the key theme of the conference was ...

Promoting diversity and inclusion seemed to be a thread that ran through both of the days. Kriti Sharma's key-note explored this with her experiences using data and information in AI, as did the aforementioned Hong-Anh Nguyen's and Liz Jolly's key-notes. Long after the conference this seemed to be the most discussed topic on Twitter, with unfortunately a couple of people on the 'Diversity in the profession' panel experiencing some negative reactions to the personal stories they had shared.

As already stated before I believe libraries are important for social change and as a profession we need to promote information, examples and role models that reflect the diversity of our world.

I would recommend attending CILIP conference because ...

The CILIP conference was lovely. It seems the challenges we face across all sectors of libraries are shared (funding, shortage of space, lack of recognition, etc.) but this means we can work together and learn from each other. I think this is what makes CILIP conference a quite a unique and special event. You can meet people with shared challenges, but also shared passions.

You also gain quite a few new followers on Twitter if you use the hashtag.

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