

CILIPS Professional Development Fund write-up

On the 9th of March this year I was on my way to the British Library in London for the RLUK – (Research Libraries UK) Conference. It was a beautiful day and a very exciting one for me. I was interested in attending this conference as research is a priority within Higher Education in the UK – and research support is in demand more than ever. Supporting researchers within the current climate of political, economic and technological change can be challenging! The conference was focussed on libraries as drivers of innovation and change, the case for international collaborations and working, the impact of Brexit on the future of research and how our libraries are redefining their purpose and their offer.

Throughout the day, one of the key themes that emerged was collaboration. This came across in a number of different ways, and I believe that it is something that we can all relate to in the workplace. This collaboration might be within our institutions – working across departments to deliver new services. It may mean working with other institutions in our own sector, or even collaborating outwith our own sector. Looking to the future of open access, it may even mean worldwide collaboration.



There were a number of great presentations including one from Torsten Reimer at the British Library: ‘Everything Available’ – a vision for the development of the British Library services for research’ and ‘Bob un cam, cer mla’n (with each step, go forward): using collaboration to drive innovation in Wales’ from Tracey Stanley. Torsten Reimer’s presentation looked at how the library can add value – including increasing our capacity for discoverability of our collections, tailoring content provision and being a partner in content creation and research. Tracey Stanley described the implementation of a project to introduce a new library management system across all Higher Education institutions in Wales, the Welsh National Library and NHS Wales.

The British Library conference centre was the perfect place for the event, and it is a great venue. During lunch break I managed to have a quick look at the temporary exhibition in the main foyer of the British library which was all about Victorian entertainment – fascinating! I also enjoyed a brief stroll around the ‘Treasures of the British Library’ exhibition, where you can see rare manuscripts such as Handel’s Messiah and Gutenberg’s Bible.

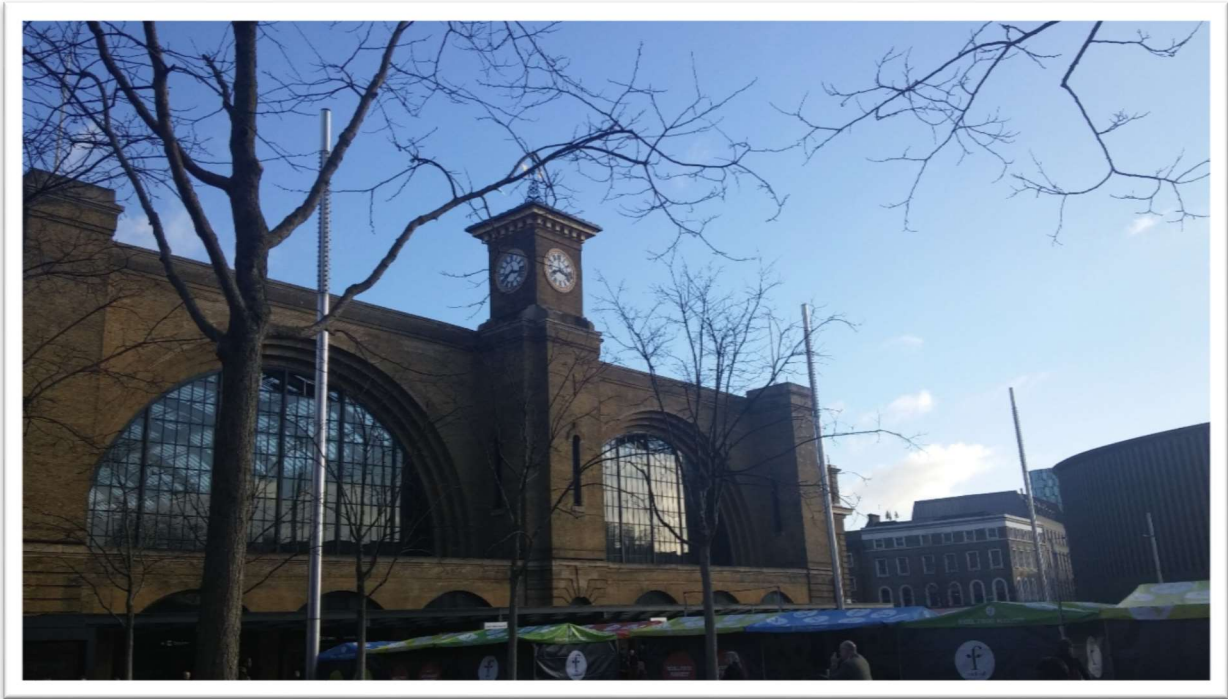


The speed presentations were next – 20 slides at no more than 20 seconds per slide. I think that this is much more difficult than it sounds. Afterwards I found out that these are also called ‘PechaKucha’ – I had wondered what people were talking about! These were great as you got a burst of information and it made the speakers focus in on their most important points. The presentations covered a number of different topics including: Embedding Open Scholarship, the redevelopment of the Charles Booth website at London School of Economics (<https://booth.lse.ac.uk/>), Beyond the LMS: the emergence of a new model in library technology, the Metadata 20:20 project from CrossRef, Peer Review Workshops, a solution to the problem of perpetual access to ejournal content from EDINA at Edinburgh University and finally we got a glimpse of UCL Press - a dedicated open access press at University College London.

The day concluded with a number of workshops – all looked interesting, but I chose to attend the ‘Staffing for Research; Scope Structure and Skills’ session, led by John Cox and Chris Pressler, both working at Irish Universities. This was possibly my favourite part of the day, with John and Chris getting into the nitty gritty of how universities can arm themselves for the future. There was a lively debate in the room and a number of thought-provoking topics discussed, such as staffing for partnership or support services, having subject teams versus functional teams, and whether libraries need to be predictable or experimental?

I came away from the day with many questions, and hope that I will find the answers somewhere along the way in my career – huge thanks are due to CILIPS for allowing me to attend such a stimulating and challenging event.

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