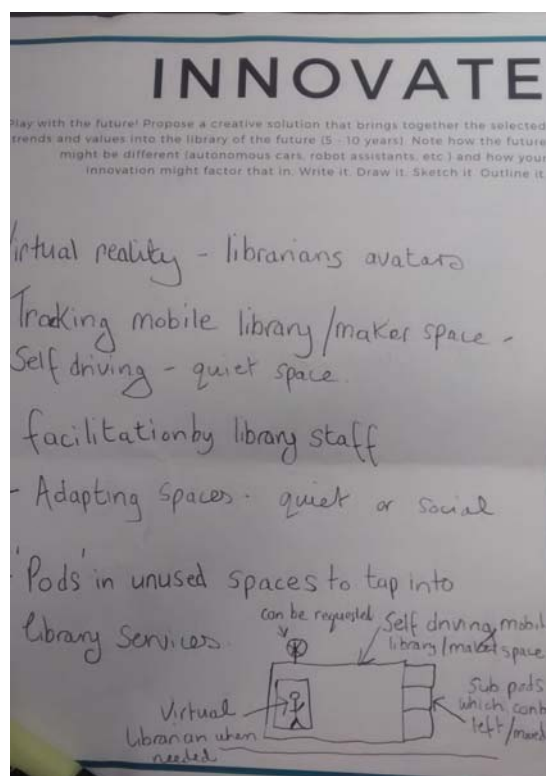# CILIPS Conference 2017 – Kayleigh McGarry Report

As an information professional working in the specialist libraries sector it can be hard to find conferences with relevant content outside your own niche professional membership group, so I was impressed to see that the theme for CILIPS 17, strategies for success, had such broad appeal this year. Inspired, I applied to the CILIPS Professional Development Fund and was thrilled to be awarded funds for the full conference package. I would encourage anybody with an interest in building their knowledge and skills but does not have organisational support to apply (the process is not at all onerous).

Day one of the conference was opened by Miguel Figueroa, Director of the American Library Association Centre for the Future of Libraries. Miguel spoke on the topic of trends and signals for the library of the future, noting that we need to work together utilising our combined expertise in our sectors to identify what is changing today and to anticipate changes further ahead. Librarians are well placed for this due to our familiarity with using and analysing data and engaging with service users.   Using the visual of a 'cone of change', we can work within boundaries of plausibility (which widen the further in the future we look) so as not to predict the future but prepare for real changes. The ALA Centre for the Future of Libraries has created an emerging trends collection which can be used by libraries to inform strategic plans and changes in practice and include: connected learning; internet of things; sharing economy; short reading; and urbanisation. Library services do not have to implement all these trends but should think about what is relevant to their users and take an incremental approach to developing a future proof service which aligns with their values. This session set the tone for the rest of the conference perfectly, encouraging and showcasing innovative and creative thinking that leaps over current problems and limitations to galvanise staff and pursue the best future option for libraries. I was given the opportunity to practice my own skills as a 'Futurist' in Miguel's parallel session, with our group designing a self-driving mobile library/maker space which could be tracked and requested like an Uber with detachable pods (see artist's impression below!).

Building on the theme of innovation, Gilian Daly's session on 'Hacking a digital future for libraries' illustrated how sharing knowledge and data with experts in the IT field, library services have a real opportunity to create forward thinking and creative apps and programmes to meet changing library needs.

Dr Diane Pennington also touched on this when presenting her research on linked data and the need for library professionals to engage with this trend to ensure that our materials and services are findable, searchable and integrated.

My attending two sessions on copyright, including the entertaining keynote from Dr Jane Secker and Chris Morrison, challenged my risk adverse attitude to copyright. As well as a general overview of current copyright law and recent developments, I was given reassurance that there is not always a clear answer in copyright law, even for experts in the field, and a degree of pragmatism is needed when making copyright risk assessments. Librarians need to be re-educated in light of this so that they are thinking in terms of a framework for approaching copyright queries in an open and discursive manner rather than just thinking there is a right or wrong answer.

Nick Poole closed the conference with the key message that we are not securing the future for ourselves but for others. We are becoming a broader, more powerful community of information professionals not only visible in libraries but embedded in the workforce of most organisations. As such CILIP needs to become a bigger, better and more inclusive professional association and by campaigning together we can deliver real, measurable change.