LISDIS Conference

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Early on a dark Saturday morning in November 2015 librarians, information professionals and students from around the country battled through wind and rain to make their way to Huddersfield for the first ever LISDIS (Library and Information Science Dissertations) conference. LISDIS was developed, as we believe that too much librarianship and information science research is hidden away in dissertations and not used in practice. As newly qualified professionals we were aware of how much work goes into a Masters dissertation and were inspired after seeing excellent dissertation research presented at a New Library Professionals Network event. We hope that by showcasing a selection of research at LISDIS other information professionals will think about how we can better use this evidence base to improve information services and advocate for change.

The day consisted of a poster session, keynote speaker and three themed sessions with three speakers each. The first session on Collections and Discovery began with Sarah Hume's talk on the difficulties of classifying a women's studies collection using the outdated classification schemes available. It was a really engaging talk offering both abstract questions (if you cannot find yourself in the collection can you use it?) and practical solutions in the form of proactive cataloguing to improve the representation of historically marginalised groups. Lizzie Sparrow used ethnographic research methods to look at the use of a discovery layer in an academic library. Lizzie's research has already prompted some changes to the Senate House Library, London discovery layer exemplifying the impact that LIS dissertation research can have and which LISDIS aims to promote. Lucy Saint-Smith's talk on female book collectors in the 18th and 19th centuries closed the first session. Library history was a new area for many of us but Lucy brought it to life with an overview of four key collectors and insights from her extremely thorough research.

Later we heard about different aspects of Public Libraries and the Community. Ian Clark started us off looking at how the move toward community libraries run by volunteers is drastically reducing the ability of those libraries to address the digital divide. He highlighted how economic and educational inequalities can be reinforced once public services are removed, particularly once the professional expertise of qualified librarians is lost. After this overarching look at the effect of cuts to public libraries two speakers spoke about how public libraries are failing to serve particular groups. Alanna Broadley considered the provision of lesbian fiction in public libraries in Scotland, describing how collections can all too frequently focus on "classic" texts and fail to classify recent books as lesbian fiction. Martyn Greenwood's research looked at the availability of graphic novels in English public libraries suggesting that better cataloguing and displays by genre can improve their discoverability. All three talks in this section highlighted the varied ways in which public libraries are crucial to the communities they serve and the severity of the threat facing them.

Emma Coonan, our fantastic keynote speaker, refocused everyone after lunch and provided invaluable advice on how to get published and share your research with a wider audience. Emma, editor-in-chief of the Journal of Information Literacy, explained the publication process, highlighted the differences between a dissertation and a journal article, and gave some excellent advice about how to deal with the inevitable knockbacks. The audience was a mixture of new professionals, current LIS students and those who have been working in the sector for some time and Emma's advice engaged attendees at all stages in their careers.

The final session of the day focused on valuing the library with presentations about measuring value in a corporate library, the effect of tuition fees on attitudes in academic libraries, and the destruction of libraries in conflict zones. Natasha Chowdory's research demonstrated the value of the service she provides to her users and despite differences in the corporate sector her message that librarians are there to build relationships with their users resonated with attendees from all sectors. The relationship between librarians and users was also central to Marion Harris' presentation, which prompted much debate about the use of the term "customer" in academic libraries following the increase in tuition fees

in England. Sonja Kujansuu took a broader approach in the last presentation of the day where she shared her research on the destruction of libraries in conflict situations and how the international community can help. Her research felt particularly pertinent given recent events in Syria and it was fascinating to hear more about the organisations who attempt to protect libraries of cultural significance.

Many thanks to UKeiG for their generous sponsorship, which funded travel for several of our speakers enabling a variety of sectors and regions to be represented. Following the excellent response from attendees on the day and on Twitter at *#LISDIS2015* we are hoping to organise a second LISDIS conference next year. If you would like to view the slides from the day they are all available from our website.