

Conference Report: Library and Information Science Research Coalition Conference 2010

June 2010, London

The LIS Conference is reviewed by Hui-Yun Sun.

I am grateful to UKeig's financial support, together with a sponsored place from Glen Recruitment, TFPL and Sue Hill Recruitment, to support my attendance at the Library and Information Science Research Coalition conference, which was held on 28th June, 2010 at the British Library Conference Centre in London.

The theme of the conference was "Evidence, Value and Impact: the LIS Research Landscape in 2010". The whole conference was around the topic, *impact*. My Ph.D. research aims to investigate the essential elements that help make community engagement work in public libraries. Community engagement is an emerging area in the public librarianship literature and may be a way forward for future public library service. Therefore, it was very important for me to attend the conference to disseminate my research, explore the current issues around evidence, value and impact in library services and learn how to transfer my research outcomes into practice to make them more applicable for public libraries.

This conference was unique in that it engaged with attendees (at the conference) and people who did not, or were not able to attend, could keep in contact remotely (using Twitter) throughout the whole conference. In addition, I was very impressed with the high efficiency of information sharing after the conference. All the details of the day were made available on the LIS Research Coalition website (<http://lisresearch.org/conference-2010/>) within three days of the conference ending. Therefore, instead of repeating the content of the conference, I will highlight my general impressions, interesting issues raised and what I learnt from attending the conference.

My general impression of the LIS Research Coalition conference was very positive. The conference centre facilities were very good, with free public wifi; the food was abundant and delicious, and the conference was very engaging. The conference format included *keynote presentations* followed by question-and-answer sessions, *break-out sessions* for participants to discuss the themes of evidence, value and impact of the current LIS research and *one minute madness*, where each presenter was given 60 seconds to present their research topics. Lunch time provided a good opportunity for networking and getting to know each other better. The conference programme was relevant and varied – the one-minute madness

offered a taste of a wide range of current LIS research projects by academics, library practitioners, research students, publishers and information researchers.

The conference started with Dr. Michael Jubb's introduction, where he gave us an overview of the LIS research in the UK from the past to the present and his view of future research. As an international student, I found this session very useful, because it helped me learn the history of the LIS research to understand where it is today. A key issue raised in the break-out sessions was "What is the purpose of the research?" It was related to further issues, such as a gap between research and practice, languages (i.e. academic jargon and plain English), the importance of 'the audience' to whom research communicates value and impact, and research methods (i.e. case studies, survey or mixed methods). Other main topics included new funding sources, cross-disciplinary input to LIS research and international collaboration. As a rapporteur, I enjoyed observing and recording the dialogues/debates/discussions between conference participants from library practitioners, academics and research students. Professor Charles Oppenheim concluded the conference and put forward a new title: "Evidence, Value and Impact SHOULD BE the LIS research agenda".

This conference provided me with opportunities to meet face to face with other participants whose profiles and research interests I had read on the LIS Research Coalition website before attending. It was interesting to meet people with different backgrounds (e.g. libraries, health services, publishers, information consultancies) from around the world (e.g. UK, USA, Nigeria, Gambia, Germany and India). Also, it was good to find out more about the roles of individuals in the conference and the LIS Research Coalitions' plan and activities.

Although I was aware of the existence of social media, this conference further emphasised the importance of using them. I was inspired to make use of the social media (i.e. Twitter, blogs and Slideshare) to rehearse my research ideas, distribute my research results and keep myself updated with current LIS research issues and projects after the conference.

To sum up, it was nice to see so many delegates with different roles and interests. I found the conference useful and helpful. Not only did it raise my awareness of current issues and challenges on the LIS research, but also offered me an opportunity to network and develop my own thinking in this area. My three words to summarise the conference are: inspiring, valuable and challenging.

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