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Conference Corner

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Chan, L. et al 2002. *Budapest Open Access Initiative*. New York: Open Society Institute. Available at: <http://www.soros.org/openaccess/read.shtml> [Retrieved 22 January 2007].

Student award winners conference report

LILAC 2013, University of Manchester, 25–27 March 2013

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**Student Award winners
Darren Flynn (left) and Roisin
Cassidy (right) with Ruth
Stubbings (centre)**

In the run-up to LILAC 2013, we felt a mix of excitement and trepidation. As first-time delegates to any conference, we were unsure of what to expect or how to get the most out of the three-day event. That sense of unease melted away almost immediately as we entered the University of Manchester building – our saviours a row of smiling, purple-bedecked LILAC organisers and volunteers handing out conference packs and pointing the way to the tea.

Proceedings were officially opened by University of Manchester Librarian Jan Wilkinson. Jan warmly welcomed approximately 300 delegates from over 18 countries with a wealth of interesting facts and images of our host city, and an emphasis on how the University and Library are committed to developing independent, critical learners – she knows her audience!

From then on we had a very busy schedule planned with back-to-back sessions every day. We attended eleven parallel sessions and two pre-conference workshops in all, choosing a mix of topics from

LILAC13's six themes (<http://www.lilacconference.com/WP/past-conferences/lilac-2013/>).

We picked up lots of tips, techniques and strategies that we could put into practice in our current and future workplaces. We would particularly like to credit Kirsty Carver and Sophie North's session on 'Library language' as an example of how a simple change and adopting a different perspective can really improve your users' experience and competency in the library. Another theme that stood out was how librarians can contribute to graduates' employability, as discussed by Claire Abson and Alison Lahlafi from Sheffield Hallam Library. They collaborated with their Careers and Employment Service to improve guidance on career information sources and raise the profile of IL as a key graduate attribute. Researchers' skills were also a priority at this year's LILAC. Ann-Sofie Zettergren from Lund University outlined a consultation process libraries can initiate to understand and audit their research staff and students' needs, while Nicola Howarth and Andrew Walsh spoke about their experience of developing an IL framework in line with Vitae's 'Informed Researcher' lens, incorporating online materials and a workshop series. We were put to work in Nancy Graham and Jane Secker's session on 'Sharing information literacy resources globally' where we split into groups to debate the opportunities and challenges of open educational resources (OERs) and how to develop an international information literacy OER community of practice.

The keynote speakers were a great experience; they really provided the 'big picture' and reminded us that the changes that are taking place in our own workplaces are happening across the globe as part of a fundamental shift in how the world communicates. Steve Wheeler gave a fascinating talk on the future of learning in an online and social environment,

reminding us all how we must always do more to engage with our users and adapt to the digital revolution taking place around us. Irmgarda Kasinskaite-Buddeberg gave us an overview of the information professional's place within a culturally diverse but intrinsically connected global society. She outlined the UNESCO international framework for developing media and information literacy (MIL) competencies. We were encouraged by her discussion of IL as a human *right* as much as a need, where she cited an interesting example of using these literacies as survival skills to track a tsunami and move to safety. JP Rangaswami provided the perfect close to proceedings, a warm, humorous and infinitely informative personal view on the future of our profession – a key message being that the book has always been just one (albeit durable) technology to transmit information, which is the real asset.



The University of Manchester entrance

Outside of the keynotes and parallels there was plenty to keep us occupied, and we never found ourselves at a loose end. The LILAC committee appreciated how daunting the conference can be for first-timers, distributing 'new delegates' badges and organising a new delegates lunchtime networking event which was a big help. Other activities included a poster exhibition where we chatted to people about IL projects they were undertaking to promote or embed IL in their institutions. We were also treated to a tour of the

University's new Alan Gilbert Learning Commons, host to an impressive variety of learning spaces and furniture, café, interactive info points and wood-carved inspirational quotes. This building is more than just bricks and mortar; Rosie Jones and Jennie Blake described how it represents and facilitates a new chapter in delivering a collaborative learner development programme at the University.

LILAC delegates are definitely a social bunch! The evening events were a fantastic opportunity to get to know the other delegates in an informal and fun environment. On the Monday night we were invited to a networking evening at the amazing John Ryland's Library, Manchester's 'Large Visitor Attraction of the Year'. As well as wine and delicious food we were treated to a rare behind-the-scenes tour of the library; the spectacle of this gothic edifice at night was incredible. The conference dinner took place in an equally impressive venue, Gorton Monastery. The evening began with a glamorous champagne reception before we were invited through to the lofty great hall of the monastery. After a delicious dinner the awards winners, including the student awards, were announced. To have been included in a ceremony alongside winners of such coveted awards as Information Literacy Practitioner of the Year was a great honour. Finally, it was straight onto the dance floor with the movers and shakers of the library world to finish off the night in style.



John Rylands Library

We left our three days at conference inspired, not only by the topic and everything we had learned, but also by the people we had met. The conference really cemented for us that we are entering a profession of dedicated, passionate and innovative individuals possessing both great knowledge and a desire to continually learn more. We are both deeply grateful to the LILAC committee for organising such an excellent conference and in particular for giving us with the opportunity to attend. We have no doubt that the experience will be of tremendous value to us as we embark on our librarianship careers.