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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].

# The 43<sup>rd</sup> Annual LOEX Conference, Denver, Colorado. 30 April-2 May 2015.

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LOEX, an annual conference centred upon information literacy practice, takes place in a different American city each year. Approximately 390 attendees travelled to Colorado for this year's conference, which consisted of one day of pre-conference activities, and two days of breakout sessions, plenary speakers, poster sessions, roundtable discussions, and lightning talks. As in previous years, many presenters dutifully attempted to incorporate the conference theme into their presentations - this year the beer-inspired *Perfect your craft* was reflected in proposal tracks such as *Pedagogy: the art of the craft* and *Collaboration and outreach: I'll buy the next round*. Presentations can be viewed at <http://www.loexconference.org/program.html>. The drinking theme aside, as an instruction librarian and first-time LOEX attendee, I appreciated the conference's focus on information literacy and the opportunity to engage with other librarians' thoughts and techniques regarding library instruction.

The opening plenary featured an extremely insightful talk by Anne-Marie Deitering of Oregon State University: *Reflections on reflection, or how I learned to stop worrying and embrace the meta*. Deitering examined the interconnectedness of reflective practice, emotions and learning, making important points such as librarians' responsibility to ask students to question their beliefs. She also discussed the necessity of valuing lived experiences in the classroom, and the unique status of librarians in academe as a strength that allows us to help students navigate school and learning. Slides, a bibliography, and the presentation script are available at <http://info-fetishist.org/2015/05/01/loex2015>. Deitering's talk on reflective practice was an exceptional start to the conference and set the stage for the presentations that followed.

It was apparent from the parallel session topics and ensuing discussions that many academic librarians in the US are working through how to situate the new ACRL *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education* in their work. Interestingly, interpretations of the ACRL Framework appeared to vary widely, from those attempting to translate the ACRL Standards into the Framework's language, to those using the Framework as a jumping-off point to explore new pedagogical approaches. Lane Wilkinson's presentation *Reconsidering threshold concepts: a critical appraisal of the ACRL Framework for Information Literacy* was a well-considered and thought-provoking examination of the theoretical foundation of the Framework. While acknowledging that the Framework is a positive step forward, and that it has caused librarians to reflect on what and how they teach, Wilkinson made a number of criticisms of threshold concepts and their application to the ACRL Framework. He concluded that the document's scope is limited and represents only "one beer in the six-pack."

As is so often the case with parallel sessions, there were many hard choices to be made. There were 61 sessions over two days, with up to seven taking place during each of the nine time slots. I particularly enjoyed Stephanie Alexander's presentation on incorporating satirical news sources such as *The Daily Show* and *Last Week Tonight* into instruction sessions to teach information literacy concepts. Alison Hicks spoke about integrating workplace information literacy into classes for Spanish students by having students reflect on their personal learning networks, and Kevin Michael Klipfel and Alexander Carroll on advocating action research as a way to investigate everyday problems in one's work. Two sessions I heard great things about, but did not attend, were Angela Pashia's, Kevin Seeber's and Nancy Noe's workshop where attendees could learn about and practice the important skill of "saying no to unsound requests for library instruction," and Angela Lucero's use of feminist pedagogy with ESL students. Many sessions I attended had some type of interactive component which provided me with multiple opportunities to think about new activities and exercises for my classes.

There was virtually no vendor presence at the conference, a welcome change of pace compared to other library conferences, that had the subtle but significant effect of placing emphasis on teaching and learning instead of on products. Despite inconsistent wi-fi, the Twitter backchannel at [#loex2015](https://twitter.com/loex2015) was very active, and is worth perusing. The team of volunteer conference coordinators did an exceptional job of organising and overseeing the many logistics of the event. Next year's LOEX will take place in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, which will be another great opportunity for academic librarians seeking productive dialogues on information literacy and library instruction.



**Rocky Mountain National Park, a short drive from Denver.** Copyright: Katelyn Angell.