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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> [Accessed: 18 November 2015].

# Measuring value: the impact of information literacy and its evaluation

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This was my third visit to Birmingham in as many months but my first in a professional capacity. On previous trips I have been delighted by Brum's offerings – every high-street shop and cafe you can name, along with the unique joys of the Electric Cinema and Purnell's. Arriving at New Street Station is a transformed experience thanks to the newly developed Grand Central, and no less impressive is Birmingham City University's city centre campus with fountains, lawns and fantastic views of the Bullring – a truly 21<sup>st</sup> century destination.

The theme of the conference was to consider the ways in which the teaching of information literacy (IL) has made a difference in three specific areas: student progression, supporting research students and enhancing employability.



**Keith Walker. Photo courtesy of Philip Sidaway and Simon Cooper, © BCU, licensed under [CC BY-ND 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nd/4.0/)**

After a warm welcome from Steve Rose, the first speakers, Keith Walker and Stephen Robertson of Edinburgh Napier University, led on the strand of student progression with *Contextualising information literacy to assessment criteria and measuring the impact on students*. By placing resources – links to repositories and video guides – within the module assessment area of course information on their Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), they presented students with *relevant* support: what they needed alongside the task for which it was required. Using system logs in Moodle, they were able to see which students had accessed these resources and map that against their performance in the assessments. The outcome was increased student engagement and improved marks. There was also a clear indication of where further skills development was required, for example referencing.

Next Lorna Dodd described the process of developing a new information literacy framework at Maynooth University with *Supporting the development and assessment of critical skills in a new undergraduate curriculum*. The enviable position of having IL skills identified as 'essential graduate attributes' at Maynooth came with the onerous task of delivering the training in a sustainable way to a rapidly growing student population. Lorna developed a framework – a blend of A New Curriculum for Information Literacy (ANCIL) and the Association of College and Research Libraries

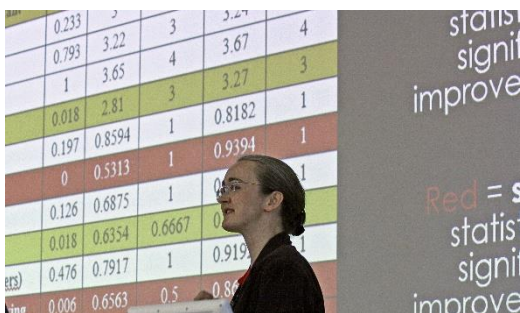
(ACRL) – which identifies five key competencies that are mapped to the new marking rubric set by the university. Every department now selects modules which focus on the development and assessment of these critical skills to enhance the employability and citizenship of their graduates.

In the final presentation of the day, *Organic information literacy: supporting the developing researcher at the University of Bolton*, Sarah Taylor explored the way students at Bolton are encouraged to view themselves as valid researchers from the outset. Demonstrating to students that searching for the answers to everyday questions such as ‘When is Tesco open on Bank Holiday Monday?’ utilises the same skill set required to use a discovery tool, helps them to recognise the research skills they already possess. The inclusion of student work in the institutional repository, student research conferences and opportunities to present at staff conferences all contribute to the building of students’ confidence in their information skills: ‘Everyone who researches is a researcher’.

Choosing parallel sessions was straightforward for me as I am involved in similar projects but each of the sessions was well attended and highly praised by other delegates.

Siobhan Cottam and Cat Taylor’s *Widening participation and transition to higher education* offered an evaluation of the IL skills sessions they have developed for schemes run by the University of Leicester. With the possibility of reduced entry tariffs and bursaries for those who go on to apply to Leicester, and the wealth of information that can be gleaned about the IL skills needs of first-year undergraduates, there is a great deal of benefit for both sides of the equation in this project. Cat and Siobhan had a tidal wave of questions to answer, and I will certainly be getting in touch for advice in the coming months.

A very popular choice for the afternoon session was Erica Swain’s presentation of findings from research at Cardiff University: *How did the freshers fare? Measuring progress using a ‘before and after’ evaluation of online compared with face-to-face library induction*. Data analysis suggests that



while students receiving a face-to-face induction had gained slightly more than those receiving an online induction, each group was happy with the mode of delivery they had received. Not only is this a great comfort to those of us preparing inductions for off-campus and distance learners, but the added value of repeat viewings justifies the time taken to develop online materials. The online induction, which had just 1,780 views initially, has now had over 37,000. See it for yourself at <http://tinyurl.com/jkryfmd>

Erica Swain. Photo courtesy of Philip Sidaway and Simon Cooper, © BCU, licensed under [CC BY-ND 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nd/4.0/)

The day was rounded off with a tour of the Curzon Library which opened in August 2015. Unfortunately, I had to forgo the tour to catch my train but the very comprehensive conference webpage includes some great photos. I came away feeling inspired, with valuable new contacts and a growing affection for Birmingham.

## Resources

Measuring value: the impact of information literacy and its evaluation (4 May 2016)  
<http://libguides.bcu.ac.uk/c.php?g=302953&p=2021573>