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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].

ECIL 2018: information literacy in everyday life

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The sixth European Conference on Information Literacy (ECIL) was held from 24th to 27th September in Oulu, which is located in the northern regions of Finland. Home to one of the world's best education systems, Finland was an inspired choice for this conference that is dedicated to advancing information literacy (IL) research and practice. Unfortunately, I missed the first day of the conference, which coincided with the start of orientation week at UCL, but over the course of the week delegates enjoyed a range of stimulating presentations that showcased, critiqued and extended IL research from within a variety of contexts.

The theme of the conference this year was everyday IL, which attendees interpreted fairly broadly. A lack of existing definitional work in the area led to presentations that ranged from nutritional literacy to social media use and beyond. At the same time, recent growth in the related (but separate) topic of Everyday Life Information Seeking led to a few lively back channel Twitter discussions about the relationship of everyday IL to the related area of information behaviour. In my own presentation, which drew upon my recently completed doctoral research to establish some initial propositions for our understandings of everyday information literacy, I positioned this emerging field as including health, citizenship and community contexts as well as connected to the broader concept of lifelong learning. I also argued that a focus on everyday contexts throws a number of core and accepted IL concepts into question, including concepts of self-efficacy, transfer and even the shape of workplace information literacy, rather than being seen as irrelevant within academic contexts. For these reasons, I am glad that the ECIL organisers decided to centre everyday life within their call for proposals and I hope that this institutional attention inspires future research and practice across a variety of settings.

Another benefit of a focus on everyday IL meant that the conference afforded (long overdue) insight into public library education initiatives. A particular stand out for me was the presentation by Helena Francke and her colleagues from the Arctic University of Norway, who presented findings from their systematic review of digital literacy and social inclusion efforts within public libraries. Noting the need for research that explores whether public libraries are contributing to the creation of a public sphere, Helena and colleagues also neatly illustrated how public library IL literature reflects the current trend to impose the responsibilities of the welfare state onto citizens. These findings also resonate with Diana Hackett's exploration of British public libraries, which was published in JIL earlier this year. Miriam Matteson (Kent State University) and Beate Gersch (University of Akron) rounded out this theme in their presentation that described tensions found within the definitional work of IL as well as the creation of a teaching identity within public libraries in the United States.

Cultural aspects of IL formed another significant trend within this year's ECIL, with various presenters exploring the impact of multilingualism and multiculturalism within the workplace (Farhan Ahmad) as well as in international IL standards, frameworks and classrooms (e.g. Samantha Godbey and Xan Goodman; Kristin Schuster and Kristine Stewart). These themes were picked up by Karen Fisher's (University of Washington) well-attended keynote, which gave us an overview of her work in the Zaatari refugee camp in Jordan. While Karen's talk didn't explicitly take an IL focus, she demonstrated how she explored refugee information activity through a variety of ethnographic and participatory research methods, all of which could be adapted for IL scholarship. Her talk also prompted several tweeters to reflect upon the implications for this work closer to home given Britain's growing stateless or displaced

populations and the prominent role given to citizenship within the new CILIP definition of IL. Perhaps more poignantly, these themes were brought into relief when the ECIL local organising committee commented on how delegate cultural diversity meant that the evening reception had attracted the attention of the local Oulu police.

Health also took more of a centre-stage role at ECIL 2018, with several presentations exploring the implications and outcomes of health IL education throughout Europe. More uncommonly, diet and fitness aspects of health IL emerged to form an interesting new focus for research with a handful of presentations exploring the shape of data and IL within this sphere. Health information also formed the focus of the final keynote, where Peter Bath (University of Sheffield) provided insight into the social support practices of people with breast cancer and motor neurone disease. While his talk didn't take an explicit IL focus either, his findings have a number of implications for our understanding of the role that trust and social support play within learning. The creation of a theatre adaptation from his findings also provided a thought-provoking illustration of the impact information research can have.

As ever, ECIL provided a rich and varied programme and there was a substantial swathe of presentations focussing on data literacy as well as more critical approaches to teaching and learning. Teaching practices were also well represented, with the concept of the escape room, which seems to have emerged from recent interest in games-based learning, forming one of the more flamboyant instructional activities represented. ECIL also encourages a nice mix of traditional presentations and more hands-on activities, with Sheila Webber and Pam McKinney (University of Sheffield) providing a well-received workshop on choosing an appropriate IL research methodology and Emma Coonan (Anglia Ruskin University) joining the keynote speakers to provide a series of useful doctoral student workshops on the Friday.

Key take-aways from me now that the dust from the beginning of term has settled? One major stand out was the enormous scope for future research in health, public library and citizenship settings; while the keynotes provided a useful overview of alternative approaches to information research, they also perhaps highlighted the scarcity of scholarship that takes an explicit IL or learning focus within and across everyday settings. I would echo the rapporteur, Lisa Janicke Hinchliffe (University of Illinois, Urbana Champaign), whose closing speech included an exhortation for IL research that goes beyond single population and one-off research samples – although I hope that the current enthusiasm for measurable performance metrics does not lead to the employment of intrusive data surveillance methods as the means to fulfil these goals.

One of the major benefits of ECIL is the opportunity to hear from international colleagues who take different perspectives on similar challenges or who are engaged in innovative projects that go beyond time-worn interpretations. While ECIL is taking a break in 2019, I look forward to continuing these conversations when it reconvenes in Germany in 2020 if not before at the new and tentatively-named ACIL (African Conference on Information Literacy) conference that is scheduled to take place in South Africa in 2019.