Journal of Information Literacy

Conference Report

FestivIL 2021: Day 3

Charlotte Dormer, Learning Hub Manager / Academic Liaison Librarian for Education, University of Reading.
c.n.k.dormer@reading.ac.uk. ORCID: 0000-0003-1221-5116

Whilst LILAC: the Information Literacy Conference was postponed for a second time for reasons of global pandemic, the LILAC committee rallied round to organise a fantastic online event to tide us all over until we can meet again: FestivIL.

FestivIL took place over three half days, from 6-8 July 2021, and I was lucky enough to attend all three, though I will be focusing my review on the third and final day. This was my first experience of a LILAC-related event, as well as the first time I attended a conference-type event online, and I was not entirely sure of what to expect, but the entire event was a whirlwind of interesting conversations, exceptional speakers, and inspiration for all.

On a practical level, most of the presentations were pre-recorded by the presenters and delegates were asked to watch them prior to a scheduled question and answer session during the event. I think this worked well, as I found it gave me the opportunity to really think about the presentations and come up with more in-depth questions as well as the option to watch the presentation twice where I felt it would be interesting and useful to do so. It also helped with the inevitable "fomo" or fear of missing out of in-person events, as it was possible to watch presentations for multiple parallel sessions.

The third half day of FestivIL began, as previously, with a welcome session via Zoom which filled everyone in on how the event would work, and which links to click next. We then split off into the "Campfire Conversations" session, which aimed to replicate the opportunities for networking and meeting other delegates at an in-person conference. We were split off into small groups of four or five via break-out rooms, where we had the opportunity to have some fantastic conversations about the pre-recorded presentations – as well as the all-important and ubiquitous discussion about our pets!

Our Campfire Conversations were followed by the discussion session for Barbara Fister's Keynote on *Information Literacy in the QAnon Era* (Fister, 2021), which was a fascinating discussion of her work both with Project Information Literacy and the way that Information Literacy (IL) teaching can backfire catastrophically when faced with the epistemological differences in the world today. We need to consider why to trust rather than what to trust, and to frame IL as education for democracy, engaging students to feel responsible. She highlighted how essential it is to emphasise how IL should incorporate understanding of information infrastructures, integrating what happens in the Academy with what students do in the real world to enable students to see IL skills and understanding as transferrable and relevant, preparing them to ask their own questions and function in the "real world". The conversations in the discussion session were fascinating, with a huge amount of engagement in the text chat in parallel to the spoken discussion, with discussions about Open Access materials, motivating students, and the challenges faced in implementing IL teaching in schools.

After a short break I attended the first of the day's parallel sessions. I decided to attend the *Hindsight 2020* panel discussion (Highton, 2021). This panel discussion brought together keynote speakers from earlier LILAC conferences to consider their keynotes from previous years and reflect on the events that have happened since. In some cases, predicted events never happened, such as Melissa Highton's prediction of the creation of YouTube U, an educational YouTube (Highton, 2009). In others, such as the predicted move to online, it has

happened very differently to how it was predicted – not by persuasion but by way of the strange situation we find ourselves in. The discussion also turned inevitably to the effects of the pandemic, and the ways in which this affected colleagues. Allison Littlejohn shared a project on the pedagogy of care, with photographs shared during the pandemic, which often depicted a range of contradictory emotions, with colleagues (particularly female colleagues) feeling pulled in different directions, and the effects of the space we work in upon emotional welfare during the pandemic. There was also discussion about how the divide between those who had prepared for the digital revolution in universities and those who had not was noticeably clear during the pandemic, and how this affected all of those concerned. Jane Secker then talked about how LILAC had evolved since 2005, the wide range of people who have spoken at LILAC, and its importance as a place to build a community of practice. She concluded that with the benefit of hindsight, it's unlikely she would change much about LILAC over the years, other than trying to get IL out and into the wider world rather than confined to its current place as something discussed almost solely by librarians.

At the same time as this session, sessions on *Information literacy and Gen Z* (Dalal, Taylor, & Whitfield, 2021) and *Enhancing student engagement in an online teaching environment* (Carey, 2021) took place. Whilst I was not able to attend the discussion sessions for these presentations, I did make use of the event format and took the opportunity to watch the videos for these sessions and found them to be insightful and interesting.

At the final parallel session of the event, I took the opportunity to find out more about *Copyright, information literacy, and criticality*, by attending a second panel discussion hosted by Jane Secker, addressing copyright as the intersection between scholarly communications and information literacy (Secker, 2021). This featured a fascinating discussion of Caroline Ball's involvement with the #ebookSOS movement (Anderson, Ball, & Bickley, n.d.), covering the issues of a lack of knowledge among students and academics over the reality of the eBooks issue: students aren't aware of the restrictiveness of licensing, and in many cases, academics don't realise that they have power to negotiate over access agreements. The verdict: Copyright education is key to tackling the systemic problems with eBook access and overly complex licensing agreements. The panel also featured discussion of Chris Morrison's work, including his responsible yet critical approach to copyright law and work on The Publishing Trap game (Morrison & Secker, n.d.). Overall, the panel was very interesting and provided a real opportunity to get an overview of the relationship between copyright literacy and IL and how one can inform the other.

With that done, it was time for one final set of Campfire Conversations, where once again we split into groups and discussed our take-aways from the whole event. It was interesting how the campfire conversations gave an opportunity to have those little conversations that usually happen at conferences in in a way that I hadn't previously seen at an online event, and surprising to see just how well they worked!

And with that, it was time for the closing ceremony and the announcement of the Leading Light award (Sponsored by the Information School at the University of Sheffield), which was won by Hazel Glasse, for her Hungry Robot virtual Induction Activity (University of Derby Libguides, n.d.). Hazel previously presented on the topic of her non-virtual version at LILAC 2019 (Glasse, 2019).

In summary, FestivIL was a well-needed opportunity for librarians to get together and celebrate Information Literacy whilst also engaging in important discussions over where we need to go next. Fake news, unfair copyright clauses and the chaos of the strange new world we live in are perpetual threats; but as a community we can fight them, and from this feeling springs hope for the future.

Videos and presentations from FestivIL can be accessed at
https://www.lilacconference.com/lilac-archive/festivil-by-lilac-2021.

References

Anderson, J., Ball, C., & Bickley, R. (n.d.). *Read and sign our open letter*. Campaign to investigate the academic ebook market. Retrieved November 15, 2021, from https://academicebookinvestigation.org

Carey, A. (2021, July 6-8). *Enhancing student engagement in an online teaching environment* [Conference presentation]. FestivIL by LILAC, online conference.

Dalal, H., Taylor, A. & Whitfield, S. (2021, July 6-8). *Information literacy and Gen Z* [Conference presentation]. FestivIL by LILAC, online conference.

Fister, B. (2021, July 6-8). *Information literacy in the QAnon era* [Conference keynote]. FestivIL by LILAC, online conference.

Glasse, H. (2019, April 24-29). *'Escaping' the library induction: a game based learning approach to developing students' library skills*. LILAC 2019, University of Nottingham, United Kingdom.

Highton, M. (2009, March 30-April 1). *Managing your flamingo* [Conference keynote]. LILAC 2009, Cardiff, United Kingdom.

Highton, M. (2021, July 6-8). *Hindsight 2020* [Panel discussion]. FestivIL by LILAC, online conference.

Morrison, C. & Secker, J. (n.d.). *The publishing trap*. UK copyright literacy. Retrieved November 15, 2021, from https://copyrightliteracy.org/resources/the-publishing-trap/

Secker, J. (2021, July 6-8). *Copyright, information literacy and criticality* [Panel discussion]. FestivIL by LILAC, online conference.

University of Derby Libguides. (n.d.). *The night of the hungry, hungry robot - online escape room*. University of Derby Library. Retrieved November 15, 2021, from https://libguides.derby.ac.uk/hungryrobot