Review of the European Association for Health Information and Libraries (EAHIL) Conference June 14th – 18th 2010

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http://www.eahil2010.org/en/

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Jackie Cheeseborough and Angela Perrett, from the Royal College of Nursing (RCN) attended this year's EAHIL conference held in Estoril, and delivered a presentation on '*Leading the RCN eHealth Programme*'. Jackie is the Learning and Development Manager for Information and Knowledge Management (IKM) and Angela is Library and Information Services Manager for RCN Wales. The presentation outlined the eHealth Programme and illustrated how their roles have

changed.

Preparation for the conference included drafting the initial application, producing the full text for the conference proceedings, preparing the content for the presentation and our biographies, submitting a bid to the RCN Corporate Development Panel, getting permission from our own organisations, finding out the requirements for reporting back to the RCN and dealing with the practicalities of travel and accommodation. Phew!

We did not get off to an auspicious start, with a two hour delay, due to French air traffic control being on strike. Easyjet decided to put us all on the plane anyway, but were not selling food or drink until we took off. The landing was extremely wobbly, due to a high wind. We arrived at our respective hotels gone midnight, and then faced a showdown with a taxi driver trying to charge way above the going rate.

Angela attended the First Timers' event on Tuesday June 15th, which was held at the Santa Maria fort, lighthouse and house in Cascais. The house was designed by Raul Lino, overlooked the Bay and had exquisite 17th and 18th century tiles and a wooden oil painted ceiling. Around fifty first timers attended the event; Angela met the past Chair, several Committee Members and many first timers, from Germany, Italy, Sweden, Belgium and

even Oxford. Angela was already beginning to feel quite "European".

The following morning was the start of the main conference programme. Our hotel was some distance from the conference centre, but we soon formed a taxi club, with Sonja Hortling from Helsinki and Anneli Mindemo from Stockholm, reducing our taxi costs to around €1.00 each per journey.

The conference was attended by 360 delegates, from forty different countries.
The keynote speech of the conference was given by Anthony Quintanilla, chair of the Council of Associated Laboratories, Portugal, on 'Evolution of Knowledge and its impact on Bioethics'. It was very inspirational and thought provoking and received an appreciative ovation.

Angela then attended the parallel session on evidence-based practice and learnt many new snippets of information e.g. NICE guidelines cost approximately £400,000 to develop, and from Elinor Bastin's presentation on NHS Evidence, she discovered that Annual Evidence Updates will replace National Knowledge Weeks. Jackie attended the sessions on user statistics. Like us, the presenters were trying to find ways of measuring qualitative as well as quantitative aspects of their services. She wondered whether we should use the management tools our electronic suppliers more than we do

presently at the RCN. Esther Carrigan from the USA talked about their use of LibQual, which we also have used to measure our customers' satisfaction. LibQual was mentioned several times during the conference, and it feels good to know that the RCN is participating in an internationally used survey. It was also reassuring to know that areas of concern to users of other services were also the website, e-resources and physical space. Interestingly, again, feedback about information professionals was good. How to balance personal service with remote delivery remains a key concern.

Our presentation took place after lunch, alongside four other presentations, from the USA, Poland/Norway, Italy and the
Czech Republic, chaired very ably by Ghislaine Decleve. The process entailed handing your presentation to the IT staff to be checked first thing in the morning. This was fortunate, as we discovered that, although our digital story worked for us, it did not work on their technology. Angela had to save it again onto a memory stick, which is when she discovered that European keyboards are different to those in the UK; it took about thirty minutes to locate the @ symbol! Still we got there in the end. We divided the presentation between us and left the digital story until last, in case we ran out of time, when we would have taken questions while people were watching the story.

Our digital story was one person talking about how he was able to stay in his own home on a Scottish island, by having the

technology installed to have his COPD monitored remotely from the mainland. This greatly enhanced his independence, knowledge and quality of life.

Both the presentation and the digital story were very well received; we even got a "bellissimo" from one Italian delegate and just under 100 delegates attended. Angela was also very pleased that she was asked to repeat the presentation at the annual conference of the All Wales Health Information and Library Extension Service (AWHILES), in Wrexham in July.

The content of our presentation included our backgrounds and job roles, information on the RCN, IKM services, the eHealth Programme and its structure and products, including the digital story, definitions of eHealth and how our roles have changed. It

can be viewed on the EAHIL website:

http://www.eahil2010.org/en/

Jackie and Angela then both attended the parallel session on

"Library spaces and places", as both the library space at our

London headquarters and in Wales is shortly to be redesigned.

Angela particularly found the presentation by Karen Smith and

John Flannery illuminating and made copious notes about

green issues when building or redesigning libraries and was

very interested in a project they mentioned which seeks to

transform the lives of millions of children in developing countries

by focusing on literacy and gender equality in education

(http://www.roomtoread.org). Karen also spoke about the trend

for libraries as living rooms where users feel relaxed,

comfortable and at home.

It was also another good opportunity to catch up with
previous colleagues, as Angela worked with Karen when she
was a library trainee at St George's in London in the 1970s!!
Meile Kretaviciene from Lithuania spoke about the library as
destination not just a quick stop, somewhere beautiful as well
as functional and the convergence of the virtual and physical.
It is important to develop the virtual library at the same time
as the physical library. Derek Hall from the USA spoke about
the importance of the design of space being user driven.
Users could give their views by text as well as online or in
person via white boards. People using the library tested out
furniture before it was purchased. Ideas included the ability to
check out laptops. He had also introduced the role of Onsite
Services Librarian, someone responsible for the physical

experience. Peter Hickey from Ireland spoke about the library as the heart of a building.

The welcome reception took place at the end of the day at the Hotel Palacio, which was very elegant, and was used as a location in the James Bond film "*On Her Majesty's Secret Service*".

Thursday morning started with two plenary sessions on Web 2.0 and on user needs. Liz Brewster's comment on "Do we value what we measure, or do we measure what we value" gave pause for thought. Patient focussed websites need different methods of evaluation such as patient stories, interviews, and participant observations. The first speaker, Karen Buset from Norway, had set up a training programme for her team on the use of Web 2.0 technology. A self selected group had explored a wide variety of Web 2.0 tools and implemented those that they felt could most improve their service, which were blogs and RSS.

Jackie then attended a Forum on "Health Information in Portuguese Speaking Countries." Portuguese is the sixth most spoken language in the world. HIFA 2015 (Health Information for All by 2015) has now set up a discussion group in Portuguese, e-Portuguese. Language is a big barrier for health information professionals and practitioners in developing

countries with most information being in English or French. There are now 648 participants on e-Portuguese.

Meanwhile Angela went to the internet room to catch up with emails, she did intend to write a blog during the conference, but the programme was too packed, especially given the problems with strange keyboards. After coffee Angela attended emerging technologies and tools and Jackie attended scholarly publications and public access. Tatjana Petrinic from the UK spoke of the librarian's role in supporting nurses towards publication. The Cairns Library at Oxford University, had developed tailored workshops and individual sessions which were preferred to generic training. Sessions included literature search strategy, referencing techniques, advice on adapting academic work into journal articles, showing examples of successful submissions, and advice on copyright.

After lunch Jackie went on the accompanying tour to the Rococo Library of the Mafra National Palace, a Baroque and Italianised neo-classical palace/monastery.

Friday morning started again with two more plenary sessions, on "an embedded informationist model", about librarians' expertise following the widespread introduction of electronic resources, which was very interesting and another on integrating technologies, where computer scientists are trying to understand user intent. The former spoke about the need for

the information professional to be relevant to the context they were working in, and for them to go to users where they work as many users no longer felt the need to come to them. This was follow which gave Angela some new ideas for services e.g. "come and try the new iPad." Perhaps we could try to obtain sponsorship for promoting new technologies and Angela became more convinced that we have a role in promoting/educating our users around new technologies. There was a general agreement among panellists that it was the skills of the information professional which would remain relevant in the future.

After coffee there was a rolling programme by sponsors, it was difficult to try to judge when sessions would take place as they were not timed. Angela very much wanted to attend Donna Flake's session on "integration of the electronic medical record and the library's electronic resources", but missed it. Jackie managed to hear this and realised the potential for RCN services to be promoted through the electronic health record, which would take our services to where nurses needed them. EBSCO spoke about the library of the future and the new generation of discovery and management tools. Licia Marques from EBSCO Portugal, estimated that library portals and catalogues would be extinct by 2020 and that the majority of searching would be through internet search engines. She felt we needed to aim for all library searching to be done through one search box and talked about their discovery tools. The morning finished with a really excellent lecture by Guus Van

den Brekel from the Netherlands, on "Web 2.0: the empowerment of the librarian and user".

Guus emphasised the importance of information professionals keeping up to date with the rapid advances in new technology. ed by a panel debate on "the future of libraries", The advantages are improved communication, improved access to information, interaction is more dynamic e.g. groups can do their own updating, web 2.0 tools can be used for new ways of marketing, learning and teaching. He also spoke about the emerging digital divide e.g. those who know how to get information to travel to them versus those who chase it.

After lunch Sheila Corrall gave another excellent session on "Positioning the Health Librarian as a Blended Professional." She outlined a new professional doctorate for information professionals that can be studied part-time over four years. It is work related, very structured and assessed by publications, not dissertation. Sheila talked about the three aspects of a successful blended information service: conduit, content, and context. She also mentioned the variety of media that information professionals are now using to promote messages to their users, and used the RCN digital stories as an example (as she had attended our session.)

The conference ended with a gala dinner at Estoril Casino, a very surreal place, rather loud and very big. The

entertainment was fado - traditional Portuguese music, by a singer and two classical guitarists, very beautiful, and soulful.

The conference could have been improved in some ways e.g. the format was too uniformly PowerPoint, some of the transport arrangements were not communicated early enough and the chairing of some sessions was inadequate. It is a shame that the organising committee did not ask for evaluations, we had

positive as well as negative input that we would have liked to have fed back. It was nevertheless a very worthwhile experience and we would recommend it to other colleagues. It was good to meet other professionals from all over the world and share ideas and experiences. Many sessions were about emerging trends; which have given us both new ideas for future services and improvements to existing services. It was also an opportunity to showcase our own innovate work. Having either presentations or posters accepted promotes the work of your own organisation. Our advice to colleagues would be to submit both if appropriate, as some delegates had several items accepted, and to try to vary presentations for example with digital stories or with interactions, as that was what made ours so successful.

And a final nugget of advice for anyone visiting Lisbon or Estoril, all the pavements are cobbled - wear flat shoes.

All conference abstracts, full text and presentations can be

found at:

http://www.eahil2010.org/en/scientific-program/scientific-

programme

(last accessed 7th December 2010)