

## **Conferences 2013 – Looking at Web 2.0 and Information Literacy**

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### **Summary:**

In 2013 I was able to attend two conferences; LILAC, held at the University of Manchester in March, and the Workshop for Instruction in Library Use (WILU) conference at the University of New Brunswick in May.

This year LILAC focused on how technologies are changing the way we support our users and improve their Information Literacy skills. The keynotes helped promote discussion around what we can do as Librarians to help prepare them for the changing information landscape. The topic of WILU was "Synchronicity: The Time is Now", reflecting the demands on the time of academic and 'instructional' librarians.

## LILAC

The Library and Information Literacy Annual Conference was hosted by the University of Manchester. The key themes of the conference were:

- IL and employability
- IL and the digital future
- Transliteracy
- Future-proofing the IL practitioner
- Collaboration and partnerships
- Active learning and creative pedagogical approaches

There were three keynotes at the conference, looking at current information use around the world, including learning technologies and media literacy. Steve Wheeler looked at how technologies have changed the way we and our students learn. (Wheeler, 2013) Specifically he discussed how we are using mobile technologies and the personalisation of learning. Steve looked at Digital Literacies, in particular, Transliteracy (the ability to present yourself well across any platform), identity management, organising content, filtering, re-using etc. This is something that I think Librarians should get more involved in, looking at how we can present ourselves and our services to our customers. We could also use this as a way of integrating ourselves into the wider service more, supporting our users in new and interesting ways by helping them to manage and develop their digital identity.

The second keynote, Dr Irmgarda Kasinskaite-Buddeberg, looked at "Mainstreaming information literacy for the promotion

of universal access to information". (Kasinskaite-Buddeberg, 2013) Her focus was to look at how we could bring media and information literacy to all, presenting key publications from UNESCO that are addressing these challenges.

The final keynote that closed the conference was JP Rangaswami. He presented his personal view of Librarians and the 21<sup>st</sup> century. He was a really engaging speaker who highlighted how increasingly sophisticated technologies would make it difficult to discern fact from fiction, as photo-shopped images become 'fact' after a while. As an example, he used a photo from the 2012 film *Skyfall*, having swapped the faces of the film's stars Daniel Craig and Dame Judi Dench onto each other's bodies. (Rangaswami, 2013) He really helped to round up the conference illustrating the importance of information literacy (critical thinking and evaluation) and helping our learners to make the most of the mass of information that is available to them. He also quoted *Short Circuit* to illustrate the importance of information to our survival and development. If you ever get the opportunity to hear him speak, I'd recommend it. He finished with a story of a 64 year old Italian tour guide from Pompeii who was going back to school "so I can be better than the internet".

LILAC really helped to spark ideas this year, with a growing interest in OERs and not reinventing the wheel. There were also some interesting projects presented, such as the University of Reading's anti-plagiarism project to provide teaching materials for academics. The abstracts and slides, together with video presentations of the three keynote addresses, are

available at the LILAC website

<http://www.lilacconference.com/WP/past-conferences/lilac-2013/>

## WILU

The WILU conference had many sessions that offered interesting points for discussion and reflection. These included one about 'iAnnotate' for annotating PDFs. The presentation from Gwendolyn MacNairn highlighted an area to explore with my students back in the UK – how did they manage their files, their electronic lives? Was this an area where I could offer some additional advice and support? We offer Refworks at my institution for managing bibliographical references, but we don't overtly discuss how students manage and save their files, if they back them up etc., perhaps we are making too many assumptions about how technically savvy students are. (MacNairn, 2013) Another explored the use and benefit of Wordpress as a teaching tool, holding all the content that the students and staff could then refer back to. (Bordignon & Strachan, 2013) I found the process of following a presentation on Wordpress quite disjointed as the presenter flicked between tabs and zoomed in and out of relevant areas, so I think I'd need to explore this a bit more before I used it for any of my teaching. One interesting example the presenter used of a task she gave her students was to get them to trace a scientific research paper from a newspaper article, highlighting how information can become a commodity as it is harvested for different purposes.

WILU included 'ignite talks'; five minute presentations, similar to Pecha Kucha, where presenters gave a snap shot of their areas of interest which were then available for questions later in the session. The director of LOEX (an IL conference in the USA) shared his knowledge and ideas around new presentation media for conferences and teaching. So much depended on the company ecosystem – how well the different software integrated with different packages and browsers. GoogleDocs and ZohoDocs were recommended if you needed to create forms, Prezi was an example of a good tool to create a library orientation video, but we need to remember that movement does not add meaning! Project offered a presentation that could integrate live streams, e.g. from Twitter, so you could engage in real debate and see the current situation (rather than a snap shot in time). However, the key things to consider for everyone considering using any software for teaching or presenting were: your budget, the equipment available; how the file will be accessed by the user (solo or group work on a project); what functionality was needed; the background of the individual and their temperament (would they get motion sickness from Prezi)?(Sietz, 2013)

WILU was a great opportunity to share ideas and learn from our North American colleagues which I would recommend to everyone. The presentations can be view on the WILU 2013 website at <http://lib.unb.ca/WILU/wilu-2013-presentations/>.

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