

Taking Charge of your LIS Career: Personal Strategies, Institutional Programs, Strong Libraries
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Foreword

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Abstract:

Describes how the conference programme was put together, comprising a mix of peer reviewed papers, papers which were not peer reviewed, workshops and lectures. Explains that these proceedings are the peer reviewed papers and lectures only and describes the rigor of the quality control process. There is then a description of the papers published in the proceedings.

Keywords: Continuing professional development, Libraries.

It is a privilege to have been involved in the reviewing and editing of the papers in these Proceedings, published under the title Taking charge of your LIS career: personal strategies, institutional programmes, strong libraries. The 15 papers were selected for peer-review from the wide-ranging submissions to the IFLA Continuing Professional Development and Workplace Learning (CPDWL) 2015 satellite conference held on 12-14 August in South Africa at the Milnerton Public Library (City of Cape Town Library and Information Services Department). As in earlier years, the 2015 satellite conference was held immediately prior to the IFLA World Library and Information Congress, which in 2015 took place in Cape Town on 16-20 August. The CPDWL satellite was also the 10th World Conference on Continuing Professional Development and Workplace Learning for the Library and Information Science Professions organised by the Section.

Proposals

In response to the Call for Papers sent out by the Section in late 2014, a total of 49 proposals for various kinds of presentations were received, almost literally “from China to Peru”.

Within the conference theme, the Section invited submissions “of examples of best practices for forging a vibrant library work force ... exploring how individual librarians have successfully managed their careers by embracing change, professional development, and training or by providing the professional development opportunities for others ... [and] how enhanced library skills contribute to stronger libraries ... across a variety of organizational structures, library types, different cultures and geographical regions ... a diversity of voices.”

Those who submitted proposals were invited to prioritise the presentation category they preferred (workshop presentations, personal stories, peer-reviewed papers for publication and others); as a result, 22 proposals were received for full papers to be peer-reviewed, presented and included in the published conference proceedings. In addition, two long-standing members of the Section were invited by the Conference Committee to write and deliver opening and closing keynote papers to commemorate the legacy of Dr Elizabeth W. Stone. It was through Elizabeth Stone’s tireless work for two decades that the original “World Conference on Continuing Professional Education for the Library and Information Science Professions” was convened in Palos Hills, Illinois, USA in August 1985, and led directly to the formation of the IFLA Continuing Professional Education Round Table (CPERT), the forerunner of the CPDWL Section. Three members of the original 1985 conference, Jana Varlejs, Clare Walker and Blanche Woolls, who attended and have actively participated as presenters and editors in all ten conferences, were recognised in the closing session of the 2015 Milnerton satellite.

From proposal selection to peer review to final edit

Ewa Stenberg, the 2015 Conference Co-ordinator, prepared detailed spreadsheets of all proposals and other information received from would-be authors/presenters. These were circulated throughout the broad review team for detailed assessment and scoring in terms of specific criteria, including the extent to which each proposal was considered original and/or innovative and likely to result in a final product of high quality. In the process, two additional authors of presentation proposals originally not intended for publication accepted invitations from the review panel to prepare their presentations for more formal publication. Conversely, a group of authors who had presented multiple proposals were asked, and were assisted, to combine some of their proposals and focus them more narrowly in a much smaller number of papers. A small number of proposers withdrew for various reasons.

The members of the original proposals review panel were: Eileen Breen (Emerald Publishing, UK); Monica Ertel (Bain & Co. USA); Susan Schnuer (Mortenson Center, University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign, USA) and Ewa Stenberg (Malmo University, Sweden); in the peer-review process they complemented the wider review team (see below) and their additional advice was invaluable throughout the review and editorial process.

Author guidelines from previous CPDWL conferences, modified and updated for 2015, were sent to everyone whose proposal was provisionally accepted for presentation as a paper for the published proceedings. The prospective authors came from many countries and cultures and English was in many instances not their first language, nor were all authors based in the academic library environment where familiarity with publication conventions may be considered a given; the Guidelines were therefore aimed at supporting authors in preparing

their papers in a standard format ready for peer review rather than merely imposing rigid stylistic criteria. The Guidelines suggested rather than prescribed aspects of language and style, although the Harvard author-date style was required for citations and lists of references, and authors were directed to various sources for examples.

The CPDWL Section has always built on the experience and advice of past conference organisers. Many members of the CPDWL Standing Committee and others in the section volunteered to provide reviewing, mentoring and editorial assistance and an internationally affiliated team of peer-reviewers was set up early in 2015 to carry out conventional blind peer-reviewing of all papers that had passed the broad first selection from the proposals submitted; their names and affiliations are listed below.

The final review process was applied rigorously and iteratively, with many exchanges of email, to the papers identified for potential inclusion in the published proceedings. The final 13 selected are published here, and the Proceedings also include the Elizabeth Stone Memorial Lecture (the opening keynote address) and the closing keynote address.

Authors were informed when each paper had been reviewed by two referees; comments from members of the review team and the marked up texts were then returned to authors for further revision to finalise their papers in a style and content appropriate for inclusion in the programme and subsequently the Proceedings. In some cases this became major mentoring as well as an editorial/review exercise; the Section has always felt this is entirely appropriate in the context of its purpose, the “continuing professional development and workplace learning” for LIS professionals, including those presenting and possibly publishing for the first time. Nevertheless this approach put unexpected workload pressure upon the review team and as the editor responsible for coordinating what became a very demanding review process, I should like to thank profoundly and acknowledge (in alphabetical order) the members of the wider peer-review team:

Eileen Breen (Emerald Publishing, UK)
Mary Chute (New Jersey State Library, USA)
Monica Mooney Ertel (Bain & Co., USA)
Matilde Fontanin (University of Trieste, Italy)
Vivian Lewis (McMaster University, Canada)
Cynthia Lombardo (Cleveland Public Library, USA)
Mary-Jo Romaniuk (University of Manitoba, Canada)
Jana Varlejs (Rutgers University, NJ, USA)

These peer reviewers, all senior members of their institutions and organizations, responded tirelessly to requests for further blind reviews and ongoing advice, and contributed substantially to the final editorial decision process.

Content coverage of the Proceedings

The papers published in these Proceedings continue the tradition established 30 years ago at the 1985 World Conference, of highlighting international innovative thinking and best practice in the field of continuing professional education/development for professionals in the Library and Information Services (LIS). The themes of the previous nine conferences are

reflected in Blanche Woolls' closing keynote address, "Continuing professional development and workplace learning: past to future." It is difficult to imagine a time when issues around professional development and workplace learning were not mainstream concerns in the LIS profession. Yet this was by no means the case in the mid to late 20th century, as Woolls made clear in her Inaugural Elizabeth W. Stone Lecture in 2005, at the Sixth World Conference in Oslo (Woolls, 2005).

Recognition of practising librarians who publish like their academic peers, and thus may qualify for career advancement, is probably the most familiar form of recognition in academic libraries, but is not necessarily so in other LIS sectors. It is of particular interest therefore to read of the ALA-APA Library Support Staff Certification program (and also reasons for its possible demise) described by Nancy Bolt. While there are no other papers in the Proceedings which focus specifically on the "national vocational qualification" type of certification, incorporating portfolio and course work programmes for practitioners in the LIS sector, more than 50% of the papers do describe innovative professional development opportunities based or accessible in the workplace environment.

Two very different contexts for the professional and skills development of school librarians are given in the papers by Virginia Dike, Ngozi Osadebe and Elizabeth Babarinde (in Nigeria), and by Valérie Glass (in France); a solution to the problem of how to persuade South African public librarians to read more extensively is addressed by Jennifer Hastings and Nazeem Hardy; programmes linking innovative academic and research reference services with new directions in development of academic librarian competencies are described in the paper by Alissa Sputore, Philomena Humphries and Nola Steiner at the University of Western Australia and in two related papers from the University of Lund in Sweden by Åsa Forsberg, Maria Ohlsson and Christel Smith, and by Linnéa Stenson and Åsa Forsberg. An unusual certification programme for librarians is the Certification in Innovation Management being developed in Germany, detailed in the paper by Ursula Georgy. These papers address not only the developmental interests of the individual but also in many cases explicitly indicate how each development has led or is expected to lead to stronger library and information services.

Opportunities for taking personal initiatives and responsibility for self- and career development, incorporating personal networking, new technologies, Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) and many kinds of social networking, are identified in the papers from Ray Pun, Jana Varlejs and Blanche Woolls. The impact of international programmes on networking and personal development is reflected in an overview of international developmental programmes by Chinwe Anunobi, Scholastica Ukwoma and Nkiruka Iwundu, whose paper describes the impact that continuing professional development programmes from institutions such as the Mortenson Center at the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign, the Galilee International Management Institute and the Carnegie Corporation New York have had on Nigerian LIS professionals.

Finally, two papers show how mentoring, always central to personal career development, has become part of innovative national association programmes, as described by Ulrike Lang (the BIB in Germany) and Mary Kandiuk (CARL in Canada).

Conclusion

At this 10th World Conference, more presentations were made in the format of personal and interactive accounts of best practice and career development, workshops, discussion groups and career consultation opportunities, than there were formal papers prepared for publication. This suggests that future Section meetings might regularly include a session for novice authors on how to prepare the kind of formal paper for publication that often gains the author institutional and CV credit. Although the content of these less formal contributions does not comprise part of the published Proceedings, it nevertheless remains accessible: abstracts, outlines, slide presentations and contact details are available through programme session links on the CPDWL website at <https://iflasatelliternerton2015.wordpress.com/programme/>

The input made through these contributions, as well as the papers in the formal Proceedings, reflects the essence of the Section, its commitment to and engagement in interactive exploration and sharing of experience and thought in the ever-evolving field of continuing professional development, in particular for the upcoming members of the profession. As the then chair of the Section, Ann Ritchie, explained, (Ritchie, 2005, p.12) when the Round Table changed to a Section, “workplace learning” should be seen as part of this vision, inherited from Elizabeth Stone 30 years ago. The Section has always been ahead of its time, as Blanche Woolls has made clear in her closing Keynote address. As one of those who has been here from the beginning, I would like to acknowledge and thank all the organizers, contributors and participants in the 2015 satellite conference for continuing to carry us along this path into the future.

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Lead Editor
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