Internet Librarian International Conference 2018

By Birgit Bauer, Bauer Business Research, Austria

More than 300 participants from 28 countries attended the Internet Librarian International Conference, held the 16th and 17th of October 2018 in London. They heard some 60 lectures and case studies on current developments and visions in the library and information professions. There were three tracks running in parallel, interactive sessions, and social events, making ILI 2018 a stimulating conference, and an opportunity to meet with AIIP members in Europe.

The Library: A vibrant place where exciting things happen

In order to remain attractive to their users in the digital age, many librarians strive to offer pleasant, communicative places to encounter, learn, research, invent, and work. What a change!

In her keynote speech, "Cultivating Knowledge Communities," Katherine Skinner, Executive Director of Educopia Institute (Atlanta, Georgia, USA) revealed what all communities need. The non-profit institute **Educopia** supports collaborative communities in creating, sharing, and preserving knowledge. It has now published its models for knowledge communities in the ebook *Community Cultivation Model: A Field Guide*.

Libraries of all types are cultivating their communities in a variety of ways. They shared their experiences in case studies. Several libraries showed how they foster learning experiences through literacy programs for all ages, such as Reading Ahead in the UK or the Helmet Reading Challenge in Finland. Espoo City Library in Finland has developed a journal-

ism project for school children, and 25 libraries in the UK offer Microbits coding clubs to mentor children.

Interactive fiction and literary game development initiatives, such as Off the Map, Playing Beowulf, Litcraft, and Gothic Novel Jam, are run in British libraries to open up collections. Columbus State Community College Library (Columbus, Ohio, USA) uses augmented reality to enhance learning, as do several universities in California and the De La Salle University library in the Philippines through the use of makerspaces. Besides expanding reading, writing, coding, maker, and social skills, and enhancing self-confidence of the participants, these programs increase the visibility of libraries, librarians, and their services.

Left to right: Birgit Bauer, Marydee Ojala, Cindy Shamel, Deb Hunt

Magical Marketing

In addition to the pre-conference workshop "Marketing Your Library Service: Principles and Actions" a number of case studies demonstrated that libraries use all kinds of events and media to attract new customers. For example, Loud in the Library (UK) offered two case studies, one sharing how established and young musicians were invited to perform in rural libraries, creating a win-win-win situation for the libraries, musicians, and the public. The second case study outlined a crowdsourced initiative to research the history of a popular music club and present the results in an exhibition in Cork, Ireland. A series of case studies was presented in "Promoting the Library and Library Services" to share interesting techniques libraries are using. For example, the librarians of the Vejen Library in southern Denmark employ catchy headlines and recommend books in the articles they write for a regional weekly newspaper.

The future in focus

Bohyun Kim, CTO and Professor at the libraries of the University of Rhode Island (USA) presented a case study describing current applications of Artificial Intelligence (AI) including machine translation, contract analysis software, writing news bots, and Google's AlphaGo. But AI systems, in which the software programs learn from their human trainers, can fail due to learned human prejudices. One notable example mentioned was Amazon's machine-learning recruiting software. After it had predominantly studied male CVs, it discriminated against female applicants and was therefore scrapped by Amazon.

In his keynote talk, **Fantastic Future? Predicting Promise and Peril**, Martin Hamilton, futurist at Jisc (UK), summarized new developments in technology with reference to Education 4.0, robotic engineering, climate change, and fake news. Other topics covered at the conference included cooperation of libraries, archiving the internet, repositories, collections, and more.

Dwindling search

In a pre-conference workshop, Search Skills Academy, AIIP experts Karen Blakeman (UK), Marydee Ojala (USA), and Arthur Weiss (UK) gave an overview on current search engines, Google features, other tools, social searching, and people searching. Only one other session, Next-gen Search Skills, covered search-related issues. Marydee Ojala, Online Searcher magazine and co-chair of the conference, and Martin White, Intranet Focus Ltd., UK, talked about latest technolo-

gies like AI, text analysis, and predictive analytics. They also described the difference of content language (mostly English) to native language (usually not English), that already influences search today. Their advice was to update skills and "stay alert, stay flexible, stay awesome."

"Librarians make the world a better place"

Phil Bradley, co-chair of the conference and renowned British information consultant, closed the 20th ILI with his passionate **final keynote**. He said, "Being a librarian is not about books, is not about magazines, is not about searching the internet. What it is about is our community. What it is about is protecting that community and empowering that community." He closed with, "and you do know how to make the world a better place, because that is what we do."

AIIP

As in previous years, AIIP exhibited as a sponsor of ILI and the Taxonomy Boot Camp. AIIP President Cindy Shamel attended the conference and hosted a reception for members and guests at a pub. It was a great opportunity to speak with other AIIP members, from other countries, in person.

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*Birgit Bauer is the owner of **Bauer Business Research** and a veteran information professional in Austria. She ran the information service of the development bank for small and medium-sized companies of the Republic of Austria, then managed a group with a globally active research & analytics provider in India. Birgit is a long-standing member of AIIP.*

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In This Issue

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