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## Conference update

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Chan, L. et al. 2002. Budapest Open Access Initiative. New York: Open Society Institute. Available at: <http://www.soros.org/openaccess/read.shtml> [Accessed: 18 November 2015].

# LILAC Conference 2017: Student view

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## Fun & games at LILAC

As I left Swansea Bay Campus on the last day of the LILAC 2017 Conference, my taxi driver asked me why there were all these librarians in Swansea, and what they had been doing. Was it 'just a conference?' It took me a moment to answer, simply because just saying "just a conference" did not seem enough to convey the sheer variety of sessions and topics covered. Nor did the term 'conference' do justice to the engaging activities I'd experienced. I had applied for a Student Sponsored Place at LILAC based on all the great feedback I had heard from colleagues in my previous role, especially in terms of how enjoyable and friendly it was. From the beginning, LILAC 2017 lived up to this promise, with travel games to play for the journey, and the target to 'turn LILAC purple'. The social media presence on Twitter allowed for a range of conversations before LILAC had even begun, and of course, made the journey a lot more entertaining.

The fun continued upon arriving at the Great Hall on the Bay Campus, where the Auditorium became the central social space for the conference. Alongside housing the excellent food and drink, it was a great space to socialise, relax, and check out the Posters. It also housed blow-up pigs, 'LILACTOPIA' and the photo booth and dress-up clothes (check the [LILAC Flickr account](#) for the evidence!).

The fun and games spread into the LILAC sessions. Following its introduction last year, the Lagadothon was back, this time won by Warwick University Library's Tracy Dix and her "[Frogger-Style](#)" [Harvard Referencing Game](#). The previous year's winner Andrew Walsh used his parallel session 'Escape from the Library' to showcase the use of locked boxes and puzzles as part of library induction sessions, alongside a helpful grounding in theories of play (2017). Delegates were shown how librarians have used apps to encourage active learning. Examples included ActionBound with Julie Charles and Kim Donovan (2017) and the augmented reality app Aurasma with Chloe Menown (2017).

## Collaboration and real-world information literacy

Alongside the games and play of library inductions, two key themes stood out for me: the need for libraries to collaborate and promote the use of information literacy (IL) outside the library. This was reinforced by the brilliant keynote speakers. Barbara Allen's 'Making an impact beyond the library and information service' was a personal favourite of mine, and quickly became the top trending topic of the day. Allen (2017), through an honest reflection of her employment history, offered practical and useful advice on how to influence key members within universities and academia. Librarians, she argued, have to network beyond our usual tribes, and make our voices heard to impact ongoing strategy. This could be seen in sessions such as Deborah Stebbing and Jane Shelley's (2017) research into academics' understanding of the definition of IL and Katherine Stephan's (2017) session on how Research Cafés at John Moore's University Library created scholarship and networking opportunities.

The other two keynotes looked at some of the issues outside of the academic classroom affecting IL teaching. Josie Fraser's keynote (2017) 'The library is open: librarians and information professionals as open practitioners' focused on open educational resources and how openness informs the teaching of information literacy, such as issues with Creative Commons Licenses and encouraging open educational practices. Alan Carbery's 'Authentic information literacy in a post-truth era', a barnstorming keynote on the final day of the conference, examined the role of IL on everyday learning. Carbery (2017) argued that

librarians, instead of being library focused, should be information focused, and look beyond the academic classroom. For example, this included examining current themes, including the rise of 'fake-news' and social media 'bubbles'. Several delegates discussed afterwards how the talk had made an impact on them, and gave them a validation of their work.

## Meals and atmosphere

With all the parallel sessions and complex topics discussed, it could be quite easy to get overwhelmed. The conference though, had a lovely relaxed atmosphere, helped by having an actual beach on the doorstep. It was also interesting to step into the new Swansea Bay Library. Here, the staff gave me a thorough tour of the new library, with an honest discussion of how the staff have settled into the new building, and I was able to check out the new sound reducing furniture.

It was during the conference that LILAC's Twitter presence really came into its own. Delegates could not only discuss topics as they were being presented, but also keep up with events within other parallel sessions. It also encouraged me to talk to a wide range of people from different areas of expertise, which for someone very new to the profession, was a great advantage. The atmosphere was friendly, and had a great international feel, with delegates from Sweden, America and Hong Kong.

The big social event, of course, was at the historic Brangwyn Hall, which looked beautiful lit up in the on-message purple colours. Whilst waiting for the delicious food, delegates entertained themselves with the funky balloon hats (although I failed to even blow up a balloon!). The previous year's book giveaway also made an exciting return – I sadly did not get one, but someone at my table managed to grab Roald Dahl's *Matilda*. Then all that was left was to present this year's bursary awards and dance away the rest of the night, alongside my fellow Student Award winner Leanne Workman.

Overall, I had a brilliant experience at LILAC. I have already included some of the knowledge I gained into my academic assignments, and I came away with many great ideas and concepts which I am sure will benefit me hugely in my future career. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the CILIP's Information Literacy Group Committee for their time and effort in organising the event, and for allowing me the opportunity to attend. I am keen to attend again in the future. As I said to the taxi driver as he dropped me off at the station, LILAC 17 was much better than 'just a conference!'

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