

Westminster to Washington: sharing the experience!

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Amy Stubbing, University of Westminster

At the end of March I was surprised and thrilled to find out that I had been named the winner of the new UKSG sponsored conference place award. The award was part of UKSG's drive to offer professional development and innovation opportunities to information professionals from across the sector. Unlike many conference awards, this particular award allowed applicants to apply for any conference, opening up a whole host of conferences that would normally be extremely difficult to find funding for. Knowing the openness of this award, for my application I chose the American Libraries Association conference. I've wanted to attend for several years, but assumed I would never actually be able to go. Needless to say, I'm over the moon that I now have the opportunity!

ALA is an international conference, presenting some of the newest ideas and approaches to librarianship, management, publishing and bookselling, and hosting incredible keynotes, speakers and vendors. With users and technologies constantly changing and developing, I am passionate about using international connections to share ideas and practices from across the library profession to develop our services and continue to offer the best possible service to our users despite the fast pace of changing information needs. As such, ALA is an incredible opportunity for me to expand my international network and understanding and make lasting connections to collaborate on future projects. I have done a lot of work surrounding data collection for service development (including recently developing a toolkit for implementing data collection and analysis) and I'm excited to get new perspectives and approaches to expand my understanding and improve my work. It was also great to further the reach of this work, and be able to tap in to an international market.

ALA is also a great opportunity for me to expand and learn more in some of my specific areas of interest in libraries. As well as attending sessions on new trends in data collection I'm also going to attend streams on library management, service development, and new trends in libraries, all of which will give me tangible takeaways to make developments in my work at the University of



Westminster and in the future. Of course, as well as the sessions, the exhibitions, book signings, and keynotes are infamous, and I'll definitely be carving out time to learn from these too.

When I attend a conference one of the most important things to me is the ability to disseminate the knowledge and experiences I gain as wide as possible. This is a key goal for UKSG too, and as such we've come up with a range of options to share the experience with the UKSG community and the wider information profession. As well as tweeting and responding to questions throughout the conference on [#UKSGatALA](#) (using @amyodo) I will be creating a sketch noting portfolio of key sessions which will be on twitter and available to download after the conference, sharing a video diary before and during the conference, writing up my general conference experience in a blog post after the conference, and sharing write-ups of key themes from information sessions in a series of articles.

I look forward to sharing the experience with you in a few weeks!

These views are the author's own and do not necessarily reflect the views of UKSG.



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