



Include, Connect, Innovate: delivering the 2024 UKSG Conference and Exhibition

UKSG eNews 559

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One of the many things I love about our sector is that it's continuously evolving. For me, keeping pace means more than staying up to date with current trends and drivers – it's about active engagement, collaboration, and being open to different perspectives. The 2024 UKSG Conference and Exhibition, taking place in the culturally rich and vibrant city of Glasgow, promises dynamic discussions, networking, and exploration of the latest developments, challenges and opportunities facing our knowledge community.

An outstanding programme

At the core of our conference is a strong programme that reflects the diverse interests and concerns of stakeholders across the scholarly communications ecosystem. This year, five Plenary Sessions will cover a range of topical discussions and themes, including Research Integrity, Open Access and Transitional Agreements, Predatory Publishing, Artificial Intelligence, and Perspectives on Leadership. Thirty breakout sessions will cover a wide range of subjects and will be held twice during the Conference. This approach enables attendees to personalise their itinerary and gives them the best possible chance of catching the sessions they're most interested in.

One of the highlights of this year's conference is the introduction of Workshops, allowing delegates to delve deeper into specific topics in interactive and practical sessions. These workshops offer a unique opportunity to gain insights that can be applied to your work.

The strength of our programme is a testament to the high calibre of the proposals we receive each year. This year has been no exception. So, I'd like to thank everyone who submitted a proposal or a recommendation for the Conference Planning Committee to explore and develop.

Glasgow: the great city beyond the conference venue

Beyond the enriching program, Glasgow serves as an exceptional setting for the conference. Renowned for its world-class museums, vibrant arts scene, and warm hospitality, the city offers delegates a unique blend of cultural and urban immersion. Whether Glasgow is a familiar favourite or is new to you, I hope you find moments to appreciate its rich heritage, architecture, and culture.

Community and connections

What truly sets the UKSG Annual Conference and Exhibition apart is our mission to meet the needs of a rapidly changing environment by embodying the spirit of learning and sharing, openness and inclusion. The four themes that run through our vision - include, connect, innovate, and deliver - reflect UKSG's special role as a meeting point for the entire scholarly communications community. Community sits right at the heart of our flagship annual event, which brings together academic librarians, academics, consultants, publishers, intermediaries, and technology vendors from around the globe. The conference is a critical forum for discussions and collaborations that transcend our professional or geographical boundaries.

We have a keen focus on facilitating engaging exhibitor interactions, underscoring a recognition of the collaboration between different areas of our community, which plays a vital role in driving innovation, relationships, services, and initiatives that support the flow of knowledge. Through informal social events like our popular UKSG Quiz, Gala Reception and Disco, and networking opportunities during breaks in the programme, delegates have time to develop connections and explore potential partnerships.

Welcoming first-time attendees

This may be your first UKSG Conference or first conference in general. I know from experience that going to your first conference can be equally exciting and daunting. We work hard at UKSG to ensure you know what to expect and feel welcome. You'll be invited to our First Timers Reception, an informal event where you'll meet others in the same position as you, as well as friendly UKSG staff and volunteers. This is a nice time to connect with people you'll see throughout the next few days, and beyond. Don't worry if you can't make it to the First Timers Reception, our UKSG staff will also be on hand at our Welcome Desk throughout the conference if you've any questions. You may also be interested in reading eNews Editorials, written by first-time attendees: [Luca Filippi](#), [Andrew Marsden](#), and [Tom Morley](#) – who's also one of our wonderful eNews Co-Editors. Last but not least, take a look at our [First Timers attendees guide](#).

Gala Reception

Last year's Conference feedback gave us different perspectives on the experience at our Gala Reception. Many delegates appreciated the grandeur of the unique venue, Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum, its exquisite Spanish Baroque architecture and the culture of its internationally significant collections. Many relished hearing one of the finest Lewis & Co. concert pipe organs in the UK – an extra special recital, as it was played by Christopher Cipkin, Director of Library, Learning Support & Culture at Royal Holloway.

Some delegates feedback indicated that they preferred the traditional table service Gala Dinner and missed the Disco. One of the few drawbacks of having such a large number of delegates is the challenge of identifying a suitable venue for this style of event. Equally

challenging are the high number of no shows we experience at our Gala Dinner events. When we last hosted a Gala Dinner in 2022 in Telford, we had 50 no shows. Unfortunately, these situations result in a significant amount of leftover food which is not suitable for donation to charitable partners. We have been unable to reconcile such a high volume of food waste with our shared commitment to sustainability.

This year we will welcome delegates to another Gala Reception. The event will take place at the world-class Glasgow Science Centre, a venue which played a leading role in COP26 – the world’s biggest climate conference in 2021. Once again, canapes, alcoholic and soft drinks will be available. A string quartet will provide gentle and refined ambiance throughout the first part of the evening. The evening will see the return of the legendary UKSG Disco. However, we will also be providing a quieter room for those of you who would prefer to continue your conversations. Selecting the [Glasgow Science Centre](#) as our venue also means that, we are supporting a charitable organisation for the second year running: an educational charity that undertakes important work around Glasgow, Scotland, and the UK to inspire and engage people with science and help them see the relevance to their lives. Delegates will also be able to explore the Centre’s exhibitions for themselves, providing opportunities for personal moments of scientific discovery, wonder, inspiration.

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI)

Our strategic vision, launched in 2022, emphasises UKSG’s commitment to embracing and representing the diversity of the global knowledge community in our activities and addressing areas of under-representation throughout the organisation. During the past few years, we have realised better levels of inclusion for underrepresented groups on our Conference Planning Committee and Conference Programme. We are also continuing to explore ways to provide an inclusive environment where individuals of all backgrounds, identities and experiences feel welcomed and valued at our Conference.

This year, one small change we’re making is to ensure that staff at the UKSG Welcome Desk can signpost anyone who’s interested to quieter areas during programme intermissions. We will also be offering Traffic Light Stickers again; these enable delegates to signal their preferences for interacting with others. You’ll only see red stickers here which are for delegates who would prefer not to be approached, there are a range of reasons why this might be the case. So, if you see a delegate with a sticker, please do respect their space, unless of course, they initiate a conversation with you. We would also like to emphasise that people are welcome to step outside during the conference to get some fresh air and enjoy the riverside setting. We will continue to deepen our commitment to EDI across UKSG, as well as our activities and initiatives. You can read more about our plans in the EDI space in this [eNews Editorial](#) by our UKSG Chair, **Joanna Ball**.

Continuous improvement

We place a growing emphasis on sustainability, reflecting a broader commitment to minimizing environmental impact and promoting responsible practices. Once again, any surplus food will be donated to [FareShare](#). In addition, any leftover “Save the Planet” bottles, kindly sponsored by **EBSCO**, will again be donated to a local homeless shelter. Our continuous improvement efforts, driven by feedback and suggestions from attendees, underscore our responsiveness to the evolving needs and expectations of our community. We

always welcome your reflections and suggestions; feedback forms will be circulated after the Conference.

Our excitement is building for #UKSG2024 - attendees will have the opportunity to engage with a range of key themes, connect with members of our community, and contribute to the future of our sector, which plays a major role in advancing progress towards the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. Whether you're a regular delegate or a first-time attendee, we look forward to welcoming you to Glasgow for an enriching conference experience.