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CONNECTING THE KNOWLEDGE COMMUNITY

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# Keeping everyone communicating

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## Leo Appleton and delegates to the 2018 UKSG Conference

The UKSG Conference in Glasgow in April seems a long time ago now, and there is no rest for UKSG as it prepares itself for the [2019 Conference in Telford](#), and indeed for the [programme of events](#) taking place throughout summer and autumn, including the One-Day Conference scheduled for November. But before we focus all of our energies on the future, let's take one last look back at the 2018 conference to remind ourselves how excellent and informative the whole thing was . . .

Several of our delegates agreed to provide brief reports of their UKSG conference experiences and these are included below starting with the view from Regina O'Brien, Assistant Director (Operations and User Services) at Lancaster University:

“Open access was the main theme for the plenary session on Monday and an excellent overview of the current situation in the UK, the state of play in other countries, and a publisher perspective, provided lots to ponder on about the sector's next steps for open access. The key message being that there has been significant progress but there is still lots of work to do. I thought Tuesday's presentation from the Director of Policy at Universities UK exploring the political and policy challenges facing UK higher education provided a relevant framework for many of the discussions taking place during the conference. I found this session most beneficial.

From the varied selection of breakouts I attended, Matt Borg's session about the user experience was thought provoking and entertaining, using "obvious" bad user experience examples. Breakouts illustrating the importance of quality metadata, and collaboration with publishers, academics or other libraries provided practical ideas and things to consider that I've brought back to the office.

It was a great conference, and in addition to the formal sessions, the networking and social events are a key feature of the UKSG conference - how quickly the dance floor fills up at a UKSG conference dinner never ceases to amaze me!”

Paul Tavner, Head of Institutional Outreach at Hindawi, was attending UKSG for the second time and he found it as enjoyable an experience as first time around:

“I think the thing that I most appreciate about the conference experience is the sheer range and diversity of expertise that's on display. You can have very intensely technical conversations with someone at one moment, and then be learning about something completely new the next. It's fascinating to watch people click into gear as they find areas of common ground.

My high point of the conference was the breakout session presented by my friend and colleague Catriona MacCallum on the important work being done by the Initiative for Open Citations (I4OC). While support for open access seems to be gathering momentum – as supported by some of the striking presentations delivered during the first plenary session – the idea of making public the citation relationships between journal articles, covering both OA and subscription content, is a genuinely exciting prospect. Developing a better understanding of the interconnectedness of articles will unlock important doors in the future, and developing structured, separable, and open citation data is a necessary first step. I would encourage all UKSG members to familiarise themselves with the work of I4OC and to support their work wherever possible.

This also relates to my key lesson from the whole conference, which would be to question the traditional boundaries of commercial activities. Technical progress has made certain formerly labour intensive services – that could legitimately require additional charges – totally facile. The idea of charges for a purely digital journal is a contradiction in terms, for example. There's an onus on consumers of these services to question what they're being charged for, and there's an onus on publishers to look carefully at where they can offer new services for free, or expose new data at no cost to themselves."

Alice Graves, Associate Marketing Manager from ACS Publications, provides us with the sponsors' viewpoint, which is always great feedback to get, as without generous sponsorship we would have no conference to report back on:

"UKSG is an essential conference for us to attend, and this year marked my fifth time in attendance. We were delighted to be platinum sponsors this year and bring the ACS Publications lab to Glasgow! As always, it was great to catch up with colleagues, and to share thoughts and ideas.

I attended some excellent breakout sessions, including Nick Poole from CILIP on 'Advocating for corporate libraries', a really valuable, interactive session with librarians and publishers sharing their thoughts on challenges and opportunities for librarians and information professionals working in a corporate environment. The inclusion of a session on non-academic libraries was a very welcome addition to the conference programme.

My favourite plenary session was Adam Blackwell's 'Guns, lies and sex tapes: how the primacy of emotions over reason gave us fake news (and Trump!)'. Through some powerful storytelling, he showed how fake news gains traction because it taps into beliefs and values that are already there, and feeds the emotions that are tied to those beliefs, despite the evidence and facts to the contrary. His conclusion was my takeaway from the conference this year, that the solution to the problem of fake news would not be the engineers of this world, but the educators. Only through empowering people with knowledge, via the libraries and educational institutions of the world, can we work on solving these issues."

Nikoleta Kiapidou, Institutional Engagement Coordinator from MDPI, first time attendee, also enjoyed the conference experience and took a great deal away from the experience, including the first timer networking event:

"One of the highlights was the pre-conference social gathering for first-timers. This was particularly enjoyable as people like myself could socialise and feel welcomed in an

informal setting. The first day, and especially Monday's plenary talks, were among the best features of the conference. I was impressed by the genuine, thought-provoking presentations given by the speakers. The conference dinner along with the traditional ceilidh dancing was, of course, another moment to remember.

There was so much going on at UKSG that at times it was a bit difficult to allocate my time accordingly. However, the conference organisers as well as the use of technology helped to keep track of everything I wanted. The conference mobile app was useful for planning my time and the IET TV set-up enabled me to catch up with any sessions I missed. Twitter also proved particularly helpful and following #UKSG18 was both informative and entertaining.

It was fascinating to realise that so many professionals from different backgrounds and positions are eager to gather, share their views, and work together for an advanced and sustainable information and knowledge sector. There is so much inspiration, dedication, and hard work going on in the field, and the UKSG conference seemed to represent exactly that. I am already looking forward to next year's conference."

It was a pleasure to welcome colleagues from the further education sector to the conference, and UKSG, as always, is keen to ensure that it is responsive to FE and college library managers. Charmian Oldman, Assistant Learning Resource Centre Manager at Peterborough Regional College, was one such colleague in attendance:

"UKSG was the first library conference I have ever attended and it did not disappoint.

The conference opened with several discussions on open access publishing. Anna Lundén gave us an insight into how open access has developed in Sweden and how all material published by public funds is automatically open access, something that should be standard practice. Liam Earney from Jisc then gave a UK perspective of open access, detailing how there have been open access arrangements since 2003 and how they provide efficiencies for institutions. This was followed with Caroline Sutton from Taylor & Francis, who gave a publisher's perspective. Caroline made an interesting point when she said that, under a subscription model, the journal is the unit in terms of pricing, systems, tracking and reporting usage but an open access model meant that the article itself was the unit and this poses different challenges.

On day two of the conference David McMenemy started off by talking about privacy and the library patron and how this is an ongoing ethical challenge. He talked about the difference between informed consent and engineered consent, something I had not really thought about before. Seeta Peña Gangadharan followed this and started off her talk by asking the audience if we felt we knew everything about library privacy. No one answered. I suspect, like me, they felt that, if they said 'Yes', Seeta would prove that we were wrong. She talked about a project she had been involved with in America to teach library staff how they can protect their patrons' privacy in which they were asked where patrons in the library input information and came up with lots of answers. She found that knowledge of patron privacy was low amongst library staff and used context in the form of patron profiles to teach privacy.

The final session saw Adam Blackwell from ProQuest talk about fake news. This is something I currently teach to students. However, Adam really made me think about why students believe fake news. He cited the example of a pro-gun professor in the US who made up statistics and fabricated research but people still cited him. He talked about how people spread fake news because they want to believe it. Students use

information to reassure themselves that they know enough and it is our responsibility to teach them how to evaluate information. We have gone from information scarcity to information abundance and we need to make sure students are prepared to judge the credibility of that information. I feel that understanding why students believe fake news will help me to teach them about it.

Overall, I felt that UKSG was a really good and well organised conference with lots of interesting sessions and thoughtful debates.”

And our final reflection is from Jacqueline Clarke, Learning Centre Manager at West London College:

“My experience of UKSG 2018 started several weeks before the conference, when the UKSG Events app was launched. The app covered every aspect that I could possibly need to maximise my planning, participation and enjoyment of the conference. It even included the phone number and discount codes for Glasgow Taxis. I was able to select the breakout sessions that I would attend. In addition to informing me of all the plenaries, lightning talks and main speakers on the days, all the delegates, sponsors and exhibitors details, slideshare and live streaming via IET tv, social media links – I could post to social media via the app. There was also the very exciting Click photo competition sponsored by JoVE, which was a 104 photo tasks challenge.

Having attended UKSG events in the past, the standard of UKSG events was maintained. The conference operated like clockwork – all activities and presenters were as they were advertised and on time. As ever, the range of presentations was very eclectic and covered topics from various perspectives on open access (publishers, providers and users) through to the merging of libraries; TEF (teaching excellence framework); KEF (knowledge exchange framework), HE and FE resources; user experience and privacy; advocacy for corporate libraries; data collection, management and visualisation; content marketing, authentication and access; e-resources and digitisation; digital collection procurement and management; research and publications; publishers.

All the plenaries and lightning talks were very informative and thought provoking. The breakout sessions gave a wealth of choice and I would have liked to have attended more but there were several running concurrently. For me, as an information professional in the FE sector, the standout breakout sessions that I attended were 'User experience in libraries' (Matt Borg), 'Maximising the value of learning and teaching resources in the FE sector' (Karla Youngs), and 'teaching and learning outcomes: the TEF – a new world for libraries, publishers and intermediaries'. (Ken Chad).

It was a great conference, held in a great city – Glasgow. The high points for me were young people receiving the John Merriman Awards and early career sponsorships, as this promotes continuity in the sector. My added bonus was winning the best dressed attendee at the conference dinner and the Click photo competition. The particular inspiration that I took from the conference is that the scholarly communication sector has positive stewards and that UKSG as an organisation is indispensable in the chain of keeping everyone communicating to ensure the continued success of the sector and the optimisation of resources in research, teaching and learning across the UK, Europe and the world.

The quote that I took away from the conference is one used in Ken Chad’s presentation, 'The world’s most valuable asset is no longer oil, but data . . . Smartphones and the

internet have made data abundant, ubiquitous and far more valuable.' (The Economist, 6 May 2017)

I am looking forward to UKSG 19 in Telford very much.”



This UKSG Editorial is taken from the industry newsletter *UKSG eNews*, published every two weeks exclusively for UKSG members. The newsletter provides up-to-the-minute news of current issues and developments within the global knowledge community.

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