UKSG 2018: a conference in tweets

UKSG eNews 419

13 Apr 2018

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Earlier this week UKSG proudly hosted its annual conference at the Scottish Event Campus in Glasgow. The UKSG conference is a major highlight in not just the UKSG calendar but the calendar of the whole knowledge community in the UK and beyond. The conference always boasts a packed schedule of high profile keynote presenters, cutting edge practitioner led sessions, and a vast and vibrant exhibition, and 2018 proved to be exactly that.

Unfortunately I was unable to attend this year, but thanks to today's social media platforms you can follow such events remotely and never be too far from the action. Therefore I have been set the task of trying to convey the highlights of the conference in this editorial through the medium of Twitter by using just the tweets that have been generated throughout the conference. This in itself is no mean feat, as I wade through the thousands and thousands of comments that have been tweeted over the course of the three days of the conference. The output has been so huge that I am going to use only the 'top tweets' from the conference, ie the tweets that have been 'liked' or retweeted the most, but hopefully the essence of the conference will shine through.

To pick out lots of individual practitioner presentations would be unfair, but also quite difficult to do simply from 'top tweets'. However, two key themes really stand out as having provoked genuine enthusiastic debate: research impact and the influence libraries have on research activity; and, developments in the open access landscape.

I suppose both of these seem like obvious themes to emerge, considering the nature, scope and focus of UKSG and the conference, but with regard to research impact what really stands out in the tweets from many of the presentations is the influence and impact that academic libraries and librarians can have on the research environment and activity of their university. The strength of academic libraries and the positions that they hold within their institutional research environment is very encouraging. It would appear that many library practitioners were happily sharing their experiences and best practices in engagement in these areas, most noticeably initiatives around academic advocacy between the library and research academics. There also seemed to be a lot of excitement around the introduction of 'impact literacy' and how understanding impact, both how we achieve it and what it means, is essential to the modern research support librarian.

The second main theme to have emerged, again unsurprisingly, is the open access landscape and emerging practices and policies. This is manifest in a whole host of discussions and tweets around the various best practices and solutions being shared by presenters including: library crowdfunding for open access collections; Open Access Button; the Initiative for Open Citations (I4OC); open access university press activity; open science etc. The work taking place at Swedish institutions really stands out in the UKSG Twittersphere with initiatives around negotiating licenses at a

national level and monitoring open access costs at a more local level receiving plenty of Twitter attention. The area of predatory publishing, and the appropriate use of this terminology, also engaged much online conversation within this theme.

The UKSG conference never fails to have inspirational keynote speakers and, judging by Twitter, 2018 has been no exception. Two of the keynotes that stand out in the Twitter admiration tables are the closing presentations on day three (this may well be because our UKSG tweeters are well into their stride, 60 hours into the conference!). Mike Cannon, Director of Serial Publications and Editorial Services at the American Speech-Language-Hearing-Association, certainly inspired his audience through likening strategically developing within the rapidly transforming publishing landscape to being able to perform increasingly difficult circus tricks (such as flying through the air on a trapeze or juggling flaming chainsaws). And similarly, Vijaya Nath, from the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education, left a lasting Twitter impact with her closing plenary on the importance of strong leadership in our ever changing working worlds. Of particular note is her narrative around 'human empathy' and how in our continual technology-led changing library environments "human empathy will never be replaced by robots".

So there it is, my very brief synopsis of the 2018 UKSG conference, compiled purely from engaging in Twitter from afar. I am hoping that the main essence of the conference programme and content is accurate. It is worth mentioning also that, in true UKSG conference style, the social events and networking opportunities really stand out through my brief social network analysis, in particular experiencing the bagpipes versions of 'Wonderwall' and 'Living on a prayer'. Sounds fascinating.

And lastly, it is very fitting that some of the most liked and retweeted tweets were not about content or social activity at all, but were conveying messages of genuine appreciation for the opportunity to attend such a great conference which genuinely and warmly welcomes everyone to it. Well done to all involved at UKSG.

This has been a very quick and brief and alternative account of the conference. Look out for future *UKSG eNews* editorials from delegates to the conference, and fuller accounts in *Insights*.

With thanks to ultra pro-active tweeting from:

@iamvicfarmer, @TechSvcslib, @Yvonnenobis, @SimonXIX, @uomlib_dominic, @LibraryLantern, @KatherineAnneH, @Dr_Sarah_P, @h_j_dobson, @VijayaNath1, @ruthej, @IanGibson11