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Proving Our Worth: Evidence and Data in Acquisitions National Acquisitions Conference (NAG) Conference: Conference Report

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Proving our worth:
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National Acquisitions Conference (NAG) Conference, 6-7 November 2017, Leeds

#NAG17

Gillian Kerins

Thanks to a bursary from the Acquisitions Group of Ireland (AGI), I was a first time delegate at the 2017 UK's National Acquisitions Group (NAG) conference. NAG is a professional organisation for people responsible for or interested in the acquisition, management and development of library resources in libraries of all types. This two-day conference in Leeds included presentations from both academic and public libraries on the following theme: "Proving our worth: Evidence and Data in Acquisitions". The full programme is available at http://www.nag.org.uk/news/2017/09/full-programme-for-nag17/ and had five papers and a workshop each day. In this short report, the focus is on the keynote, workshops and panel discussions, and those presentations in receipt of NAG awards, the slides for the other presentations from the conference are available on glisser at https://audience.glisser.com/#/live-view.

Proving our worth: Evidence and Data in Acquisitions

After a welcome address by Andrea Eillison (Chief Librarian, Leeds Library and Information Service), Ian Anstice (*Public Libraries News*) gave the opening keynote address entitled "An Aquarium without fish? The importance of stuff "spoke about library use and the importance of properly selected and sufficient stock. He touched on how spending power, inflation and decreased budgets in the UK correlate with the decline in public library usage. The big decline in the UK from 48% (2005) to 34% (2016/17) in public library usage does not seem to be happening to this extent in other developed countries in the world. On a positive note, in the last year across Great Britain, there were more visits to public libraries (250 million) than trips to the cinema, to the theatre, live gigs or UK Top 10 Tourist attractions. Ian highlighted how we as librarians need to advocate for libraries with evidence, taking in to account our audience and to choose books in the same way.

Robin Armstrong Viner described the University of Kent's (winners of the NAG award 2016) case study on their European Study Centres. The goal was "to enable discovery of and provide access to high quality content, supported by excellent services for all students who chose to study at any one of our European Centres". Using evidence-based practice and data driven decision-making, they went about achieving this goal. Acting with knowledge, they set about creating a sustainable model and now have enacted a European collection development policy, Patron Driven Acquisition (PDA), streamlined interlibrary loans, and customised discovery layer for their European Study Centres.

The panel discussion entitled "Are you being served?" with a liaison librarian, a public library user and a student covered a broad range of themes: influencing what books are purchased for their library, promoting eBook use, visibility on library resources spend, subject librarians, the best thing about the library, new library services, impact of funding and resources cuts.

On each day of the conference, delegates had a choice of workshops.

I chose the workshop on "Preparing and delivering an impactful elevator speech" as this is something I would like to be better at. Campbell Storey (Storey Communications) provided us with some very helpful templates to use to get our point across. The key to an effective elevator pitch is to have a collection of issues, policy, projects, products/services ready to go, don't try to come up with something on the spot! Be consistent in your message, look for common ground with your audience and most importantly have evidence. The main takeaway from Storey's workshop is that great communicators *speak on behalf of those who use your service*, not the service.

At the "eBook accessibility audit workshop" (winners of the NAG award 2017) we had a brief overview of the eBook accessibility audit project https://sites.google.com/site/ebookaudit2016/) and then we completed a brief audit of an eBook through our own organisations where we checked for text reflow, text-to-speech and accessibility information (http://bit.ly/ebookauditquestions). The key theme of this workshop was the importance of accessibility as a factor in eBook procurement. I would recommend any library with eBooks to complete this brief audit of their eBook resources.

The mix of presentations from the different library sectors is an excellent format for the area of library acquisitions. What struck me was that both sectors are dealing with similar issues but may be using different tools that suit their sector. Evidence based collection management was a core element in the programme and the presentations reflected this for both sectors, for example, the presentations on **Copac Collection Management Tools (**academic) and **CollectionHQ** (Public). I found that no matter which sector the presentation was from I got something from it.

I am grateful to the Acquisitions Group of Ireland for awarding me the chance to attend NAG. It is a specialised conference and though small in comparison to other international conferences (approx. 80 delegates), it was very well organised, it highlighted key topics for the library acquisitions community, and I made many valuable contacts for the future. Thank you AGI!

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