EMTACL12: Emerging Technologies in Academic Libraries 2012

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Table of Contents

EMTACL12 - Emerging Technologies in Academic Libraries 2012

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The EMTACL12 conference took place in Trondheim, Norway, October 1-3, 2012. EMTACL stands for "emerging technologies in academic libraries". The programme consisted of 8 plenary keynote presentations by invited speakers, and a number of presentations in two parallel tracks. Themes: library innovation and future, support for researchers, support for teaching and technology. All presentations are available via the "Programme" link on http://emtacl.com.

Library innovation and future
A number of keynote speakers urged libraries to change and leave obsolete practices behind. Karen Coyle: "*The mission of the library is not to gather physical things into an inventory, but to organize human knowledge that has been very inconveniently packaged*". Rurik Greenall advised libraries to take better care of and enhance their own dynamic data. Rudolf Mumenthaler spoke about "*Innovation management in and for libraries*" which provoked discussion: can innovation be promoted by management, or does it need to grow of itself in freedom, by allowing staff to play the Google way?

Support for researchers
Some speakers focused on the entire research workflow infrastructure, others on supporting publishing in particular.

Herbert Van de Sompel talked about the changing nature of the scholarly record: from "fixity" and "boundary" to dynamic and interdependent on the web. Online publications and related information, like research project information, references and data, change over time, so it becomes increasingly difficult to recreate a scholarly record. New developments can help. Jens Vigen celebrated 50 years of Open Access at CERN and predicted that current library subscription budgets will switch to open access funding soon. Trude Eikebrokk, Tor Arne Dahl and Siri Kessel presented a publishing platform that enables EPUB as publication format in Open Access journals. Presentation and promotion of scholarly publications is the focus of the Chalmers University Publication Profiles Platform, and of the 'controlled aggregation' website of the Groningen University Medical Library.

Against the landscape of disconnected tools used in the different stages of research projects, Sharon Favaro (Seton Hall University) described a project aimed at identifying better ways to integrate library tools for supporting the lifecycle of research. Sally Chambers (DARIAH) presented an overview of organisations, projects and infrastructures available for supporting research in the digital humanities.

Bridging the gap between research infrastructure and publications is one of the features of the Erasmus University Rotterdam RePub framework.

Tamara Pianos presented a mobile app for access to EconBiz to support business and economics researchers. The possibilities of social media to promote international collaboration were demonstrated by Hua Sun and Mark Puterbaugh. The History Engine at the University of Richmond (Canada) was presented as a means for supporting research in teaching.

Support for teaching
Different ways of presentation and distribution of recorded lectures were discussed by Martin Gaustad of NTNU Technical University, the hosting organisation of the conference. Olivia Walsby described the various roles of librarians in supporting teaching in a number of projects at Manchester University. Andrew Whitworth presented the triadic model, a new theoretical model for a better, more holistic view of the information/digital literacy relationship.

MUBIL is a project aimed at augmenting and enriching rare old books in a digital 3D architecture, for use in teaching.

Technology
'Linked Data' was viewed from a number of perspectives. OCLC's Richard Wallis presented the WorldCat schema.org markup as an example of publishing existing bibliographic metadata as linked data. Creating new views from existing heterogeneous data sources using linked data is the topic of the Norwegian Black Metal project presented by Kim Tallerås. Jane and Adrian Stevenson of MIMAS (UK) discussed the pros and cons of dedicated APIs versus the Linked Data concept. Shun Nagaya and Keizo Itabashi demonstrated covo.js, a JavaScript library for using subject headings and thesauri on the web.

Lukas Koster (University of Amsterdam) showed the discrepancies between the in theory unlimited possibilities of harvesting and indexing with discovery tools, and the actual implementations. The possible value of QR codes (2D barcodes that look like a bunch of black and white squares) in libraries was discussed by Krista Godfrey.

In his closing keynote Brian Kelly of UKOLN made it clear that it is very hard to foresee the future, with Star Trek, monorails and paper planes as evidence.