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## Conference Corner

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Chan, L. et al 2002. *Budapest Open Access Initiative*. New York: Open Society Institute. Available at: <http://www.soros.org/openaccess/read.shtml> [Retrieved 22 January 2007].

# LILAC 2014 Conference report: a student's perspective

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Finding myself with a few hours to kill at the end of LILAC 2014, I sat with my snazzy official conference notebook and a red pen, intending to underline everything in my notes that I wanted to follow up. I soon abandoned the idea when I realised that I wanted to find out more about pretty much everything I'd heard over the previous three days.

As an MSc Library and Information Studies student at Robert Gordon University, I was one of two students lucky enough to receive a sponsored place at LILAC 2014. I hadn't been sure what to expect from my first major conference, and approached Sheffield Hallam on the first day of the session with some trepidation. However, I was soon made to feel welcome and quickly fell into chatting with colleagues from across the UK and further afield. Working in an FE college and studying as a distance learner, it's sometimes easy to lose sight of the bigger picture. LILAC was a fantastic opportunity to get right to heart of things, and it was difficult not to get swept up in the incredible enthusiasm and excitement with which presenters and delegates alike approach all things information literacy (IL). The next three days were intense, with three excellent keynotes, thirteen fascinating parallel sessions across the conference's six themes and finally a lively panel discussion. It wasn't all work, however, and I enjoyed a more relaxed opportunity to meet other delegates at various social events.

Of all the themes of LILAC 2014, I was most drawn to 'Transitions – IL from cradle to tomb'. The conference presentations reinforced the idea of IL at all stages of life, not just as an academic skill but an everyday necessity, and this was neatly drawn out by presentations across the conference programme. I particularly enjoyed Ian Hunter's (2014) paper on the information skills of the 'Google Generation', and I have already found it extremely useful while reflecting on IL provision at my own library.

'Outreach and collaboration', 'IL on a shoestring' and 'Innovative approaches to IL' were also big themes, and there were opportunities to find out about successful projects and initiatives from around the world. It was fascinating to hear about accredited peer-based student engagement initiatives offered as part of the University of Nottingham's Advantage Award (Coombs and Hollier 2014; Stanton et al 2014). Melissa Man (2014) from Nanyang Technological University spoke on her library's efforts to create a single website to meet the needs of a wide range of information seekers and provided a wealth of useful advice and pointers. A particular favourite among the sessions was Alan Carbery's (2014) standing room only account of Champlain College's shift towards blended IL instruction.



**Amanda Brennan, student award winner of a LILAC 2014 sponsored place**

As well as insights into activity in schools, colleges and universities, Jacqueline May, Policy Officer at CILIP, updated delegates on activity at the national level and the work of the Information Literacy Steering Group. I was very interested to hear that IL in the workplace has been identified as a major priority for 2014, nicely reinforcing the theme of lifelong IL.

The parallel sessions were complemented by three amazing keynote speakers. In his speech on 'Information science and the 10 cultures', BBC journalist Bill Thompson called for a more widespread learning of coding and proposed a vision of IL that includes an understanding of technological systems. The following day's address, one of my personal conference highlights, was given by Alison Head of the University of Washington. This was my first encounter with Project Information Literacy, and I was fascinated by her account of their investigation into how today's students conduct research. Finally, Special Libraries Association President Kate Arnold's rousing keynote rounded off the conference on day three, presenting a 'big picture' look at the value and evolution of the information profession as a whole. All in all, inspiring stuff; I left the conference with plenty of food for thought.



**Amanda Brennan and Penny Andrews (centre left and right), student award winners of a sponsored place at LILAC 2014, with judges Konstantina Martzoukou (Robert Gordon University) and Rebecca Mogg (Cardiff University, Vice-Chair of the CILIP IL Group)**

As well as the keynotes and parallels, there were lots of opportunities to meet fellow delegates in a less formal setting. The welcome session for new and international delegates was great fun, with librarian bingo and 'speed dating' really breaking the ice and easing us into what could have otherwise been quite a daunting experience. On the first evening we were treated to a networking event at Sheffield City Hall, complete with a magician and Nigel Morgan's hilarious account of the history of the conference (including some entertaining photographic evidence!). The social highlight, however, was the conference dinner, which took place in the beautiful surroundings of the Cutlers' Hall. It was incredible to share a table with real leaders in the field and meet the winners of this year's Information Literacy Award and Credo Reference Digital Award. Having managed to navigate the hall and stage to receive my award without falling flat on my face, I decided not to tempt fate by joining the dancing, but rather took the opportunity to round out the evening chatting with some of the other attendees, including my fellow Student Award winner, Penny Andrews.

I came away from LILAC 2014 enthused and encouraged, having met a host of inspirational practitioners and academics, and eager to put what I'd learned into practice. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the organisers and the committee of the Information Literacy Group, both

for organising such a wonderful conference and for giving me the opportunity to attend. I am certain that my time at the LILAC will bear great fruit, and I am determined to attend again in the not too distant future.

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