

# **ALISS** Quarterly

*Association of Librarians and Information professionals in the Social Sciences*

## **Special issue:**

### **Developing Staff: Innovation and Creativity**

#### **ALISS Conference Papers**

Workplace learning at Cardiff University; Virtual chat services  
University of South Wales; self-development via Library courses.

#### **Staff Development Programmes**

Kent Surrey and Sussex NHS Library staff mentoring programme;  
Staff Development in Library Services, City University London.

#### **Volunteers**

Zoological Society of London.

#### **Research Data Management**

University of Exeter research data management  
and open access training for staff.

#### **Digital development**

See it, try it, show it: digital literacy development with a difference.  
Newcastle University;  
Accessible libraries.

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**Volume 10 no.1 October 2014**

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## Editorial

Welcome to the latest edition of ALISS Quarterly. It has been published by ALISS (Association of Librarians and Information Professionals in the Social Sciences). This issue focuses on creativity and innovation in staff development.

It is based on the ALISS conference which took place in Cardiff in July 2014 and incorporates three papers from this: Lou Wallace's presentation on using online chat to support staff integration during a university merger, Rob Challis's experiences in undertaking a library qualification and Sally Earney's paper on workplace learning at Cardiff University.

Slides from the event are available on the main ALISS website <http://alissnet.org.uk/2014/05/08/aliss-one-day-summer-conference-2014-developing-staff-innovation-and-creativity/>. They also include: Judith Stewart, Associate Lecturer, University of the West of England, presentation on "Knowledge, Skills and Reskilling – where does the MSc fit in?"

The rest of the issue focuses on other aspects of staff development. The section on programmes highlights the approach taken by City University London and the NHS library staff mentoring programme. The ZSL Library also describes how it has developed a volunteering scheme. Other aspects covered are the development of a staff training programme in Research Data management at Exeter University and the development of digital literacy skills at Newcastle University. Finally the issue closes with practical advice from Jisc TechDis on strategies for implementing accessible library digital services.

We hope you enjoy the issue.

*Heather Dawson.*  
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## Doing something different – staff development and workplace learning at Cardiff University

Sally Earney and Dr Louise Harrington, Cardiff University

### Background

Cardiff University Library Service offers its staff a range of workplace learning opportunities. These have evolved over time and had their beginnings in a job rotation pilot carried out as part of an MSc Human Resource Management dissertation project<sup>1</sup>.

The dissertation was entitled “Piloting Job rotation in Cardiff University Library Service” and had two main objectives – to find out whether job rotation improved motivation and job satisfaction and to investigate whether technical and ‘soft’ skills increased.

The pilot was carried out in spring 2006. The environment at that time was conducive to job rotation due to the fact that Cardiff University Library Service had 18 site libraries (since consolidated to 14) and a staff of approximately 250 performing a wide variety of roles. In addition, Cardiff University had merged in 2005 with the University of Wales College of Medicine which meant that two different cultures were coming together. Job rotation was well suited to these circumstances.

Before the pilot began, a literature review was carried out to find out what the benefits and costs of job rotation might be to the organisation. A wide range of benefits were outlined in the literature. Among the benefits cited were the fostering of employee learning, career development and promotion, creating innovation, aiding the assessment of employee interests, increasing ‘social capital’ i.e. quality of relationships, reducing turnover, growing in-house talent, creating agile and flexible employees that can see the ‘big picture’ and increasing job satisfaction. Job rotation is also one of 35 “High Performance Work Practices” (HPWPs) which are thought to contribute to the improved business performance of an organisation<sup>2</sup>.

The literature also highlighted the costs of job rotation which included learning curve errors, ‘non-participant’ jealousy, the financial cost of running the scheme and a decrease in output during the rotation. In addition the employee may ultimately leave if there is no reward or promotion at the end of the rotation.

### Job Rotation Pilot

The job rotation pilot at Cardiff University Library Service was carried out in 2006 over a period of 6 weeks. The table shows the participants (‘rotatees’) in the pilot:

			No of hours swapped
Pair 1	Senior Library Assistant <i>Aberconway Library (Business)</i>	Senior Library Assistant <i>Nursing &amp; Healthcare Studies Library</i>	29 hours /week
Pair 2	Senior Library Assistant <i>Arts &amp; Social Studies Library</i>	Archives Assistant <i>Special Collections and Archives</i>	15 hours /week
Pair 3	Senior Library Assistant <i>Biosciences Library</i>	Acquisitions Assistant <i>Collection Management Services</i>	30 hours/week

Staff did not swap for their entire working week in order that they maintained contact with their 'home' library or workplace during the period of the rotation.

### Feedback from the Pilot

The rotatees perceived that a number of 'soft' skills had improved as a result of the rotation. These were confidence, people skills and creativity in their approach to tasks. In addition they felt that 'social capital' had been increased through the building of relationships. According to one rotatee:

*"you can't put a price on getting to know other people in those situations...and I think that facilitates any sort of cross-departmental working which I think is very important"*

In addition to the 'soft' skills gained, the rotatees perceived that their technical skills had also improved. The table shows the areas they felt they had gained or increased skills:

Technical Skills	
Inter-library loans (2)*	IT troubleshooting
Database searching (4)	Voyager cataloguing
Advanced word processing (3)	S:\ drive
Voyager circulation (3)	SIMS
Report writing	Microsoft Access
Athens passwords	Orientation
Using photocopiers	Classification systems
Microsoft Excel	Internet searching

*\*Numbers shown are where more than one rotatee mentioned this area*

### Outcomes

Feedback from the rotatees suggested that a wide variety of new technical skills and soft skills had been acquired or improved. In addition, some rotatees felt their career prospects had improved. Two of the rotatees found they preferred their new working environments which resulted in their swapping roles on a permanent basis! They also felt that they took new practices back to their usual workplaces as a result of seeing how others did things.

The pilot was felt to be a big success in terms of benefits to the individual and thus ultimately to the organisation. Following the pilot, the scheme was formally introduced as an annual scheme with a Workplace Learning Working Group forming in 2008 to take forward this scheme and other new workplace learning initiatives.

### New initiatives – “Do Something Different” Days

Despite the success of the job rotation pilot, it was found in subsequent years to be difficult to gain volunteers. This may be due to staff's lack of confidence about moving out of their usual workplace for a fairly lengthy period and the stress of taking on new tasks and roles. This reticence gave rise to a new initiative called 'Do Something Different Day' which was set up to be a 'taster' or mini rotation – in the hope that staff might then go on

to volunteer for a full rotation.

Do Something Different Days were designed with similar aims to job rotation - to build relationships, see the bigger picture, cross pollinate ideas - but to be less daunting for staff than a six week rotation. The first 'Do Something Different' Day took place in June 2008, and attracted 5 applicants, who visited the Business, Law and Science and Biomedical Libraries, and the Acquisitions and Cataloguing team. It has proved extremely popular and is embedded into the library calendar; one member of staff has participated at least 10 times! According to this staff member,

*'I really enjoy participating in Do Something Different Day because you meet lots of different people, some of whom you know by name but have never met. It enables you to broaden your network and put faces to names so that when you need to contact other University services you can picture that person and it makes the job easier.'*

Since 2008, Do Something Different Day has run twice-yearly, usually in May and November. It is open to library staff at all grades, and while initially it primarily appealed to staff at grades 2 and 3 (Library Assistant and Senior Library Assistant and equivalent), staff at all different levels have applied including Subject Librarians, Site Heads, Cataloguing and Acquisitions Librarians; the University Librarian has even taken part, working in one of the university's large 24 hour study centres for a morning.

Initially, we included just the site libraries and the Collection Management Services (CMS) in the Day, but increasingly different sections of Information Services have taken part including Media Resources, IT Help Desk, the Careers Library, Advanced Research Computing @Cardiff (ARCCA) and the Finance and Communications Teams. Since the scheme started, over 134 staff have taken part and the most popular locations have been CMS and the IT Help Desk.

Since 2012, Do Something Different Day has been extended out to other libraries within the CLIC (Cardiff Libraries in Cooperation) organisation, including Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama Library, the National Museum of Wales Library and the Atrium at the University of South Wales' Cardiff Campus. This has been a welcome development, enabling staff from Cardiff University libraries to glimpse some of the similarities and differences between working in an academic library, to working in more specialised libraries and in public libraries. One participant who visited the Welsh Government Library and Archives states that

*'even though it is such a different working environment, it was still very useful to share ideas and compare experiences and best practice.'*

### **Job shadowing**

In 2010, we launched a third workplace learning programme, job shadowing. The remit for this scheme is for a staff member who is eager to advance in the organisation or profession to spend some time 'shadowing' someone in a different, usually senior role, to gain advice and insight into specific tasks and skills involved. The scheme is very flexible, with the schedule and timings individually tailored to suit both 'shadower' and 'shadowee'.

The participants meet up for an initial chat to discuss what the applicants wish to get from the experience, and for how long they wish to shadow. Shadowing is usually between 6-8 weeks; the participants can choose to meet each week at the same time, or can vary their meetings according to their schedules. As well as observing the daily office-based work, shadowers often get the chance to go to relevant meetings or observe teaching sessions.

The pilot programme consisted of two pairs, a Library Operations Manager shadowing a Subject Librarian and a Senior Library Assistant shadowing a Library Operations Manager. Subsequent shadowing arrangements are outlined in the table below:

Year	Shadower (Grade)	Shadowee (Grade)
2011	Subject Librarian (6)	Site Librarian (7)
2012	IT Assistant (3)	Team of subject librarians from the Business Library (5-6)
2013	Administrator/PA (2)	Subject Librarian and operations team in Senghennydd and Bute libraries (3-6)
2014	Courier (2)	Subject Librarian (6)
	Senior Library Assistant (3)	Subject Librarian (6)
	Senior Library Assistant (3) x2	Library Operations Manager (5) x2
	Library Attendant (1)	Staff in four libraries (2-6)
	Library Assistant (2)	Collection Management Services (3-6)

Initially, we envisaged the programme as a paired shadowing, similar to job rotation, but have found that to have someone shadowing a team of people in one library, or to spend one or two sessions in a number of libraries works just as well.

Some colleagues have been nervous about being shadowed – there is often a feeling of ‘but I don’t do anything interesting!’ But those who have participated have found that being shadowed is ‘an excellent opportunity to reflect on routine actions and choices’ and is ‘an opportunity to think about what I do and how I explain myself to others’.

### Future developments

Do Something Different Day and the Job Shadowing Programme are both popular schemes; as noted, Job Rotation has not had many applicants in recent years, so decisions have to be made about whether to continue with the programme, relaunch it or end it. Another possible avenue we are exploring in Workplace Learning is developing a work placement programme with University IT.

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## **Which campus are you based at? Manning a virtual chat service through a university merger**

*Lou Wallace, Assistant Librarian, University of South Wales*

### **Introduction**

The University of Glamorgan's Library Service launched its online chat service with a librarian alongside a full time enquiry desk service at 3 sites for 4 hours a day in September 2012. At the end of the first academic year the service had received moderate volume of chats (2 per hour) and fantastic feedback from users and the virtual chat project group were considering ways of taking the service forward.

During the Summer of 2013 The University of Glamorgan merged with The University of Wales Newport to become the University of South Wales. Prior to the merger the main considerations for the virtual chat project group were promotion of the service and increasing the hours. Post-merger there were further factors that needed to be considered if the chat service was going to continue to be successful. At the start of the 13-14 academic year the new library service had two more sites and fewer staff, making manning the chat service alongside an enquiry desk very challenging. As well as this, although work was well underway to join systems and processes, the merged library services still had two library management systems, two catalogues, two ways of accessing electronic resources and two virtual learning environments.

It was important that some measures were put in place to make the chat process as easy as possible for staff and students.

### **1. Staffing**

In the first year the university of Glamorgan library's chat service had been offered weekdays 11am-3pm alongside an enquiry desk manned at 3 sites; Treforest, Glyntaf and Cardiff from 9am-7pm. Post-merger the Library service had acquired two new sites; Newport and Caerleon and had lost several members of staff and the decision was made to stop enquiry desk provision at all sites and offer the chat service for a longer period of time. At the same time the facility to book an appointment with an Information Librarian was introduced so that users with more detailed enquiries could be supported face to face.

In the first year the chat service had been manned by librarian's and senior library assistants from the information services team and the enquiry desk had been manned by professional staff from all teams. Post-merger the professional staff and Senior Library Assistants from all teams were added to the chat rota, this larger pool of chatters made it possible for 2 people to man the service 10am-6pm.

### **2. Queuing**

The software used for chatting, a product called Library H3lp, had proved itself to be robust and straightforward to use in its first year. Initially the project group had used the product rather simply; creating and embedding a widget that linked to a single queue, manned by all users. As the year progressed more of the features of the product were utilised to improve both user and staff experience. This included creating a separate queue for enquiries that had come via FINDit (online journals and databases) so that enquiries could easily be filtered

to the most appropriate member of staff available to chat. Enquiries being answered by the most appropriate member of staff improved the student experience as chats were more likely to be completed quickly and without referral. It also benefitted chatting staff who would be answering more enquiries that fell within their skills set.

After the merger a Newport queue was also created, meaning that if a chat had been started on the Newport Moodle page, should there be a Newport member of staff chatting they could pick it up first. Even when there was no member of Newport based staff on chat it was still a useful facility as when chats did come in from the Newport queue operators didn't need to spend time asking which campus they were from, or remember to ask this.

### **3. Not so “Instant” chat**

It would have been impossible to learn everything about our new institution overnight and staff needed to accept that they were not going to be able to answer everything asked during a chat and that chats would very likely be longer and might have to progress to email conversations or be referred onto others. As staff were used to taking ownership and following up enquiries to the point of completion, this concept of transferring responsibility didn't come easily to everyone but it was really important. The project group tried to reiterate this in training sessions, updates and any other communication with the chatting staff. Library h3lp has two features which make this process easier; the function to transfer chats between operators and the ability to email transcripts. The project group made all chatters aware of these functions and it was down to them to utilise them.

### **The outcome**

The amount of chats that were forwarded to other members of staff increased over the course of the year, particularly for subject enquiries which were forwarded on to the appropriate librarian. This could have been in part down to the project group's insistence and in part due to the incorporation of non-information services staff on the rota as they worked in a slightly different way and were used to referring subject enquiries from when they were on the enquiry desk.

To see if staff were feeling positive about the service an informal “chat about chat” was organised for them to discuss their first year chatting as a merged institution. In the main the chatters were very positive about the service, agreeing that it had been a steep learning curve but answering a huge variety of questions had increased their confidence.

Once again the qualitative data was fantastic, some examples of the kind of feedback given; “this is a great chatting service, I was trying to find a phone number to call 😊” “Diolch yn fawr iawn!!!”, “Thank you very much! excellent service. goodbye!” “No thank you 😊 you already did a lot 😊”

As more enquiries were now being forwarded it might have been expected that the feedback to not be as positive as previously. This was not the case and people were generally very grateful for any information that was given and were more than happy to be referred on.

The quantitative data for the 13-14 year was encouraging; an average of 2 chats per hour, with definite peaks and troughs in chat activity.

## **Conclusion and looking forward**

The methods put in place to try and make sure the service ran successfully were not flawless, but were fairly successful at getting enquiries to the right person and increasing staff confidence.

Some suggestions that came out of the “chat about chat” included having a bank of stock answers to help with common enquiries, more regular meetings for the chatters and changing the name of the service from Ask a Librarian to Ask Library staff as implying that chatters were always talking to a librarian was misleading. All of these suggestions have been acted upon by the project group.

With a successful first year post-merger to build on and with staff confidence high and library services becoming increasingly joined up chat is consistently becoming a better experience for both staff and students. Looking towards the 14-15 academic year the main point of concentration is once again promoting the chat to make sure that this fantastic service is utilised.

## **The library-related Master's degree: a personal experience**

*Rob Challis, Deputy Branch Supervisor, University of Bristol*

I started working as a library assistant at the University of Bristol in February 2000, shortly after completing my first Master's degree in History. Since then, I've spent fourteen years working for the university's Library Services. Despite the potential career benefits that it offered, however, I didn't seriously consider pursuing a library-related postgraduate degree until last year.

There were a number of reasons for this. I'd originally taken up library work out of necessity – having failed to find a suitable job elsewhere – and was disinclined to think of it as a “career”. Furthermore, my qualified colleagues had often found their courses difficult to complete around a full-time job, and – in some cases – rather boring.

Most significantly, though, I really enjoyed my “unqualified” roles. In particular, I liked the daily personal contact with library users. For most of my time in Library Services, I viewed the subject librarian role – which seemed like the obvious goal for someone who had obtained the qualification – as very much a backroom job, with relatively little public interaction. Since I was already gaining a lot of experience and expertise from a front-facing job that I enjoyed, why would I spend time and money on an additional degree?

It was my involvement in two projects at the Wills Memorial Library – where I now work as a supervisor – that led me to reconsider. The first was a refurbishment of the library, to the tune of £3.1 million, between 2012 and 2013. The supervisory team felt that it was important for us to be involved in planning from the outset, to ensure that the results would meet our functional requirements, as well as providing a showcase space for the university. Through attending planning meetings, and being onsite while the work was progressing, we found ourselves communicating – and sometimes negotiating – with a wide range of people from within and without the university; not only the library's senior management team, but also building managers, the Estates Office, the Finance Office, architects and external building contractors.

The second project was the introduction of RFID self-service into the newly refurbished space. Having taken part in previous projects relating to the university's library management software, I was able to take a leading role in developing our requirements and test plan prior to the installation of the self-service machines; I then worked closely with the project manager and the library systems team during installation to ensure that everything worked out as planned – and to consider alternatives when it didn't.

Being able to contribute to these projects, from the early stages to the point where they were being used on a day-to-day basis, was not only personally satisfying; it also gave me a new outlook on how the library fits into the network of relationships that comprises the university as a whole – and the variety of forms that higher-level library work can take. A career in libraries began to seem more appealing. I was fortunate to get a lot of support from my line manager, who encouraged me to think about how I could build on my recent experiences in order to develop my career.

I made the decision to undertake a professional degree at a time when support for career development at the university was changing. Previously, Library Services had provided sponsorship for up to three members of staff per year to begin a CILIP-approved course. This included paying 50% of course fees, and allowing time away from work to attend teaching; relatively few conditions were attached.

One outcome of this, as I understand it, was that most of the library's training budget was used to fund Master's degrees. As more and more members of staff took advantage of the offer, however, there was no commensurate rise in the availability of librarian-grade roles within the library. Several qualified members of staff found themselves working in library-assistant-level roles long after graduating from their courses; a few left the university altogether, to take up more suitable roles elsewhere.

Consequently, the level of support was changed in the year when I applied: the university sponsored only one member of staff, with an additional condition that the fee contribution must be repaid if the individual leaves the institution within two years of graduating. This seems like a pragmatic approach, which also allows higher levels of funding for other forms of staff development.

Happily, my sponsorship application was accepted – so I now had to decide which programme to follow. As a resident of Bristol, the MSc in Information Management at the University of the West of England (UWE) had an obvious practical appeal: the campus is only a few miles away from where I work and live. In recent years, however, several of my colleagues have followed distance-learning courses – such as the MA at Aberystwyth or the MSc at Robert Gordon University in Aberdeen – and given very positive feedback about their experiences.

My decision to start the course at UWE was not simply due to its geographical proximity, therefore. I was also keen to follow a course that I would be required to attend in person. Partly, this is because I feel that the benefits of regular face-to-face discussions cannot always be replicated via online discussion boards and chat; the very act of restructuring one's thoughts into written form can act as a barrier to spontaneity and full engagement.

Primarily, though, I wanted to improve my oral presentation skills. Despite my earlier impressions of the subject librarian role, it is now clear that communicating to different groups of library users and so-called "stakeholders" is an important consideration at all levels of academic library work – whether in an information literacy session for undergraduates or to demonstrate the value of the library to senior management and departmental staff. Regular oral presentations, individually or as a group, are a form of assessment at UWE in a way that would not be possible on a distance course.

I enrolled at UWE in September 2013; at the time of writing I am halfway through the taught element of the programme. Significantly, I am studying for an MSc in Information Management; the word "library" has been dropped from the title altogether, which has had an immediate effect on the type of people taking the course. In addition to academic and public library professionals, the class includes people working in online professional

publishing, archivists, a knowledge manager in the MOD. It's been really interesting to get a fresh perspective on principles and processes from outside the library realm.

While some elements of the course have undoubtedly been more interesting and relevant than others, there have been immediate practical benefits for my current role at the University of Bristol. A module on personal and organisational management, for example, has been extremely useful to me as a line manager and supervisor. A module on information and digital literacy, meanwhile, encouraged me to think more about widely about what our users want and need from the library, and some of the barriers that we might be creating for them in the way we operate and present ourselves.

Most importantly, though, I feel that it is opening my eyes to the things that I wasn't able to learn about libraries from personal experience. The form and function of the academic library is currently up for negotiation – Library Services at the University of Bristol is even now in the process of being completely restructured – and thanks to my work on the MSc, I'm in a much better position to understand how they might look in a few years' time. As such, the course is not simply teaching me what librarians and information managers do – but also what they could do, and what they are likely to be doing in the future.

## **Kent Surrey and Sussex NHS Library staff mentoring programme**

*David Copsey, Professional Advisor, formerly Head of Library and Knowledge Services, Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust*

### **Introduction**

In February 2006, a mentoring programme for NHS Library Staff in Kent Surrey and Sussex (KSS) was launched. The programme was developed by the KSS libraries staff development group in conjunction with Caroline Doherty, an external consultant, and is managed by senior members of the KSS Library and Knowledge Services Team. The benefits of having a mentoring programme were identified by Louise Goswami, the KSS Head of Library and Knowledge Services Development, who had significant previous experience of mentoring programmes in her previous roles outside of the NHS environment.

### **The KSS mentoring model**

Developmental mentoring is the model used on this programme and the preferred definition is a broad one: 'Personal support in the context of continuing education and professional development' - R Freeman, *Mentoring in General Practice* (1998).

This has been interpreted and developed by mentors and mentees during the course of their work with each other, adapting the broad principles to fit the needs of each working relationship.

### **Development of the Mentoring Programme**

Interested potential mentors and mentees were invited to attend structured training sessions before agreeing to participate and start their mentoring relationship.

Many of the KSS mentors attended a CILIP Framework of Qualifications training day in July 2006 to gain accreditation to become CILIP mentors for the newly revised levels of registration and revalidation.

In 2007, Carla Wearing, now Knowledge Services Manager, East Kent NHS University Hospitals Trust, synthesised the content of these training sessions and their allied resources into a self directed learning programme, and then, in 2008/9, to full e-learning packs, accessed through the KSS moodle.

These packs were produced to introduce the key mentoring concepts through a series of discussion topics. Working through the packs gives the opportunity to confirm understanding through interactive exercises with feedback. Each learning topic and the whole programme can be followed at a time and pace to suit the individual.

Following a written evaluation questionnaire and telephone discussions with mentors and mentees, the programme was updated in July 2013, again in partnership with Caroline Doherty. A further training day was held, both for experienced and potential new mentors. The revisions included increased emphasis on active listening; intervention styles; links with other one to situations notably appraisals, supervision, and executive coaching; models of helping; moving from expert to enabler; and assessing strengths and areas for development.

### **Areas for structured support**

The mentoring programme is offered to any employee who feels that they may benefit from it,

and also to new employees as a matter of course. However, participation in the programme is voluntary. The mentoring programme therefore aims to provide structured support for library staff as they:

- Initiate change within their library services
- Take on new roles and responsibilities - such as a first management role
- Develop or revalidate their professional qualifications
- Plan their careers and continuing professional development - including the CILIP Framework of Qualifications
- Return to work following a career break
- Plan towards retirement

## **Content**

The mentoring programme will:

- Recruit, train and support a group of library managers, and other library staff, as mentors across the region
- Recruit and brief potential mentees
- Match mentors and mentees
- Provide an ongoing support and problem solving service to mentors and mentees
- Monitor and evaluate the programme outcomes
- Offer mentee and mentors training via a self-directed learning module

## **Management of the Mentoring Programme**

New mentees complete their profile form, identifying the outcomes they want from the mentoring relationship; availability for meetings and maximum travel distance. The programme administrator compares the content of the mentee profile with the pool of mentor profiles and e-mails the profiles of two or three potential mentors. The new mentee can then make an informed choice of mentor. The administrator sends the mentee profile to their chosen mentor and invites the mentee to make initial contact to arrange a date and venue for the first meeting.

The matching process in 2014 gives greater weight to the practicalities of mentor and mentee being able to meet at convenient times, taking account of other commitments; relevant experience and knowledge; distance; and time available. The former reliance placed on matching mentor and mentee learning styles from the Honey and Mumford model has declined, although the analysis of the questionnaire answers remains an important tool for self awareness for programme members.

The majority of mentors and mentees work together for a period of between six months and two years. Face to face meetings are held at regular intervals to suit the needs of both parties, typically about every two months

A fundamental principle of the programme is that the content of mentoring meetings and discussions remains confidential between mentor and mentee, unless both choose to share outcomes or selected issues more widely.

If either the mentor or the mentee feels that the relationship is not working, the partnership can be terminated, and a new mentor will be identified.

## Resources

An extensive range of resources has been developed for the programme, including:

- Mentoring programme handbook
- Mentor and mentee profile and application forms
- E- learning packs including activities, for mentors and mentees
- Exit questionnaires for both mentors and mentees
- An ethical code of practice
- Steps to getting a mentor
- Working agreement for negotiation and signature from both mentor and mentee
- A reading list, most titles are available for loan from the KSS professional collection. This comprises a range of books, journals and multimedia resources about library and knowledge services work
- The links between the KSS programme and the CILIP mentoring process

An introduction to the programme is available to all KSS staff, <http://www.ksslibraries.nhs.uk/groups/mentoring/>.

All the e-learning resources and programme tools are included in the moodle content accessible to mentors and mentees after logging on.

## Participation and take up

Since the start of the programme, the most significant area where support has been requested has been with candidates seeking a mentor for CILIP Chartership. The other areas of work where mentor support has been requested are:

- Career development
- CILIP Certification
- New management roles
- Personal support outside the organisation
- Support to undertake a course
- Revalidation
- Maximizing their contribution

When the mentor programme was established, there were around 100 KSS library staff in post. This number has reduced in recent years, and the level of demand for mentoring has fallen. NHS library staff turnover is low and there is a limited recruitment of new staff. Both these factors are likely to have contributed to this fall. As budgets become tighter, it is also more difficult for staff to justify the time and travel costs for mentoring work. A mentee is never matched with a mentor from the same trust to avoid any conflicts of interest. The 2013 revision set up a system for telephone mentoring to reduce the requirement for travelling to mentor/mentee meetings. There is a current pool of nine trained mentors; many, but not all of these, are also CILIP mentors.

## Future plans

Although the programme was developed for NHS library staff, many of the KSS mentors have worked with library staff from other sectors, particularly, but not exclusively, with ILIP registration candidates. Since the summer of 2014, all new CILIP registered learners at any level now have

to complete an online portfolio. CILIP mentors must update their training to include the online portfolio system, before they can begin work with new candidates. KSS mentor interest in working with NHS staff outside library work is currently being explored to facilitate sharing of expertise, knowledge and good practice, as is the use of mentors for KSS library staff from outside the library sector.

### **Further information**

The programme is currently administered and managed by David Copsey, [copseydavid@gmail.com](mailto:copseydavid@gmail.com). Please contact him for more information.

PROOF

## **Staff Development in Library Services, City University London**

*Chris Thorpe, Samantha Halford and Verena Price, Library Services, City University London*

Library Services' Staff Development Group (SDG) at City University London has been working on several initiatives over the last few years. We aim to foster communication and support each other across multi-site service by promoting, advertising and then sharing our learning from development opportunities. Our approach has been to positively engage our colleagues in development activities, without pushing or making any element compulsory. We feel that encouraging colleagues to share their experiences, whether from a large external conference or working on a small internal project, is as important as the development activity itself because sharing maximises all of our learning and increases our collegiality.

We have used four tools and schemes to help us to achieve this aim. We have a staff development blog, *Developing@City*, <http://blogs.city.ac.uk/developingatcity/> where we encourage our colleagues to share posts ranging from quick descriptions of interesting courses or visits, to much longer reports from conferences. We also use a private Moodle module for library staff to draw together Staff Development documentation. We set up a very successful recurring event, the *Conferences and Activity Feedback and Sharing Session*, where staff members gather to give and hear short presentations about their colleagues' recent experiences. Finally, we set up a scheme to provide support to staff at all levels who wish to pursue a professional qualification, whether from CILIP or another relevant opportunity.

### **Developing@City**

Launched in February 2013, the *Developing@City* blog was designed as a mechanism for staff to write-up and share their experiences of attending training sessions, courses and visits, and as a first step to becoming professionally published. We also use it to draw attention to staff development initiatives. It uses an in-house iteration of WordPress, Edublogs. SDG members retain primary editing and posting rights, though contributors create their own posts, which are then published by the editors. The SDG created a basic category and tagging system for posts and allocated one month per person to manage and encourage contributions.

Articles are encouraged from all staff, with support and tutorials available as part of the blogging/development process. Small prizes such as £10 Amazon vouchers were initially offered for 'blog post of the month' as voted for by SDG members. Ease of use, quick setup and the dynamic nature of blogs (the ability to add photos, links, run RSS feeds etc.) were seen as the key advantages of the format, with the opportunity to derive meaningful feedback and express personal viewpoints in an open context identified as the principle benefits of the initiative. It also has the useful side-effect of allowing staff to learn some web skills by writing their own posts and using the WYSIWYG editor to format their posts and add images. A small contingent of regular contributors, maintaining impetus, and institutional data regulations have proven the principle drawbacks, although the blog remains one of our more popular forms of staff engagement.

## **Moodle**

We created a secure, central resource for staff to access information and material related to CPD, training and development activities using Moodle. It is also a repository for information related to the SDG itself, such as our terms of reference. We opted to use Moodle primarily as it is the University's VLE, and many students, particularly outside of core departmental hours, seek advice from Library staff on navigating course modules and submitting coursework on the platform. Therefore, as well as directing colleagues towards information relevant to them (on CILIP Chartership, mentoring, or our Green Impact scheme, for example) we created a meaningful opportunity for staff to familiarise themselves with a key student resource.

The Moodle module has perhaps proven the least effective of our initiatives so far. Although a team initiative, in practice one colleague took on the bulk of the creative and administrative tasks: although this restrictive approach ensured a unified feel to the final product, and our colleague did a fantastic job (especially given her part-time hours) this approach became burdensome and time-consuming, and following her departure left a process and knowledge gap. We also concluded early on that we had created a useful but static resource, rather than a dynamic learning environment; and we will be looking to address this issue as we move forwards. Our Moodle module is also not integrated with other university systems, meaning that there is no automatic sign-up for new members of staff, and this has proven a drawback in terms of affording immediacy and relevance for new starters.

## **Conferences and Activity Feedback and Sharing Session**

The Conferences and Activity Feedback and Sharing Session has become a flagship event, providing an opportunity for staff to exchange a variety of CPD experiences in a relaxed, informal setting. SDG members encourage colleagues to offer 10 minute presentations, in a format/style of their choosing, and this is often followed by comment and discussion with fellow attendees. Originally conceived with the aim to host at least one session per term, a key focus of these sessions was an attempt to introduce our graduate trainees and other new staff to the wider library services environment and sector dynamic.

The main benefits of these sessions have been staff engagement, and the opportunity for staff working in a variety of diverse roles to increase their confidence and experience of preparing and delivering presentations in a supportive, enthusiastic, non-pressurized environment. SDG have also made a conscious effort to create an atmosphere of 'fun' and diversion outside of the everyday work context, for instance providing tea & cake and booking a conference suite outside the library. The sessions also creates an opportunity to encourage further engagement, such as adding write-ups for the SDG blog or staff newsletter. The SDG have tried to schedule the sessions in the most accommodating way possible but timing has been problematic due to the need to balance participation with staffing service desks and diary commitments.

## **Qualifications Support Scheme**

One of the things we have been keen to promote is the support available for staff to pursue professional qualifications whilst working at City University. With the Library

Executive committed to allocating funding for this purpose for up to two members of staff per annum, the SDG was tasked with creating a formalised application process and promotion strategy, with a key focus on encouraging staff to develop their own potential, including (and perhaps more relevantly) where the cost may be prohibitive, especially for colleagues at an earlier stage in their career. Clearly defined eligibility criteria were established: applicants must have completed their probation period, be willing to commit to employment at City for both the duration of their course and a six month period following completion.

SDG have placed emphasis on the fact that this funding should not be restricted to just 'library' type training (i.e. CILIP Chartership), but rather that development courses offered by other information specialists, or in more general areas such as customer service or presentation skills, are of equal import and value. Supporting staff to be proactive in managing their own training is empowering, and this scheme demonstrates commitment of the service to supporting staff development; and those who benefit are in a better position to then feedback their knowledge and experience, further enhancing the service which can be provided for our patrons. Several colleagues have taken advantage of the scheme, but one crucial problem, as with many of our initiatives, has been perception and buy-in: colleagues are often wary or reluctant to make a substantial time commitment for development activities at the expense of day-to-day workloads, and a formalised course can seem even more problematic in this regard.

### **Future priorities**

The SDG is looking forwards to continuing to improve our existing support for colleagues, for instance by improving awareness of the Moodle module. We would also like to reinvigorate successful staff development projects from previous years - for instance, recontextualising a 23 Things course first run in 2011, as well as pursuing new projects. In the coming session the group will be refreshing our existing Graduate Trainee programme by expanding its scope to include events for all staff, and using it to enhance our Moodle content. A new Library Leadership Team and some recently recruited new members joining the group will certainly help sustain our direction and purpose.

## **Volunteers ZSL Library: lessons learned, and why we now can't do without them**

*Emma Milnes, Assistant Librarian Zoological Society of London*

### **Background**

Founded in 1826, the Zoological Society of London (ZSL) is an international scientific, conservation and educational charity, whose mission is to promote and achieve the worldwide conservation of animals and their habitats. ZSL Library has an important role in supporting ZSL as a whole through communicating information about, and inspiring an interest in animals, habitats and their conservation. It contains a unique collection on all aspects of zoology and animal conservation, including books dating from the sixteenth century to the present day.

ZSL overall has over 200 volunteers working across its two sites (Regent's Park, London & Whipsnade, Bedfordshire), performing an array of tasks to support the keepers and researchers in their daily duties. Most of the volunteer roles are situated inside the zoos themselves and can involve anything from educating the public about the animal exhibits to cleaning the displays.

12 of these 200 volunteers give a portion of their time to ZSL's Library, some exclusively volunteer with us. This article hopes to give an overview of the volunteer situation at ZSL Library, including: how the volunteers spend their time; how we train them; and highlight challenges that other libraries might find useful to bear in mind.

### **ZSL & volunteers**

ZSL Library operates with four paid employees: a Librarian (PT), an Archivist (FT), an Assistant Librarian (FT) and a Library Assistant (PT), and between us we manage the day to day running of the Library. However, with c. 500 FTE (UK & overseas), three MSc courses, 100 000 Fellows & Members, members of the public, and various tour groups visiting, we are very fortunate and extremely grateful to the 12 volunteers who dedicate so much time to the Library.

Our volunteers come from all walks of life; some were already volunteering inside the zoo and decided to have a change of scenery, others replied to adverts on the ZSL website, whilst others simply rang the Library to ask if we were in need of assistance. Some of our volunteers are retired, some are in paid employment and some just have some spare time; there is no such thing as a 'typical' volunteer in the ZSL Library.

ZSL's volunteers help with a huge variety of tasks, helping us to get the ball rolling on new projects and ensuring lengthy tasks are completed at a much quicker pace. Outlined below are some of the tasks that our volunteers perform, but this list is not exhaustive, it just gives a flavour of some of their duties:

#### **Conservation roles**

- Three volunteers working on various projects. This has included wrapping older books in Tyvek, re-housing the photographic collection and cleaning books.
- One paper conservator with specialist knowledge on how to repair bindings, tears etc.

#### **Cataloguing**

- Two book cataloguers to assist with converting the card catalogue to the OPAC

(<http://library.zsl.org>) as the final part of the Retrospective Book Cataloguing Project.

- One art cataloguer.

### **Photographic collection**

- One volunteer working on tidying up the metadata of our existing digital images and scanning new ones in.

### **Special collection**

- One volunteer working on transcribing manuscripts of Nepalese animals by Brian Houghton Hodgson.

### **General**

- Three volunteers assisting with general library duties, including light shelving, pricing duplicate books, checking documents for typos.

## **Factors to consider when recruiting or working with volunteers**

Just like any paid staff member, our volunteers need to be managed. Although many of our volunteers have been coming to the Library for some years, and their need for management has become less and less, there are some things that need considering as their needs are different to that of paid staff. Without the motivation of financial reward we have to ensure that we can stimulate the volunteers' interest enough for them to want to come back each week and to perform to the best of their abilities. Outlined below are a few points we have identified as being areas to consider when recruiting volunteers and how to keep them coming back.

### **Be realistic about time frames, and what can be achieved in allotted time**

Although most of our volunteers have dedicated many years to helping the Library, we have on occasion also taken on people that can dedicate just a few weeks to assist us. Short term volunteers can provide fantastic assistance on short term projects, but we would recommend taking people on who can commit on a longer term.

ZSL Library has recruited cataloguing volunteers (MA students mostly) to assist in converting the card catalogue to the OPAC, but unless the volunteer already has a wealth of cataloguing experience behind them, then two weeks simply isn't enough. During those two weeks, a staff member is required to be available to help the volunteer when needed, and then check and correct cataloguing which can be very time consuming. The demand on the staff member lessens each day, but on many occasions it is only the second week that we can benefit from their cataloguing output.

We have learned that it is easier to manage a volunteer once a week over a longer period of time, even if their cataloguing knowledge is limited.

### **Keeping volunteers motivated**

As previously mentioned, most of our volunteers have been with us for many years and so we rarely need to recruit anyone unless a new project arises. So how have we managed to maintain such a loyal team of volunteers all this time? The answer is different for each of our volunteers, but that is probably the main point!

Each of our volunteers has a different reason for wishing to be here, and it is our job to identify those reasons and try to meet them as best we can. Some of our volunteers have an interest in

supporting the ZSL Library generally, and are flexible about the tasks they perform, but are much happier when a social element is involved. With these volunteers we ensure that they work as part of a team, or, if the project does not require team work, then ensuring they don't spend their breaks alone - spending lunch with the volunteers is something that appears to be greatly appreciated.

Then there are other volunteers who are keen to use their existing skills and talents that they have acquired from previous paid employment. In these cases we try and identify tasks that can be tailored to suit their interests. For example, one of our loyal volunteers used to analyse data before retiring and so has a keen eye for detail. He is enthusiastic about checking documents for errors and typos, so is more than happy to oblige when we ask him to check over book lists, new catalogue records, posters.

### **Dealing with mistakes**

If a volunteer has been set a new task, and has been working on it for a couple of weeks, imagine how disheartening it must be for them to discover their hard work is incorrect. For a paid member of staff, this will likely be just one of many duties performed for a couple of hours; but for a volunteer it could be their only task in the Library that week. Furthermore, a couple of hours for a volunteer can easily be spread over a few weeks, making the mistake seem even larger than it really is.

The key is to try and help volunteers to avoid mistakes in the first place. If a volunteer is only in once a week then it is understandable that they may not remember a set of instructions seven days later. Appreciating that volunteers are not always information professionals and have lives outside of the library they volunteer in may seem obvious, but it can easily get forgotten. On one occasion we asked a volunteer to re-locate some books for us but he didn't consider growth-space on the shelves. To information professionals this seems obvious, but there is no reason why growth-space should have been anticipated if it's not explicitly asked for. Paid staff members need to recognise their own errors of judgement – “there's no such thing as a bad student!”

Overall, we have found that close contact with volunteers each week, asking how they are progressing, re-iterating key points, and if necessary writing down some of the steps involved has helped minimise errors. And if a mistake does happen, which it will, try not to escalate it in to a big issue – the volunteer is probably already doing that enough by themselves.

### **Conclusions**

Working with volunteers involves taking more factors in to account than paid staff, but ultimately, at ZSL at least, these extra considerations have certainly been worth it and the benefits are beyond measureable. We have had numerous conservation projects completed; we have a specialist working on transcribing our manuscripts; books that are not valuable enough to be sent away for conservation, but important none-the-less have been repaired; 'spare time' has been created by our volunteers which has enabled paid staff to work on other projects that could otherwise be postponed indefinitely.

For anyone considering recruiting volunteers it is something that requires serious thought, but if you find the right people, with the right enthusiasm for the role, then you could have a very rewarding future ahead of you.

## University of Exeter Research Data Management and Open Access Training for Staff

Gareth Cole and Jill Evans, University of Exeter

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### Introduction

As part of the Jisc Managing Research Data Programme (Jisc, 2014) the University of Exeter received funding for the 18-month Open Exeter project starting in October 2011 (UoE, 2014). Building on an internal project, Open Exeter's aim was to create an environment in which Exeter was equipped to 'act open' with its research data in order to facilitate collaboration and increase the global impact of research. The project brought together Library, IT and Research Office staff. We have continued to build on the work of the project since it ended in 2013.

Although infrastructure capability is an important element of any research data management (RDM) service, equally, if not more, important is increasing the knowledge and understanding of the institution's staff. Crucially, it was not only academic staff with whom the project team needed to engage: Professional Services (PS) staff (Research Office, Library, IT Services and Academic College Research Support teams) were also important target audiences.

Throughout the lifetime of the project the Open Exeter team conducted a variety of training sessions aimed at the different categories of staff. This article will briefly outline the different types of training offered at Exeter for RDM and open access.

### Identifying Training Needs and Formats

With a finite budget and resources, both financial and staffing, it is important to identify where training efforts should be focussed. One of the early successes of the Open Exeter Project was our, adapted, Data Asset Framework (DAF) survey (DCC, 2009). The full results are available to download from Open Research Exeter (ORE), Exeter's Institutional Repository (UoE, 2012). We made a decision that we would not run a full DAF survey but focus on using it for our requirements analysis. The final section of the survey asked questions on "Research Data Management Training and Requirements". Only 11% of our respondents (31 out of 284) had received any such training. We also asked two further follow up questions "Would you like to receive data management training in the following areas?" (Q31) and "What format would you like data management training to take?" (Q32). The results influenced our future direction.

The results of Q31 are in Table one below - respondents could select more than one option. At the time of running the survey, sessions on Bibliographic Software were the only training offered by Exeter.

Table 1: RDM areas in which Exeter researchers would like to receive training (2012)

Training Area	Number
How to Develop a Data Management Plan	144
Organising Research Material	123
File and Document Management	112
Legal and Ethical Issues	115
Bibliographic Software	83
Institutional Repositories and Open Access	121

Sessions on any of these topics could be taught by suitably trained information professionals. However, at a survey conducted at the DARTS3 conference in June 2012, it was clear that the librarians present would not feel comfortable teaching a number of the topics. We shared these results in blog posts (UoE, 2012 (2, 3)). Our findings support those of the RLUK Re-Skilling for Research report (Auckland, 2012 p.43). These results are now two years old and it would be interesting to run a similar survey today to see if the results have changed much.

The survey results also showed that when asked whether they preferred Online Training Materials, Presentations and Talks, Training Workshops, or 1:1 training (Q32) researchers overwhelmingly favoured Training Workshops and Online Training Materials.

Although a small number of PS staff completed the DAF survey, most of our requirements analysis for this category was conducted in meetings and informal discussions. We discovered it is easier to meet with PS staff who have distinct roles, for example Subject Librarians, than it is to meet with a representative selection of “Researchers”.

Our analysis of the DAF survey and our meetings with PS staff meant that we developed a broad range of training and guidance materials.

### **Training and Guidance for Library Staff (see also Guy, 2013)**

As the Open Exeter project was funded for only 18 months, we needed to develop the skills of fellow PS staff in order to continue to provide an effective service to researchers. In addition, as the Open Exeter project developed, open access to publications became increasingly important and so we needed to develop Library colleagues in this area as well.

We have written elsewhere about our “23(+1) things for RDM” (Lloyd-Jones, 2013) but this was an important element in developing the skills of our Subject Librarian team so should be highlighted again. 23(+1) also demonstrates one of the key aspects of our training programmes: guided self-learning.

There are two members of the Library dedicated to open access and data curation at Exeter. Both of these are based at the University of Exeter’s main campus in Exeter. The University also has libraries based at a second campus in Exeter, St Luke’s and at our Cornwall Campus in Penryn. As such, although we are usually available to offer advice and answer questions we are not always able to be available in person. We have provided as much information as possible in guides (available internally for Library staff, for example, a

“Quick Guide to Cataloguing in ORE” which provides a brief guide on what is required for each metadata field) and on our websites in the form of FAQs and dedicated open access and RDM web pages. These materials are supplemented by regular meetings between the Subject Librarians and open access and data curation staff where updates can be discussed.

As the Subject Librarians each support specific subjects they have become expert in the requirements for their disciplines. A major advantage of self-guided learning is that staff can develop at their own pace and in ways which advantage them rather than in a set format, at a pace set by a presenter.

In addition to specific training and guidance for fellow Library staff we also invite the Subject Librarians to some of the training sessions we provide for researchers. In this way they get an idea of the information we are providing to researchers and are able to increase, or strengthen, their knowledge at the same time.

### **Training and Guidance for Research Staff**

Where possible we try to integrate our sessions with existing training programmes (Guy, 2013 (2)). One of the advantages of this is that researchers do not have to attend additional sessions. For example, we present a short segment on data management and open access in a session for new doctoral supervisors: *Doctoral Supervision: An Exploratory Workshop*. In embedding in existing sessions, we highlight data management and open access as being an integral part of the research environment rather than trying to argue it is an add on to the existing environment.

Integrating with existing programmes or workshops can also help to save time and effort. It means that we do not have to carry out our own marketing or promotional work for the session because this is already done by programme co-ordinators as part of the wider programme.

In addition to regular training sessions, Exeter also holds a number of annual events aimed at researchers. One of these is Research Focus Week. Presenting at high profile events not only enables us to reach a large audience, but also helps to promote the services and assistance we offer.

We have also created dedicated one-stop-shop websites for open access and RDM. These enable researchers and PS staff to answer some of the questions they may have without needing to contact us. These websites include how-to guides, for example, funder specific guides on how to write a data management plan (UoE, 2014 (2)). Again, the aim is to provide as much information as possible so that researchers (in this instance) are able to develop the skills they need to write a successful data management plan.

### **Training for Research Students**

We developed a number of training sessions for the Researcher Development Programme at Exeter (UoE 2014 (3)). These sessions are aimed at postgraduate research (PGR) students and Early Career Researchers. Sessions include: How to Write a Data Management Plan and How to Organise your Files and Folders.

## Final Thoughts

RDM is not something to be feared; individuals do not need an in depth knowledge of IT to deliver successful training in RDM – neither of the two core open access and data curation staff at Exeter have an IT background. Core elements of RDM, for example, organising files, understanding copyright, and archiving, are skills which most information professionals already have. New skills do not have to be learnt, they just have to be delivered in a different context. At Exeter, through a combination of choice and necessity, we have developed a range of materials which enable staff to develop their own skills in addition to providing training sessions.

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## See it, try it, show it: digital literacy development with a difference

*Lucy Keating, Arts, Humanities and Education liaison librarian, Newcastle University.*

In June this year, Newcastle University Library tried a new approach to staff development, with a multi-day programme: #seeitryitshowit. This digital literacy event aimed to encourage library staff to explore and discuss new tools and technologies in an informal and participatory way.

Traditionally, staff development in the Library has been delivered via various methods, including external training providers, internal sessions, and self-paced activities. Although there are occasional 'all-staff' update meetings, it was a new departure for us to run a staff development event across all library teams.

The impetus for #seeitryitshowit came from a number of directions. Firstly, the Library's new Social Media Forum had been exchanging experiences of social media tools, and wanted to encourage more colleagues to join in. Secondly, a new wave of more creative professional events, such as the i2c2 conference<sup>1</sup> had caught colleagues' attention. Finally, Newcastle University had organised a new event, NU Go Digital<sup>2</sup> in Autumn 2013, to promote digital literacy among all staff, which many library staff had enjoyed. Thus, there was general enthusiasm about the subject matter and format, so we just needed to deliver it...

### Organisation and planning

We set up a small team of four in April 2014 to plan and organise the event for early June. The timescale was limited, but from the outset, we were eager to embrace the experimental ethos and not get too bothered if things were a little 'rough round the edges'.

Our first priority was to put the programme together. We wanted to encourage experimentation and exploration with digital tools, and get colleagues sharing ideas and showcasing experiences. We were keen to involve people from other sections of the University, and received an enthusiastic response from teams involved in e-learning, IT support and social media, all of whom contributed popular sessions for us. Initially, it was more difficult enticing volunteers from the Library to co-ordinate sessions (understandably, given that this was a brand new venture), but as the weeks went by, we managed it, with only mild arm-twisting required! The schedule<sup>3</sup> rapidly came together, encompassing topics ranging from Apps to Vine, via archives, MOOCs and much more.

Like all academic libraries, the main logistical hurdle we faced in organising an 'all staff' event is that we are a 24/7 operation, with colleagues on three sites and with different working hours. Thus, to try and incorporate flexibility into the programme, we scheduled

<sup>1</sup> <http://i2c2conference.org/>

<sup>2</sup> <http://blogs.ncl.ac.uk/nugodigital>

<sup>3</sup> The schedule is available here: <http://libguides.ncl.ac.uk/seeitryitshowitbook>

it over different days and times to cater for people's varying timetables, making some sessions bookable and others drop-in.

We created an event web site at <http://libguides.ncl.ac.uk/seeittryitshowit> using our libguides platform. This served several purposes: promotion; hosting the schedule and booking form; and acting as a repository for supporting resources and activities. To help us gauge demand, the booking form included an option to specify if someone wanted to attend an event but couldn't because of scheduling.

## Publicity

Organising publicity for the event was relatively straightforward, in that the target audience was easy to identify and more diligent than most at reading emails!

However, as this was a brand new venture, we also needed to make a concerted effort to explain the concept to colleagues. We also wanted to encourage as many people as possible to contribute, and debunk any idea that digital skills are 'just for the IT team'.

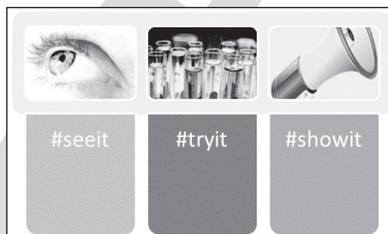


Figure 1 The event logo

We sent regular emails to colleagues, spoke to many individually, and produced flyers and posters. We also set up a PC and plasma screen dedicated to the event in the Library staff room.

## Participation

#seeittryitshowit took place for two hours on each day from Monday 9th – Wednesday 11th June. We had over **70** bookings for the bookable slots, and another **30** or so people attended the drop-ins, which meant that well over half of colleagues took part (with more using the online activities), even though participation was entirely voluntary. The event web site received over **1,300** hits during the programme. Bookings came from colleagues in almost every section of the Library, and performing a wide range of roles.

## Feedback

Informal feedback at the event was very positive, but we also wanted to get more in-depth feedback, as we saw the event as something of a test bed. We received 31 responses to our feedback survey, with highlights including:

- 90% of respondents gave #seeittryitshowit the top two overall ratings (the other 10% said they couldn't rate it as they hadn't attended). A selection of comments is included in the speech bubbles.
- 45% said they found the web site very useful, and 35% quite useful (the rest hadn't visited it).

*Really great to see and hear what other library staff are doing, and feel part of a wider team.*

- **Two thirds** of respondents said they would have liked to have attended more sessions, but couldn't due to time constraints.

We also asked respondents to highlight the sessions they found particularly useful or enjoyable, and this drew particular enthusiasm for workshops on MOOCs, the digital tools drop-in and two Special Collections sessions.

*I really hope there are more events like this, as they allow for group collaboration and promote curiosity.*

### Positive points

We feel the event was very well-received, achieving all its aims with varying degrees of success. The key plus points for us were as follows:

- Colleagues from many different roles and sections in the Library took part.
- It was cheap to deliver, with minimal printing and catering costs, and relatively straightforward to organise, despite the tight timescale.
- It achieved its key aim of helping to raise awareness of tools and technologies, with many people identifying specific tools they have discovered and/or will investigate further. Colleagues are also being encouraged to use the event's resources to help with their annual Performance and Development Review.
- It enabled us to work with colleagues from other sections of the University, and build relationships which could bring many mutual benefits in the future.
- It has the potential to support many of the Library's new strategic objectives, particularly relating to staff development, and the services and guidance we offer our customers.
- It has given us a good basis for a future event of this type. Almost all survey respondents said they would definitely attend in future, and many expressed interest in delivering a session and/or contributing online resources.

*Very informal atmosphere which worked very well indeed.*

*I really enjoyed it, thought it was well-organised, and loved the marketing.*

### Things to work on

Unsurprisingly, as the event was quite experimental in nature, there were also aspects which we would need to work on for a future event.

- Library colleagues were generally more interested in attending than (co-)delivering a workshop. Therefore, we need to find better ways of encouraging people to share their good ideas and best practice, so that it becomes truly interactive. Nonetheless, it was pleasing to see that colleagues who definitely wouldn't want to deliver a formal presentation, contributed enthusiastically in other ways, such as leading a drop-in slot, or developing online resources for the web site.
- We would like to create more of a 'big event' atmosphere with more planning time in the future, perhaps incorporating stalls, freebies, a social event, and a wow factor (a 3-D printer had dazzled attendees at the earlier University Go Digital event!). However, we would also be anxious not to lose the informal ethos, as we

felt the tight timescale did help spark creativity and spontaneity.

- Logistical issues will always be a challenge, but can be overcome. Feedback showed that many colleagues would have liked slots to have been repeated, and there was also some interest in remote delivery. Participation was on a voluntary basis, and thus often relied on goodwill in terms of covering duties, but we would want to plan this in a more strategic way in future.

## Next steps

The Library's senior management and staff development teams have given an enthusiastic go-ahead for a future event of this type, which we hope will be bigger and better and continue to nurture our culture of innovation and collaboration.

*I thought the event was a great idea, and it was something different to do which brought colleagues together in a friendly learning environment.*

The concentrated impact of the three day programme worked well, with the mix of online and face-to-face activities creating a positive symbiotic relationship.

However, we would like to investigate ways of embedding the online activities over a longer period, in similar fashion to the popular *23 Things*<sup>4</sup> training. We would also look at examples from elsewhere, such as Imperial College London's *Learning 2.0* (Day and Phillips, 2014) and Northampton University Library and Learning Services annual conference<sup>5</sup> as well as online digital literacy resources such as those from the Jisc Design Studio<sup>6</sup>.

For any other libraries considering such an event, we would definitely encourage you to do it, but don't get too bogged down in the fine tuning. Embrace the ethos of social media and be prepared to experiment and make mistakes. Library staff may sometimes be characterised as precise perfectionists, so this is a chance to be a little less orderly!

## Reference

Day, Andrew and Phillips, Debbie (2014) 'Learning 2.0: making time for staff to explore web tools.' *CILIP Update*, May, pp. 44-45.

<sup>4</sup> <http://cpd23.blogspot.co.uk/>

<sup>5</sup> <http://mypad.northampton.ac.uk/llsconferences/>

<sup>6</sup> <http://jiscdesignstudio.pbworks.com/w/page/48863650/DL%20staff%20development%20materials>

## Accessible libraries – strategic practice.

Alistair McNaught *Jisc TechDis*

In the previous issue, Alistair McNaught from the Jisc TechDis service explored the role of pragmatic policies in helping libraries to be more accessible to the estimated 10% + users with disabilities. In this issue we focus on practice - specific **audits** of your accessibility and suggestions of positive **actions** to tip the balance to improved accessibility. Please note that the focus of this article is on technology related practices in line with the remit of Jisc TechDis. Non-technology practices (like extended loan periods) are also important but not covered here.

### Auditing your influences

To make a practical difference you need to be aware of how your skills and influences can make a difference to disabled learners. If you are a library and learning resources professional then...

- the policies you influence determine accessibility - for example procurement, hardware and software provision and effective communication strategies.
- your knowledge of content and media can influence reading lists and help teaching staff to provide a more flexible and accessible range of supporting resources.
- your contacts with suppliers enables you to obtain digital versions of textbooks directly from publishers for print impaired learners.
- your ability to anticipate the needs of disabled people can make a big difference to their confidence in becoming independent learners and self motivated researchers.

### Auditing your accessibility

#### Checking e-book platforms

Your **e-book/journal platforms** have probably got some inbuilt accessibility features. It may be possible to change the font size or colours or select text so that it can be read by text-to-speech tools or clipboard readers. But is it fair or efficient for the 600 or so print impaired learners in a typical University to have to find out for themselves what the system does before they can work out if it suits their needs? The best solutions (in priority order) are...

1. ensure suppliers provide a plain English accessibility statement that learners can check.
2. library staff to familiarise themselves with the main platforms and provide guidance for the learners – for example the Open University<sup>1</sup> online resource.
3. pay learners to do it for you – for example the University of Bradford library service.

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<sup>1</sup> See <http://www.open.ac.uk/library/help-and-support/databases-accessibility-issues>. Last accessed 27/08/14

## Checking guidance materials

In browsing a wide range of library websites Jisc TechDis has come across guidance for disabled learners demonstrating poor accessibility practice. This has included a guide for dyslexic students consisting of 8 pages of dense text and a guide for visually impaired students provided as an inaccessible multi-column PDF that did not reflow text when magnified. There are excellent free tools that will allow you to create audio guides (using Audacity<sup>2</sup>) or short narrated video guides (using TinyTake<sup>3</sup>, Jing<sup>4</sup> or Screenr<sup>5</sup>) or even short animated gifs (using LICEcap<sup>6</sup>). If you need guidance on creating accessible Word documents or PDFs see the TechDis plain English guides to creating accessible documents<sup>7</sup>. Recommended approaches include

- Check the accessibility of your current guidance materials,
- Identify areas for improvement,
- Explore the opportunities for disabled learners to be involved in creating improved guides.

## Checking your tools

What assistive technology hardware or software is available? How well is it promoted? How well is it used? Check the JISC TechDis “Accessible library” overview<sup>8</sup> to see how your provision matches. Since many software tools that can support disabled learners are free it should be relatively straightforward to make a case for their installation on the network. Recommended approaches include:

- Audit existing tools
- Identify gaps in provision
- Identify gaps in dissemination, marketing or training resources<sup>9</sup>
- Partner with disability support and IT/Network staff to plan for improved provision.

## Checking your services

What percent of your print impaired learners know that the library can request textbooks in digital formats direct from the publisher to support them? How many have had this service? Do you use the Publisher Lookup<sup>10</sup> service to contact publishers and give feedback on their service? Are you linked to Load2Learn<sup>11</sup> so you can search for existing alternative formats or request new ones?

2 See video guide plus download information - [http://www.jisctechdis.ac.uk/techdis/multilinkres/detail/main\\_site/FOSS\\_AudacityIntro](http://www.jisctechdis.ac.uk/techdis/multilinkres/detail/main_site/FOSS_AudacityIntro). Accessed 26/08/2014.

3 Screenshot download from <http://tinytake.com/> - Accessed 26/08/2014.

4 Screenshot download from <http://www.techsmith.com/download/jing/> - Accessed 26/08/2014.

5 Screenshot direct from <https://www.screenr.com/> - Accessed 26/08/2014.

6 Download LICEcap animated gif creator from <http://portableapps.com/node/24263> - Accessed 26/08/2014

7 Accessible documents and presentations - <http://www.jisctechdis.ac.uk/techdis/resources/accessdocpres>

8 Accessible library overview - <http://www.jisctechdis.ac.uk/techdis/keyinitiatives/libraries-accessible> Accessed 26/08/2014

9 Many instruction guides can be found at <http://www.jisctechdis.ac.uk/techdis/resources/fosstechnology>

10 Publisher lookup service - <http://www.jisctechdis.ac.uk/assets/Documents/guidetoaltformat.pdf>

11 Load2Learn – originally a schools service but now with a higher percentage of HEIs than schools signed up - <https://load2learn.org.uk/>

## Practical actions

The consequence of the reflective practices above should suggest some specific areas to address but it would be wrong to give the impression that the accessible library is just about a checklist of technology implementations. Good practice in accessibility is fundamentally about two very human characteristics – empathy and imagination. The best examples always come from places where these qualities have been given free reign – with appropriate technology in the background to support efficiency and independence. So to make the technology affordances meaningful we need to develop understanding, imaginative planning and supportive teams.

## Understanding

A key starting point is to familiarise yourself with the particular access requirements of learners with different disabilities. The User needs<sup>12</sup> section of the Jisc TechDis website has a helpful overview for all the main access needs. Some people find simulations a helpful way of developing awareness – there are good online simulations<sup>13</sup> of vision and hearing difficulties and the WatchWords resource<sup>14</sup> (put together by deaf learners) provides an excellent background in practical tips for working with deaf people.

## Imaginative planning

Priorities will vary for every learning provider depending on current practice and imagination but the following are suggested as generic good practices:

- **Explore** the TechDis Accessible Library guidance<sup>6)</sup>
- **Update** your provision to match reasonable learner expectation<sup>15</sup>.
- **Involve** disabled learners in helping make plans for short and medium timescales
- **Future proof** - stop paying for inaccessible products that disabled learners can't use. Adapt procurement policies to embed accessibility.
- **Join** with others to make a bigger difference more quickly – join the Load2Learn service to make your efforts on alternative textbooks more effective. Join disability focused groups such as CLAUD<sup>16</sup> or the Open Rose group<sup>17</sup>.

## Supportive teams

To effectively embed accessibility in your systems you will need to develop good working relationships with IT/Network managers, curriculum/quality managers and disability support staff. Ensure they know what you are trying to achieve because their support will be important in ensuring accessibility is seamlessly embedded in library practices. And don't forget to get feedback and ideas from disabled learners! Ask them for ideas and suggestions because their ideas will often help you create a better service for everyone... and they might also save you money.

<sup>12</sup> User needs - <http://www.jisctechdis.ac.uk/techdis/userneeds>. Accessed 26/08/2014

<sup>13</sup> Online simulations - <http://www.inclusivedesigntoolkit.com/betterdesign2/simsoftware/simsoftware.html> - Accessed 26/08/2014

<sup>14</sup> WatchWords – teaching deaf learners - <http://watchwords.jisctechdis.ac.uk/> - Accessed 26/08/2014

<sup>15</sup> Reasonable expectation guidance - <http://www.jisctechdis.ac.uk/assets/Documents/transitions-reading-print.pdf> - Accessed 26/08/2014

<sup>16</sup> Creating libraries accessible for users with disabilities (CLAUD) group - <https://wiki.brookes.ac.uk/display/CLAUD/Home> - Accessed 26/08/2014

<sup>17</sup> Open Rose group Twitter page - <https://twitter.com/OpenRoseGroup> - Accessed 26/08/2014

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