

The Northern Collaboration Conference 2016

Collaboration: Delivering Innovation, Engagement and Impact

Thursday 15 September

Catherine Bazela

Thank you to the sponsors, ProQuest and ExLibris, also thank you to the organisers and other stall holders.

The main themes of the event were: use collaboration to deliver innovative practices with stagnating and shrinking budgets; engage with stakeholders to deliver a service which will actively engage. Look at the impact of libraries in terms of what they offer and demonstrate how the services a library provides have an impact, and deliver a successful learning experience. Insight was given into the work taking place across academic libraries to enhance the student experience by working to create new collaborations between the library and its stakeholders; it also highlighted the growing importance of learning analytics being used as evidence to make developments to services.

The key messages from the day were that collaboration needs to happen in order to maintain, improve and develop the services we offer within our institutions; however, we need to remind ourselves why we are doing what we do. If we fail to understand why we are doing what we do, then we will fail to provide a service that will be appealing and engaging to our customers. We need to use data available to us as librarians to look at the changing ways our students interact, and we need to be flexible to accommodate this, and be confident to make changes when something doesn't work.

Keynote address

Richard Watson – author of Digital vs Human

The Future: The Good, The Bad & the Totally Unexpected

A provocative keynote address which looked at the impact of technology on society and social interaction, as well as the stories of human reality in virtual spaces. The talk focused on the negative impact that technology is having on the current and future generations of library user, and society as a whole as a result of digital distancing. The result of new technologies being readily available is the ease of access to information, this will lead to information overload. It was suggested that this is leading to changing reading habits of our students, instead of reading books, chapters or articles completely, students are now skim reading these resources and cherry picking information. The response from universities and other learning institutions is to change learning and teaching policies and practices to suit. The case was made that the library should be a place where people can interact with technology, but also interact with physical materials and their own thoughts.

Parallel Sessions

Head Start – Library-led innovation and collaboration enhancing the student experience

Nadine Sunderland - University of Cumbria

Offered a look at the THE Award winning programme offered at pre-entry students at UG, PG, Distance Learning, and CPD courses. Covers academic writing, information skills and referencing tutorials all in their own subject specific iterations. Collaboration was sought by the library, who worked with academic staff and the IT department to get the programme started and running. Evaluation was key to determine the success of the programme, indicators had been worked into the planning of the programme which allowed the developers to decide what the key aims should be in development. The lessons learnt from the programme are that in order for it to work it will need buy in from the departments and collaborators at all stages, as well as the intended participants. It is hoped that the scheme can be linked to student retention rates at university.

The Digital Magpie: the academic reading patterns of undergraduate students

Roy Vickers, Janet Savage, Shona Forbes – University of Salford

Using learning analytics to determine how undergraduate students interact with information, online and physical spaces. It had been found that students who use the library more tend to do better academically, but with declining book loans the library looked at electronic data to determine if students were reading less and how they were interacting with the information. Data were gathered using reading lists embedded in the VLE and mapped the reading to literacies; once patterns have been identified and analysed it can then be determined best how to support students in their academic career. Some suggestions have arisen from the study, these include:

- Collaboration between FE and HE institutions to develop a library policy that will prepare students for the transition.
- Using reading lists as an annotated bibliography to indicate what the end user should gain from the readings provided.
- A strategy for academics and students to engage with academic reading.
- Tie in with the Strategic Plan.

Closing Keynote

Richard Heseltine – Chair of James Reckitt Library Trust

The Soul of the City: developing a progressive voice for public libraries in the UK

A thought-provoking session to end the day looking at a progressive voice for public libraries in the time of austerity cuts. Looking at the challenges of developing a compelling marketable statement for public libraries by defining what services are needed to fill the mission and do so effectively. In order to define the services needed to make such a statement, we must look at the approach taken by Simon Sinek – Start with Why.

The three main concepts of developing any service are how, what, and why; but we should start with why as it allows us to give meaning and develop our mission. Applying this to academic libraries is quite difficult as most of us know the how and what of what service we develop and offer, we should apply the why when services are in development.

Looking at the why in academic libraries is becoming increasingly important with the growing need for universities to become actively involved in widening participation and community engagement as part of their social and political obligations. This session closed by asking the attendees to think about the why, the how, and the what for academic librarians and libraries, if we as librarians are unable to answer these questions about the services we provide then we will not be able to provide a library service much longer.