Welcome to CLSIG Journal No. 10!

Kim Austin reflects for us Internet Librarian International 2014 and this issue highlights both ILI 2015 and potential funding to attend this made possible by the Briggs-Washington Bursary.

Our team of reviewers have been busy evaluating three new titles on information needs analysis, the impact of 'networks' (online technologies in their broadest sense) on libraries, and on the multi-faceted nature of the roles of corporate information professionals.

Adapting to these new technologies and the ongoing 'internet revolution' is not always welcomed; our Agony Aunt provides some wise advice for those struggling to win colleagues round to the possibilities of these changes.

Would you be prepared to write a contribution for the Journal or suggest future topics for articles? Could you review a book for us? Do you face challenging issues at work which you’d like to share with our Agony Aunt? Please contact the Editorial team below.
Conference Report: Internet Librarian International 2014

Kim Austin

I attended Internet Librarian International for the first time last year and it was also the first time as a representative of CLSIG at a conference. As soon as I arrived it seemed to me to be a very friendly atmosphere and one where there was a real desire to share ideas. The international aspect was also clearly evident, both from looking at the program of speakers, as well as other delegates I happened to meet, either at the CLSIG stand or at various other points around the conference. It’s always interesting to me to find out where people have come from and their experiences.

From what I knew of ILI I did wonder both what I could bring to the conference and what I would be able to take away that was relevant. Though I have worked briefly both in public and academic library settings, the past several years have been spent working in the legal sector. As many of the speakers at ILI seemed to be from public or academic settings my initial impression was that this was who the conference was aimed at. However, my concerns soon disappeared when it became apparent the broad range of professions and sectors that ILI had attracted, both delegates, speakers and sponsors. My only other regular attendance has been to the BIALL annual conference (their stand was located next to our CLSIG stand) and this would influence pre-conceived ideas I had about ILI and what I would draw comparisons with.

The first keynote speaker certainly got my attention as an opening session and as one in which most in the industry can relate I think. Michael Edson of the Smithsonian Institution spoke of the power of the internet and the huge amount that is undiscovered and uncontrolled (which he likened to us as humans gradually learning and understanding the enormity of the universe).
He showed us examples of projects people have created (using social media, building online collections, and more) with a relatively small amount of time and money, which have the potential to then grow and spread. It emphasised the opportunity for creativity and engagement online and for which library and information services can use to great effect.

New to this year’s ILI was ‘X Track’, a series of informal and interactive sessions run in parallel to the main conference programme. A part of this I was able to attend and found particularly interesting was the demonstration of a 3D printer, which had been brought along by staff from Dundee Library Services. This followed an earlier presentation which recounted real world examples of effective use of 3D printing in a library setting. At Dundee for example, group sessions are arranged for people with learning difficulties to enable them to print characters from story books, an activity the speaker said gives them a sense of belonging and purpose, something they may rarely feel. I found this a really interesting idea, and a use of this new technology I hadn’t considered before. Having read several negative reports about 3D printing it was uplifting to hear such a positive and worthy use. The second speaker in this session (currently conducting research in the USA where usage appears more widespread) spoke of medical uses of 3D printing to help with training, as well as printing accessibility items such as tangible maps for visually impaired people. Of course this is a very new (and still fairly expensive) technology, but I left this session thinking of the possibilities for the future.

ILI offered such a selection of sessions for delegates that it seemed sometimes difficult to choose what to attend and it wasn’t always clear from the descriptions provided beforehand what the sessions involved. I also think some of the sessions could have been lengthened to more fully explore what was being presented and discussed. However it seemed timings were controlled very well, enabling ample time for delegates to visit the sponsor showcase. I must also mention the lunch provided (after a morning of intense conference filled activities this was a welcome sight!) as ILI definitely impressed me in this respect - a hot meal and a delicious cake set me up for the afternoon!

ILI 2014 featured several direct connections to CLSIG. Former CLSIG Hon. Secretary Jennifer Summers, who now runs ONEIS, gave an account of managing a project for a university in which the solution was delivered in stages (i.e. every 6 months). This enabled staff to deal with fewer, smaller problems rather than all of them in one go and also let users gradually get used to changes in a new system rather than suddenly be faced with something completely different.

A panel discussion session featuring Arthur Weiss (CLSIG Journal Editorial Board) covered issues on search engines (namely the prevalence and limitations of Google) and how search behaviour has changed. I could relate very easily to one of the issues mentioned in the session, that of users deciding that if something isn’t quickly or easily found on Google then it must not exist, or be important. As Arthur said, the problem isn’t starting with Google; the problem is ending with Google. I found this session to be a good reminder of the need for us as information professionals to promote our value and skills and to consider and change techniques as the technology changes, to maintain the relevance of library services.

The conference experience as a whole was a great chance to be reminded that
there is a diverse range of areas in which to work as an information professional. Overall, throughout the two days I found ILI to be a very friendly, positive and inspiring experience and one I would be keen to repeat.

Kim Austin

Katharine Schopflin, Editor
Price: £59.95, but to CILIP members £47.96
ISBN: 9781856049689

Reviewed by Penny Leach

I was very interested to read this book for several reasons. Most of my own career has been spent in information services in the corporate workplace through decades of intense change. Although there have been a few similar reviews of current practice published recently (see the bibliography below) information professionals are involved in so many activities that the editor is necessarily selective, and it is always interesting to see what are the chosen areas. In this case the editor has gathered together a group of well-respected British and North American contributors, a number of whom (as well as Katharine Schopflin herself) are known to me via professional networks such as CILIP and SLA.

Table of Contents

- The role of the information professional in the corporate workplace
- Managing the corporate intranet
- Internal and external marketing by information professionals
- The hybrid librarian/systems specialist
- Developing corporate taxonomies
- Gaining buy-in for knowledge and information management
- Managing staff and demonstrating value at a time of change
- Managing information services in a global corporation
• Working with suppliers and licensing for e-libraries
• Training end-users in the workplace

Given the range and complexity of potential offerings in corporate information services, it would be impossible for any individual to write with authority on all topics. The contributors here represent several sectors, particularly legal. Inevitably the sharing of their knowledge is presented in different writing styles, with varying levels of philosophical comment, allusiveness, even evangelism. And I did feel that the book could have benefited from some more visualisation and clearer signposting to the practical tips. However, a wealth of expertise is provided, obviously directly from the coalface, and shot through with the enthusiasm and generosity that are marks of the profession. In the end, this particular snapshot of themes and issues adds up to an optimistic picture of the value of information professionals and illustrates that the profession is having a very positive evolution.

Of course in this Handbook there is a concern around survival of the profession and what it offers, and the need to find new ways to justify ourselves will always be there (as it is for the drivers of any corporate cost - we are not unique in finding ourselves in this situation). However, seizing the opportunities arising from technological and social change mean that corporate information professionals have moved a long way from the days of the 1957 Tracy/Hepburn film Desk Set (which even then showed that standing still was not an option). And in spite of the focus on the corporate information professional, much of the content is universal in its applications. The messages that come through apply to information professionals in any sector - be visible; align services to organisational objectives; deliver value by helping the business achieve ROI and manage risk. We might not be able to see in to the future but having the right mindset - proactive, flexible, creative, strategic - will position the industry well.

It would be interesting to see another volume covering more activities - competitive intelligence, due diligence, primary market research come to mind, as well as a more in-depth review of outsourcing and off shoring which has been so seismic in the marketplace, and the challenges around content management. It would be good too to expand the number of views from business partners and perhaps include the perspectives of service users and other stakeholders.

One caveat - the book’s price puts this out of the range of most personal pockets which is a shame as I think it is relevant not only to practitioners but those with a personal interest in moving in to the corporate information world.

Penny Leach

Bibliography


BIIALL Handbook of Legal Information Management, 2nd Ed., Loyita Worsley and Sarah Spells (Editors), Ashgate 2014

Business School Libraries in the 21st Century, Tim Wales (Editor), Ashgate 2014


Lorcan Dempsey
Price: £44.95, but to CILIP members £35.96
ISBN: 9781783300419

Reviewed by Penny Bailey

Imagine sitting down and reading a decade’s worth of blogs in one sitting; this book provides a similar experience but structured and well edited. Whilst it doesn’t contain all 1,869 blogs from 2003 to 2013, this book includes an edited selection of Lorcan Dempsey’s the most ‘significant’ blogs, in the editor’s opinion1, from Lorcan Dempsey’s Weblog2. The editor, Ken Varnum has worked with Lorcan Dempsey to update and refresh the blogs where things have moved on, but on the whole the blogs are reproduced as first published. The book is arranged into nine topical chapters with an introduction to the topic by the editor and then the blogs are arranged in chronological order. Like a collection of poems, this collection of blogs is best dipped into; each reflective opinion or thought process needs proper contemplation by the reader.

It’s an interesting decade for a retrospective review of technological changes affecting the library profession because there was a lot of change. Dempsey’s blogs cover networking, emerging digital technologies, web scale discovery, library systems, meta-data and new ways of publishing and communicating.

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2 http://orweblog.oclc.org/
What emerges when reading the blogs en masse is Dempsey’s thoughtfulness and inventiveness. Sometimes, terms coined by Dempsey have caught on in the wider sphere and these are marked with the coinage tag in the book.

Chapter 1 focuses on networked resources. It looks at how library resources are changing as they become networked, centralised and shared in the cloud. The blogs in this chapter cover a lot of ground: how library systems have moved beyond walls and are part of a broader networked environment, while they have also become more personal to users; how Google has informed how people expect to see search results; the effects of mass digitisation on access to published texts; preservation issues; and the costs and issues associated with integration. In 2010 Dempsey discussed the five ways in which mobile is impacting library services including atomisation, localisation, imbrication, socialisation and convergence of technologies. The chapter finishes with his blog from 2012 expressing his musings on the catalogue linked data discussion.

Chapter 2 is closely related to Chapter 1 in that it looks at the near future of libraries in terms of how organisational habits need to change to facilitate the flow of data and access to it. Dempsey talks about the ‘recombinate’ and ‘remixing’ of data which when successful achieve service-oriented delivery. He writes about interoperability, library logistics, sourcing and scaling, preservation and Web 2.0. The last blog in this chapter returns to the important subject of sourcing and scaling with particular reference to budget reductions, space restrictions and pressures of demand, which make more pertinent how much a library should try to provide information resources itself, in collaboration, though public channels or via commercial or non-commercial third parties. He notices that there is a trend to greater collaboration linked with a trend to network at higher levels as like consortia, public or social networks.

Chapter 3 explores how the research process, and the libraries’ role in it, is evolving. The blogs in this chapter trace the huge shift from the library as go-to place for research to it becoming just another source of information. He says quite simply that, “No single site is the sole focus of attention, and convenience is important.” He talks about the impact of social networks and personal digital identities for organising access to information resources and how intermediaries like search engines, RSS aggregators, VLEs, intranets and social networking sites may sit between the library and its users. The latest blog in this chapter draws to the reader’s attention the foregrounding of “library space as a service” where library services and facilities can discovered and filtered to personal requirements and “full library discovery” which allow exploration of the “full capacity of the library”.

The posts in Chapter 4 describe, in the editor’s words, “...the evolution of resource discovery from sequentially searched silos to cross-silo federated

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3 Lorcan Dempsey, p. 21
4 Ibid, p. 79
5 Ibid, pp. 84-86
search to web-scale single index discovery systems.” Indeed over 10 years Dempsey is there on the ball with every new twist and turn in discovery trends. For me the key distinction that he stresses is discoverability of library resources, i.e. that content in the library catalogue can be found from beyond the library via SEO, Google, Mendeley, the intranet, higher network search engines, etc. Without discoverability, the library and its resources will simply be inconvenient and undiscovered. Dempsey also explores a whole gamut of functions which enhance the user discovery experience including: alternatives, suggestions, sharing, subscribing, ranking, relating, recommendations and more.

Chapter 5 includes posts related to library systems. In an early 2005 blog Dempsey talks about libraries managing, “a patchwork of systems which do not always play well together.” He talks about software tools which are outside of integrated library systems (ILS) including metasearch, resolver, electronic resource management (ERM), citation managers and digital asset management to the extent that all the effort goes into maintaining a fragmented systems infrastructure. I love his blog titled “The user interface that isn’t,” This 2005 blog compares the user’s more personal web experience on websites like Amazon, which offer immediate fulfilment, to the frustrating user experience of inert and unfriendly traditional ILS OPACs. Thankfully OPACs have improved since 2005.

Chapter 6 focuses on data and metadata and making data work harder to create value for library users. Inevitably Dempsey discusses such standards as MARC and Dublin Core in the context of AACR2, AACR3 and FRBR making the point that most data will be managed by programs so it needs to be optimally designed for automated processes. He stresses the importance of rights data – what can be done with the content – to inform access to digital content. Other data elements to emerge in this decade, Dempsey points out, are data about people, objects, locations, service levels and usage. Tracking and profiling people to better understand their behaviours and choices is used to create “emergent knowledge.”

Chapter 7 traces the transformation of publishing and communication in the digital era. Dempsey comments on mass digitisation and the need for different patterns of distribution and access for digital publications. For me his most interesting observations are around the concept of ownership of publications and usage licences. Whilst we may ’own’ a physical book we may not reproduce it freely and the same applies to digital publications: we are restricted as to how we can share it – often not at all. One blog discusses the curation of publications like blogs which is a bit ironic considering that this book I am reviewing will bring his blog content to a wider audience!

Chapter 8 gathers together blogs on the administration and organisation of libraries, archives, museums and galleries.

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6 Ibid, p. 87
7 Ibid, pp. 131-134
8 Ibid, p. 136
9 Ibid p. 140-145
10 Ibid p. 171
Here Dempsey notices that the job of collection development may well be outsourced or shared and therefore diminished while new services will focus on customer engagement or learning support. At the same time library services are merging or converging with IT services. Another blog explores how institutional research is moving towards self-publishing. I also like his blog where he notices that the skills an enterprising librarian needs to run a library are not dis-similar to those of an entrepreneur running a company. The enterprising librarian recognises that they must continually adapt to their customers’ needs with ‘institutional innovation’.

The final chapter, Chapter 9, is a selection, by Lorcan Dempsey, of blogs that didn’t fit into one of topics of the other eight chapters. It is a miscellany with subjects including poetry, Starbucks as on-demand places, public libraries in Dublin, the difference between libraries in the US and UK, amplified conferences, reputation enhancement and network residents.

This well chosen collection is an invaluable reference work looking back at a decade of change. Recurring themes of networking, integration and data flows run through the blogs so read as a whole there can be some repetition albeit is a slightly different context. The content is rich with links to further reading. My only small quibble is that sometimes the links are either out-of-date or incorrect – I am not sure which. For example, www.libraryjournal.com/article/ca609689.html takes me to “page not found”.

Interspersed through the book are Reader Comments from key library figures explaining how Dempsey’s blog has made an impact. Some are a bit self-referential and read like reviews of the book within the book. I think this Reader Comment from Stephen Abram sums up for me the importance of this blog retrospective: “Dempsey has a long history of providing thought leadership for library strategies on a global scale and influence. He is one of my go-to blogs for considered ideas and thinking about where libraries must head to in order to be successful and sustainable.” ¹¹ And another Reader Comment, this time from Jay Jordan, adds “he synthesizes emerging trends with exceptional skill. His ability to deconstruct complex topics and them reassemble them eloquently while delivering a clear view of the future makes his blogs a compelling read.” ²² Indeed Dempsey’s blogs are very pithy, exploring big concepts in a few words, while his notes enable the reader to follow-up the authorities for the subjects on which he comments. Until I read this book I wasn’t a follower of his blogs but I am now.

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¹¹ Ibid, p.23
¹² Ibid, p. 136

Daniel G. Dorner, G.E. Gorman and Philip J. Calvert
Price: £49.95, but to CILIP members £39.96
ISBN: 9781856044844

Reviewed by Katie Treherne

This book provides broad coverage of information needs analysis and the processes involved. The ten chapters are broadly organised into three sections: the first three chapters cover the underlying concepts and context; chapters 4 to 8 deal with data-gathering methods, from exploiting existing data, to surveys and interviews; and the final two chapters look at analysing and reporting on the data.

Throughout the book a wide range of scenarios are borne in mind, from school libraries, to law firms, architects, to government offices, so it is generally easy to see how the concepts might be applied in your particular information service. It will also provide food for thought in areas that I wouldn’t necessarily have considered under the heading of information needs analysis. For example, one of the population groups the book covers are the staff of an information service – do they have the knowledge and information they need to carry out their jobs? Various information management scenarios are discussed, from strategic planning to selecting a product or solution, as well as a standard user satisfaction evaluation – which is the application I was particularly thinking of when I picked up the book.

I felt that the initial discussion defining ‘needs’ and ‘needs analysis’ was somewhat contrived and the definitions forced, but the discussion around them helpful in teasing out some of the nuances of what information needs analysis is.
The authors differentiate between ‘wants’ and ‘needs’, but recognise that the value judgment of needs is subjective. They also highlight that an information need lies in the gap between the existing situation and what should be, and in a problem rather than in its solution. For example, there may be a need for material to be more accessible to staff in an organisation, which might be solved either by online resources or by lending books via the internal mail. The need, as such, is not for more online content, even though this may be how it is expressed.

As the authors note, this is not a book on research methods, and at times I found this frustrating because it seemed tantalisingly close! Chapter 7, on collecting data through surveys, for example, includes practical information on distribution and wording. Useful hints are certainly to be gleaned here: I was reminded that Friday afternoons are not the best time for survey distribution, and that not everyone will recognise terms such as OPAC. I did find the style slow to get into, as the authors tend to re-iterate points and re-cover what they have said earlier in the book. If you are skipping around chapters with a particular project in mind, however, this is helpful for indicating where the authors are coming from in a single chapter, so you won’t need to read cover-to-cover.

As an academic, conceptual book with a practical slant this book is more useful to information professionals in the planning stages. However, it does also provide some information for practical application on all the stages of putting an analysis together; if a research methods textbook seems a little heavy going, this would be a good place to start for covering the basics.

Katie Treherne
Want to go to this year’s ILI Conference in London?

The Briggs-Washington Bursary

CLSIG have this year announced the launch of the Briggs-Washington bursary, which will initially provide a free place to a CLSIG member to attend the CILIP Conference and another to attend the Internet Librarian International Conference, both now annual events. Other conferences may be added in due course.

Norman Briggs and Bert Washington were exceptional contributors to the advancement of the Group. We lost them both in March 2013 – Norman to a long-fought illness and Bert in a tragic accident.

We have been looking for a way to commemorate these two wonderful people which will reflect in perpetuity their philosophy of promoting excellence and the careers of information scientists working in the commercial field, hence the bursary which bears their names.

You can read more about the ILI Conference at: http://www.internet-librarian.com/2015/

Details for bursary applications will be announced in June.

We look forward to hearing from you!
Agony Aunt

Agony Aunt has received the following question:

"Dear Agony Aunt,

New technologies (particularly the increasing number of online books and apps produced by our main information vendors) are changing the way that we provide information and research services [in a corporate information centre context] but I'm finding that some of my team are slow, or even reluctant to embrace these and in turn champion them enthusiastically to our internal clients. How can I convert them from sceptics into passionate advocates please?"

Agony Aunt suggests the following:

The unfamiliar is often scary. Human nature likes to settle in with what we know; routine is comfort. It feels good to be experts at what we do and much less good to contemplate replacing tried-and-true practices with untried ones. It's as if a voice inside us is saying "Learning is hard! Why do I have to put out so much effort? I'm a professional already, isn't that good enough?"

The task of enticing others to come around to our way of thinking (to begin with, never mind the subsequent change of action) boils down to connecting the new attitude to something desirable. If you can paint a highly attractive picture that has your team members reacting "I waaaant that!" and then clarify how attainable it is via adopting some new skills and practices ... you've got a shot. So here goes (adjust the messaging to your environment of course):

- Isn't it nice when our clients appreciate what we do for them?
- Do you feel good when you know your expertise has made a big positive difference for someone?
• Are you happy when you do your part to make the information centre indispensable (thus contributing to job security)?

Assuming replies in the affirmative, you move on to explain the connection with the new tools in ways that are difficult to refute:

• Our clients are busy people. They really benefit from the special capabilities of ebooks and apps - and in fact, they have already adopted all kinds of other apps in their private lives.
• We owe them the advantages of what our vendors are making available - showing our clients those apps is not an imposition, it will be welcomed with open arms.
• Our information centre is all about enabling the organization to achieve its goals, and that means helping employees be as productive as they can be.
• It is our professional hallmark of quality and relevance to be innovators and early adopters so as to enhance our organization’s opportunities for success.

Finally, you paint the picture of success and describe how painless it really is to become adept at the "new stuff":

• Let's be the heroes for our clients by showing them how much convenience we can add to their research ...
• Let's further solidify and enhance our reputations as information magicians ...

• And the good news? It's straightforward:

• The new tools are just variations on the old ones we know and love.

• Your existing knowledge and expertise will make it a snap to figure them out.
• Once you see how the new apps work, you'll wonder why you waited to fall in love with them.

I'm arranging some special sessions for you to explore and discover how intuitive the apps actually are.

Some people do take a long time to come around, so you may need to set your expectations accordingly. That said, the strategy of positioning new learning as a path to professional success and status is (IMHO) a better bet than any kind of pressure. Anyone in a position to distribute rewards (of whatever nature) to team members might want to acknowledge and spotlight those who are in fact adopting the new tools and "selling" them to clients.

Good luck!
Agony Aunt

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Notes for Contributors

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The theme of July's issue is – 'Professional Issues'

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