

Background

CILIP has asked its member networks and Special Interest Groups to consider equality and diversity in their business plans. The Equality and Diversity Strategy Project looked at CIG's current membership profile, identified potential barriers to participation, and assisted in developing CIG's strategy to address equality and diversity. This project was conducted by participants on the CILIP Leadership programme,¹ on behalf of the Cataloguing and Indexing Group.

The project surveyed CIG members and benchmarked this against the wider information profession. We also identified possible barriers to participation in member network activities, and created a toolkit to support other member networks' in analysing their own membership and developing their equality and diversity strategy.

Literature Review

Our review of the published literature concluded that while there was a great deal of work focused on diversity and inclusion within professions as a whole, there was not much that tackled the activities of the professional bodies themselves. However, these two issues are closely linked.

Information-related professional bodies such as the Young Adult Library Services Association have been looking at how to increase the diversity of the profession (Craig, 2010). Similarly the Association for Library and Information Science Education has made suggestions for improving cultural awareness in the information studies curriculum (Lee et al., 2015). Newman (2016) points out that the American Library Association's "*top tech trends*" panels are consistently male-dominated, despite the organisation's membership being 81% female, and recommends conference organisers be more pro-active in seeking diverse panels.

Looking outside the information profession, useful advice can also be found in the publications of The Minerals, Metals & Materials Society, who now include improving diversity and inclusion in their strategic plan (Robinson, 2015). In 2014 the society held a summit on diversity, producing both a toolkit (The Minerals, Materials & Metals Society, 2015a) and a lengthy report (The Minerals, Materials & Metals Society, 2015b). The Society for Conservation Biology also provides practical suggestions for increasing diversity in their profession (Foster et al., 2014).

A lengthy report commissioned by the ASAE Foundation (Leiter, Solebello and Tschirhart 2011) makes suggestions for increasing diversity and inclusion in membership associations, including a review of projects that did and didn't work (p.51). An article in the Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (Stein, 2013) reviews the diversity projects of various professional bodies. Many of these professional bodies declined to share measurable outcomes of their projects, and the Stein paper concludes that whilst there isn't a single solution for improving diversity, various options do exist.

¹ The CILIP Leadership Programme was designed to help mid-career professionals wanting to develop their skills and ran from July 2015 to July 2016.

Benchmarking CIG membership

A survey of CIG members was launched in mid-January 2016 and concluded in mid-March. It was promoted via CIG's newsletters, Twitter account and blog, and had two sections. One focused on the demographics of respondents, and the other about how they engaged with CIG.

The findings from this survey were looked at alongside two other sets of data: the 2014 Workforce Mapping Survey, commissioned by CILIP and the ARA to map the workforce across the Library, Archives, Records, Information and Knowledge Management Services and related professions in the United Kingdom; and CILIP's own brief demographic information about CIG members, which had been gathered as part of the CILIP membership process.

At the time of analysis, only certain aspects of the Workforce Mapping Data survey results had been made publically available. One of the aims of the project survey was to compare CIG's demographics with the wider information profession, so we focused our survey on the publicly available Workforce Mapping Data. This meant that certain themes often cited in diversity and equality research, such as health, disability, family and caring commitments, were deliberately excluded from our survey.

CIG's own existing membership data comprised of the age and gender of its membership. We had hoped to gather more detailed demographic information about CIG's membership via the survey, and then compare this to the Workforce Mapping Data project, but the low response to our survey meant that we could not use our data to predict the wider make-up of CIG, and therefore demographic comparisons were limited to age and gender.

Gender

The Workforce Mapping Study identified that the information sector has a 78.1% female make-up. CIG's demographic data suggests that their membership is 69% female and respondents to our survey of CIG were 72% female. These figures would indicate that the group is attracting more males as a proportion of their membership compared with the profession as a whole.

	Equality and Diversity project survey	CIG demographics (from CILIP membership application)	Workforce Mapping Study
Gender identity ²	72% female	69% female	78.1% female

Table 1: Gender identity of survey respondents, CIG members and wider workforce.

Age

The workforce mapping survey found that 55.3% of the information and archives workforce is over the age of 45. Unfortunately CILIP's CIG membership data is not directly comparable as the age ranges don't match. From CILIP's data the proportion of CIG members who are over the age of 40 is 78% and 54% of CIG members are over 50.

². Gender analysis was further complicated as the CILIP demographics and the Workforce Mapping Study only offered male and female as gender options, but the Equality and Diversity Project included an option for non-binary and prefer not to say.

According to these figures CIG membership is older than the general information workforce. However, of the respondents to the Equality and Diversity survey, only 40% were over the age of 45, hence younger CIG members were over-represented compared to the membership in general.

	Equality and Diversity project survey	CIG demographics (from CILIP membership application)	Workforce Mapping Study
Age	40% over 45 years old.	78% over 40 years old. 54% over 50 years old.	55.3% over 45 years old.

Table 2: Age of survey respondents, CIG members and wider workforce.

Other indicators of diversity

CILIP has not been asking its members about their ethnicity, religious identity, or sexual orientation, so this information isn't available for the wider CIG membership. Survey results about ethnicity, religious identity and sexual orientation are not covered in this paper but were included in the report submitted to CIG, which will be made available to all members.

Some tentative conclusions can be drawn about CIG membership in relation to gender and age. It would appear that overall, in comparison to the wider information workforce, CIG has a higher proportion of male members with approximately 9% more members being male than one would anticipate if the nationwide pattern were followed. With regards to age, taking into account the discrepancy in the way the two figures were measured, it is still possible to deduce that CIG has older members than the information sector in general.

The project group's survey was based on a self-selected sample, and as with all self-selected samples, the respondents have to be motivated to respond, which may further affect the representativeness of the results. With that in mind, the results collected in relation to identifying barriers may be more valuable.

Identifying Barriers

Our survey also looked at barriers that limit member's participation in CIG offerings. It covered themes such as attendance at events, involvement in e-forums, and access to monthly newsletters. Follow up questions were included to try and capture reasons for limited, or lack of, participation in activities. All respondents were also asked to offer suggestions on how CIG might remove barriers and widen its appeal.

Many respondents expressed a desire to participate in events, but faced obstacles in doing so. The three primary barriers identified were cost, location and timing. A lack of employer engagement was also a significant concern.

Cost is a major obstacle for members. This includes the cost of the event itself, the cost of travel to a free event, or a combination of paying for the event and getting there. From our survey a high proportion of participants, 65%, had been unable to attend a CIG-organised visit, with 24% of those stating that costs and location of visits were the primary reasons. The survey results showed that 47% of participants have attended a course organised by CIG, but of the 41% who have not, 10% stated that the location and costs involved were a barrier to attendance, with another 29% stating they had not been able to attend, despite wanting to.

Funding for training was an issue for many of the respondents, especially when employer funding was not available. There were suggestions that employers are happier funding courses directly related to current work issues, such as RDA, and that CIG may need to work harder at promoting the benefits of other types of CPD to employers.

Location, and specifically the distance to a location, was highlighted as a barrier. Thirty-five per cent of respondents stated that distance and getting time off were significant barriers to participation. This is more than the 24% who indicated cost was a primary barrier, but as the two are often linked, the results shouldn't be considered in isolation to each other. Some survey respondents reported difficulties in attending events at the locations currently used by CIG, especially those not accessible via public transport.

Timing was the third major barrier to participating in CIG activities, and unlike cost and location, which primarily related to attendance at events, timing also accounted for an inability to participate in online activities. Heavy workloads and small teams were common barriers, with people either unable to get time off due to an inability to arrange cover, or because they simply didn't have enough time to spare. Many responded that they could only participate in their own time and had to take annual leave to attend events.

Survey respondents gave various suggestions for improving engagement between CIG and its members. These are useful for anyone organising an event (whether or not for CIG) and should be carefully considered. It's important to remember that making a single change would not help every survey respondent, but reflecting on the feedback and publicly taking on board the suggestions will improve the relationship between CIG and its members. Publicity material for events could highlight that the survey results have been considered, this would show members that their feedback is valued.

We also asked for suggestions on how CIG could better engage with the wider profession and attract potential members. Some respondents were concerned that CIG was not doing sufficient outreach outside of the special interest group, particularly to those who were not working in traditional libraries or were not members of CILIP.

Toolkit

We also produced a toolkit that could be used by other member networks to inform their strategy on equality and diversity. The toolkit was broken down into three sections. The first section focuses on analysing members, drawing on our experience of running the survey for CIG. This section gives detailed advice for gathering information, and the different types of approaches groups might want to take.

The second section focuses on identifying barriers, and includes tips on identifying less obvious barriers. We felt that given the survey responses, it would be the 'hidden barriers' that would be likely to pose more of a problem to CILIP groups than the more visible and clearly legislated ones.

The third section of the toolkit focused on developing strategies. It was not designed to offer solutions, but instead to highlight some of the options which might be available. It was important that we created something that was fluid enough to adapt to individual groups, but not so vague as to be of no use. This is because any equality and diversity strategy must be specific to the group and take in the unique nature of their membership. It must also be achievable and practical, but flexible enough to address changing needs. It's important to not assume that all members identifying as a particular group will have the same needs, or want to be treated the same.

Finally we also provided a reference list of sources of information covering aspects such as Planning accessible information from the Sensory Trust, to Uncovering hidden impairments from the Hidden Impairment National Group.

Conclusions

This project identified a number of steps that CIG can take to address issues surrounding equality and diversity. Taking these steps will hopefully increase engagement with CIG's membership offering. The recommendations of this project include measures of differing intensity, as well as short- and long-term options. This will enable CIG to implement some measures immediately, whilst some will require a more considered and strategic approach. The project also produced a toolkit that can be adapted and used by other CILIP Special Interest Groups.

At the conclusion of this project in July 2016 both the final report and the finished toolkit were submitted to the CIG committee who will be able to make them available to any CIG members who wish to see it. The Equality and Diversity in Member Networks Project team enjoyed working on what was a very interesting topic, and we are grateful to CIG for commissioning it, and to those members who helped promote, and responded to, the survey. We look forward to seeing where CIG decides to take the project in the future.

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