BBSLG

British Business Schools Librarians' Group

2007 Conference Review

University of Northampton, June 27th-29th 2007

User Education in the 21st Century

On Wednesday 27th June, despite the heavy flooding that beset the country, a total of 60 BBSLG members from across the UK arrived in a thankfully dry Northampton at the Marriott hotel for the 51st BBSLG conference.

Organised by Joanne Wade of the University of Northampton and the BBSLG committee, this year's conference theme was the development and delivery of user education, a topic which was set to provoke lively discussion and encourage information sharing among delegates.

Breaking the Ice / Welcome

The conference got off to an enjoyable - if noisy - start with a 'speed networking' icebreaker in which delegates quickly got to know each other better.

This was followed by an entertaining welcome to Northamptonshire and an introduction to the University from Dr Ian Brooks (inset) the Dean of the Business School.

Keynote Speaker – Ruth Stubbings

'What is user education and why is it important?'

Ruth Stubbings, Academic Services Manager, Loughborough University

Ruth stimulated our thinking about what user education is and why it is important, with a presentation that used group discussion, images and voting to make us think about our preconceptions of what user education involves, what terminology we should use and how we should integrate it into the curriculum. She left us thinking about its importance and likely future developments. This proved to be an excellent starting point for the discussions over the next few days.

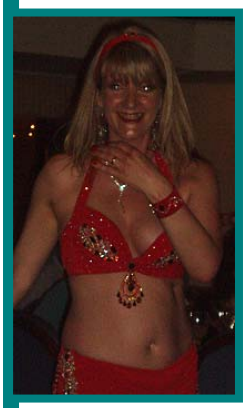
Keynote Speaker – Chris Powis

'Swallow your medicine - it'll be good for you: motivating students to engage with information skills'

Chris Powis, Teaching Fellow and Deputy Director of Information Services, University of Northampton

Chris gave us some thought-provoking and refreshingly cynical advice on motivating students. He shared some interesting findings from a Northampton student survey (e.g. reading list is king, students hate columns and abstracts) before providing his own tips on how to overcome their low expectations, emphasising the importance of planning and varying all aspects before reminding us that we all are performers. Inspired by Chris's talk, the breakout that followed saw a lively discussion about the innovative, active and challenging methods we employ in our user education sessions.

Turkish Delight / The Quiz



Wednesday night's dinner was immediately followed by two forms of 'Turkish Delight': a bellydancer (left) and the confectionery itself. It was then time for the hotly-contested annual quiz, this year with Sue Csoka (far right) as 'quizmistress'. The clear winners were 'Lucky 13' (top), while '5 Business Babes' (middle bottom) won the wooden spoon…

Keynote Speaker – Sally Laurie

'Academic and employer perspectives on teaching information skills'

Sally Laurie, Senior Lecturer in Marketing Communications, University of Northampton.

The first speaker, on Thursday, was Sally Laurie, a senior lecturer who has had extensive involvement in the development of learning and teaching at Northampton business school.

The focus of her talk was her special interest in the development and embedding of employability skills within the curriculum. Her session gave the audience the opportunity to reflect whether their information skills teaching succeeded in providing the attributes most sought by both academics and employers. The ensuing discussions continued in this vein as delegates shared experience and tips as to how they have gone about embedding information skills teaching in courses at their home institutions.

Members' Sharing Sessions

'Introducing Olivia: Information Literacy at Imperial College London Library'

Helen Harrington, Campus Library Manager, Imperial College

Helen began by defining Information Literacy (IL) and the competencies expected of the 'information literate'. She went on to explain how IL had been embedded at Imperial through the stylish Olivia (OnLIne Virtual Information Assistant) service.

During a brief demonstration of Olivia, Helen described how its learning units could be used selectively or as a linear programme and gave some examples of its interactivity. Helen ended her presentation by providing links to more information on IL and offering guest access to Olivia to those delegates who wanted to have a look around for themselves.

'It's Powerpoint, but not as we know it'

Jacqui Gaul, Electronic Resources Manager, Cass Business School

Jacqui demonstrated Adobe Presenter (formerly Macromedia Breeze Presenter), a rich media and e-learning authoring tool that enables the creation of professional, high-quality on-demand presentations from within PowerPoint. Whilst using a live presentation that she had created for students at Cass, Jacqui described the pros and cons of the software.

Members' Sharing Sessions

'Cephalonian induction method: how it worked for us'

Sue Csoka, Academic Liaison Librarian, University of Bedfordshire

Sue explained the Cephalonian induction method – the planting of prepared questions amongst an audience in order to enliven inductions – and how it has been successfully adopted for undergraduate programmes at the University of Bedfordshire. Sue went on to explain the possible pitfalls of the approach and how they plan to incorporate more questions and answers in future and try it out with postgraduates.

'Assessing information literacy skills within a core module

Carol Dell-Price, Subject Information Team Leader (Business) and Yvonne Cotton, Senior Information Officer, University of Teesside

Carol and Yvonne described their involvement in an assessed module (Professional Development and Employability) for 1st year undergraduates and gave a frank account of what they learned from the experience (e.g. marking takes three times longer than you think; the need for repetition so students understand what is being asked of them) and the positive feedback received from students and academic staff.

Keynote Speaker – Peter Godwin

'Information Literacy meets Web 2.0: good news for business librarians?'

Peter Godwin, Academic Librarian, University of Bedfordshire

Peter Godwin provided us with an informative and humorous look at Web 2.0 and its accompanying technologies, suggesting ways in which it could be used to make information literacy sessions more interesting and relevant.

Peter spoke about blogs, wikis, social bookmarking, social networking, YouTube and gave tips on how each of them could be utilised. He also provided a useful list of recommended resources.

Exhibitors

2007 Exhibitors

GOLD:
EBSCO

SILVER:
EIU
Euromonitor
Proquest
Research for Libraries
Thomson Gale

BRONZE:
D&B
Emerald
Keynote
Kompass
Lexis-Nexis
Mintel

As is always the case, the conference would not have been possible had it not been for the generosity of our sponsors. A total of 12 exhibitors were in attendance this year whom delegates had the opportunity to speak to during scheduled breaks in the programme. Exhibitors were also invited to attend all the conference sessions.

On Thursday afternoon our Gold and Silver sponsors also delivered short but informative presentations to delegates.

All current BBSLG-brokered database deals are on our website's 'Members Only' page.

Leisure Activities

Late Thursday afternoon, delegates had the choice of three separate leisure activities and boarded coaches to the idyllic Stoke Bruerne canal village, the Rennie Mackintosh-designed 78 Derngate (inset) and the Boot and Shoe Museum (far right). A good time was had by all.

Conference Dinner at the Broomhill Hotel

On the Thursday evening, delegates, together with Tania Smith and Steve Giannoni from EBSCO (our Gold sponsors), enjoyed a sumptuous dinner in an outside marquee at the Broomhill Hotel. Conversation and wine flowed freely.

AGM

At the Annual General Meeting, Andy Priestner, (BBSLG Chair) outlined the committee's activities over the past year, which have included: an extensive survey benchmarking BBSLG institutions and individuals (provided as a printed report at the conference and now available on the website), brokering various database deals, database training days in London and Newcastle, a library guides project, the revival of the database survey and a proactive membership drive. He also explained that the major committee project for the coming year would be a complete overhaul of the BBSLG website.

As well as the approval of reports prepared by committee members, delegates were asked to vote on two important proposals relating to annual subscription rates and the Group's name. It was subsequently agreed that rates would rise from £30 to £50 and that the name of the Group would remain the same.

Outgoing committee members Jan Storey and Deborah Morrison were thanked for their considerable contribution and David Clare was elected as Treasurer.

Members' Forum

The Members' Forum saw Alison Sharman present the highlights of the Database Survey; Tim Wales discuss the Benchmarking Survey; Simon Speight outline the committee's initial thoughts on the new website; Andy Priestner flag up the possibility of a BBSLG Innovation Award and business terminology training days; Sue Csoka describe BBSLG's intended contribution to the JISC ebooks survey; and Carol Dell-Price asking how members have coped with the implementation of Metalib.

Small breakout groups were used to capture delegates' ideas for the new website and possible themes and content for next year's conference.

Members' Sharing Sessions

'Who wants to be a librarian: the use of voting technology in inductions'

Simon Speight, Subject Librarian - Business, University of Warwick

Simon gave an entertaining and interactive presentation incorporating voting handsets to show how voting software can be used inductions to test levels of knowledge, check understanding, encourage discussion and seek opinion. He then detailed how it had been employed at Warwick and the advantages and disadvantages (e.g. don't overuse and don't treat as a gimmick) of the approach, before ending with some 'bargain basement' alternatives.

'Captivating and feeding OU students'

Tim Wales, Learning and Teaching Librarian Team Leader, Open University

Tim delivered an interesting two part presentation showcasing new technologies at the OU library. He demonstrated behind the scenes use of RSS feeds in the OU's VLE, Moodle, which take online content from various library repositories and then display that content seamlessly in the relevant VLE course websites with all the inherent advantages of real-time updating.

Tim went on to demo two online literature search tutorials created using Adobe Captivate screen capture software, before giving an honest appraisal of its strengths and weaknesses.

Farewell and Thanks

The Chair closed the conference with a vote of thanks to this year's capable organiser, Joanne Wade (right), who everyone agreed had done a fantastic job. For those that stayed on after lunch there was a tour of Northampton's Park Campus library.

Acknowledgements: Review written and compiled by the BBSLG Committee Photos: Andy Priestner, Kerry Lee and Tim Wales