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Showcasing the variety of LIS research

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The idea of a conference showcasing LIS Masters Research dissertations came from seeing Lyn Denny's presentation of some of her findings at the NLPN and CILIP Yorkshire and Humberside's 'Get Career Ready' event in March 2015. A conversation during this event of how valuable an experience the opportunity to present our own dissertation findings would have been, continued online via Twitter, led to the organising committee of LISDIS being established.

Taking place in Heritage Quay, the archive of the University of Huddersfield, we published our call for papers in the summer. We had an amazing response to the call for papers, and interest in the conference in general was high. We approached Emma Coonan, editor of the Journal of Information Literacy, to be our keynote speaker, which was a real highlight of the day. We also decided to have a poster session running throughout the event to allow for the sharing of more Masters research.

We were very grateful to be sponsored by BAILER, UKEiG and UCL Department of Information Studies, who contributed towards the costs of travel for our speakers. We also received sponsorship from CILIP Yorkshire and Humberside, who provided refreshments.

The conference was split into three themed sections; collections and discovery: public libraries and community: valuing the library. The presenters came from a variety of backgrounds, sectors and library schools. The most common feedback we received after the event was how wonderfully varied the presentations were. This shows the range and scope of LIS research; from the history of book collectors to modern collection development policies; from measuring the value of a corporate library to how differences between rural and urban community libraries contribute to the digital divide.

The poster sessions also showed the variety of LIS research. Contributors included Laurel Burn's reflections on serendipity in libraries, Sophie Defrance's exploration of the book collections of John Couch Adams and Samuel Sanders, and Thomas Gebhart's investigation into crowdsourcing in HE library catalogues.

Highlights of the day for me included Ian Clark's rightful vitriol towards the effects of cuts on an urban library in an area that saw home computer ownership at 52%, but whose funding saw a slash in provision from 12 computers to 8. Marion Harris' talk on how the increase in fees has altered the attitudes of UK HE students had me nodding my head along to her findings, whilst Sonja Kujansuu describing how librarians formed a human chain to save books from the burning library of Sarajevo during the Balkans War had me welling up in tears.

Natasha Chowdory's enthusiastic retelling of her project, which involved surveying what her user base found valuable about her corporate library's services had many people taking notes of tips to incorporate in their working practices.

The conference had a streak of women's history running through its core. Lucy Saint-Smith's talk on the history of women book collectors in the age of bibliomania was very enlightening. Sarah Hume showed the limitations of both DDC and LCSH to women's studies collections and Alanna Broadley's extremely thorough research into Scottish public libraries' provision of lesbian fiction highlighted the need for collection development policies to take in to account the real needs of LGBT users. Catalogues were also a running theme, with Martyn Greenwood focussing on descriptions of graphic novels, and Lizzie Sparrow concentrating on the experience of the end users.

Copies of the slides can be found on the conference website  
<https://lisdisconference.wordpress.com/>.

Although at some points challenging, organising an event such as LISDIS taught me a lot about team work over distance, and made me appreciate the scope of LIS. The feedback from the day itself was altogether positive, with interest already building for next year.

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