

## Report

# **Report of the HSLG Conference 2025 “Cultivating Curiosity: A Wonderland for Librarians”**

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This year I was the recipient of a bursary to attend the HSLG annual conference which took place in the Ashling Hotel, Dublin on 6th March. The following is a brief synopsis of the day's presentations.

### **Mary Dunne - Conceptualising curiosity.**

Mary Dunne, HSLG Research Officer and Vice-Chair, opened the day by giving her thoughts on curiosity, the theme of the conference. She provided some definitions, described its components as described in the literature and suggested how we might apply curiosity to library and information services and the workplace in general. She recommended we cultivate curiosity in our working lives by asking open-ended questions, paying attention to the thoughts and knowledge of others, staying humble and keeping our minds open to new ideas.

### **Keynote Speaker Sue Lacey Bryant - Making curiosity count.**

This year's keynote speaker was CILIP President and former Chief Knowledge Officer at NHS England, Sue Lacey Bryant. Addressing the conference theme, Sue suggested that we should be curious about patients' rights, ask the right questions and consider how medical information affects practitioners and patients. She took us through her long career in health librarianship from her earliest days to her most recent role as Chief Knowledge Officer and offered her thoughts on the future of healthcare and our profession.

Healthcare workers will need to be digital savvy in order to continually adapt to new ways of working and new IT solutions. Health librarians must play a role in bridging the gap between evidence and practice and medical evidence must be available to be mobilised by the right people at the right time. On the subject of AI, Sue shared that, it will create, change and, in some cases, displace jobs, information professionals can move into new roles including as knowledge architects, taxonomists, user experience (UX) librarians and research data management librarians. She reminded us that AI guides humans to answers but humans must put in accurate data first. Sue believes the future lies in “knowledge management in action” and called on us to align our skills with our values, build on our strengths (not least our searching expertise) and, above all, to skill, reskill and skill again.

### **Breeda Herlihy - New HSLG open access journal.**

After the break, Breeda Herlihy, UCC Library, unveiled the HSLG's new peer reviewed diamond open access journal called *Health Information Sciences Journal*. Replacing *HINT* newsletter, the first issue of the new journal will be published this summer.

### **Peter Reilly - Cultivate your creativity by being curious!**

Peter Reilly, Learning and Engagement Librarian at the University of Limerick, shared some tips on learning by being curious and using curiosity to foster creativity. He identified some of the elements of creativity,

including motivation, innovation and problem solving. Creativity requires complex thought, inspiring and motivating leadership and collaboration. Peter encourages shifting between conventional and unconventional perspectives, prototyping ideas and rethinking assumptions and he advocates for 'creativity clinics' to encourage collaboration with users and the adoption of universal design principles to better support diverse learners.

Peter offered a six- step solution for creative problem-solving and shared some excellent tips for incorporating creativity in daily work and, in particular, in teaching information skills in the classroom.

#### **Dymphna McGettigan - Health Information Calendar: a health calendar for all.**

Dymphna McGettigan presented on the HSE Health Information Calendar which currently lists 151 events for 2025, including cervical cancer prevention and mental health as well as partnerships with Arthritis Ireland and Cystic Fibrosis Ireland. The goal is to build a supportive environment through community actions. She also spoke about the principles of health promotion and talked us through some of Ireland's most successful public health campaigns.

#### **Dympna Lynch and Shona Nolan - Everything everywhere all at once... but in one place.**

Dympna and Shona are part of the HSE Inter Library Loan (ILL) Team, and they outlined the development of the ILL service which began as decentralised system with fragmented access, variation in staffing and resources and a lack of standardisation. In 2022 the service shifted to a centralised model. Today, user requests are dealt with from a single virtual desk with a dedicated team that administers ILLs for the entire country. A monthly staff rota means the ILL desk is staffed all week which ensures access to the service for all library users, regardless of location. Use of the service has doubled since the centralised model was initiated.

In 2023 the HSE ILL Team took over the running of the HJNI and Shona talked about this process and the current practicalities of running the service. Between 2023 and the first half of 2024, there were 502 requests, 80% of which were fulfilled. The strength of the HJNI in its collaborative approach. Challenges include the reduction of members since its move to the HSE and reduced collection development in individual libraries.

#### **Ann Byrne - Follow the White Rabbit: guiding nursing students to creative poster presentations, protocols.**

The first presenter after lunch was Ann Byrne, Digital Librarian at Hibernia College. The college has run an undergraduate nursing programme since 2022 and poster assessment has been part of the assessment strategy since the beginning. Ann presented on the poster/people workshop that was developed by the library and the digital learning department to teach nursing students how to design good academic posters. The workshop covered the difference between academic papers and posters, converting written text into a post and provided checklist for good design.

The workshop was well received by its attendees. There was overall satisfaction with the support offered and students reported a better understanding of poster design afterwards. Future directions include adding resources on poster development on the library webpage.

#### **Niall O'Brien - Following protocols: adventures in tracking the life cycle of review protocols.**

Niall O'Brien is an Information Specialist at the Health Research Board and his talk was on the difficulty with tracking review protocols.

In 2011 PROSPERO was launched as the first international register where protocols can be registered free of

charge and the PRISMA statement provides registration information for the review which should make protocols traceable and transparent. However, looking at a recently completed HRB project, Niall discovered that in many of 1,323 protocols examined, the unique PROSPERO identifying number was not mentioned in the abstract or citation. In some cases the number is also not mentioned anywhere in the paper and this can provide a challenge to connect the protocol with a final paper, particularly when the title of the paper has also changed from the protocol title.

In conclusion, Niall called for greater consistency in reporting protocol details within a paper and suggested that a protocol registry's unique ID should be referred to within the abstracts or methods of any resulting papers.

### **Aoife Lawton - LAI Library Labour Market Taskforce report: key findings.**

Aoife Lawton, HSE National Librarian, has recently chaired the LAI Labour Market Taskforce and presented the findings of the report at the conference. The main aim of the taskforce was to identify areas where the LAI could make a positive difference to the Irish library labour market. To achieve this a literature review and a survey of members was carried out, followed by a focus group and some independent research on job analysis.

Results from the literature search revealed a growing need for librarians, together with the need to continuously learn and adapt to changing work environments. The survey revealed librarians account for 0.08% of the Irish workforce and are a highly educated profession, most of whom are in employment and in public sector jobs. Meanwhile results from the job analysis reflected a need for greater data related skills, the diversity of roles and a growth in project-led work. Lastly, the Focus Group recommendations included the promotion of work – life balance, making CPD mandatory and a need to change the public perception of the profession.

A Virtual Group Workshop was being planned which will create an Action Plan to be approved by the LAI Council.

### **Mingli Gong - CPD needs for librarians in ICT engagement.**

Mingli Gong was recently awarded an MSc in Information and Library Management from Dublin Business School. For her degree, she conducted research to understand Irish librarians' experiences and challenges when engaging the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in their Continuing Professional Development (CPD). She conducted a literature review around four themes and carried out a survey of librarians working in all sectors in Ireland and presented her findings at the conference.

There are challenges in engaging with ICT. While most librarians agree that ICT improves the quality of services, gaps remain in areas like AI and literature searching. Workshops could help remedy these shortcomings, as could liaising with colleagues and social media. Mingli concluded that librarianship and ICT service delivery within libraries can be improved by appropriate CPD.

### **Mairéad McKeown & Amy Bond - Knowledge Café: how we make better sense of a rapidly changing and complex world.**

Mairéad and Amy from Board Bia Library closed the day by leading us in a Knowledge Café. In a new world of knowledge that is volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous, librarians can be the catalyst to help navigate this complexity by adopting a new approach and a more democratic and participatory form of conversational leadership. Mairéad took us through the concept of a Knowledge Café, a tool to bring people together in conversations they might not otherwise have in a safe authentic atmosphere. The Bord Bia librarians create 'Hot Topics' where they synthesise information into ten page reports and then run Knowledge Cafés where the information can be disseminated and discussed. To give delegates an idea of how these are run, she divided us into groups of four or fewer people and gave us a discussion time frame

of ten minutes. When the time was up, we switched seats to begin a different discussion with another group.

The presentation concluded with Amy's top tips on running a Knowledge Café.

