



Swings and roundabouts

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We asked a few participants their opinion of this year's UKSG conference in Bournemouth, and as well as the glowing feedback in the delegate survey – which included comments like "UKSG never fails to deliver a conference that has something for everyone! Well done on another successful year!" and "Best conference I have attended in a long time - spot on." – we have more detailed feedback from Ian Walker, Kelly Duoos and Amy Ward.

Ian Walker, Research Support Librarian from Anglia Ruskin University

I was fortunate to attend this year's UKSG Conference and Exhibition as the membership survey prize winner. From a logistical point of view, the conference was fantastically well organised, and held at a venue – the Bournemouth International Centre – which boasted incredible views of the region's acclaimed coastline.

This year's programme covered a wide variety of topics. I particularly enjoyed Stuart Lawson's talk on 'Open Scholarly Communications Data' and the group discussion which followed his presentation. Donna Lanclos's engaging talk on ethnographic approaches to scholarly communication made me think about how we might apply this methodology to better meet our own users' needs.

The speakers also introduced me to new topics. A highlight was Raymond Pun's session on gamification - after attending his talk, I'm now considering how I can introduce game play as a learning and engagement tool.

One negative point: at times, it felt like there was simply 'too much' going on at UKSG. Technology helped to make this easier. The conference app allowed me to plan which sessions to attend to make sure that I got the most out of the event. Social media also enabled me to 'be in two places at once' and keep up with the discussions and insights shared at other sessions.

However, the conference was so much more than just the scheduled speakers. It was also about the informal interactions with other delegates and the opportunity to network outside of the main conference programme. In her opening address, Kate Price talked about the inclusive nature of the UKSG community and my experiences echoed this. Coffee breaks and social events allowed me to chat and interact with other attendees. The fact that the conference attracts international delegates from a variety of backgrounds enabled a wide range of viewpoints.

I really enjoyed my conference experience. I'm already looking forward to UKSG40.

Kelly Duoos, Senior Marketing Executive from BioMed Central

Highlight: this conference was my third year attending UKSG, but my first on Twitter! From getting

involved with the (BioMed Central) PR team before the event to live tweeting some of the sessions, it was a lot of fun to interact with the event in a new way. Really enjoyed listening to and learning from other attendees and those who were involved remotely.

While you can't be in four places at one time, several breakout sessions made me wish that was possible. Twitter was particularly valuable in crowdsourcing feedback on parallel breakout sessions, enabling you to prioritise plans for the following day. (Thanks to IET TV I'll be exploring alternate timeline choices for a few weeks to come.)

Another highlight of course being the bumper cars and abundance of rock candy.

Low point: if I have to choose a low point, it would be going back into the conference hall after a Tuesday lunch break on the sunny beach . . . that was tough!

Specific takeaway: not only are libraries, publishers, and funders keen to work together and align our interests, but there is a significant willingness and need for traditional roles to shift in order to continue providing the best service to researchers. Not a new idea, admittedly, but one that really resonated with me at this year's event.

Libraries (and institutions) in particular seem to be greatly diversifying their core functions: pursuing customer engagement, conducting market research, marketing their services, enabling research output evaluation and reputation management, aiding dissemination of research, accounting to funders on research compliance, reviewing OA spend and ROI, and becoming publishers themselves.

The spirit of adaptability, collaboration, and innovation I witnessed across the board at UKSG presents a really exciting opportunity for us to work together toward an improved, sustainable infrastructure of research support.

Amy Ward, Learning Facilitator at Ashton Sixth Form College (Manchester) and part-time librarianship student

I was a little nervous about attending my first conference but UKSG are really supportive of first time conference goers. There is a mentoring scheme where you are paired up with a seasoned delegate who can give you a unique insight into the conference. They also hosted a first timers' webinar which was really useful. This outlined everything I needed to know about the conference and the venue and gave me an opportunity to ask questions alongside other first timers. I thought the UKSG events app was excellent, I really enjoyed using it and it definitely enhanced my conference experience. It made it a lot easier to choose which events to attend.

The hotel was lovely and I really cannot emphasise how appreciative I am of being able to attend this conference. Thank you, UKSG! The setup was mind-blowing. The weather was fantastic and it was lovely being able to walk down to the beach for a little break. I thought the venue was well suited for the event with the larger sessions in the hall and the breakout sessions in the smaller, seminar rooms. I admit, I got a little lost at first but there was always someone nearby willing to help. The food was fantastic, the quiz was hilariously impossible and the company was great. I met loads of inspiring people and really enjoyed the social events. The conference dinner and funfair were so much more than I ever imagined. I still cannot believe that there was an entire fun fair set up for us.

My favourite talks:

- Meet the new professionals: it was great to learn about their experiences whilst studying, and there was an interesting discussion on the floor about how library schools are preparing students for the profession
- The predatory publishing phenomenon: actors, bystanders, consequences – this was something I have never heard about before and I am really glad I went to this talk because

- now I know
- Search and discovery: defining user behaviour – simple changes can sometimes be the most effective
 - Students, customers or partners? ensuring the student voice is heard through effective market research – it is so important to find out what your users want
 - Engaging students, shaping services: the changing face of student engagement at The Hive – I really liked how involved the students were in this library and 'The Bees' is the best name ever for the student library helpers
 - International gamification of the library: very inspiring – I cannot wait to play games during inductions next year

A high point for me was feeling inspired, enthused and motivated by many of the talks. Another high point was the conference dinner and fun fair which involved my first ever attempt on a bucking bronco. A low point was feeling a little nervous on the Monday morning and losing my purse on the way home (it turned up eventually).

It was interesting to see the various participants of the knowledge community in one place and to witness their discussions, their concerns and their thoughts and opinions. The conference opened my eyes to the variety of roles that are out there for information professionals; one publisher asked why more librarians aren't interested in the publishing profession. I had not even considered this as an option and at the moment I am very happy to be working in libraries, but it is comforting to know that the librarian's skillset would be welcomed, should I decide to try something new in the future.

I hope I can attend again in the future and thanks again UKSG.

More feedback

We also heard that the conference was an "Amazing experience all round! Being so new to the profession, it filled me with enthusiasm and excitement about things to go away and discover in more depth. I met some fantastic people and will benefit from these connections in the future. Fantastic location too!" as well as "Continues to be a relevant and enjoyable event - with a good range of speakers and topics. I always come away feeling energised and inspired. Feels like good value for money to me too. Keep up the good work."

Jo Alcock said, "I absolutely loved the conference - thanks so much to everyone involved. I [blogged](#) my thoughts."

Needless to say that the UKSG committee is very happy about all the feedback and that we all look forward to the big 40th anniversary.



This UKSG Editorial is taken from the industry newsletter *UKSG eNews*, published every two weeks exclusively for UKSG members. The newsletter provides up-to-the-minute news of current issues and developments within the global knowledge community.

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