Conference Report

Conceptions of Library and Information Science

Jenna Hartel
Faculty of Information, University of Toronto, Toronto, Canada
E-mail: jenna.hartel@utoronto.ca

The 10th *Conceptions of Library and Information Science* (CoLIS) was held June 16–19, 2019, at the Department of Library and Information Science and Book Studies at the Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia. CoLIS is a triennial series of international conferences for the exploration and exchange of ideas in the field of Library and Information Science and its related disciplines. The final *CoLIS 10 Programme and Book of Abstracts* is available online (Merčun & Vilar, 2019), and selected full papers will appear in a special issue of *Information Research* in late 2019. The capital city of Ljubljana, with its stunning architecture, charming café-lined canal, and delightful spring weather was an ideal location for CoLIS 10; 115 delegates from 19 countries attended.

Keynote addresses occurred each morning of the conference and engaged the audience in the simmering frontiers of Library and Information Science. On the first day, Sarah T. Roberts, of the University of California, Los Angeles, presented *Behind the screen: the internet's invisible information workers* (Merčun & Vilar, 2019, p. 13). She reported on the phenomenon of content moderation in social media firms and its hidden, global, human toll. On the second day of CoLIS, Sabina Leonelli, from the University of Exeter delivered *New frontiers in data curation: A view from scientific practice* (p. 14). In the context of Open Science, Leonelli described the enormous logistical, scientific and ethical challenges that exist in making Big Data accessible – and called for information professionals to be mediators of the process. As the third and final keynote, Ross J. Todd, of Rutgers University shared *Safe information lives: Conceptions and practices* (p. 15). Drawing from his 48-year career in education and library science, Todd reflected upon the cluttered theoretical landscape associated with digital literacy and young people; introduced the concept of digital well-being; and pointed to potential future research methods for understanding youth's experience online.

The 54 papers at CoLIS 10 were wide-ranging and stimulating. Scholars targeted the perennial questions of Library and Information Science while also introducing novel views. My own contribution, *Turn, turn, turn* (Merčun & Vilar, 2019, p. 17), surveyed seven theoretical movements that have swept through our field in the past half-century and included a sing-along. Other delegates tackled chestnuts such as *information need* (p. 34); examined the *usefulness* (p. 33) of information; probed the

elusive matter of information's *context* (p. 29); and revisited the intriguing notion of *mentefacts* (p. 23). A number of presenters took linguistic approaches to interrogate the origins and meaning of terms. There was an explication of *identity* (p. 20) in information behavior research; inquiry into the origin of *informatology* and *informatics* (p. 19); and scrutiny of the rhetoric of *holism* (p. 18) in our literature. CoLIS has always been a place for critical views, and in Ljubljana trenchant statements were made on the need for the library to develop a more *critical technical practice* (p. 25), while concerns were voiced that bibliometric measures of scholarly performance flatten (p. 51) the human being. Many other great ideas and insights were proffered; again, see the *CoLIS 10 Programme and Book of Abstracts* (Merčun & Vilar, 2019) for the complete picture.

In addition to the papers, there were ten posters on display. One poster advanced a new model for the American public library (Merčn & Vilar, 2019, pp. 74–76) and another documented the information behavior of international students (Merčn & Vilar, 2019, pp. 77–80) who are studying abroad. CoLIS also was the site for five alternative, interactive events, such as a conversation café about time (Merčun & Vilar, 2019, pp. 112–116) in information behavior research and a session on the information landscapes of refugees (Merčun & Vilar, 2019, pp. 103–104). A doctoral workshop occurred the day before the conference in which 15 budding information scientists pitched and practiced their visions. Everyone feasted on Slovenian delicacies at the conference banquet in Ljubljana Castle!

The CoLIS 10 team deserves congratulations and thanks for a terrific conference. Maja Žumer served as chair, with Polona Vilar as co-chair. Programme chairs for papers were Jonathan Furner and Lyn Robinson. David Bawden, Jenna Hartel, and Theresa Anderson organized alternative events, while Jack Andersen and Tomaz Bartol coordinated the doctoral workshop. The local planning committee included Tanja Merčun Kariž and Jan Pisanski, who managed endless administrative and logistical details. No conference can occur without sponsors, and CoLIS was co-funded by the Institute of Information Science and Emerald Publishing. Mark your calendars! CoLIS 11 will be hosted by Oslo Metropolitan University in Norway during the summer of 2022.

Reference

Merčun, T., & Vilar, P. (Eds.). (2019). *Conceptions of Library and Information Science 10th international conference: Book of abstracts*. Ljubljana, Slovenia: University of Ljubljana. Available at https://e-knjige.ff.uni-lj.si/znanstvena-zalozba/catalog/book/161