



**Libraries
Connected**

Annual seminar 2018 Evaluation report



1. Introduction

This year's seminar took place on 7–8 June at the University of Warwick. Those attending heard from a wide range of speakers both from the library sector and beyond. 2018 was a landmark year for the Society of Chief Librarians as the seminar saw the launch of the new organisation and charity 'Libraries Connected'. It also examined the ways in which public libraries are embracing the continuously changing digital world in order to engage with a rapidly developing audience.

The event was fully booked and attended by 144 delegates across the two days with representatives from library services and partner organisations such as The Reading Agency, CILIP and ASCEL. Most people attending gave positive feedback, saying it was a useful event which they would recommend to a colleague.

2. Attendance



A total of 144 delegates attended across the two days, with 119 attending on both days and 25 attending for just one day, this was an increase in attendance from 2017 when there were 127 delegates. There were also an additional 22 people at the seminar representing event sponsors.

The majority of those attending were Heads of Library Service or Senior Library Managers; with just over 70 library services represented, along with senior representatives from key partners

including The British Library, The Reading Agency, ASCEL, DCMS, CILIP and the BBC.

Eleven companies sponsored the seminar (more companies had applied to sponsor the event but were turned down due to limited display space at the venue) and a small number of sponsors gave five-minute 'flash talks' to delegates in the lecture theatre.

Carnegie UK also contributed £6000 which was used to fund places for two aspiring leaders to join the seminar planning group and enabled Andy Wright and Rachel Heydecker from Carnegie UK along with four library workers who had been involved in the Engaging Libraries projects to attend the seminar and brief delegates on their projects during two workshops. Feedback from the people who attended thanks to the Carnegie UK Trust funding showed that, thanks to participating in and attending the event they had; increased their confidence, been inspired by what they heard and built and strengthened their professional network.

Here are a few of their comments:

'I heard about a number of exciting projects in libraries that I can add to my 'future projects' list. Such inspiration!'



'As I am new in post as Head of service, I felt being part of the seminar planning group gave me a lot of confidence. To be able to share my ideas and support the planning of an established and well attended seminar for other heads of services' and library professionals was both humbling and rewarding.'

'it was a great chance to network and make it clearer how I need to develop in order to move forwards in the library service. It was also mind blowing how much innovative work is taking place in the sector, due to the enthusiasm and dedication of library staff. Both myself and my manager came away with pages of ideas to take back to our library. There is nothing that compares to hearing about projects and ideas from those who imagined and facilitated them first hand.'

Funding from Carnegie UK Trust also enabled Katri Vanttinen, Library Director, Helsinki City Library to attend and speak at the seminar. Katri closed the seminar by talking about libraries in Finland and the development of the new Oodi library in Helsinki which will be opening later in 2018. Katri was also able to attend the full two days of the seminar which gave delegates an opportunity to network and chat to her in an informal way and for Katri to find out more about the work taking place in UK libraries. Katri said,

'I very much enjoyed listening to the very good presentations and making acquaintances with so many new colleagues.'

Katri's talk generated a number of positive tweets including these:

Libraries' duties in Finland include promoting social and cultural dialogue - think that is such a powerful and fundamental role for libraries @libsconnected @kativaan #SCL2018



Brilliant talk by @kativaan from Helsinki City library. Digitisation shouldn't be for the sake of it, should be grounded in improving existing service. #SCL2018



Our evaluation also showed that Katri's talk ranked as the most enjoyable on Friday's programme with several people saying it was the highlight of the seminar for them.

In addition to the Carnegie UK funded places, free places were offered to 27 people including the seminar planning group, speakers, workshop leaders and external Libraries Connected Trustees.



3. Evaluation

An electronic evaluation survey was sent to all delegates after the event and 61 people responded. Not all respondents answered all questions therefore the percentages are based on those that answered the question rather than all 61 participants.

3.1 General thoughts

When asked if the seminar was a useful event, 98% of respondents said that it was with only one person saying they were 'unsure'. Again 98% of people also said they would recommend the seminar to a colleague and 93% thought it was a good development opportunity for other members of staff.

Comments showed that people had enjoyed networking with colleagues, hearing about innovative work taking place in libraries and hearing about Libraries Connected - although one delegate said they hadn't come away feeling as inspired as they had in past years. People also said that they felt the seminar was a good development opportunity for upcoming or new library managers, but some would like to see more younger colleagues involved in leading the sessions. Comments also showed that library services would have like to offer more places to their staff but had been limited in the numbers they could send due to budget restrictions.

When asked what they most valued about the seminar, responses could be grouped into the following four categories:

- Networking
- Sharing innovation, ideas and good practice
- Space away from work to reflect
- Hearing from inspirational speakers.

Comments included:

'The networking and the speakers. The seminar brought a lot of interesting speakers and it was really useful to learn what others have been doing, particularly the LOFIE [Libraries Opportunities for Everyone Innovation Fund] projects.'

'networking; the chance to reflect; the opportunity to hear about new trends, challenges, and developments.'

'Time away from my job to think about professional matters and discuss ideas with other heads of service.'

'It is always good to get away from the day job and remind oneself of all the great work going on in other library services that could be replicated in some way in our own. It's refreshing to be around people who are always so positive about libraries and change!'



3.2 Thursday's programme

Delegates had the opportunity to attend one of 12 workshops on Thursday morning and a second on Thursday afternoon and analysis of the respondents showed that at least one person completing the survey had attended each of the workshops. On Thursday morning, 49% of people said the workshop they had attended was 'excellent', 47% said it was 'useful' and 4% said it had been 'disappointing'. Afternoon workshops had a better response with 57% saying they were 'excellent', 40% 'useful' and only 3% saying 'disappointing'.



Feedback showed that people had appreciated the opportunity to hear practical tips and discuss ideas within the workshops while constructive comments showed delegates in some workshops would have appreciated more time to discuss the topics and a more interactive session.

Overall, 37% of respondents found Thursday's speakers 'excellent' and 63% of people found them 'useful'. The Libraries Opportunities for Everyone Innovation project ignite talks were particularly popular with 62% of respondents saying they were 'excellent' and 38% saying they were 'useful' with comments showing the short five minute ignite presentation format had worked well. The section 'Building on Our Past for a Stronger Future' was well received with 38% saying it was 'excellent', 55% 'useful' and only 7% 'disappointing'. Comments showed that Nick Serota's speech had been particularly useful with a few people saying they would have liked to hear more about the future plans of Libraries Connected.

3.3 Friday's programme

The majority (58%) of respondents said that Friday's programme had overall been 'useful' with 37% saying it was 'excellent' and 5% 'disappointing'.

Delegates were asked to rank Friday's session from most to least useful, then again from most to least enjoyable. Comments showed people had found them hard to rank because they had enjoyed them all and a couple of people explained that they hadn't seen all the speakers which may have skewed the results slightly.

When asked to rank Friday's talks from most to least useful the panel session 'Future Workforce' was identified as the most useful (Chart 1). When asked to rank Friday's talks from most to least enjoyable, Katri Vanttinen's talk was considered most enjoyable (Chart 2).

Chart 1: Friday talks ranked from most useful (1) to least useful (6)

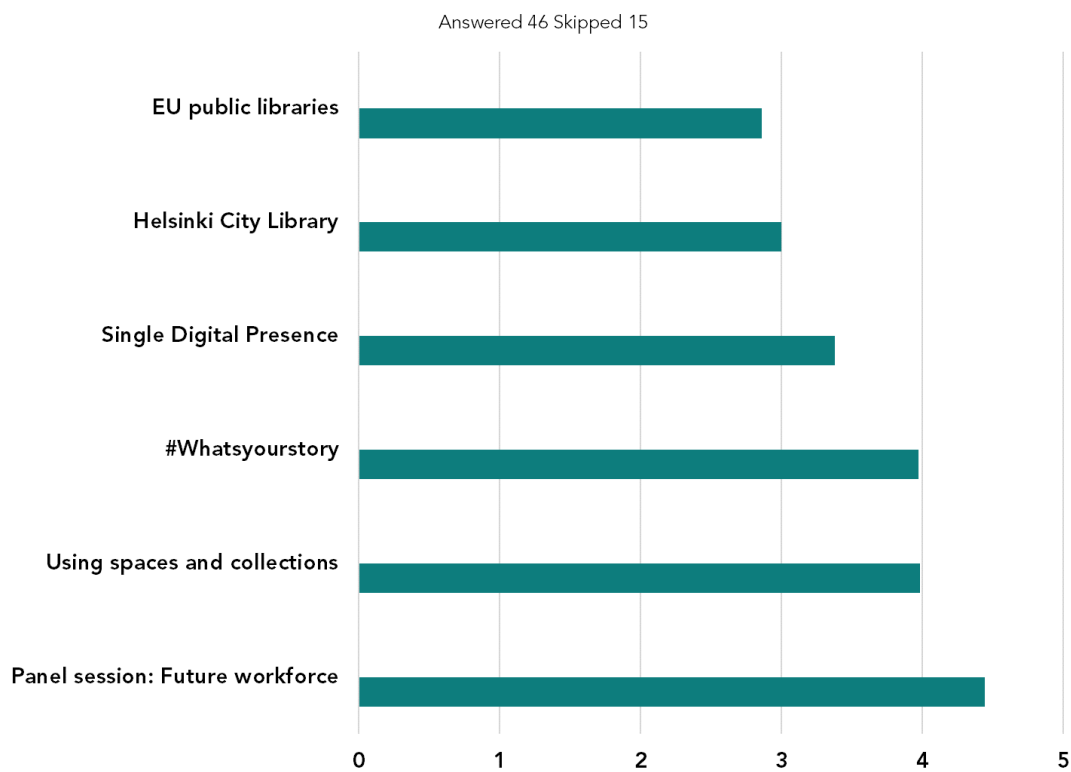
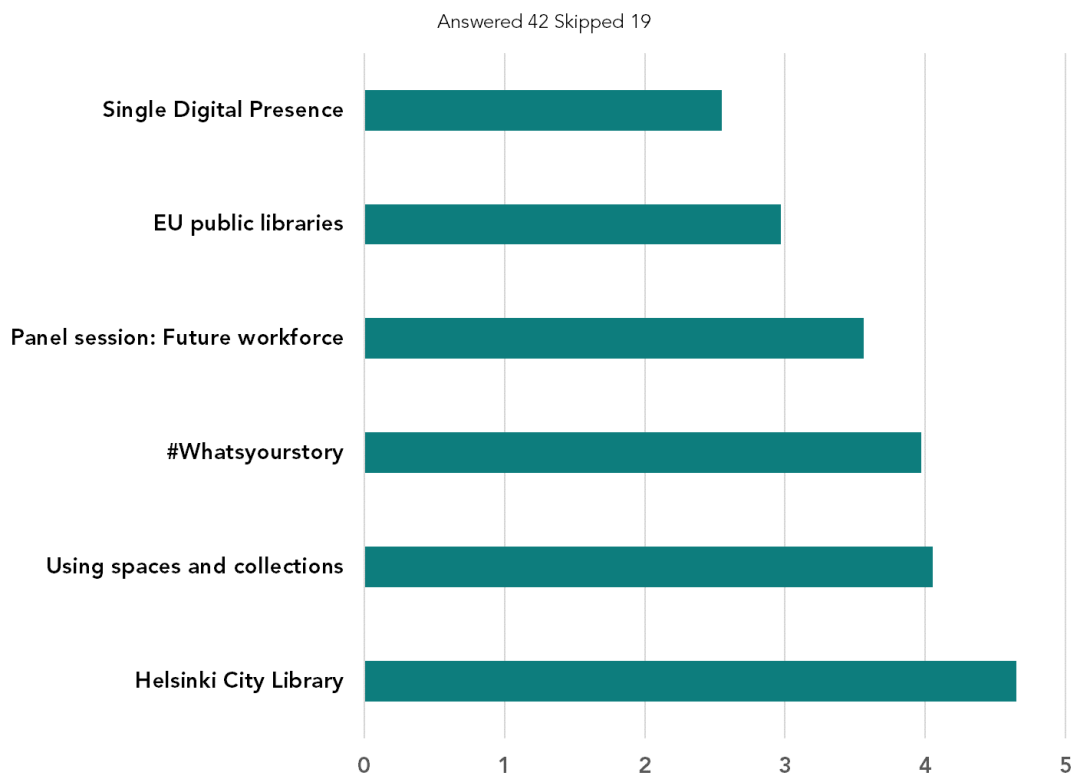


Chart 2: Friday talks ranked from most enjoyable (1) to least enjoyable (6)



3.4 The seminar overall

When asked what the highlight of the seminar was a lot of people said that they found it hard to choose just one highlight and they had enjoyed the range of speakers on offer. Katri Vanttinen from Helsinki was the speaker most often mentioned as a highlight, others who were singled out included Alison Millar from Leeds, Andrea Winn from Manchester, Hannah



Thominet from Libraries 2020 and Nick Serota from ACE. Other highlights for people were the Libraries Opportunities for Everyone Innovation Fund talks, the Future Workforce panel session, workshops and the Libraries Connected launch.

In addition to the programme some people stated that the highlight for them had been the opportunity to network with colleagues and one person said delivering a workshop had been the highlight for them as it had boosting their self-confidence.

Here are some of the comments:

'Personally it was delivering the Engaging Libraries workshop. From this, I re-gained confidence in presenting ideas and projects to other professionals. I haven't had the opportunity to do this for some time, and it was excellent to have the experience of delivering a workshop. Those attending the workshop were interested in the topic, were supportive of the project and asked some really insightful questions.'

'the Talks - interesting and inspiring. Especially those about Leadership in the panel session Future Workforce. Meeting other likeminded professional. Making connections with people and feeling valued Valuable networking opportunities'

'Hearing about the developments in Helsinki, but also the social media campaign in Leeds - which was something very concrete and relevant to put into action'

'The Launch of Libraries Connected - it made me feel we had come a long way since I started to attend SCL in 2010.'

When asked what the most useful change to the 2018 seminar would have been suggestions included, having workshops on both days, more opportunities to engage during the workshops; some of which people felt were small presentations rather than workshops, a new format for sponsors, a speaker at dinner and a less formal dinner on Thursday but most comments showed people were happy with the event as it was.

Feedback showed that 96% of people felt the overall organisation of the seminar was 'excellent' with only 4% saying 'adequate' with the only suggestion being that the event details could have been made available sooner on the website.

When asked to share any other comments about the seminar most were positive but one suggested that there should be a buddy system for delegates who haven't attended before. A buddy system is offered via a tick box on the booking form but perhaps this could be better promoted as this comment showed that not everyone is aware of the scheme.

Here are some of the positive comments received:

'Supportive, inspiring and of high standard both in hospitality and content It was my first seminar, attending as part of Engaging Libraries. I'm really pleased I had the opportunity to attend as I gained a lot in terms of both my personal and professional development. I feel a renewed sense of motivational and confidence. I'm inspired to progress further along my career path.'

'There was a very relaxed feeling to the seminar this year and the programme all felt relevant. I am glad I had the opportunity to go. Thank you for all the hard work I know goes into running a conference!'

'I thought that the speakers and topics of the sessions were much better this year, compared to previous years. Each had a link to libraries and relevance to my day to day work. This has not been the case in some previous years when the talks have been about a much broader topic that has lacked relevance.'

3.5 The venue

When asked about the venue the majority (64%) of delegates said the meeting rooms have been 'excellent', 91% said the food have been 'excellent', 80% said the bedrooms had been 'excellent'. No delegates had indicated any of the facilities had been 'poor'.

3.6 Sponsorship

For the second time in 2018 there were four slots in the main programme where sponsors were offered the opportunity to speak to delegates in a five minute 'flash talk'. All four slots sold out very quickly with more sponsors asking to be held in reserve in case of any cancellations.

Feedback showed the 'flash talks' had been well received by delegates with the majority (82%) of delegates said they had been 'useful', 10% saying they were 'excellent' and only 8% saying they had been 'disappointing'. Comments showed that the delegates felt the talks had varied in quality with Lorensbergs' being most successful. Not all delegates felt the talks added to the event while others commented that they were a good way to engage the sponsors, but they should be kept to five minutes. When asked if they would be happy to see short talks from sponsors again the majority (76%) said 'yes', 22% said 'maybe' and 2% (one person) said 'no'.

When asked for feedback, sponsors said the seminar had been a positive experience for them with conversations taking place on their stands and over meal times and a reasonable flow of delegates visiting the exhibition area. Suggestions for improvements included anything that encourages more footfall in the exhibition area, such as asking sponsors for any news, information or incentives that we could mention to remind people to visit sponsors' stands during breaks. Some sponsors also asked about contributing to a delegate pack.



When asked for suggestions for future seminar sponsors there were only three suggestions – Princh (wi-fi printing), Demco and Bouncepad or similar tech solution companies.

3.7 Suggestions for the 2019 seminar

The majority (65%) of people said that they would like to see the seminar stay the same size and continue to use Scarman House, while 35% would like the event to be held in a larger venue to allow more heads of service and future leaders to attend.



When asked what type of workshops they would like to see the majority (73%) said they would like the workshops to be an opportunity to learn from others, 31% said they would like the workshops to allow them to actively contribute to developments and 22% said they would like workshops to be based around speakers' presentations. Comments showed that a mix of all these approaches would be welcomed. A large majority of 90% said they would prefer small workshops with a maximum of 12 delegates.

When asked for ideas about the 2019 seminar ideas included:

- Sweating your assets - making our suppliers work harder
- Community engagement and engaging differently with library users
- Developing staff/volunteers/future workforce
- Leadership
- Workforce – changes to the skills mix and what this means in practice
- Income generation, business development and entrepreneurship
- Stock matters
- Partnerships
- Culture
- Lobbying for change
- Driving up performance
- Changing public perceptions of libraries: National image and brand
- Libraries in a 'fake news' world
- How libraries services can support their council's wide agendas and influence corporate thinking
- Alternative delivery models
- Doing more with less (budget)
- Using library services and library buildings for delivering other public facing services/contracts/integrated services
- Update on ACE's 10-year strategy
- A session about the role of Libraries Connected; and how we and library services on the ground can work together.

3.8 Masterclasses

In addition to the annual seminar, Libraries Connected has run one day masterclasses focusing on a current topic of interest to the public library sector. When asked for ideas for future masterclasses, the following topics were suggested:

- Community engagement
- Library NPOs
- Marketing a library service - how to create the 'WOW' factor
- Working in a political environment;
- Working with young adults
- Funding applications e.g. Partnerships with higher education
- Alternative service models e.g. community libraries, the benefits and best practice of stepping away and being less hands on (more positive spin) and the use of volunteers
- Future of income generation and the cashless library.
- Libraries as cultural businesses - how to find finance from different sources

3.9 Recommendations

The seminar evaluation shows that the 2018 event was attended by a wide range of library services and partners. The programme was well received by delegates who had enjoyed the range of speakers and workshops on offer.

Hearing from an international speaker had been a highlight for quite a few people and so this would be something to consider again for future seminars. The five minute ignite presentations had also worked well and been commended by a number of delegates. Suggestions for improvements from delegates included running workshops across both days, making the workshops more interactive, involving more aspiring leaders.

Most people who completed the survey were happy with the facilities on offer at the Scarman House conference venue and would like the event to remain here in future years offering a similar sized conference.



4. Outcomes

Thank you to everyone who took time to complete the evaluation survey.

Here are a few of the ways that your feedback has shaped the planning of the 2019 seminar.

You said	In 2019, Libraries Connected will
The seminar should stay the same size and continue to use Scarman House	Hold the event at Scarman House
You enjoyed the five-minute ignite presentations	Include ignite talks in the programme
You would like more involvement from aspiring leaders	Use funding from Carnegie UK Trust to offer free places to Library Lab Partners and cover the expenses for an aspiring leader to be part of the seminar planning group. We will also fund two bursaries for aspiring leaders
You would like the workshops to be an opportunity to learn from others and to be more interactive	Offer a mix of workshops that prioritise knowledge sharing and provide a clearer brief to workshop leaders asking them to include an interactive element
You would prefer small workshops with a maximum of 12 delegates	Continue to have small breakout workshops as part of the programme
You wanted to see workshops running on both days	Continue to run workshop on Thursday only as room hire and accommodation for leaders across two days would increase seminar costs
You want to hear more about our future plans	Include an update on our plans in the programme
You enjoyed hearing about innovative work taking place in libraries	Include ignite talks, workshops and panel sessions to highlight innovative work taking place in libraries
You enjoyed hearing from sponsors in short 'flash talks'	Offer 'flash talk' slots to sponsors as part of the programme
You had enjoyed networking with colleagues	Continue to build in plenty of opportunities for networking
You wanted a speaker at dinner on Thursday evening	Not have a dinner speaker because this would reduce the time to network with colleagues
You wanted a less formal dinner on Thursday	Continue to run a seminar dinner but offer better guidance around dress codes etc. so everyone knows what to expect
You would like to offer more places to staff but were limited due to budget restrictions	Fund two bursaries for aspiring leaders
You would like the event details to be made available sooner on the website	Share event details as soon as they are available on our website and provide updates on Twitter
You wanted a buddy system for delegates who haven't attended before	Continue to provide a buddy system and improve the way this is promoted



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