

Summary of My Experiences at IFLA WLIC 2013

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How you found it

IFLA WLIC 2013 was well organized. The events of the conference revealed tireless commitment, collaboration, co-operation and goodwill of numerous individuals and companies, Sage and Ex Libris being noteworthy of special mention. It also indicated that they planned for every detail and that they had the participant at the forefront of their planning activities. This was illustrated by flawless logistic support, the attention given to the small yet essential provisions they made for all participants, for example, bus cards, rain coat for our trip to Sentosa, just in the event it rained, an abundant supply of water and mints as well as free computer / Internet access for participants without computers but desirous of communicating with family, friends and co-workers. These minute provisions were welcomed and lent an atmosphere of warmth to the occasion. The volunteers who assisted with the varying details of the conference were omniscient, helpful, empathetic and pleasant; they accented the experience. The conference was an excellent mix of professional learning, entertainment and cultural exposure thus producing unforgettable memories. On the cultural scene I will not forget that it was at IFLA I got my first henna. On the professional scene, I will not forget the trend-setting ideas shared. The IFLA WLIC 2013 planning committee did an excellent job.

What you learned/found most informative

All the sessions were very informative. Therefore, having to narrow these into the categorization of most informative presents some difficulties. Notwithstanding this, I have placed the IFLA Market: @your library session, the marketing session, the Academic & Research Libraries (ARL) Hot Topics session and the exhibitions into this categorization. The IFLA Market: @your library showcased the partnership between IFLA/ALA and countries across the globe and the impact that their campaign is making within the library and information arena. Their activities, viewed through the lens of modernization theory, underscore the critical role these actors, or should I say titans of our profession have played in development. As per expectation the

marketing session was impressive and informative. It was interesting to learn the different types of initiatives adapted to market libraries, with the least cost; in this regard I offer my commendation to the session presenters. The ARL Hot Topics session provided an interesting and informative space for learning about contemporary issues in academic libraries. The exhibition of an array of library & information products and services by various vendors, including Sage and Ex Libris, were instructive. They provided rich exposure to the infinite possibilities in services and products for all types of libraries and information centers to assist them in catapulting their impact on their various user communities.

What you will be taking back to practice

The cataloging sessions exposed me to international best practices and trends, which will certainly enhance the cataloging lectures I facilitate. The sessions provided exposure to infinite possibilities in subject access, expanding MARC metadata services with linked open, new methods of indexing and cataloging and how these can be used to complement traditional cataloging for audiovisual and multimedia. Further, the marketing session has provided new insights, which I will share with my library's marketing and customer service teams. The session provided practical and adaptable examples of marketing on a "shoe-string". The STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Medicine) session as well as the academic and research libraries hot topic session have informed my delivery of STEM library and information services, especially in the area of reference service practice.

What benefit you felt that it had

There were a number of sessions specially designed for young professionals to provide them with a strong foundation for building a successful career in librarianship. This was illustrated in several sessions held, for example, the session on how to get published in journals. Additionally, the session on education and training for agricultural and information professionals as well as the session on education and training for STEM was particularly instructive for professional development and continuing education. The cultural exposure on the professional level as well as the social level provided yet another opportunity for learning and adaptation. The tours to the various Asian libraries provided added best practices to model, especially in the area of library building and design. The conference also provided an opportunity to hear presentations on

studies done abroad that could be replicated in my home library, thereby enhancing the local library and information studies literature in Jamaica. The conference provided a research forum for discussing issues relating to various branches of librarianship, it facilitated opportunities for new relationships/partnerships, professional development and exposure to new trends and issues in global librarianship.

In closing, IFLA WLIC had an excellent driver along with a team of well motivated, results oriented and dedicated colleagues. If IFLA WLIC 2013 is any indication of the quality of future conferences then I am certainly looking forward to attending IFLA WLIC 2015 in South Africa; this should no doubt be another conference gathering punctuated with learning and entertainment. Additionally, if IFLA WLIC 2013 is any indication of future conferences then every library professional and paraprofessional should attend at least one IFLA conference in their lifetime. An event like this however, certainly did not begin overnight. I thank the planners, contributors and collaborators. IFLA (ARL Section in particular), Sage, Ex Libris, and the University of the West Indies made it possible for me and others to attend this conference. Through their engagement of value-adding initiatives they have clearly articulated a place for themselves in librarianship and information. I am certainly indebted to these sponsors and I consider my experience a privilege. Thank you.