



Feature

The 7th International Evidence Based Library and Information Practice Conference (EBLIP7): Conference Commentaries and Reflections

© 2013. This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons-Attribution-Noncommercial-Share Alike License 2.5 Canada (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/2.5/ca/>), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly attributed, not used for commercial purposes, and, if transformed, the resulting work is redistributed under the same or similar license to this one.

Rick Stoddart, Assessment Librarian, Oregon State University Libraries & Press, Oregon State University, USA

Can you have a crush on a methodology? Well, I am little embarrassed to say I left the University of Saskatchewan quite enamoured with evidence based library and information practice. As an assessment librarian, I am attracted to all aspects of librarianship that elegantly bridge library practice and evidence based decision making. The EBLIP7 conference was definitely jam packed with this sort of smartly done librarianship. Each conference presentation, lightning talk, and poster session incorporated the beauty of evidence based practice with library content such as instruction, space planning, outreach, and research methodologies. The conference program itself was also spiced with verve and pluck especially in the Poster Madness and Lightning Strikes sessions. Likewise, let's not forget about whimsy and mischief at the Evidence Based Hootenanny either. These events keep the conference lively like the bubbles in a glass of champagne. What was not to love about EBLIP7?

The keynote by Denise Koufogiannakis was quite inspirational and I took away her

framework for the differing types of evidence and discussion of an amended evidence based model for librarianship to share with my colleagues. I attended presentations about the intersection of evidenced based practice and librarian research agendas, virtual reference, library leadership, and student performance. Librarian research agendas and virtual reference were particularly timely topics for my library, and I gained some new perspectives in these areas to put to use right away when I returned home.

Personally, I was encouraged that EBLIP7 was inclusive of librarians of all stripes, including medical, public, school, and academic librarians. I guess I am not the only librarian charmed by the potential of evidence based practices to influence effective decision-making in libraries. I was grateful for the opportunity the conference afforded to network with other assessment librarians. I think one of my most important takeaways was being able to build deeper connections between library assessment and evidence based library and information practice. Lorie Kloda's lightning strike session the last day really helped put the library assessment puzzle piece into the overall evidence based librarianship picture.



Generally, there was a lot of energy and camaraderie at EBLIP7 that was certainly contagious throughout the conference. I definitely left Saskatoon excited about the idea of evidence based practices in libraries. I attribute this ongoing conference enthusiasm to the planning and efforts of Virginia Wilson, the conference chair, and the rest of the conference planning committee. Continued kudos on a conference well done!

Perhaps it is the lingering buzz from the cheaply priced beer at the Evidence Based Hootenanny or the sugar rush from the Saskatoon berry pie at the ribbon cutting ceremony at new Centre for Evidence Based Library & Information Practice, but let it be known that EBLIP7 was a blast, and I can't wait for the next one.

Daniel Hsieh, Princeton Junction, New Jersey, USA

I attended EBLIP7 in July, 2013 at University of Saskatchewan (UofS) as a delegate's companion and stayed in the campus dormitory. The selection of the UofS as the conference site was

an excellent choice. The campus is so beautiful and the university offers the perfect infrastructure for a conference. The simple lifestyle on campus was interruption-free, which helped me focus on what I wanted to accomplish: I finished writing the major part of my scientific manuscript during my stay in the dormitory.

EBLIP7 organizers arranged two exciting tours for the delegate's companions: one was a visit to a local brewing company and the other a visit to the famous Canadian Light Source synchrotron at the UofS. As a chemical engineer working in the pharmaceutical industry, I found these tours very interesting and educational.

Tasting all kinds of beer was the first step of visiting the local brewery. Fortunately after this tasting event, I was still fully awake. All kinds of grains suitable for the beer making process were displayed at the entrance, which were also available for purchase by local beer makers. The basic tools and recipes for beer making were also displayed to help us understand the beer making process. One interesting part of this

process is the liquid seal associated with the fermentation reactor.

This liquid seal has two functions: first, this seal prevents oxygen from getting into the fermentation process, because oxygen will ruin the taste of the beer. Second, this seal can be used as an indicator of the end of fermentation process. During beer making, carbon dioxide is produced as a product and can escape from the fermenter through the liquid seal. When the fermentation process is complete, no carbon dioxide will bubble through the seal. This signals the end of the fermentation process and the beer is almost ready to be harvested.

A senior research scientist at the Canadian Light Source introduced us to the famous Canadian synchrotron—an excellent introduction on how the moving particles are generated at a speed close to light speed and how the synchrotron can be applied to real life. I was particularly impressed with two amazing applications: the identification of the origin of diamond from extremely low levels of mineral impurities, and the reason why arthritis is so painful. This is because there are numerous tiny spikes from the bone at the joints penetrating into skin. These kinds of spikes cannot be detected using regular X-rays, but they can be observed from the results generated using the synchrotron.

During the conference, we had a chance to attend a food festival in downtown Saskatoon, a Taste of Saskatchewan, where we also enjoyed a live concert. On the way back to the university, we walked along the South Saskatchewan River, a beautiful view.

The arrangements for EBLIP7 were excellent and I brought back a souvenir given by EBLIP7, a book entitled *Prairie Dreams*, which contained photographs from photographer Courtney Milne. The photos in this book are a fond reminder of my trip to Saskatoon.

Iffat Ahmad, University Library, University of Saskatchewan, Canada

I work at the University Library, University of Saskatchewan, and this year I was a delegate at the EBLIP7 Conference hosted by the University Library. I was able to attend this conference as a recipient of the Marjorie Clelland scholarship. This is an annual scholarship created in the memory of a highly respected colleague who is no longer with us. With her dedication and hard work, Marjorie Clelland left a legacy that inspires us to continue to better ourselves. The scholarship in her name annually allows library staff to attend a conference related to academia and library work. Upon being awarded this scholarship, I gladly chose to attend a conference right here at the University of Saskatchewan.

I attended a variety of sessions on a broad range of topics that were both interesting and informational. The papers presented covered subjects such as copyright as it relates to EBLIP, as well as noise control in libraries. All of the presenters were knowledgeable and enjoyable to listen to. I truly felt that all of the sessions were well worth attending. I cannot stress enough what a fun experience it was to attend EBLIP7 here at my place of work.

Having never been a delegate at a conference, I enjoyed the novelty of being one. It gave me a new perspective of the University – as viewed by a visitor to the campus. This gave me a new appreciation as to what a truly beautiful campus it is. Having never attended a conference before, I had nothing to compare it to. However, I am in agreement with fellow delegates who said that it was incredibly efficient and smoothly run. Virginia Wilson, her organizing team, and the many volunteers and session facilitators did a splendid job in ensuring that EBLIP7 was a huge success.

**Sandra Stubbs, University of the West Indies
Mona, Western Jamaica Campus, West Indies**

The Caribbean was represented by four librarians, all from the University of the West Indies (UWI), including the University Librarian from the St. Augustine Campus in Trinidad and Tobago, and the Campus Librarian from the Mona Campus of UWI in Kingston, Jamaica.

I previously attended *EBLIP6* in 2011 in Manchester, England, and a Conference of the Association of Caribbean University Research and Institutional Libraries (ACURIL) in 2010 in the Dominican Republic. At the latter, the conference was themed around evidence based library and information practice, and presentations were led by some of the chief proponents of EBLIP, and so I was eager to investigate how colleagues worldwide had embraced and advanced the evolving concepts and models of evidence based discussion and application in libraries.

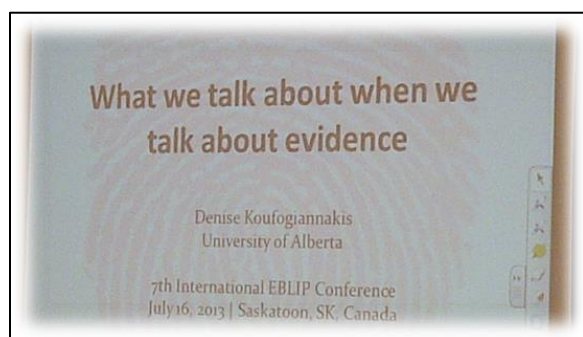
I was not disappointed. The opening keynote address by Dr. Denise Koufogiannakis, entitled “What we talk about when we talk about evidence,” set an excellent tone for EBLIP7. She discussed the evidence based practice movement with its origins in the field of medicine, to what is meant by evidence in the context of library and information practice and how such evidence might be utilized in practical ways to inform decision making. She spoke of four types of evidence, namely anecdotal, causal, expert, and experiential, and then examined categories of hard versus soft evidence. This was especially useful for those who were still trying to understand the paradigms and models in what is now commonly known as to as the international EBLIP movement.

In making selections of sessions to attend from the many concurrent choices available, I was happy to be able to participate in presentations of research and discussions of current practice in



Evadne McLean and Sandra Stubbs from Jamaica in foreground

my areas of interest, including noise management in libraries, copyright, virtual reference, prevailing versus ideal research environments, and changes in academic library space. As expected, the poster sessions were very informative. A number of poster presenters incorporated the useful facility whereby participants were able to use our mobile devices to scan the posters for instant access to both the presented and additional information via their online Web pages.



My Caribbean colleagues and I especially enjoyed the Lightning Strikes, which saw presenters very creatively presenting evidence based projects in the allotted time of just five minutes each. These strikes were much more engaging and information filled than one might anticipate. Audience reactions and applause underscored their utility. Congratulations to all presenters and the organizing committees for this and the successful staging of the entire conference.

Venue Appreciation

The venue chosen for EBLIP7 was picturesque. I was among the EBLIP7 delegates who chose accommodation in the halls of residence on the beautiful campus of the University Saskatchewan. This afforded walking access to the conference sessions, which were all held at the Campus. I was particularly fascinated with the rocks in the permanent exhibition displayed in the Geology Building.

Hospitality was superb. The generosity of the people of Saskatoon carried over into all social programmes. I don't remember going to a conference before where the consensus among attendees was that we were perhaps overfed.

Centre for Evidence Based Library & Information Practice

During the conference we were pleased to be part of the historic opening of the Centre for Evidence Based Library & Information Practice in the Murray Library. This function included a ribbon-cutting ceremony (followed by lunch) with University Library Dean Vicki Williamson officiating.

Social Programmes

Part of what makes conferences memorable is the opportunities to engage with the local and international populace outside of the conference setting, and to explore parts of the host city. I had an enjoyable bus ride into the country side and back to the Barn Playhouse for an event that was dubbed "Evidence Based Hootennary" and yes, it did include lots of wine, food (with too much dessert personally prepared by the Chair of the local organizing committee), barn dancing, prizes, and surprises!

A Taste of Saskatchewan & Kiwanis Park

A group of us joined Saskatoon librarians from the organizing committee on a very enjoyable walk along the river to the event dubbed "Taste of Saskatchewan". This was the 18th anniversary of this festival, held in the beautiful Kiwanis Park. As a Kiwanian, I was especially excited to visit this memorial park and observe the many monuments, pavilions, fountains, statues and information billboards showcasing historical Saskatoon and world events. This park is located between the Broadway Bridge and the University Bridge on the banks of South Saskatchewan River.

The Taste of Saskatchewan Festival featured over 30 of Saskatoon's finest restaurants serving their favourite dishes, including entrees, desserts, and speciality items. My EBLIP7

colleagues and I rocked and danced to music of live bands in performance and basked in the atmosphere. The Festival was said to be featuring over 55 of Saskatchewan's premier bands and performers.



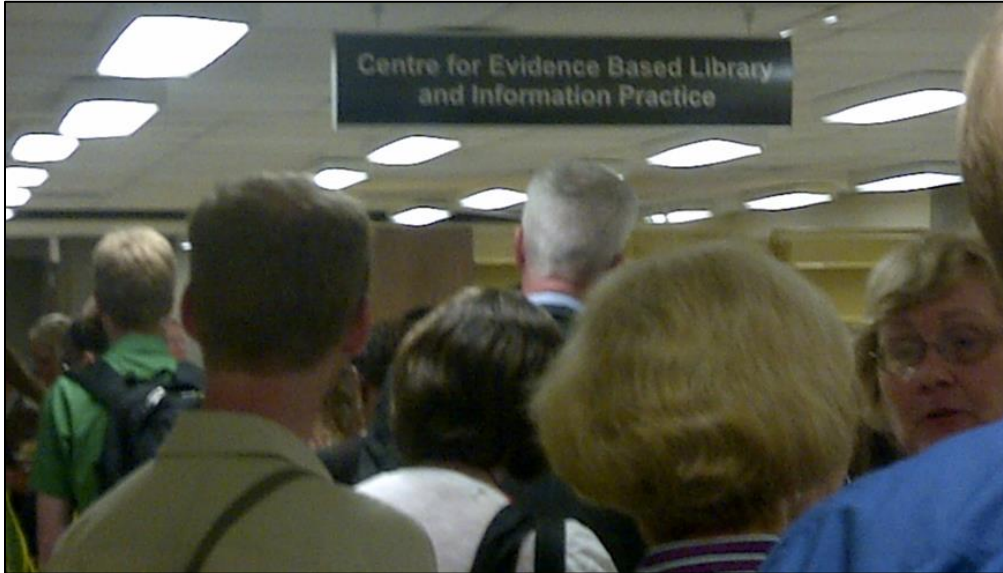
Saskatchewan Hall



Crystals on display in the Geology Building

Overall, the conference was thoughtfully organized with relevant information available throughout from courteous volunteers at the Information Desk. I look forward to using and sharing valuable information garnered from the many sessions attended with my Colleagues in the West Indies and beyond.

Cheers!



Participants at the opening ceremony of
Centre for Evidence Based Library & Information Practice



Participants liming outside the Barn Playhouse ahead of post-dinner activities

**Sharon Murphy, Head, Academic Services
Division, Queen's University Library,
Kingston, ON, Canada**

As my plane touched down in Saskatoon on July 15th I was greeted with a tornado warning. Welcome to the prairies, and welcome to the 7th International Evidence Based Library and Information Practice Conference! The meteorological tornado never occurred but the intellectual and social burst of energy started from day one and continued building throughout the conference. Lest my metaphor be taken in any negative connotation, I have to add that this was one positive storm of energy.

My first foray into the EBLIP community was two years ago at the University of Salford during the 6th EBLIP conference. Little was my understanding of evidence based librarianship at that time, and I felt like I had stumbled in as a visitor from a strange and foreign land, i.e., from librarianship outside of the health sciences. The EBLIP community welcomed me then and continues to inform and inspire me now. So the opportunity to attend this year, in a sister Canadian university, was irresistible.

Reviewing my notes as I prepared to write this reflection reminded me that every session I attended was a stimulating presentation of solid research – truly, every single session. I participated in sessions on copyright, fines, citation management, citation data analysis, scholarly communication, system dynamic modeling, action-learning for writing, leadership development, and assessment. Certainly the scope of research shows how EBLIP is an approach to understanding and practicing librarianship and not a discipline specific pursuit. I'm only sorry I missed other brilliant presentations – such is the conundrum of concurrent sessions.

We did all get to enjoy the posters, keynotes, and socializing. The posters alone were worth the price of admission and had the most brilliant

introductions I have ever witnessed during Poster Madness. We were enticed to view the posters by the creators giving introductions that included skits, costumes, dialogues and singing – yes indeed, thank you, Laura Newton Miller! The opening keynote was especially thoughtful, with Denise Koufogiannakis enlarging our understanding of what we mean by evidence and how we use it as we work together. I think about that a lot in my own work.

There were many assessment librarians in attendance and I wandered around musing aloud about the relationship between assessment and EBL. Lorie Kloda took up that question in her Lightning Strikes contribution. She gave us a very useful conceptualization of the relationship between the two (no spoiler alert needed here as I will wisely leave it to Lori to elaborate, which I'm sure she will).

Well, no great conference experience is really great without community and fun. I was nineteen years old the last time I stayed in residence and have judiciously avoided it ever since (I loved it when I was 19, but as one gets older...). However, my EBLIP stay in residence turned out to be an unexpected highlight. The University of Saskatchewan campus is beautiful and residence was a place to visit and to get to know colleagues from Canada and all over the world. I especially loved our breakfast gabs all together in the "caf". Of course this brings to mind the joyous and delicious banquet on a prairie farm under that prairie sky.

This was my first visit to Saskatoon and I will be back. It was fun to get to know the city and to get to know colleagues from around the globe. With Maria Grant from Salford, I roamed the city and perused the galleries after the conference closed. I will certainly travel again to Saskatoon and hope for the opportunity to experience another EBLIP conference.

Thank you to all who made it happen, I can hardly wait for the next one!

Jon Eldredge, Associate Professor, University of New Mexico, USA

To the best of my knowledge, I believe that I am one of only two people who have participated in all seven EBLIP conferences to date. Each EBLIP conference has showcased its own local attractions and has provided a window into regional practices.

Each EBLIP conference, beginning with the first in Sheffield, has offered its own memorable elements. Sheffield during 2001 featured the promise of a dramatic evidence-based revolution within our profession. Edmonton in 2003 opened the movement beyond the boundaries of the health sciences, where it had derived much of its initial inspiration. Edmonton brought in academic, school, and public library representatives.

Brisbane during 2005 suggested the codification of EBLIP and announced the birth of this peer reviewed journal. Then North Carolina brought many US colleagues on board to our international movement during 2007. North Carolina also featured the perspectives of research faculty members charged with training future members of our profession.

Stockholm offered a distinct turning point of EBLIP toward a genuine international movement rather as primarily an English-language-centered series of conferences. The Nordic countries demonstrated their sophisticated perspectives on EBLIP at this 2009 conference, and contributed a vision of integrating EBLIP as a team-centered pursuit into mainstream practice.

EBLIP6 brought this biennial conference to Salford near Manchester, not far from the first-ever conference hosted in Sheffield. The conference was held during 2011 on the Salford University campus with hotel accommodations distributed around Manchester. The program emphasized an applied research focus and multiple perspectives on the future of EBLIP.

Attendees enthusiastically cheered on the poster madness innovation.

How shall EBLIP7 during July 15-18, 2013 be remembered? I will recall it in a most unexpected way. I arrived almost two days early to complete a research project and begin a manuscript far away from the distractions of my office. EBLIP7 offered on-campus lodging in the dorms so I elected to stay in a dorm room instead of a hotel separated by some distance from the on-campus conference venue. Others also arrived early to attend pre-conference workshops or to relax away from their offices.

When I left EBLIP 7 the research project and the manuscript were still in the same incomplete state. Instead, I felt invigorated by my interactions with the many other conferees who also had stayed in the dorm and who had eaten at the adjacent dining hall. During our time together on campus we created a community of EBLIP enthusiasts. We talked on the lawns, while walking around the beautiful University of Saskatchewan campus or throughout the city of Saskatoon, at late night eateries, more conventional restaurants, in the hallways, and in the dining halls. The conversations almost always were stimulating. Some conversations catalyzed me to pursue new directions in EBLIP. I recall one breakfast dining hall discussion in which no one wanted to stop in order to attend the formal program. The late night hallway conversations about EBLIP in the dorms examined some underlying assumptions and introduced us to interesting variations of EBLIP at other types of libraries.

Library conferences often take place at large hotel conference centers. In contrast, many specialized academic societies in the USA sponsor their conferences on university campuses with attendees housed in dormitory housing. There is something about communal living in this kind of smaller conference context that many other conferees and I obviously found to be very stimulating. Based on the positive experiences at EBLIP7, I would recommend that

all future EBLIP conferences use campus venues to foster the same kinds of informal discussions and networking. Such communal conference living could very well expand and strengthen our international EBLIP community.

Each EBLIP conference gets better and better. The organizing committee made all of us comfortable and fully entertained throughout EBLIP7. I find it increasingly difficult to choose between the tantalizing presentations at

different concurrent EBLIP sessions. That trend continued at EBLIP7. I found the presentation by Pors and Johannsen about the diffusion of findings from systematic reviews in the mass media, for example, to be an intriguing research direction worth pursuing in other countries. The poster madness program, once again, provided informative and entertaining presentations such as one sung to the theme of "Yesterday" and another presented as a cheer exercise.