

Memories from EAHIL participants and first timers

Exploring the horizons of library innovation: EAHIL 2023 Workshop insights

We decided to attend EAHIL this year because of the great content. As library professionals, we constantly seek opportunities to expand our knowledge, enhance our skills, and connect with fellow enthusiasts. Colleagues are always willing to share their expertise – making the conference a great place to learn and connect.

This year's focus on current events was inspiring and put the conference theme – radical positive change agents – in perspective. Our presentations on advocacy, leadership, and organizational resiliency dovetailed nicely with several themes highlighted in the keynotes. Libraries have always been reflections of our communities, and our roles in research, education, patient care, and access to information, along with our physical spaces, will remain vital to the constituents we serve. Preparing, planning, and messaging for impact were key themes in our work this year, skills applicable across library roles and services.

The interactive nature of the sessions we attended also allowed for fruitful discussions, knowledge sharing, and networking opportunities. Each session was thoughtfully designed to provide valuable insights and foster innovative thinking by participants, making the EAHIL workshop an enriching experience. R. David Lankes called for each of us to “be a radical positive change agent within your community,” and this call resonated in many of the inspiring talks we attended: Eva Hessman and Helen Sjoblom inspired us to think about library services evolution; Mia Høj Mathiasson shared visions about the transformative and creative potential of librarians concerning sustainable development; Mala Mann shared clear tips for focusing evidence synthesis questions; and so many others gave us great ideas to bring back and implement at our own institutions.

One key takeaway from this year's EAHIL was thinking about how we reframe our work. An example was the workshop by Irma Klerings and Alicia Fatima Gomez-Sanchez. How do we rethink the conversation on predatory publishing? What differences make something “predatory” versus a potential quality improvement issue? Joey Nicholson challenged us to reimagine what it means to measure student learning. How do we move from assessing students' knowledge to assessing competency in real-world practice? Gaining fresh perspectives to think about the challenges we face as health information professionals on problems such as these is part of what keeps us coming back to EAHIL.

Lastly, the dedication of fellow EAHIL participants to advancing health information services is palpable, creating an atmosphere of motivation and encouragement. Witnessing the inspiring work and sharing our ideas with others ignited renewed purpose, reminding us of the crucial role of health information professionals to embrace new challenges and continue to act as catalysts for radical, positive change. Many thanks to our wonderful collaborators and colleagues for an outstanding conference. We look forward to continuing the conversation at future EAHIL gatherings!

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EAHIL 2023 Workshop, Trondheim, Norway

Feelings and memories from a first timer

Excitement, anticipation, enthusiasm, but also a little bit of fear and stress! The roller coaster of feelings that an EAHIL first timer goes through while attending the workshop in Trondheim, Norway. Fortunately, the first timers also feel very welcome because EAHIL organizes an event for the newbies on the first night of the workshop where you can meet not only others in the same situation but also the experienced board members. Amazing how inspirational it can be to hear the stories on what had happened in EAHIL congresses during the past years. Not to mention to get to know all the other first timers and have fruitful discussions with them. We were joking about the fact that we will be able to praise, let's say in 20 years from now, that we had our first EAHIL in Trondheim and we had really warm feelings and memories in order to mentor and welcome the newcomers then, wherever the EAHIL will then be. What about the feelings afterwards? I feel inspired, satisfied, full of ideas, happy but also physically tired (but mentally rested). So, turning on the positive side definitely. This workshop brought some positive, radical changes to my work absolutely! And what even more amazing, I heard that we broke the record on number of first timers in Trondheim! Perhaps a new record in Riga next year?

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My first time at the EAHIL Workshop

Although it wasn't actually my first EAHIL event (in 2020 I performed an oral presentation during the online event that was held in Łódź), this kind of meeting in person is something completely different – after pandemic I guess we can all agree on this.

Local Organizing Committee stated on the workshop's website that Trondheim is either a small city or a big village, and now I can completely agree with this. During these few days it was so easy (and lovely) to walk around the city, where you can reach all the spots in less than half an hour. Ideal for this kind of events. Trondheim is great. Period. But about the workshop itself. Over the past few years, I have been to several conferences, and I have to admit that not much of them were as well prepared as this one. From the conference venue with excellent technical backline, through spectacular social events, to the Conference App, everything was set up down to the last detail. I participated in many interesting workshops and oral presentations, but I have to say that teachmeet sessions were my favourite and that was a great surprise. Amazing, sublime organ concert in the Nidaros Cathedral and on the other hand funny, yet sophisticated concert by The Peer Reviews during conference dinner made the cherry on top and satisfied every taste. But the most important, as always, are people. Numerous discussions with fellow librarians from all around the world helped me to better understand the library's landscape, but also confirmed that professionally my library is moving in the right direction. And one last thing – cheerful, smiling attitude of all the participants is what really made this event great – EAHIL workshop is friendly, bias-free environment, where everyone can feel safe. Good job LOC and keep up the good work, and if anyone is still hesitating, I can strongly recommend EAHIL events.

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EAHIL social events

To me the social events of EAHIL are more than just extra highlights of the conferences, they really are integral to the events, and I must take my hat off to the local organising committee for arranging such wonderful activities for us to enjoy as a community. One activity that especially stuck with me this time around was the visit to the Nidaros cathedral. After listening to the most wonderful organ music, we went over to the Archbishop's Palace where we mingled and made new friends. We then got to hear master stone mason Chris Pennock speak with infectious passion about his and other's work restoring the King's Entrance of the cathedral. And although stone masonry and heritage architecture might seem a far cry from medical librarianship, I thought that it nicely illustrated that even ancient things that we sometimes take for granted will be available for coming generations very much are a matter for the present. As I am sure much discussion, debate and tacit knowledge went into the disassembling and reassembling of the Nidaros cathedral, so must we librarians mingle, meet, discuss, argue, laugh and learn from each other to make sure that the knowledge of the past and present is made available and may live on to shape the future.

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Photos by Jakub Rusakow and Taisa Maria Sallinen