

## Memories from EAHIL Scholarship recipients



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I was looking forward to the EAHIL Workshop in Łódź, Poland, for many reasons. Firstly, my SCHARR colleagues have always praised the conference for being friendly and inspiring. Moreover, I am new to the health information profession, and this would be my first time attending (let alone presenting at) an international conference. So, my expectations were high, and I'm happy to say they were more than met.

Members of the Local Organising Committee made me feel very welcome at the first timers' evening reception. This was held at the MeMo Mediateka, a 19th century building redesigned to incorporate a modern library and events space, the perfect venue for library and information professionals to break the ice.

It was great to then see these friendly faces over the main three days of the conference, during the packed programme of presentations, lightning talks and longer interactive workshops. The conference theme, IMAGINE, encompassed various topics, meaning I came away with many new ideas and practical takeaways. Keynote speaker, Janina Bąk, who talked about statistics and misinformation, was particularly engaging and a reminder of why information literacy (and our work) is so important. I also learnt about open access strategies, how libraries have transformed their services, and about specific use cases for familiar tools like Zotero, and innovations such as Scopus AI. I also engaged my coding and syntax skills in learning how to search OpenAlex in one of the interactive workshops on the programme.

AI was not the only theme, but it was a popular one. I enjoyed reflecting on and discussing many issues relating to it: where this technology might take our profession; how libraries and institutions have stepped in to fill a knowledge or leadership gap around AI; even what it means to be human.

Another highlight was networking and talking to fellow professionals. This was both during the main programme, and also the social events organised to maximise the collegiate feel of the whole conference. Łódź was a fantastic host city with a young, confident vibe against a mixed backdrop of historical buildings. This post-industrial contrast was highlighted during the walking tour on the social programme by the excellent guide who presented with the perfect mix of humour and facts.

I am grateful to the EAHIL organising committee for the opportunity to attend the conference and participate in all these experiences. In particular, it enabled me to co-present an interactive workshop myself, on the theme of getting started with automating familiar tasks using AI. This was a really valuable experience and I enjoyed interacting with a sizable and engaged audience. Hopefully they went away feeling more confident about experimenting with AI in their work. I certainly came away feeling more confident about presenting.

So thank you Łódź, thank you EAHIL, thank you friendly and generous attendees, and let's not forget my amazing workshop collaborator and co-host, for a wonderful experience. Future conferences will have a lot to live up to.



**Remy van Alebeek**

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I am very grateful and appreciative of being awarded the EAHIL scholarship in 2025. I had an absolutely fantastic time within the city of Łódź in Poland this year. My positive experiences can be attributed towards the delightful large presence of both national and international colleagues. I thoroughly enjoyed the inspiring workshops and presentations held by those who were present.

Last year in Riga I had the luxury of being able to absorb everything without presenting myself. This year, however, I had both a workshop and a presentation under my repertoire. My presentation covered an innovative application for searching within PubMed (dubbed REMI 2.0), while the workshop (which I performed together with my colleague Floor Ruiter) covered the topic of using prompting techniques for AI in elaborating concepts within a literature search. I truly never expected how well my presentation on REMI 2.0 would be received, even going as far as earning an honourable mention at the closing ceremony. With all the colleagues that approached me after the workshop, I felt for a moment what it might be like to be a celebrity!

Besides my own workshop and presentation, I also attended several other inspiring presentations which focused on well-being, collaboration/team-building, and interactive teaching techniques. With the information overload in the densely-packed programme, some ideas for well-being were definitely well-appreciated!

That said, there was also a lot of room to unwind with the fantastic lunches (yet another highlight), and the social events. There is something to be said about how something as mundane as textile can be made so interesting and fascinating to learn about, which is exactly what we did at the White Factory. It was also very eye-opening to learn how Łódź grew from a small village to a large industrial city. Besides the organised social events, I would be lying if I said that I did not enjoy the drinks, company and the fabulous view at the skyFLY Bar in the Vienna House.

With the scholarship, the large appreciation that was shown for both the workshop and the presentation that I had given amongst the other talks, I am quite certain that EAHIL has not seen the last of me. In my future endeavours I hope to continue to grow, inspire and innovate within the field of health information literacy. Looking forwards to hopefully seeing a lot of you next year in Antalya!



**Norin Hamouda**

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Hi! I am an information specialist at KU Leuven in Belgium. My daily tasks revolve predominantly around information retrieval and systematic searching. We support Master's students and researchers through one-on-one consultations, tailored to specific research topics, or more generally in group settings via interactive sessions and workshops.

It is always delightful to have the chance to join the annual EAHIL conference and this was my second time. The previous time was in Trondheim, Norway in 2023 during my first year as an information specialist. This time around, at EAHIL in Lodz, Poland, it was the right moment to apply for my first EAHIL scholarship, which we successfully got; hence, I had to write this report for the September issue of JEAHIL! Furthermore, I was ready to actively participate by giving a 15-minute presentation on one of our successfully completed projects titled, "Mapping Researcher Awareness of Research Support Library Services at KU Leuven".

I have never been to Lodz before, so it was exciting to visit a new city. It was really convenient that the conference took place in the same building as a hotel, so we booked our stay there and did not have to commute. Additionally, the hotel was located within walking distance from a shopping mall and other stores. So, being the shopaholic that I am, I wandered around in some of the shops. Even when I did not need anything, I would still end up buying a thing (or five!).

Now, all the fun aside and back to business. As mentioned, I presented a project we conducted to find means to increase the visibility of our services among researchers. Through a 15-minute presentation, I shared our experience, limitations and some findings. It was a great opportunity to get feedback and insights from other attendees that we could apply to future projects. Besides, it was a way to help inspire them to try a similar approach at their organisations.

The conference program encompassed keynote talks, continuing education courses, workshops and presentations covering various topics, like information retrieval, open science and artificial intelligence, of which I tried to attend as much as I could. During the workshops, "Evaluating the accuracy of a search strategy for optimal result retrieval" by Mala Mann, and "Informing the systematic search process: How to improve communication between information specialists/librarians and researchers" by Irma Klerings, Mala Mann and Maria-Inti Metzendorf, I acquired useful knowledge that I can apply in my daily job. I also joined the workshop organized by Marshall Dozier and Rena Lubker titled, "Librarians for Librarians", which provided a safe space to talk about the struggles some librarians face due to the economical and political circumstances of their countries. It was an eye-opening experience where I gained more respect, appreciation and empathy for these librarians.

Socially, I was glad to meet (new) colleagues and engage with many in delightful conversations and interactions.

Last but definitely not least, I would like to thank the EAHIL Board for granting me the scholarship to attend the EAHIL conference 2025 and congratulate them, as well as the organising committee, on such a well-organised and successful event. Thank you and I hope to see you in future EAHIL conferences!



**Liam Bennett**

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While I am not a new librarian as such, having spent just over ten years working in prison libraries before joining the NHS, I was certainly surprised and happy to win a scholarship for EAHIL 2025 at the end of my first year of working in a medical library. It was a wonderful opportunity to learn more about this particular field of librarianship and I think it will be really useful for my professional development going forward. I was encouraged to apply for the scholarship by a colleague who attended the 2024 conference and I have already enthusiastically recommended it to other librarians across Wales.

Attending EAHIL in the beautiful city of Łódź was a real joy, and it made me feel a little silly for being nervous about attending in the build-up. Events, such as the First-timers Reception at the beautiful MeMo Mediateka or the visit to the White Factory Textile Museum, really helped promote a sense of friendly fellowship amongst the attendees, and were fantastic for networking opportunities. The relaxed and informal breaks and lunches really built on this and helped me feel comfortable as a lone traveller and first-time attendee. Everyone I met was warm and welcoming, and there was a real sense of comfort and respect as we chatted about the profession and the ways in which it is developing.

I put myself down for a roughly 50/50 mixture of presentations and workshops, and it allowed me to experience a good range of content without becoming tired by the longer sessions. My day-to-day work is becoming increasingly influenced by the influx of Artificial Intelligence resources so it was very useful to be able to attend multiple sessions on this topic. I particularly enjoyed the workshop conducted by Nele Pauwels on the responsible use of AI in Literature Research and have already been able to share some of her ideas with my colleagues across Wales as we look to build a workable strategy for using these tools. This session explored resources beyond the usual ChatGPT and it was really useful to hear the thoughts of someone else who has incorporated them into their work, and it gave me some great ideas for how to improve my practice going forward. Similarly, the workshop by Mala Mann that allowed participants to dissect and analyse a search strategy was a fantastic way for me to improve my skills in literature searching as somebody relatively new to it.

Overall, I found the whole experience to be reinvigorating with regards to professional development. It can be easy to lose track of the wider profession as everyday tasks take up most of your time, so coming to an event like this was a great way to appreciate what colleagues across the world are doing and reconnect with the current issues in a practical way. I would be remiss not to also mention the enjoyable evenings spent with everyone taking in the beautiful view at the skyFLY Bar on the roof of the conference centre too!

I would like to thank EAHIL and the organising committee for setting up such a fantastic event and for awarding me a scholarship spot. It was a wonderful first experience and I look forward to attending again in the future.