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Journal of EAHIL

European Association for

Health Information and Libraries

Vol. 20 no.3

September 2024

Journal of the European Association for Health Information and Libraries

Vol. 20 No. 3 September 2024

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Editorial

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This September issue is entirely dedicated to the EAHIL 2024 Conference "Small step and a giant leap: reorienting towards a new environment", which took place in Riga, at the National Library of Latvia on 11-14 June 2024.

The three feature articles which open the issue are written by the authors who received the EAHIL awards for Best Oral Presentation, Best Interactive Workshop Overall and Best Poster Presentation.

These are excellent articles which we are sure you will find of great interest:

- *Development of a competency framework for health information specialists in the Netherlands* by Chantal den Haan, Erica Wilthagen, Arjan Malekzadeh, Ingrid ter Hoeven, Marc van Kuik, Stevie van der Mierden and Hans Ket;

- *Lift off to leadership: elevate your impact by cultivating skills and mindset for working with senior leaders. Reflective highlights from EAHIL 2024* by Jamie M. Gray and Nicole Capdarest-Arest;

- *Contribution to the sustainability of the library in terms of climate change using the example of the acquisition department of a medical library* by Aleksandra Guziałek and Justyna Kopiec.

The authors of the award for Best Contribution by a First-time Attendee in any category, *Playing games @ KU Leuven* - Interactive workshop led by Anouk D'Hont with co-presenter Thomas Vandendriessche, are publishing their study on another journal and we will be delighted to read their paper when published.

"The amount of work done to organise EAHIL 2024 conference in Riga seems insurmountable" writes Kristīne Kuzņecova, LOC and IPC member, in her report on the Memories of EAHIL 2024 Conference published in this issue, "Looking back at such a long and intensive period in our lives feels surreal. But it happened, and here is how". In reading her report and the following pages dedicated to the enthusiastic reports and memories from scholarship recipients, first timers and other participants, we have the feeling of what a great event that was. An event which unfortunately I missed but whose recollection will be preserved in *JEAHIL* as all the other conferences, workshops and events since the very first steps moved by the association. For the new members of EAHIL I wish to remind once again that the whole collection of the Journal and of the previous Newsletter is online, and that all past issues have been digitized.

In this issue, the call for nomination for EAHIL Council Election in 2024 follows the Letter from the President, while the column on Publication and New Products keeps us constantly informed and updated in the profession.

I wish to thank Fiona Brown and Katri Larmo, members of *JEAHIL* Editorial Board, who participated in the Riga Conference and helped me collecting the contributions in this issue.

I'm really happy to inform you that in 2024 a new member joined *JEAHIL* Editorial Board: David Ozura. David is head of the library at the Institute of Oncology Ljubljana, a member of the Slovenian consortium

negotiating group for international scientific publishers, a member of the Expert Body for International Scientific Literature (medical field) at the Slovenian Research And Innovation Agency, and editor of the Slovenian open access journal for oncology *Onkologija*. On behalf of the other *JEAHIL* members, I would like to heartily thank him. Welcome onboard David! Hopefully more members will be willing to join us!

JEAHIL Editorial Board now comprises:

- Federica Napolitani Cheyne, Istituto Superiore di Sanità, Italy (Editor in Chief)

- Annarita Barbaro, Istituto Superiore di Sanità, Italy

- Fiona Brown, Edinburgh University, Scotland, UK

- Gerhard Bissels, Zurich, Switzerland

- Katri Larmo, University of Helsinki, Finland

- Maria-Inti Metzendorf, Heinrich-Heine-University Dusseldorf, Germany

- David Ožura, Strokovna knjižnica, Onkološki inštitut, Ljubljana, Slovenia

- Michelle Wake, University College London, UK

For full details, see the EAHIL website.

The December issue (2024) will be a no theme issue. Therefore, we invite you to submit papers for publication falling into the different areas of interest of the journal.

The March issue (2025) will publish a monographic section on Global Health and will be edited by Teresa Lee (International Agency for Research on Cancer, World Health Organization, France) and Maria-Inti Metzendorf (Heinrich-Heine-University, Düsseldorf, Germany). Gerhard Bissels was a great help in contacting guest-editors and I would like to thank him for this. If you wish to contribute to the March 2025 issue on Global Health please contact Teresa Lee at LeeT@iarc.fr or Maria-Inti Metzendorf at maria-inti.metzendorf@med.uni-duesseldorf.de.

I hope you will enjoy reading this issue of *JEAHIL* in these last days of Summer.

Federica
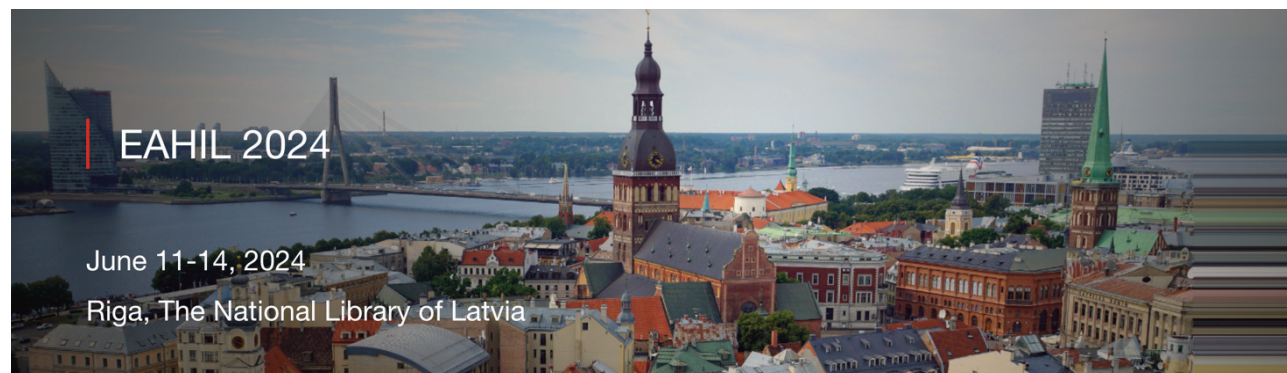
EAHIL 2024

June 11-14, 2024
Riga, The National Library of Latvia

Development of a competency framework for health information specialists in the Netherlands

**Chantal den Haan (a)*, Erica Andrea Wilthagen (b)*, Arjan Malekzadeh (c),
Ingrid ter Hoeven (d), Marc van Kuik (e), Stevie van der Mierden (b) and Hans Ket (f)**

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Abstract

Competency frameworks are essential for identifying job-specific skills, highlighting training needs, and enabling skill development. Therefore, the Dutch Association for Biomedical Information Professionals (KNVI-BMI) created a framework for health information specialists. Competencies were defined as the integration of knowledge, skills, and attributes required for effective job performance. The framework was developed through literature review, job postings analyses, and consensus meetings to select and categorize relevant competencies. An expert opinion survey validated the preliminary framework. The final framework includes nine domains: 1) healthcare environment, 2) information and literature services, 3) management of information resources, 4) information systems, technology, and applications, 5) didactics and teaching of information literacy, 6) research methodology, 7) research data management, 8) leadership and management, and 9) professionalism.

Key words: *medical libraries; professional competence; librarians; professional role; library science/standards.*

Background

Developing yourself is crucial for job satisfaction and job retention. The IFLA Guidelines for Continuing Professional Development: Principles and Best Practices state that "The individual library and information professional is primarily responsible for pursuing ongoing learning that constantly improves knowledge and skills" (1). In 2022 the Dutch Association for Biomedical Information Professionals (KNVI-BMI) appointed a working group with the task of setting up a competency framework for Dutch health information specialists. This framework will give insight into the competencies you need as a health information specialist in the Netherlands. A competency is defined as a combination of knowledge, skills and attributes you need to perform a job effectively.

The need for a competency framework emerged partly because library training programs are no longer offered in the Netherlands. For people new to the information specialist profession without a library background, it can be unclear what skills and competencies are needed for the job. The framework will offer this group insight into the competencies necessary for their job. Another reason the KNVI-BMI wanted a competency framework was to reshape the professional development activities that it organises. Furthermore, the KNVI-BMI viewed a competency framework as a valuable tool for individual information specialists to assess their own competencies and identify areas for personal development. Lastly, such a framework can provide a basis for discussions with managers, who frequently lack a background in library education.

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Method

There were five methodological parts to the project: establishment of a project group; literature review; job postings textual analyses; framework development and consensus building; expert opinion validation survey. The dataset and supplementary materials are openly available on OSF (https://doi.org/10.17605/OSF.IO/XMVPN).

Establishing a project group

A diverse project group was assembled at the beginning of the project. The experts in the project came from diverse fields, including academic and non-academic teaching hospitals (top clinical) as well as regional hospitals, but also research and mental health care institutes. There was also great diversity in age, work experience, and educational background. To give a voice to all the different health information specialists in the Netherlands, this diversity was important.

Literature review

We were already familiar with the competency frameworks of ALA (2), MLA (3) and ALIA-HLA (4). As these frameworks are rarely published in literature databases, we also asked on the EAHIL discussion list for other competency frameworks of sister organisations abroad.

The literature databases Medline (Ovid), Scopus and LISTA (Ebsco) were then searched for competency frameworks and competencies described in the literature. The full search strategies can be found on osf.io (https://osf.io/3682z), but schematically they are as follows: (medical librarian OR information specialists OR medical library journals) AND (competence OR skill). The search in LISTA was carried out on 02-11-2022, the searches in Medline and Scopus on 03-11-2022. The references were deduplicated in EndNote according to the steps described by Bramer *et al.* (5).

The unique references were independently screened for eligibility by two reviewers using Rayyan. Disagreements were resolved by a third reviewer. Articles were included if they described a competency, competency framework, or skills for information specialists / librarians in a medical, biomedical, or healthcare context. Articles published before 2000 were excluded. The included articles were then subjected to forward and backward snowballing using Citationchaser (6). In addition, a manual search of the journals of EAHIL,

ALIA-HLA was performed, as these were not indexed in the databases searched.

Data were extracted from the included articles using a pre-prepared data extraction form. This included questions about the country of the study, the sample size, the type of profession and the competencies, skills and knowledge mentioned.

Job postings textual analyses

In order to gain insight into the competency requirements in job postings, we manually searched various job postings websites, including Nationale Vacaturebank, Indeed.nl, regional hospital websites, mental health care websites, and academic medical center websites. We also included vacancies posted on the email list of the KNVI-BMI.

Vacancies posted from 2018 to September 2022 were included. The textual content of these vacancies were pooled and a word and phrase count, and correlation analyses were performed using the Voyant tool (https://voyant-tools.org/).

Framework development and consensus

The initial drafting was done in two face-to-face meetings using the job postings' textual analyses, competencies from international publications, and additional literature that mentioned any competencies or skills. This was followed by several rounds of redrafting through online meetings and emails to arrive at the first version of the framework.

Validation survey

This first version of the framework was then incorporated into a survey and sent to Dutch information specialists via the email list of the KNVI-BMI. Respondents could rate each competency on a 10-point Likert scale. In addition, it was possible to give feedback per domain and on the whole framework via open-ended responses.

The survey results were exported as a csv file and analysed using R (https://osf.io/abt58). Means and standard deviations scores were calculated for the scores per competency, and the means per domain. In addition, differences in scores for work experience and work location were calculated using a Kruskal-Wallis test. A p-value < 0.05 was considered statistically significant, indicating that at least one group had a significantly different score compared to the other groups.

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For work location, only the locations with at least 5 responses were included in the analyses. The results of the mean scores per competency and the extracted comments were then used in a discussion among the experts in the project group to revise the first version of the framework. This resulted in the final version of the framework.

Results

Results of the search

Our search identified 4107 references, and no additional records were found by backwards and forwards snowballing. After removing duplicates, 3212 references were screened for titles and abstracts, leaving 409 references for full text screening. Of these, 50 references were then included and data extracted.

Job postings analyses

A total of 30 job postings were collected for the word count and correlation analysis. The analyses of the job postings identified several frequently occurring words and phrases. The most common words observed were: "knowledge", "library", "experience", "education", and "medical and/or scientific literature search". The correlation analysis provided further insights into how these terms were used in context. The term "knowledge" was frequently associated with phrases such as "knowledge of Medline/Embase,", "knowledge of resources" and "knowledge of information/search queries". This indicates a strong emphasis on knowledge of specific databases and search strategies. Although less frequent, phrases like data management and open science were also observed.

Survey analysis

84 information specialists from different institutions in the Netherlands responded to the survey (see *Table 1*) (https://osf.io/gfn6v).

Characteristic	All participants (n = 84)
Gender, n (%)	
Male	19 (22.6%)
Female	58 (69.0%)
Other	3 (3.6%)
Unknown	4 (4.8%)
Age, mean (SD)	51.8 (12.7)
Education, n (%)	
Secondary Vocational Education and Training (VET)	3 (3.6%)
Higher professional education	39 (46.4%)
University bachelor's degree	2 (2.4%)
University master's degree	31 (36.9%)
Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)	9 (10.7%)
Work location, n (%)	
Academics	17 (20.2%)
University of applies sciences	5 (6.0%)
Non-academic teaching hospitals	31 (36.9%)
Regional hospitals	4 (4.8%)
Research institutes	8 (9.5%)
Mental healthcare	17 (20.2%)
Other	2 (2.4%)
Work experience, n (%)	
<1 year	3 (3.6%)
1 till 5 years	15 (17.8%)
6 till 10 years	3 (3.6%)
> 10 years	63 (75%)

Table 1. *Participant characteristics.*

None of the domains had a mean score below 5 (see *Table 2*). However, the Research Data Management (RDM) domain had a remarkably lower score compared to the other domains. Within this domain, the only competence with a mean score below 5.5 can be found (*see Table 1S available online as Supplementary Material*). This was the competence "Provides support or actively participates in determining and implementing policies related to RDM" (mean: 5.3; SD: 2.22). Although there were no significant differences (p = 0.12) between the work location groups, this competence scored relatively high for professionals working at universities of applied sciences (mean: 6.8; SD: 1.92) and knowledge institutions (mean: 6.3; SD: 2.60) compared to the mental health sector (mean: 4.5; SD: 2.15) and academics (mean: 4.6; SD: 2.37).

Domain	Mean score (SD)
Healthcare environment	7.7 (1.3)
Information and literature services	7.9 (1.7)
Management of information resources	7.9 (1.9)
Information systems, technology, and applications	7.9 (1.7)
Didactics and teaching of information literacy	7.7 (1.5)
Research methodology	7.6 (1.6)
Research data management	5.8 (2.2)
Leadership and management	7.1 (1.8)
Professionalism	8.4 (1.3)

Table 2. *Mean scores and standard deviations from 10-point likert scale per domain.*

In the survey, significant differences were observed in 26 out of the 61 competencies when comparing responses from individuals at different work locations (see *Table 2S available online as Supplementary Material).* Among these, only two competencies showed a difference between mean scores below 5.5 and above 5.5. This was for the competency "Provides support for the use of (institutional) data repositories" (domain: RDM), where the lowest scores were found in the mental healthcare setting (mean: 4.8; SD: 2.19) and academic sectors (mean: 5.4; SD: 2.12) , and the highest in the knowledge institutions (mean: 7.5; SD: 1.60) and applied sciences (mean: 7.4; SD: 1.82) sectors. The other competency, "Creates budgets and has financial insight" (domain: Leadership and Management), received insufficient scores from the academic centres (mean: 4.7; SD: 2.64), while other workplaces scored sufficiently, with non-academic teaching hospitals achieving the highest mean score (mean: 7.3; SD: 1.49).

The competency framework
Despite the relatively low scores for the RDM domain, it was retained in the final competency framework version. This decision was made because RDM is a relatively new and emerging domain, and the competency framework should be future-proof. Additionally, the competencies within this domain that scored insufficiently were not removed, as the framework must be representative of all information specialists in the Netherlands. For certain workplaces, such as applied sciences and knowledge institutions, this competency remains relevant.

Based on the comments made in the survey, the project group reviewed each competency. It became clear that some competencies needed to be split into two, some were duplicated, and some simply needed to be reworded to make them more explicit. In addition, the competencies per domain where ranked based on the mean scores of the survey. This resulted in the final competency framework which exists of nine domains; 1) healthcare environment, 2) information- and literature services, 3) management of information resources, 4) information systems technology and applications, 5) didactics and teaching of information literacy, 6) research methodology, 7) research data management, 8) leadership and management, 9) professionalism (https://osf.io/9qrbh).

Discussion and conclusion

This study provides a comprehensive overview of competencies across nine competency domains for health information specialists in the Netherlands, ensuring relevance and applicability to the current and future landscape. We were able to do this by assessing textual content of job postings, conducting an extensive literature review and an expert survey. We identified and described competencies that are particularly pertinent to Dutch health information specialists.

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Our findings indicate having competencies and knowledge in a wide range of competencies is required for the health information specialist in the Netherlands. Although, variability in the importance placed on different competencies depends on the institutional setting of the respondents. For instance, the Research Data Management (RDM) domain was deemed more relevant by professionals in applied sciences and knowledge institutions compared to those in the mental health sector and academic medical settings. A plausible explanation is that larger organizations and institutions in the Netherlands often have dedicated "Research Data Management" departments, leading to lower perceived importance of these competencies compared to other domains. Notably, for 26 out of the 61 competencies surveyed, significant differences were observed based on work location. For example, the competency "Provides support for the use of (institutional) data repositories" was rated higher in knowledge institutions and applied sciences sectors, while "Creates budgets and has financial insight" received the highest scores from top clinical hospitals. A limitation of the survey analysis is that non-academic teaching hospitals and mental health institutes are probably overrepresented. However, we do not know the exact number of information specialists in the different types of institutes and therefore it remains unclear how indicative the cohort is. Despite being created for the Dutch organizations, our competency framework may have broader applicability beyond the Netherlands, potentially serving as a model for health information specialists globally.

In comparing the current competency framework for health information specialists in the Netherlands to the 2017 competency profile published by the Medical Library Association (MLA) in the United States (5), several similarities and differences emerge. Both profiles underscore the importance of understanding the healthcare environment, including its specific jargon, organizational knowledge, policies, laws, regulations, and trends. One of the core competencies in both profiles is the domain of "Information and Literature Services". This domain encompasses sub-domains such as expertise in searching and conducting literature research, participating in systematic reviews and guidelines, knowledge of copyright, licensing, intellectual property, and bibliometrics. These core competencies remain consistent despite technological advancements and geographical differences.

However, there are notable differences between the profiles. The MLA competency profile places greater emphasis on detailed performance indicators for developing educational curricula, utilizing learner-centered approaches, and implementing innovative instructional methods. It also provides specific guidance on creating and implementing strategic plans, inspiring and leading others, and securing external funding. While the Dutch competency framework includes educational competencies, it focuses more on determining local and organizational educational needs and evaluating learning outcomes, with less emphasis on pre-defined instructional design. In the domain of "Research Data Management," both the MLA and Dutch competency profiles support the FAIR data principles. However, the Dutch profile emphasizes knowledge of data sharing and reuse from an open science perspective.

Maintaining the relevance and currency of this competency profile poses a challenge, particularly with the rapid evolution of technology. The impact of generative AI on our competencies and profession is still uncertain. Nevertheless, staying informed about AI developments, educating ourselves, and testing new tools will be crucial. Generative AI is likely to significantly influence the construction of search strategies for systematic reviews, presenting both opportunities and risks.

In conclusion, our competency framework provides a detailed and current overview for Dutch health information specialists. While its global applicability remains to be explored, it highlights essential skills and knowledge areas critical to the profession. Ongoing updates and adaptation to technological advancements, including AI, will be necessary to ensure its continued relevance.

Acknowledgments

oral presentation overall at the EAHIL 2024 Conference, "Small step and a giant leap: reorienting towards a new environment", The National Library of Latvia, Riga, Latvia 11- 14 June 2024.

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Lift off to leadership: elevate your impact by cultivating skills and mindset for working with senior leaders. Reflective highlights from EAHIL 2024

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Abstract

Effective communication with organizational decision-makers is paramount for health sciences library leadership success. This paper reflects on an interactive workshop at EAHIL 2024, "Lift off to leadership: elevate your impact by cultivating skills and mindset for working with senior leaders." We explore the importance of starting with the core purpose of library initiatives and the significance of emotionally connecting with stakeholders. A case example of proposing an electronic health record-integrated educational resource system illustrates the necessity of tailoring communication to diverse stakeholders' goals. Additionally, we emphasize shared language and contextually appropriate data in crafting compelling business cases. These skills help librarians present impactful proposals to fellow senior leaders, fostering collaborations and driving impactful outcomes.

Key words: *leadership; communication; stakeholders; business skills; libraries, medical.*

Background

Imagine you're a library leader with a big decision to make. Maybe you're a hospital library at risk of becoming part of the estimated 30% decline, possibly after a change in leadership (1). Perhaps, the organization is changing strategy and is considering restructuring. Or happily, maybe you have come up with a brilliant project you want to gain senior leadership support on. In all three of these scenarios, understanding how to connect and communicate with your organizational decision-makers is vitally important to position yourself for a better chance of success. In this paper, we reflect on our interactive workshop at EAHIL 2024 to offer some key points from "Lift off to leadership: elevate your impact by cultivating skills and mindset for working with senior leaders."

Building connections

Simon Sinek – ethnographer, author, and speaker – advocates that we should always start with our why (2). He describes why as a core belief or purpose (2). When we talk about our libraries, what do we generally start with? Our collections? Services? Users? In their research on value propositions, set through the lens of Sinek's model, Straker and Nusem found that most organizations focused on communicating their what (3). This makes sense, given that "the what" is generally the most tangible in terms of measuring performance or outcomes. For example, libraries traditionally focus on proclaiming their whats: "We have 3 libraries across the university," "Search over 10 million library items," or "More than 100,000 people walk through our library doors every month." However, it is noted that value is also about the "emotional relationship" (3). When talking to our senior leaders, how do we emotionally connect to the purpose of what we're proposing or advocating?

Part of this emotional connection relies on understanding who your stakeholders are and what they value. For example, consider the scenario where you, as the leader of an academic medical library, would like to propose

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a project to implement a comprehensive electronic health record (EHR) integrated educational resource system. The proposed project's goal would be to integrate educational resources directly into the EHR system used by the hospital and medical school. This integration would provide seamless access to medical literature, clinical guidelines, and evidence-based practice resources at the point of care to enhance clinical decision support. Additionally, such a project would provide medical students and residents with up-to-date evidence-based resources directly through the EHR, enhancing their learning experience during rotations and clerkships. You have identified that the hospital's Chief Financial Officer (CFO), the Assistant Dean of Education of the medical school, the director of Information Technology, and clinical personnel are all potential stakeholders in this project. Does the CFO have the same set of goals and objectives as the Assistant Dean? Are you going to pitch your project to each of these stakeholders in the same way? Probably not, even though each should be considered an equal stakeholder in the project.

To increase the likelihood of success in gaining stakeholder buy-in for your proposed project, it is important to realize all stakeholders hold critical value to the success of the operation (or project) and need to be considered as part of your overall strategy (4). For instance, the CFO may be concerned with the long-term financial investment for a project, whereas the Assistant Dean may be more concerned with the impact on the overall educational outcomes for medical students, curriculum integration, and student engagement. Crafting a business case that can consider and address the interests of primary stakeholders – even when their goals differ – is key to facilitating effective conversations on both fronts and garnering buy-in for your project. In this way, it is crucial to build the skills to effectively communicate the value of the library or your project idea in terms that stakeholders will understand and resonate with. Consider in your circumstance whether they be operational, clinical, educational, research, financial, technical, or other terms.

In addition to understanding your purpose and stakeholders, finding a shared language to tell your story is critical. What better place to start than the shared understanding we have as managers? A 2023 survey conducted by McKinsey found middle managers estimated they spent about 18% of their time on administrative

CULTIVATING LEADERSHIP COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Communication skills can be learned and practiced. Here are a few techniques library leaders can use to enhance communication with stakeholders:

STEP 1
Identify your values and those of your stakeholders

STEP 2
Bring evidence to the table in terms that resonate with your stakeholder's values

STEP 3
Craft a conversation that is:
- simple
- tailored to your audience
- built upon a story

Gray & Capdarest-Arest - Lift Off to Leadership: Elevate Your Impact by Cultivating Skills and Mindset for Working with Senior Leaders (2024)

Fig. 1. *Infographic illustrating communication tips for library leaders to effectively engage with stakeholders.*

work (5). The universal tasks of resource management, whether that is finance or people, provide a common language to build your justification or pitch. Combined with contextually appropriate data points, using an operationalized framework can help those stakeholders not intimately familiar with the work of libraries better understand what we are providing. For example, calculating a cost-benefit analysis in addition to the overall budget for the project may help the CFO better un-

derstand the impact of the investment. As libraries, we are often awash in data. Using this to show our return on investment, in whatever metric is meaningful to your organization, can show the impact beyond the library (6).

Finally, consider what your senior-leader stakeholder really needs to know. Reports and proposals contain executive summaries for a reason! Consider how to make your ask concise and meaningful. Research has shown that both managers, and particularly those in executive positions, are at high risk for information overload (7). Be clear about your main points, organize them in a way that is memorable (there are many great frameworks out there!), and be prepared with additional information when and if it is requested.

Parting thoughts

In conclusion, crafting communication that resonates with stakeholders is essential for meaningful connections and successful partnerships. Begin by identifying your why – the core purpose driving your initiative. Next, understand your stakeholders and their motivations, aligning these with your objectives to find common ground. Use evidence and data to substantiate your points, ensuring your proposals are grounded in solid research. Complement this with an emotional appeal or a compelling story to create a shared vision that inspires and unites. These skills can be honed through practice (*Figure 1*), ultimately leading to stronger collaborations and more impactful outcomes. By mastering these techniques, you can effectively engage stakeholders, secure buy-in, and drive your projects forward with confidence and clarity.

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Contribution to the sustainability of the library in terms of climate change using the example of the acquisition department of a medical library

Aleksandra Guziałek and Justyna Kopiec
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Abstract

The fight against climate change is one of today's most critical issues. With their vital community role, libraries are obliged to be leaders in this fight by enhancing their sustainability. In the first step, this study reviewed the literature to pinpoint sustainable practices for libraries, focusing on the role of the acquisition department. That became a reference point for an interview with the Medical University of Silesia's Library Acquisition Department, which, along with loan statistics and collection analysis, established the department's strategic initiatives for environmental sustainability. Furthermore, students and faculty were surveyed to determine their preferences and attitudes toward collection policy. Findings confirm the Acquisition Department's commitment to environmental sustainability, demonstrating a responsive and forward-thinking approach to collection development.

Key words: *sustainable development; library collection development; carbon footprint; libraries, medical; surveys and questionnaires.*

Introduction

Sustainability has become a commonly discussed topic in many areas of human activity since the release of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development document. The topic of sustainability in its multidimensional aspects is particularly noticeable in research papers in the fields of scientific library and information science (1). Given the essential role libraries played in creating Agenda 2030 (2) and taking into account their influential role in communities, they are well-placed to lead efforts in this regard (1). One of the critical areas of Agenda 2030 is environmental protection (2).

The poster presented at the 19th EAHIL Conference results from an analysis of the activities of the Acquisition Department of the Library of the Medical University of Silesia (SUM) regarding achieving environmental protection goals of sustainable development.

With a view on this specific area, we conducted a thorough traverse of the decision-making process at each stage of department work, the environmental awareness of the Library personnel and users, and the university regulations and economic factors influencing collection procedures. Firstly, we focused on identifying actionable steps an academic library can take to implement sustainability, particularly regarding how the acquisition department contributes to the library's efforts in that area. Furthermore, we evaluated the department's environmentally friendly initiatives and identified areas with potential for further improvement. Additionally, we analysed the preferences and behaviours of the Library users concerning environmental issues and the Library's collection policy.

Methods

We were tasked with investigating the operations of the Acquisition Department of SUM Library, focusing on issues related to collection policy and department priorities. We aimed to comprehend the decision-making process and assess whether the collection policy aligns with the actual collection structure. To achieve this, we analysed statistical data on library material purchases and usage, and next, we interviewed the staff responsi-

ble for acquiring books, journals, and databases. In the interview, we emphasised obtaining information about the reasoning behind purchasing and discarding library materials and the goals and challenges of collection specialists. All this data was compared with the literature on the subject, whose authors focus on sustainability measures that libraries can take (1-3). We focused especially on the moves that library collection management departments can make in this area. The methodology was complemented by a survey of university students and staff. It aimed to identify the Library users' preferences related to using various forms of library materials and their views on electronic publications, particularly concerning sustainability goals.

Results

The literature analysis shows that, although environmental sustainability activities that can be carried out by libraries are often reduced solely to the construction of a green building (1, 2), their role extends beyond this. According to Fedorowicz-Kruszewska (2), libraries can also contribute through their resources, services, and interaction with their surroundings.

The acquisition department within the library plays a crucial role in managing the library's collection, spanning the processes of acquisition, management, and eventual disposal. The decisions made in this area can greatly affect the environmental sustainability of the library as a whole. Some key considerations for creating environmentally sustainable collections include choosing "greener" suppliers, responsible waste management oriented on reusing and recycling and purchasing materials with a lower carbon footprint (1, 3). When it comes to the latter, the majority of researchers advocate for increasing electronic collections at the expense of reducing printed ones (1, 3). Nonetheless, there are differing viewpoints, with some arguing that printed materials are actually more environmentally friendly (1, 3). However, existing tools for assessing libraries regarding environmental aspects incorporate the presence of an electronic collection as a key indicator of ecological sustainability (2). The need to balance user preferences, available storage space, and the library's budget is a strict but crucial challenge. In light of these, we designed an interview protocol for library personnel and prepared a survey aimed at library patrons.

Following the interview with the SUM Library's Acquisition Department staff, we determined the path of library materials, from purchase to discard (*Fig. 1*).

A key focus was the criteria for item acquisition, the consideration of e-book purchases, and the process of removing books and journals from the library collection.
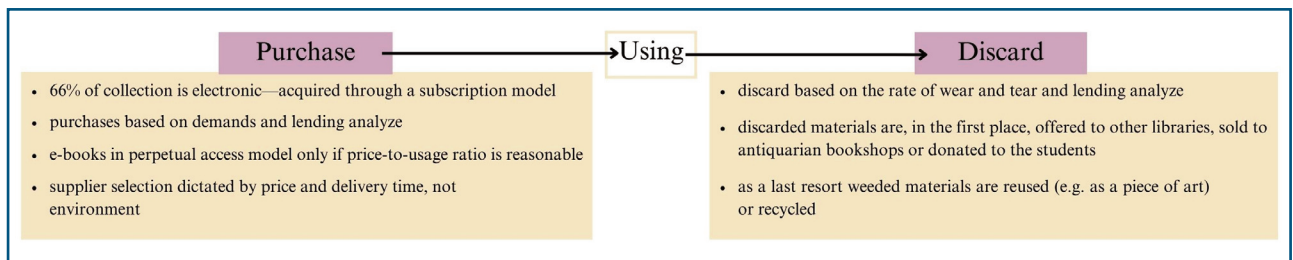

Purchase
- 66% of collection is electronic—acquired through a subscription model
- purchases based on demands and lending analyze
- e-books in perpetual access model only if price-to-usage ratio is reasonable
- supplier selection dictated by price and delivery time, not environment

Using

Discard
- discard based on the rate of wear and tear and lending analyze
- discarded materials are, in the first place, offered to other libraries, sold to antiquarian bookshops or donated to the students
- as a last resort weeded materials are reused (e.g. as a piece of art) or recycled

Fig. 1. *Work scheme based on interview with the Acquisition Department of the SUM Library employees.*

According to the interviews, purchases of books and journals are made mainly based on the requirements of students and university staff. Each decision to purchase more of the same title is preceded by assessing the loan statistics for the possessed copies. Preference is given to purchasing electronic books, but only if the price ratio relative to the expected use seems reasonable. Environmental factors play a minor role in supplier selection due to limitations in the Polish publishing market and the university's purchasing procedures prioritising price and lead time over ecological considerations.

The discard of materials is also determined by evaluating each item's usage. Due to the specialised nature of the SUM Library, it is essential to keep the collection current, and limited space necessitates regular weeding of the book collection. In the first instance, removed materials are offered to other Polish libraries, while the remaining items are sold to an antiquarian or provided
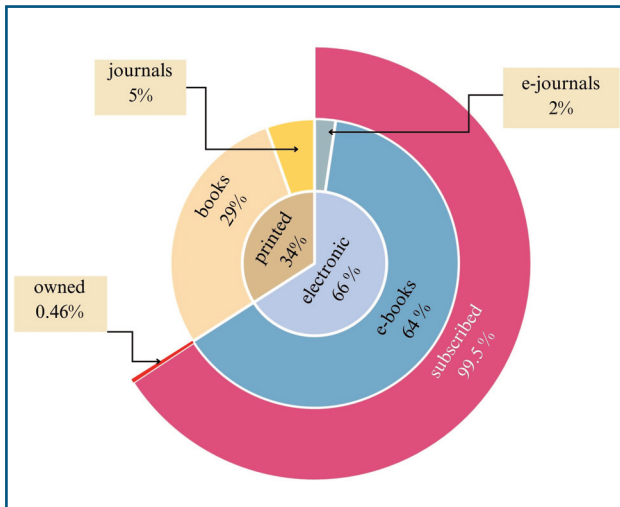
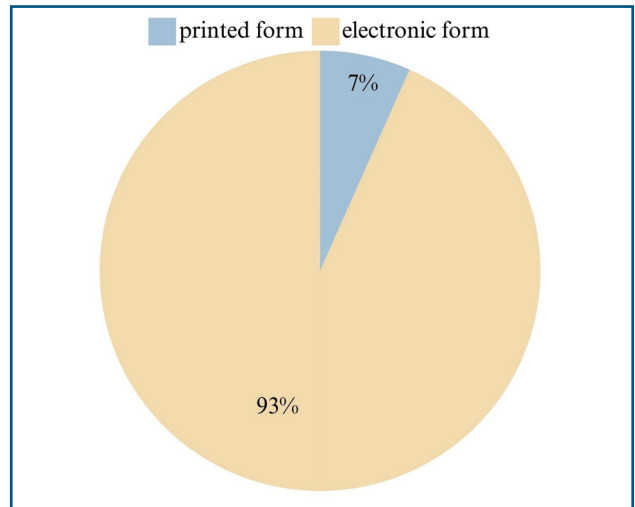**Fig. 2.** *SUM Library collection: format, type, and e-resource purchase model (2023).*

Fig. 3. *E-book vs print usage for top-rated book in SUM Library (2023).*

to students. In some cases, discarded materials are repurposed as art during cultural events or for other goals.

As the main guideline for the SUM Library's activities related to book collection management, the acquisition staff indicated purchasing and retaining only items essential to the library collection. Additionally, it's worth noting that the SUM Library has a high non-electronic collection usage rate compared to other public academic libraries in Poland, with 0.8 loans per book in 2022 (with an average of 0.1) (4).

The analysis of the materials in the SUM Library's collection aimed to demonstrate the proportion of electronic documents within the collection. The data reveals that electronic resources comprise 66% of the library's collection, with e-books accounting for 64% and e-journals for 2% of the electronic materials *(Fig. 2)*. The significant presence of e-books is attributed to the acquisition of database access with a large number of titles. Not all of them are of interest to the university's students and researchers. Nevertheless, a significant number of these items are purchased through a national consortium, and the subscription model of purchase, which facilitates access to shared resources among various subscribers rather than storing them on individual servers, seems to contribute to the library's more sustainable and environmentally friendly approach. Only 0.46% of the total number of e-books are acquired based on reader demand and are inventoried

and owned by the library (Fig. 2). As part of the analysis of library statistics, we also examined the usage of both print and electronic versions of one of the books with the highest number of loans. We compared the number of physical loans of this title in printed form with the number of openings in the Ibuk database of Polish books. The ratio is 7% to 93% *(Fig. 3)*. Of course, to get an assessment, it would be necessary to consider that a single physical book may be used multiple times during the loan period. Nevertheless, this data offers insight into the potential of books in electronic formats. When a printed book is used – probably repeatedly, but still – by only one person, an e-book can be accessed by multiple readers.

The survey of SUM students and researchers was aimed at confronting the actions taken by the SUM Library's Acquisition Department with the preferences and opinions of the Library's users. The questions mainly revolved around the factors influencing the decision to use or not to use materials in a specific format, focusing on books, journals, and databases. 230 respondents participated in the survey. As for books, the number of people declaring exclusive use of either printed or electronic books is similar (24% and 18% respectively). The situation with journals is different, only 14 (6%) of respondents declared using only printed journals, while the rate of those using only e-journals reaches 43% *(Fig. 4)*. This result is conducive to analysing the legitimacy of purchasing print journals as
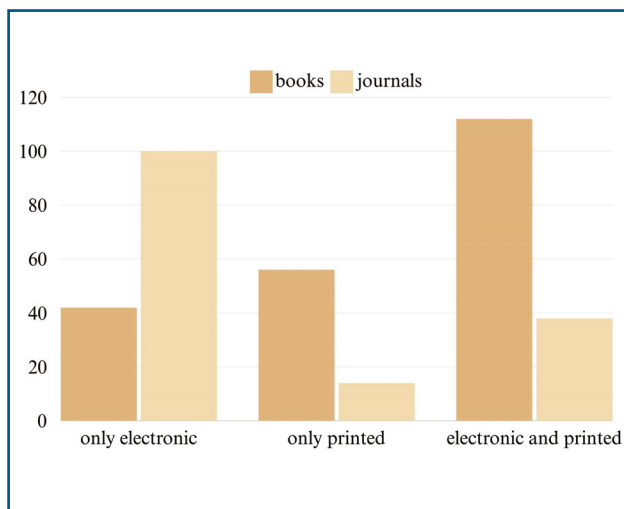
Aleksandra Guziałek and Justyna Kopiec

Fig. 4. *Preference of print and electronic books and journals in SUM Library as declared by patrons.*

Fig.5. *Factors influencing the use of e-books and e-journals in the SUM Library: a comparative analysis.*

before while providing an opportunity to broaden the scope of sustainable development activities. The analysis also included examining the reasons for opting for the digital format of shared collections, which are driven by library users. Only 17% (for e-books) and 20% (for e-journals) of the respondents mentioned environmental considerations as a factor in choosing electronic library materials. The majority highlighted convenient access (67% and 54%), portability (49% and 42%), and the unavailability of a title in any form other than digital (43% and 39%) as their primary reasons for selecting e-books and e-journals *(Fig. 5)*. We also inquired about how readers utilise the library collection, with a particular focus on note-taking or copying. A surprising result was the number of individuals making copies or printouts of material excerpts. The numbers are similar for electronically accessed and printed, at 61 and 53 (27% and 23%), respectively *(Fig. 6)*. The high rate in case of electronic usage is concerning from an environmental perspective, as it counteracts the Library's sustainability efforts to some extent. It appears crucial to implement educational initiatives, including providing guidance to database and e-book users on the tools available for annotating, downloading, and highlighting relevant content. The final survey's question was designed to inform us whether patrons are willing to use electronic sources in order to reduce the carbon footprint generated by the SUM Library. 68% of them answered in the affirmative *(Fig. 7)*. Those who
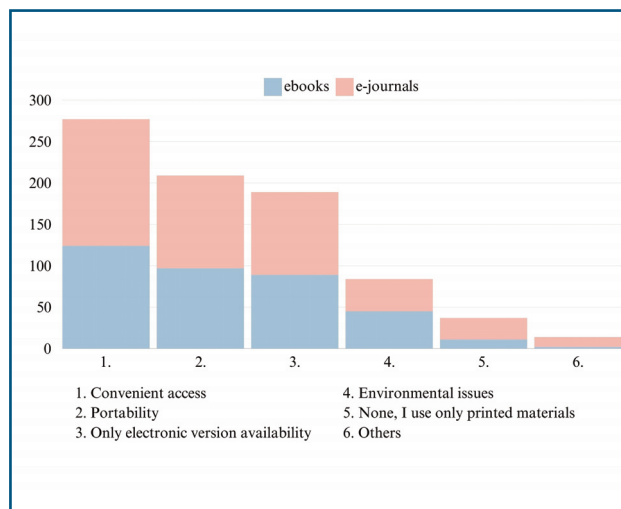
responded negatively were asked to justify their response. Reasons for adverse responses to that question include health concerns related to time spent in front of a screen, the perceived negligible environmental impact of printed materials compared to other industries, reservations regarding reliability and accessibility of electronic materials due to issues with internet connection and user interface opposed to ease of access of printed ones, as well as preferences for tactile learning experiences and personal and cultural attachment to printed books. These statements provided valuable insights into the preferences, opinions, and awareness of the Library users.

Conclusion

In light of the analysed literature, the Acquisition Department can contribute to environmental sustainability objectives by pursuing an environmentally friendly collection. When shaping the SUM Library collection, we consider various factors such as user preferences, financial implications, supplier policies, and environmental impact. However, the latter is not prioritised, primarily due to the limited number of medical literature vendors in Poland.

The analysis of the structure of library collections showed that it consists mainly of e-resources purchased in the subscription model, which allows shared resource access, promoting a sustainable and eco-friendly library approach. At the same time, 68% of library users
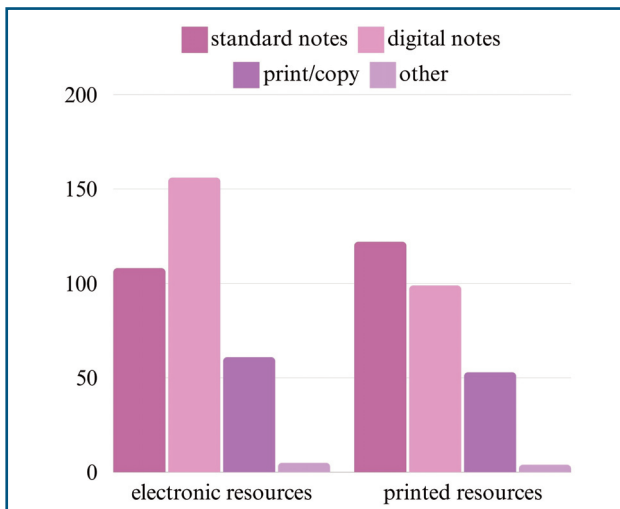
Fig. 6. *Taking notes: printed vs e-resources in SUM Library.*
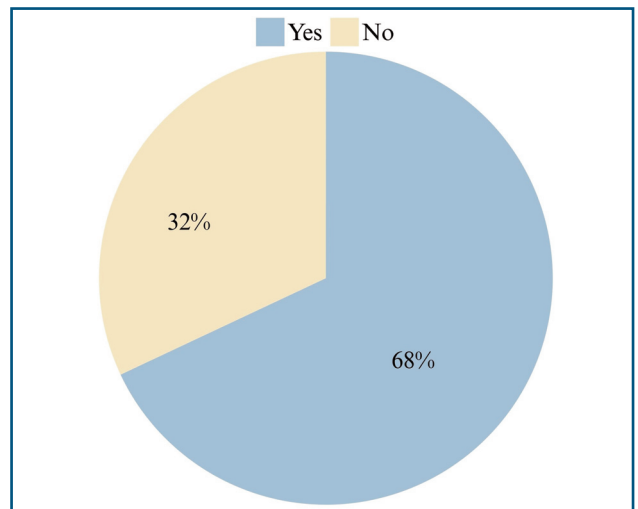

Fig. 7. *Would you use e-resources if it helped reduce the library's carbon footprint?*

use e-books and 60% use e-journals. While in the case of printed materials, the percentage of books used is similar (73%), the situation with journals is significantly different – only 23% of respondents admit to using them. Integral to developing an environmentally sustainable collection is the disposal of obsolete materials. When it comes to disposing of unnecessary books, we use responsible practices involving recycling and reuse. The survey among patrons showed us the importance of knowing and understanding their preferences for building environmentally sustainable collections. As a result of the survey, we decided to limit print journals purchases and conduct regular surveys to stay responsive to evolving needs. Furthermore, the findings showed the significant importance of education and technological solutions to reduce carbon footprint and paper consumption when using library material. All these findings seem to confirm the Acquisition Department's commitment to the SUM Library's environmental sustainability by reflecting a responsive and forward-thinking approach to collection development.

Acknowledgements

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Letter from the President

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Dear EAHIL member,

When this issue is published, September will be here, and most of us will have returned to our office after what I hope has been a relaxing summer. As we're starting up at work again, it's also time to think about next year's EAHIL event, the workshop in Lodz, Poland. The slogan that will inspire joint work during EAHIL 2025 and build partnerships and networks is IMAGINE. This multidimensional word is formed by the first letters of the concepts that will be the themes of the planned workshops:

I - Inform

M - Manage

A - AI

G - Growth

I - Integrate

N - Network

E - Explore

But no program without a submission from you, the EAHIL members. The call for abstracts will open in September. Please check the conference website (https://eahil2025.umed.pl/) for information on important dates and the theme.

I'm thrilled to announce that we have agreed to join forces with, among others, the Health Libraries Group (HLG) of the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP) in organising the next International Congress on Medical Librarianship (ICML) for 2026. The Congress will take place in Glasgow in July 2026, and the theme will be *Flourish: growing our communities* with the intention that ICML 2026 will have a growth impact upon our international community and support attendees to flourish in their roles to lay the foundations of a legacy for the profession.

The EAHIL Board has also received an expression of interest in hosting the 2028 event, which will be discussed at the executive board meeting in early October.

This means that we are still looking for bids for the 2027 event, which is also an opportunity to

highlight the 40th anniversary of the association. I invite you to send expressions of interest or proposals to the EAHIL inbox (EAHIL-SECR@LISTS.EAHIL.EU). Please refer to http://eahil.eu/events/arrange-conference/ for event guidelines, and feel free to contact other Board members or me for discussion and support.

I also want to remind you that we have Council election this autumn. The nomination period for the Council will open in September, and voting will take place in October. Who would you like to see representing your country on the EAHIL Council? If not yourself, perhaps you have a colleague who would be perfect for a Council member role. More information about the election process will follow in our channels.

EAHIL Council Elections 2024 – Call for Nominations

Dear EAHIL colleagues,

I am writing with a call for nominations to the EAHIL Council, for the new 4-year term beginning January 2025.

We will have vacancies in:

Austria (1), Belgium (2), Czech Republic (1), Denmark (2), Estonia (1), France (1), Germany (1), Hungary (1), Ireland (2), Italy (2), Latvia (1), Moldova (2), Netherlands (3), Norway (1), Poland (1), Portugal (1), Romania (1), Spain (1), Switzerland (2), Turkey (1), United Kingdom (2)

For more details on current Council members and vacancies from 2024, please see

https://eahil.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/2024_Current-Councillors-allowances-and-vacancies.pdf

The Council is an advisory group for the Board and acts as a link between the members in their country and the Association. Council members also have an important role in publicising EAHIL and recruiting new members. The Council usually meets formally once a year at the time of the annual EAHIL conference or workshop.

Councillors are elected for a term of four years by the voting EAHIL members resident in their country. Councillors may be re-elected once, after which they are not eligible for re-election until they have been absent from the Council for two years.

Each member state of the Council of Europe is eligible to elect councillors, provided that there are at least five voting members based in the country:

- Fewer than 5 voting members = 0 councillors

- 5-29 voting members = 1 councillor

- 30-54 voting members = 2 councillors

- 55 and over = 3 councillors

The list available at the link above details the Council vacancies by country for the term starting in 2025. The available places were calculated based on a count of all EAHIL members on 31 May 2024.

If the number of members increases by 1 October 2024, there may be an entitlement of an additional Councillor in some countries.

Procedure for nominating Council members

The nomination form is available on the EAHIL web site:

https://eahil.eu/call-for-nominations-to-eahil-council-2024/

Any two members can nominate a Council member from their own country. For this election, we are not requiring physical signatures from the two nominators and the nominee, but nominators must discuss and receive confirmation from the nominee that they are willing to stand, and all three people must be copied into the email submitting the nomination form. Please email the fully completed form not later than 06 October 2024 to the EAHIL Nomination Committee via eahil-secr@lists.eahil.eu.

Voting will be conducted electronically from 16 October to 31 October 2024 23:59 Central European Time.

To be able to vote, please make sure that you have an up-to-date email address in the membership database

Please encourage members to stand for the Council election!

On behalf of the Nomination Committee,

Maurella Della Seta
EAHIL Past President

Memories of EAHIL 2024 Conference in Riga, Latvia, 11-14 June 2024, and its organisation process

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The amount of work done to organise EAHIL 2024 conference in Riga seems insurmountable. Looking back at such a long and intensive period in our lives feels surreal. But it happened, and here is how.

Application for organising. In the Autumn of 2022, Rīga Stradiņš University (RSU) Library found the idea of hosting an EAHIL conference increasingly compelling, leading to the decision to submit an application. The primary goal was to present Latvia and its vibrant capital Riga, showcasing the city's rich cultural heritage. The conference aimed to provide participants with new and innovative experiences by adopting a hybrid format, offering both online and in-person participation. This approach not only facilitated broader engagement but also ensured that the event was accessible to a global audience, further enhancing the exchange of knowledge and ideas.

Despite changes in the Local Organising Committee (LOC), the support of and collaboration with the International Programme Committee (IPC) colleagues allowed us to navigate challenges effectively. Together we managed to keep the conference moving forward, ensuring that it not only highlighted the unique qualities of Riga but also delivered an enriching experience for all participants.

Theme and website. The theme of the Riga conference "Small step and a giant leap: reorienting towards a new environment" encouraged libraries to adapt and thrive in a constantly evolving landscape. It emphasized the importance of both incremental changes and significant advancements, building on the inspiring ideas from the EAHIL 2023 theme. The IPC developed key subthemes to guide discussions, including shaping the educational environment, advancing research and open science, positioning libraries as change agents, enhancing visibility and strategic presence, and leveraging technology and tools.

A website was also set up immediately so that potential participants could find out all the latest information on the conference plans as soon as possible.

Logo. Main aspect of the event visual identity for us was the logo. It had to be memorable, raise associations with Riga and inspire all the other printed and online materials. Looking through previous year's examples, we were particularly wowed by the elegant EAHIL 2022 Rotterdam "Broaden the Horizons" logo. But from the ideas that "Bounce" agency provided us with, we chose something more sharp and edgy, it reminded us of Riga silhouette and upward movement – fitting to the theme. And colour gradient from the letter "A" could be used as a colourful palette for further visual materials.

Agency. With a LOC that small (7 people) this event could only be possible by outsourcing part of the organisational tasks. Renting venues, creating and printing visual materials, filming and live-streaming the event, catering and helping with organisation of social events were the main tasks that we defined in the

procurement documents, so that we could attract an event agency to help us. It ended up being the marketing and communication agency "Addiction", who we worked closely with both before and during the conference.

Working with the event agency also made sense to us from a financial standpoint – that way we could significantly reduce the number of invoices and receipts we had to pay. And huge thanks to RSU Finance Department for helping us to plan budget estimates and to pay for some of the services before we could get money in from sponsor and conference fees.

Abstract submission and evaluation. Main part of the conference is its contents – oral presentations, posters, interactive workshops and continuing education courses. For those we made a call for abstracts and submission process was hosted by a trustful partner – cloud-based conference management software "ExOrdo". They proved their excellent service for several years by providing abstract submission and evaluation platform to our RSU Research Week bi-annual conferences. We also used "ExOrdo" for programme compilation, registration and abstract book building processes. User support was always fast, kind and very helpful.

A total of 130 submissions were evaluated by our team of 12 IPC members – Lotta Haglund, Marshall Dozier, Laura Múñoz González, Wichor Bramer, Baiba Holma, Witold Kozakiewicz, Evamaria Krause, Tuba Akbaytürk, Bea Winkler, Louise Farragher, Karen Marie Øvern and Kristīne Kuzņecova. On 23 November, Marshall and Witold were able to visit Riga and join locals Kristīne and Baiba for the in-person part of the abstract evaluation meeting. Other IPC members joined online. Marshall and Witold also had a chance to visit the venue and give valuable advice about what to consider when planning the event and its programme. And their support didn't stop there – Marshall was joining our regularly organised MS Teams calls from the very start of the journey, Witold started joining us in January.

91 abstracts went through to our conference programme – 49 oral presentations, 17 poster presentations, 20 interactive workshops and 5 continuing education courses.

Fig. 1. *One of the oral presentation sessions on 13 June 2024.*

Fig. 2. *Best poster prize winners at Poster Presentation Rapid-fire session*

Venue. National Library of Latvia was always a number one choice as to a venue for main events of the conference, because it stands as a central hub for libraries, knowledge, and culture. This iconic location was selected not only for its architectural significance but also for its role in embodying the values and mission of the conference, making it the perfect setting for discussions on how libraries can adapt and thrive in a rapidly changing environment.

EAHIL Board meeting and continuing education courses were organised in the newest RSU building – Pharmaceutical Education and Research Centre. It was opened in March 2023, and it doesn't just house the Department of Pharmaceutical Chemistry, the Department of Pharmacology, and the Department of Applied Pharmacy and the Laboratory of Finished Dosage Forms, but also has plenty of rooms for seminars and meetings with visitors from abroad.

Fig. 3. *EAHIL Executive Board Meeting.*

Fig. 4. *Platinum sponsor Wolters Kluwer stand at sponsor exhibition*

Sponsor attraction. After putting up EAHIL 2024 Sponsorship Prospectus and updating some of the previous year's sponsor list contact information, a lengthy and thorough process of communication with potential sponsors began. It was slow in the beginning, and we got scared a bit. But timing of the financial planning of next year's budget made sense and, in the end, we did receive enough positive answers from 4 sponsors (Wolters Kluwer, EBSCO, Elsevier and Amboss), 18 exhibitors (Thieme Group, S. Karger AG, Springer Nature, Sage Publications Ltd, Covidence, The Cochrane Collaboration, Technology from Sage, Clarivate, Accucoms, BMJ, TDNet, MA Healthcare, Oxford University Press, JAMA, MDPI, CABI, Taylor & Francis and Bentham Science) and one walk-in agent (OCLC).

Keynotes. "Yes" from our first keynote speaker Kristīne Pabērza-Ramiresa (Impact & Insight Manager at IFLA) we received in early December of 2023. Kristīne was teaching a professional development programme "Impact planning and evaluation in academic libraries" for Latvian libraries during autumn semester and this topic felt extremely important for libraries to be aware of. Not just doing things for the sake of doing, but really

Fig. 5. *Kristīne Pabērza-Ramiresa giving keynote speech on 12 June 2024*

Fig. 6. *Conference participants listening to opening keynote speech*

analysing community needs, knowing what our patrons are expecting from us, planning and then evaluating the impact libraries have on their existing and potential patrons. And we were happy and relieved to hear a positive answer from Kristīne, and grateful to see her perform on the main stage on 12 June.

Due to busy schedules, invitations to second keynote speaker candidates were sent out quite late and after receiving a couple refusals, we wished we had done it earlier. So, this time we were even more relieved to receive a positive (and very quick) response from Andrea Alessandro Gasparini (Senior Librarian and Researcher at University of Oslo Library). His speech about a designerly perspective on using AI in research libraries on the main stage on 14 June gave the conference participants overview and some ideas about how to plan their work around this still new and emerging technology. Another event, that Andrea quite literally saved for us, was the panel discussion about AI on 13 June. He agreed quickly and was willing to adapt to the aftermath of trade union strike in Norway by taking part in panel discussion online on Thursday, then hopping on a plane and arriving in Riga to be present at the keynote speech on Friday. As a result, we had a decent number of 3 panel speakers, including also the lovely Simone Willis and Marydee Ojala.

Fig. 7. *Andrea Alessandro Gasparini giving keynote speech on 14 June 2024*

Fig. 8. *Panel discussion "Benefits and limitations of automation and AI tools in research" on 13 June 2024*

Programme and registration. Programme with set structure and presentations, interactive workshops and CECs put into their time slots was the main condition for opening registration to the event. Marshall and Witold once again shared their experience and helped us to put together the programme that one of our LOC members transferred to "ExOrdo" Programme module. We shared this programme online with potential conference participants so that they could decide to pay us a visit in June. Because several CECs, parallel sessions and interactive workshops were taking place at the same time, data from the programme was used in setting up "ExOrdo" registration form and participants could book desired workshops and CECs, which also helped authors prepare for the number of people, who planned to attend their hosted sessions.

Social event venues and entertainment. Let's be honest, a conference is only as fun as its social events are. We chose a set of venues, that would give our participants a unique taste of Riga and Latvia, showcasing our architecture, culture and traditions.

Latvia has a strong education history and there are plenty of science and education-based institutes and museums, one of them being RSU Anatomy Museum, based on the first teaching collection used in anatomy studies in Latvia. During our first-timer event, participants could explore the first floor with the collection of skeletons, embryos, bones, body parts and organs (if they weren't too uneasy about that kind of stuff), but in the second-floor event room have a chat with other participants, the evening accompanied by wine, snacks and music.

Fig. 9. *One of the workshops on 13 June 2024*

We really wanted conference participants not only explore Riga Old Town architecture, but also get some insight into what was happening behind those walls, so we hired some guides to lead the tour around Old Town before the Welcome reception. The reception was held at the Museum of the History of Riga and Navigation, which has stunning interiors and household items of 13th-20th centuries. The evening was made unforgettable by the help of the folk singer Katrīna Dimanta and her group, who played the instruments, sang songs and taught participants some traditional Latvian dances. During the rest of the evening the accordionist Kaspars Gulbis kept our spirits very high, showcasing his top-notch accordion skills in different music styles – from traditional folk songs to Michael Jackson's "Billy Jean".

Most glorious and intricate venue (The House of the Black Heads) we kept for the high point of the conference – Gala dinner. Luxurious Celebration Hall was a stunning background to have dinner and listen to modern jazz band Lupa. The evening was wrapped up by visiting the "First Latvian Rock Cafe", to dance till the morning comes.

Virtual platform. The ambitious goal of making this conference hybrid was tackled by a) outsourcing the event agency to do the filming and live-streaming process; b) hiring local experts from "Mitto events", who created a virtual platform, where online participants could watch live streams of parallel sessions, panel discussion, keynote speeches, opening and closing ceremonies, make comments and post their questions, check out and comment posters, message each other, find sponsor and exhibitor information. Mitto events also helped us to create and disseminate the evaluation forms and attendance certificates after the event. When the conference week was over, virtual platform accounts were created for in-person participants as well, so that they could watch recordings of the sessions that they couldn't visit during the event.

Fig. 10. *The Welcome Reception venue - Museum of the History of Riga and Navigation*

Mobile App. To give in-person participants some assistance in getting around the conference venue and curating their own personal programme (by bookmarking desired sessions to attend), we used Guidebook Builder functionality, as you can synchronize it with "ExOrdo" programme and you don't have to input programme sessions manually.

Week before. In the last week before the event, organisers were busy with final preparation tasks – printing posters and participant badges, testing Zoom calls with online presenters, sending presentation information to the virtual platform, checking virtual platform and mobile app, preparing themselves mentally.

Fig. 11. *Gala dinner at The House of the Black Heads*

Week during. Time during the event didn't fly and it didn't drag. It really felt like it was – approximately 60 working hours long. Varying between "so nervous, that our hearts are going to jump out of our chests" and "we got this, we can relax now", this experience can't be traded for anything else. Even though Riga LOC team was very small, we experienced a lot of help from everyone around. IPC members took the task of chairing oral presentation sessions very seriously. Fiona Brown was willing to chair the panel discussion instead of Marshall, who sadly couldn't make it to Riga. But Marshall was still following everything via our virtual platform, being very active in the comments sections. Our team of volunteers was helpful in reading out questions posted on the virtual platform, carrying microphones and checking up on participants during coffee and lunch breaks. Agency members reacted swiftly when there were technical issues or we needed some extra visual materials to be printed out or put on the screen (such as prize winner certificates, that participants were complimenting after the closing ceremony). National Library of Latvia staff members were very accommodating, making sure that participants felt comfortable.

Fig. 12. *Lotta Haglund announcing EAHIL President and Board election results at the General assembly*

Fig. 13. *EAHIL Scholarship winners at the closing ceremony*

On Friday afternoon our cheeks were hurting after hours of endless smiles on our faces – everyone who was leaving the venue to travel home or experience a bit more of Riga showered us with compliments and words of gratitude. It helped us realise (much sooner than we originally thought we would) – it was all worth it.

Weeks after. Being organisers of the conference didn't stop at the closing ceremony. We still had to arrange evaluation surveys, certificates, presentation slide uploading, abstract book, making virtual platform accounts for in-person participants, paying off bills. But that could be done in a slower tempo with less stress, and we could finally pay more attention to our other duties, that we, maybe, neglected a bit for the sake of giving our all to the conference.

Advice to future organisers. Despite overwhelmingly positive feedback, we know what mistakes we made. Only one of the LOC members had an extensive experience in organising events, so it was understandable for

Fig. 14. *Prize winners at the closing ceremony*

Fig. 15. *Part of LOC and volunteer team at the closing ceremony*

the rest of us to feel a bit like fish out of the water. Couple of notes to us and future EAHIL event organisers – get more people in the LOC (even though it seems, that we were the only ones, who had team this small), have someone outside the team go through conference website and tell, if everything is clear there and nothing is missing, try setting up more than one payment method (preferably both – bank transfer and card payment), even if one of them will appear later during registration period, don't be afraid to ask catering to include more/better options for different dietary needs, don't be disheartened by low activity from potential sponsors – they will apply, they just need time to sort out their budgets.

EAHIL 2025. Some of us haven't even been to the EAHIL conference before. Now we know that it is an amazing event and a wonderful community. Most LOC members haven't experienced this event fully, we could only go to two, one or even zero sessions – conference days were spent at the registration desk or chatting to the sponsors. Hopefully, we will get a chance to have our first proper EAHIL event visit next June in Łódź, because Witold's presentation made us very excited about it. And don't be mistaken – we will get a full bank out of those workshops.

With greetings from Riga

Kristīne Kuzņecova for the EAHIL 2024 conference LOC members

Photos by Roberts Blaubuks

Memories from EAHIL Scholarship recipients

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I am very grateful to have received a scholarship to attend the EAHIL 2024 conference in Riga. This opportunity has been exciting and rewarding, allowing me to connect with a diverse group of professionals and gain more knowledge in the field. As someone who is relatively new to information retrieval but has considerable experience in guiding researchers through Research Data Management and Open Access publishing, the inclusion of these topics in this year's EAHIL conference was a significant bonus for me.

The conference offered a broad array of sessions, including keynotes, workshops, and Continuing Education Courses (CEC). One of the highlights of my experience was the privilege of creating and presenting two workshops together with my colleague Thomas Vandendriessche. During the first workshop, we played the Research Survival Game, which I had the pleasure of contributing to its development. This game uses playful learning to develop an understanding of the possibilities, requirements, and best practices regarding Open Access, Research Data Management, and Information Retrieval. The attendees were enthusiastic and engaged, making the session lively and productive. It was rewarding to see the participants enjoy the game while learning important concepts in a fun and interactive way.

The second workshop was a hands-on training session focused on documentation and metadata. This workshop aimed to equip attendees with practical skills on the what, where, and how of documentation and metadata, emphasising their importance from the start of a research project through to its completion. The participants were keen to learn and actively participated in the discussions and activities, which made the session very enjoyable for me.

Additionally, I took part in two CEC trainings at the start of the conference and attended three workshops organised by other attendees. These sessions provided deep dives into various aspects of our profession. It is a pity that I could not attend more workshops and training courses due to the many parallel sessions in the schedule.

The conference also provided plenty opportunities for networking and socialising. The first-timers' reception was a wonderful way to break the ice and meet fellow attendees. The social events, including the conference dinner and city tour, were beautifully organised, offering a perfect balance between relaxation and professional interaction. Exploring the beautiful city Riga and experiencing its rich culture added an extra layer of enjoyment to the conference.

Overall, attending the EAHIL 2024 conference in Riga was a great experience. I am very thankful to the EAHIL Board for awarding me the scholarship that made my participation possible. The knowledge and connections I gained during the conference have been very valuable, and I look forward to applying what I've learned in my role at KU Leuven.

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No newbie to the library sector as such, I certainly am one to the world of medical libraries. Having started my new position at the library of the Medical University of Vienna in November 2023, I am still in the process of learning about the very specific demands of our customers compared to those of other libraries. When I first heard about the EAHIL conference, I thought, why have a separate event dedicated exclusively to medical libraries? When I got there, I discovered what distinguishes it from other library conferences I attended in the past – on so many levels.

On the content level, I profited highly from workshops on "Improving efficiency and confidence in systematic searching medical bibliographic databases", "Promoting and marketing library and information services: tips and tools for creating a communication plan", and "Getting started with creating advanced OpenRefine workflows: Systematic searching and enhancing publication data", as well as sessions on "Shaping the educational environment" and "Libraries as change agents". All of these delivered more than enough "fuel" for fruitful conversations during the breaks.

I had set myself the goal of meeting someone new during every break. The open-mindedness of everyone I met made achieving this goal all the easier. On a personal level, I can wholeheartedly say that I have never attended a conference with more pleasant and inspiring conversational partners, so willing to share their experience with one another, and dedicated in their daily lives to the common goals of continuously developing library services to make them more visible and approachable to their users. Thank you very much to everyone for giving me so much valuable insight into your library's best practices, projects and challenges.

What also struck me was the unusually high turnout at the social events (each one of them seemingly outdoing the next in terms of venue and catering), which, in my perception, seems to be another fundamental cornerstone of this community. I even met some colleagues who return to this conference year upon year, even after having left the medical field, to keep up with this special crowd they have grown so fond of. I believe that speaks for itself. The first-timers event made me feel welcomed into the community and helped me approach other attendees during the following days. A massive thank you to the local organizing team, who did an amazing job with the entire conference!

I am incredibly grateful to the EAHIL Board for awarding me with a Scholarship for attending the EAHIL Conference in Riga, and commend everyone who might receive one in the future, as this conference has been a wonderful opportunity to exchange ideas and experience amongst such a warm and welcoming community of colleagues. Very much looking forward to next time!

Betsy Morgan
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I was so pleased to receive a scholarship this year to attend the EAHIL Conference in the wonderful National Library of Latvia in Riga. I would like to take this opportunity to thank EAHIL very much for the scholarship and this wonderful opportunity, as I believe that it has been a great addition to my early career. The conference totally exceeded my expectations and I have already recommended it to many colleagues across Wales.

I was a little apprehensive before attending due to my time in the profession (just over a year) and my experience of the duties undertaken by a Health Librarian. The events that EAHIL organised in the evenings were a lovely introduction to some wonderful buildings across Riga and indeed to the highly knowledgeable and friendly people who were also attendees. From the first-timer reception at the RSU Anatomy Museum on the first evening, with its amazing display of anatomy exhibitions, to the dancing and music experienced at the House of the Blackheads, on the last, it truly felt like I had found a new (very large) work-family. Everyone I met was so very welcoming and was so patient with my many, often naïve (due to my length of time in the profession) questions.

The networking opportunities throughout the whole time at the conference were amazing – no coffee time was rushed and lunches were leisurely. This relaxed approach to the conference allowed for plenty of stimulating conversations about everything from systematic reviewing to publishing, from library patrons to wellbeing ideas, from book suggestions to taking a tour to the top floor of the library. As a first timer at an international conference, I tried to use these times to speak to as many people as I could, to ask as many questions as I could and to marvel at the sumptuous amounts of food available.

I really liked the workshop heavy content of the conference and felt the opportunity to work through scenarios with others, such as different marketing strategies, was very beneficial. With the increase of AI related enquiries within the library service, I felt the workshop that I attended about ChatGPT and the way it could be used in systematic reviews very useful as well as the session on AI in a more general context. I thoroughly enjoyed the debate about the "best" ways to search – whether it was multi-line or single-line and was very entertained with the reasoning behind each argument. I would have liked to have gone to more workshops and did find it difficult to choose which ones to attend.

My time at the conference was truly amazing and the only one criticism that I would be able to find is that it was too short and I would have loved to have stayed longer. Thank you to the LOC and EAHIL for arranging an amazing, educational and inspiring few days. I felt, when I came back, as though I wanted to tell everyone what I had learnt and how fabulous the time had been.

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High-quality workshops about research data management at EAHIL Conference

I want to thank EAHIL for granting me the EAHIL scholarship which enabled me to attend to EAHIL conference in Riga, Latvia in June 2024. A conference that was filled with warmth and expertise! I had high expectations for the event to give me new insights for my work as an information specialist at the University of Eastern Finland (UEF) and Kuopio University Hospital (KUH).

As part of my work is concerning research data management, I decided to focus on those topics also in the conference. I chose to attend a few workshops that were about research data management so that I would be able to pass on valuable information and practices to our university's data support team. I gave my presentation about integrating research data management as a part of undergraduate education at UEF and I hoped that it gave tools and inspiration to others to do the integration also in their organizations.

The workshops in which I participated were of high-quality and especially the conversations among the participants were exceptionally fruitful. Among other things, we discussed together how legal issues steer data management in really different ways in different countries. Interesting and very educational!

Moreover, many good practices arose from the workshops and presentations. In UEF and KUH, we could definitely use eg. the training model that KU Leueven university's research data support services have for their researchers about metadata and documentation of research data (Research Data Management @ KU Leuven: Interactive workshop on metadata and documentation held by Anouk D'Hont and Thomas Vandendriessche). In KU Leueven they have this amazing example-dataset that they are using in order to educate researchers on how to document and collect reasonable metadata of their actual research data. Very impressive!

As I am an EAHIL council member, I also attended the council meeting in Riga. It is highly important for us newcomers to see how EAHIL operates so that we can give our best to represent EAHIL in our home countries. Also, while in Riga, the next year's International Programme Committee had a face-to-face meeting which I attended. I think it is the most valuable thing to actually see each other live and the EAHIL events each year give us the possibility to do this. So thank you EAHIL!

The EAHIL conference in Riga offered a lot of content to develop one's own professional skills, but also great networking opportunities and especially practical arrangements were in a class of their own. A dedicated app for the conference made it easier for the participant to navigate both online and on-site. Congratulations to the organizers for a successful conference! See you next year in Łódź, Poland, June 9-13!

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The schedule for my first time at an EAHIL conference was jam-packed. I was involved in delivering two workshops, an oral presentation, and a panel discussion on AI! The conference was held at the National Library of Latvia, which has impressive views of the city.

The workshop I delivered was about the potential of using large language models for systematic searching in databases like PubMed. I was overwhelmed by the popularity of the workshop and the number of requests for additional places – great that so many people are interested in this area of development. In the workshop we discussed developments in research, experimented with prompt design, and considered the effectiveness of searches created by ChatGPT. When I got back to the UK, it was fantastic to receive emails from attendees to say they had already tried using ChatGPT to design a search for a project they were working on.

AI was a hot topic for discussion at the conference and I was delighted to sit on a panel with Marydee Ojala and Andrea Alessandro Gasparini. We discussed some of the limitations and opportunities of using automation tools in libraries from systematic review software to teaching students to effectively use and evaluate AI output.

It was also interesting to learn from colleagues by attending presentations and workshops. In particular, I enjoyed a workshop led by Morwenna Rogers, Rebecca Whear, and Jill Buckland. In this workshop we considered the impact of poor-quality systematic reviews from the perspectives of researchers, publishers, the public, and information professionals. It was great to hear experiences of the challenges of working in information roles and how people are solving issues at their institutions.

This was my first time visiting Riga and it was great to explore the city through the social programme, which included events at the RSU Anatomy Museum, House of the Black Heads, and Museum of the History of Riga and Navigation. It was a pleasure to meet others attending EAHIL at the First Timers Reception. This really helped to break the ice and introduced me to people working in information professional roles across Europe. The social programme gave me an opportunity to network and I will definitely be keeping in touch with people.

Finally, I would like to thank the Executive Board for awarding me an EAHIL Scholarship to attend the conference. My first time at an EAHIL conference was a great experience and I look forward to attending again.

Memories from a first timer

Abdelkerim Belhommania
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It was my first time participating in an in-person EAHIL Conference – EAHIL 2024 – in Riga, the lovely capital city of Latvia, especially the Old Town's splendid architecture.

Supported by the university and determined to actively participate in the EAHIL 2024 Conference with the theme "Small step and a giant leap: reorienting towards a new environment", I was convinced that that would be a unique experience to upscale my librarianship know-how. The convivial reception and welcoming atmosphere were particularly reassuring and rewarding at the remarkable Riga Stradi š University and the captivating National Library of Latvia, aka. Castle of Light. Attending competitive CECs, panel presentations, and workshops and engaging in fruitful discussions with fellow librarians from across Europe, Canada, and the United States of America was enriching and impactful. Participating in the EAHIL 2024 Conference confirmed that my university library is moving in the right direction. Thought-provoking ideas on Open Science and Institutional Repositories have been captured and I tend to apply them. Equally important, the Conference was also an opportunity to meet the *Journal of EAHIL's* wonderful board members.

The spectacular social events at the jaw-dropping RSU Anatomy Museum, Museum of the History of Riga and Navigation, and The House of the Black Heads promoted fabulous ice-breaking and amazing networking with friendly and engaged EAHIL community members.

I was also delighted to meet the Conference exhibitors, most of whom I am already familiar with. And we are now exploring new horizons for further collaboration.

I would like to extend my deep gratitude to the local organizing committee. The great job they have done mustn't go unrecorded.

I aspire to sustainable collaboration with EAHIL.

Memories from a Castle of Light

Camilla Larsson, Julia Harrysson and Sara Landerdahl Stridsberg
Mälardalen University, Västerås, Sweden

On the banks of Daugava River lies a <u>castle</u> filled with the treasure of books and enlighten-ment. In its grand halls the yearly EAHIL conference took place in June 2024. What a suiting dwelling for the meeting of hundreds of librarians and information specialist to mingle, learn and workshop about themes like: Shaping the Educational Environment; Research & Open Science; Libraries as change agents; Visibility & Strategic presence; Technology & Tools.

Three adventurous librarians from the shore of lake *Mälaren* in Sweden seized the opportunity to go there. They were especially looking forward to <u>the great battle of multiline vs single line searches</u>; to <u>explore the potentials (and limits) of the ChatGPT when designing a systematic literature search</u>; to <u>pilot methods for translating search strategies; the endeavour of using AI in research libraries</u>; and much more. All workshops were very appreciated!

A first-time experience was also to be made. With a poster prepared the three librarians presented how they have worked from several angles after the device "little streams make big rivers", to improve their communication and visibility strategies. Other posters caught their attention and gave good lessons for a possible next time, for example that it is a clever idea to add contact information, interactive sticky notes, QR codes and plants. Plenty of plants.

The National Library of Latvia - the Castle of Light.
Photo taken by Camilla Larsson

How delightful it was to meet fellow colleagues from around the world – to learn together, to get inspired as well as challenged to think in new ways. The librarian trio saw that they were not alone in the challenges they face in their day-to-day work. Keynote speaker Kristīne Pabērza-Ramiresa gave good insights on how to work community-centred with planning and evaluation in order to make an impact.

Inside the castle coffee flowed freely, and occasional rains was pouring outside, making the streets of Riga glimmer in the sunset. The three librarians from *Mälardalen* made the best out of their adventure by participating in all the evening activities. A local guide showed hidden gems of the old city. The welcome reception and gala dinner offered dancing until the soles of their feet were burning.

All in all, our librarians conclude that the memories made in a castle of light is to forever be kept in the card index of their hearts.

Publications and new products

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Dear all,

welcome back to my column! I hope you all enjoyed this summer and had the chance to rest up and recharge for the upcoming fall. As always, I scanned the web searching news on the most discussed trends related to biomedical librarianship. Once again, it's Artificial Intelligence (speaking of which, have you read the last JEAHIL <u>issue</u> edited by Michelle Wake on Artificial Intelligence and libraries?), Diamond Open Access and Open Science. Enjoy!

JOURNAL ISSUES

Health Information and Libraries Journal contents of September 2024 (41:3)

Editorial

- **Core Collections: Essential titles for health libraries.**
  Lynsey Hawker and Claire Blacklock

Review

- **Information and health literacy policies during pandemics: A narrative review.**
  MShabnam Danaei Mehrabad, Sirous Panahi, Shahram Sedghi and Aidin Aryankhesal

Original Articles

- **Searched and found? The association between use of health information sources and success in getting the desired information.**
  Dennis Rosenberg

- **Using infographics in disseminating healthy lifestyle information on social media is likely to increase uptake and sharing.**
  Sin Ting Chu, Dickson K. W. Chiu and Kevin K. W. Ho

- **Parents of children with cancer require health literacy support to meet their information needs.**
  Chai Eng Tan, Sie Chong Doris Lau, Zarina Abdul Latif, Chee Chan Lee, Kok Hoi Teh and Sherina Mohd Sidik

- **Familiarity with the internet and health apps, and specific topic needs are among the factors that influence how online health information is used for health decisions among adolescents.**
  Tatjana Gazibara, Milica Cakic, Jelena Cakic, Anita Grgurevic and Tatjana Pekmezovic

- **Mental health-related internet use by people with a diagnosis of chronic psychiatric disorder, attending community mental health centres.**
  Abdurrahman Yaki ir and Zekiye Çeinkaya Duman

PUBLICATIONS AND NEW PRODUCTS

- **Bibliometric analysis confirms expected trends in consumer health information publications.**
  Elham Aldousari

Regular Features
Dissertations into Practice

- **Application-based big data development framework for health sciences libraries.**
  Xinxin Chen, Di Zhang, Bo Wang and Khurshid Ahmad

International Perspectives and Initiatives

- **Responding to technological changes.**
  Jeannette Murphy

Teaching and Learning in Action

- **Developing a governance process for apps can help enhance and change the skills base and visibility of health librarians.**
  Amanda Minns

FROM THE WEB

- **IFLA Working paper "Developing a library strategic response to Artificial Intelligence"**
  Andrew Cox, as convenor of the IFLA's Artificial Intelligence SIG, prepared a working document for discussion on libraries' strategic response to Artificial Intelligence. The text is organized around developing questions intended to lead to reflection and action and support local decision making about AI. The document can be accessed here: https://www.ifla.org/g/ai/developing-a-library-strategic-response-to-artificial-intelligence/

- **Science in the age of AI. How artificial intelligence is changing the nature and method of scientific research**
  The Royal Society published a report exploring how AI technologies, such as deep learning or large language models, are transforming the nature and methods of scientific research. It also explores how notions of research integrity, research skills or research ethics are inevitably changing, and what the implications are for the future of science and scientists. The report addresses the following questions: How are AI-driven technologies transforming the methods and nature of scientific research? What are the opportunities, limitations, and risks of these technologies for scientific research? How can relevant stakeholders (governments, universities, industry, research funders, etc.) best support the development, adoption, and use of AI-driven technologies in scientific research? The Report can be downloaded at this link: https://royalsociety.org/news-resources/projects/science-in-the-age-of-ai/

- **Global Diamond Open Access Alliance**
  On the 10th of July an event, organized by UNESCO, officially announced the Global Diamond Open Access Alliance, highlighting its vision, mission, and objectives, and engaging stakeholders in a collaborative effort to promote Diamond Open Access. The Global Diamond Open Access Alliance aims to promote this model of scholarly publishing and to encourage a more inclusive and transparent dialogue within the academic community. The initiative was introduced by this webinar.

- **List of AI-powered tools supporting teaching, learning and research**
  A list, to be regularly updated, of AI-based tools that can be useful for different library tasks. https://zenodo.org/records/10548162

READING SUGGESTIONS

- Butler, Leigh-Ann; Hare, Madelaine; Schönfelder, Nina; Schares, Eric; Alperin, Juan Pablo; Haustein, Stefanie, 2024, <u>An open dataset of article processing charges from six large scholarly publishers (2019-2023)</u>. This article, published on arXiv, introduces a dataset of article processing charges (APCs) produced from the price lists of six large scholarly publishers - Elsevier, Frontiers, PLOS, MDPI, Springer Nature and Wiley - between 2019 and 2023. It is interesting for several reasons: it makes a comparison between the evolution of the APCs of six large publishers (also in relation to the inflation rate), indicates for each type of publication (hybrid and gold) the minimum, maximum and average costs, and confirms the higher cost of APCs in hybrid publications (despite the fact that they already have a subscription revenue). Moreover, the authors make their dataset available in the <u>Harvard Dataverse</u> to enable other researchers to continue this research or library consortia to "understand the cost and value of Read and Publish contracts".

- Rob Johnson, the author of the article published on FEBS Network <u>Beyond the journal: The future of scientific publishing</u>, questions what the lines of development of a reform of scientific communication could be if the scientific community would replace the traditional journals with a decentralized network as publishing venue.

- In a blog post <u>Embrace AI in Libraries: Freeing Staff for Meaningful Work While Preserving Human Touch,</u> Corey Halaychik, starting from her experience as Head of Content Management at The University of Texas at Austin Libraries and the Founder of The Library Collective (an independent non-profit organization dedicated to education and innovation for better librarianship), focuses on the possible uses of Artificial Intelligence in different library tasks.

SOME FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Peer review week
September 23-27, worldwide
The Peer Review Week is a global event celebrating the essential role that peer review plays in maintaining research quality. This year's event will be dedicated to the theme "Innovation and Technology in Peer Review". For more detailed info: https://peerreviewweek.wordpress.com/.

Empowerment of Public Health, Health Care and Wellbeing - Education, Research, and Practice
November 6-7, Tallinn, Estonia
The conference will have a special panel on the role of contemporary libraries in supporting research. For more information: https://www.ttk.ee/en/node/76644

Association of European Research Libraries (LIBER) Winter Event 2024
November 26-27. Maribor, Slovenia
The LIBER Winter Event is a one-and-a-half-day event that takes place every year in person at a LIBER Library host venue. It is designed with and for the core LIBER network; people working at LIBER Libraries across Europe, those taking part in Working Groups and Steering Committees, and partners from LIBER's portfolio of International Projects and other collaborative initiatives. More info at: https://libereurope.eu/event/liber-winter-event-2024/

2nd Global Summit on Diamond Open Access: Centering Social Justice in Scholarly Communication to Advance Research as a Public Good.
December 8-14, Cape Town, South Africa
The 2nd Global Summit on Diamond Open sees three distinct events with common goals and objectives converge to create a dynamic forum for robust engagement: Advancing Social Justice Through Curriculum Realignment: Centering Scholarly Communication in LIS Curricula (8-9 December), Open Science in the South (9-11 December), and the Conference on Diamond Open Access (11-13 December). More info at: https://doasummit.uct.ac.za/

Please feel free to contact me (annarita.barbaro@iss.it) if you have any further suggestion about initiatives or events you would like to promote