



Converge on London viewed from 4 different “angles”

For Carmen Bonciu from Iasi in Northern Romania “Converge on London” was the very first International Conference she had ever attended.

The End? Or a New Beginning?

Dream or reality?

Several months ago I finished my application for a grant that would enable me to participate in the 8ICML with the words “for me the participation in the ICML is a dream and it depends on you to make it come true”. Now here I am back from the wonderful city of London, trying to put the impressions I accumulated into some order, and this is not easy. Now more than ever I wonder: was it a dream or reality?

The Scientific Programme...

I never imagined how difficult it was for a “fresher” participant in such a big international conference to absorb and sift through so much information. I had studied the scientific programme before I arrived in London and I had marked the presentations I wanted to attend. The plenary sessions seriously made me reconsider our role as medical librarians while the convergence between librarians, editor, researchers opened for me a new direction of questions. This disturbed my carefully planned attendance of the parallel sessions as I tried to fit in those that shed more light upon these broad aspects. Most of all I like the fact that the full text of all the papers are now published on the



The British Library at the exhibition; Bruce Madge (left), Margaret Haines (right) (Tony McSeán, UK)

web, which gives me the possibility to read those I could not attend. It also opens access for all those who were not able to attend the 8ICML. I also appreciated so much the organizers’ efforts to select the relevant papers and plan the parallel sessions so that the idea of convergence came through. As a first time participant I was amazed at the richness of themes and research topics and at the same time pleasantly surprised to see that everyday problems faced by health science librarians all over the world did not differ essentially from those I knew.

The Exhibition....

The large number of exhibitors provided a comprehensive picture of offers from the publishing industry including software, databases and Internet development.

Book launchings completed this picture. A good thing was that as I went round the booths I could engage in lively and extremely illuminating discussions with the exhibitors or with colleagues.

Conclusions:

- a) Find your way - define your goal and seek for means of achieving it - method: listen, ask, select, process what you have learnt and apply it to your own library
- b) Become rich - accumulate information, acquire new skills and knowledge all the time - “talk” to other librarians from all over the world -cooperate - make friends I knew.
- c) Regrets - I wasn’t able to participate in the professional visits following the conference - I didn’t have the time to go round every booth in the exhibition thoroughly - I couldn’t attend all the presentations in the parallel sessions I wished -

The 8ICML is over now, but for me, and for many librarians I think, returning home meant a new beginning.

Carmen Bonciu
Central Medical Library,
UMF, Iasi, Romania



The British Library and St Pancras Station (Suzanne Bakker, NL)



Converge on London - Impressions from Poland.....

Re: subject

The large number of lectures presented by librarians and information professionals from strategic organisations and health care institutions indicated that their role in stimulating development of libraries and medical informatics was significant in many countries. This stimulation takes place usually either by the means of grants giving policy (e.g. NLM grants for American libraries) or through co-ordination activities following the example of the National Electronic Library for Health in Britain. We had the opportunity to listen to a large number of lectures dealing with meta-information; we found out about the resources available (particularly on Internet) and learnt about the problems of information retrieval in accordance with Evidence Based Medicine & Health Care. There were though only few presentations referring to the traditional library resources and this could indicate that the process of intensive use of multimedia of Internet is a fact. It seems that electronic journals together with other various forms of electronic delivery of documents and other services based on machine-readable literature have led to a qualitative transformation in the access to the resources, which is independent from the distance between a user and the library.



Westminster Abbey, just opposite the QE-II Conference Centre
(Suzanne Bakker, NL)



Chair and Speakers at the last plenary session, from left to right: Lois Ann Colaianni (formerly NLM Director of Library Services), Christine Deschamps (IFLA President) and Joanne Marshall, discussing the future of the health sciences information professional.

(Suzanne Bakker, NL)

Re: current trends

Libraries seem to have become more and more the active creators of information by means of developing metadata and new management tools. This function is particularly important considering the fact that nowadays library users more frequently do their searches by themselves. Broader access to the library resources with the help of computer networks can equalise the level of access to knowledge and information among highly developed and developing countries. Information professionals are confronted with great challenges and demands of a new speciality - a "knowledge manager". New demands are accompanied by new education profiles – traditional library education is not sufficient any more, at present information science and medical informatics are more adequate subjects to be taught during library and information studies. Lack of such changes in library studies curricula in many developing countries can be a serious drawback. It can result in a shortage of properly trained staff who would be able to use new information technologies and develop modern library functions.

Re: the role of associations and the will of co-operation

The congress showed a prominent role of professional associations, acting both internationally and in a particular country. These organisations demonstrated the will of the individual and institutions to cooperate together

in the common goal of searching for the best solutions and services. Their purpose is to create an environment in which complete information is available to everyone in a manner permitting better and quicker decisions to be made and for broadening innovation and creativity. Partnership among people representing different occupations and various platforms and levels of co-operation indicate that working together brings more favourable results than acting alone.

Re: the organisation of ICML

It should be emphasised that the organisation of the Congress (with over 1400 participants) was perfect, with only minor inconveniences – canteen queues which are unavoidable with so large an audience. For us – Poles and other Eastern Bloc countries, it was a strange reminder of past times: the long queues in shops which is still very much a recent memory. The extensive scientific programme would have been impossible to realise without parallel sessions :unfortunately, it made it impossible to attend all the interesting lectures. Certainly it cannot be treated as an objection; it is rather a positive evidence of increasing activity in medical librarianship.

...and last but not least – London is a marvellous city!!!

Anna Uryga & Lucjan Stalmach
Poland



Converge on London - Impressions from Iceland

It is important to forget one's own little world once in a while and to think more globally. The 8ICML was exactly such an opportunity, a very important event, giving us the golden chance to see what

issues were uppermost in our colleagues minds all over the world and not surprisingly so many issues were of mutual concern! The problems facing the different countries are however not

always the same and it was enlightening to hear from countries so far away from us such as the African countries or even countries much closer, such as the Baltic countries, that seem to have accomplished so much in the last few years. We have a great admiration for our colleagues in those countries.

Many thanks to the people of the different committees that organized the 8ICML so well (lunch queues are already forgotten...!) and to the many excellent speakers both at the plenary sessions and the smaller parallel sessions who left us so much to think about. Being able to look at their contributions on the web is very useful and gives the conference still more depth. Planned visits at the end of the conference were also an opportunity that we wouldn't have missed for anything.

Greetings from Iceland,
**Margret Gunnarsdottir &
Fanny Kristbjarnardottir**



Tony McSeán and his team of the BMA Library, at the closing of the congress (Suzanne Bakker, NL)

MOVE OF EAHIL SECRETARIAT

EAHIL secretariat will move by the October 1st, 2000 from Amsterdam to Utrecht. The secretarial services will be provided by the bureau of the Netherlands Library Association (NVB). The NVB has extensive experience in running a membership, meetings and courses administrations & registrations, and in providing secretarial assistance to a library association. The present staff members of the NVB Bureau have good language skills: all can manage well in English, one also in French and another also in German.

The actual move of materials (actual files, archives, stock) will be on Monday September 18th. We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause due to a reduced level of secretarial services expected during September.

EAHIL Bank account numbers will not change.

The EAHIL Executive Board has announced this move during the General

Assembly in London. With the agreed upon changes of the EAHIL Statutes the seat of the Association to be mentioned in the new Statutes, will therefore become Utrecht.

NEW CONTACT DETAILS FOR EAHIL SECRETARIAT (valid from October 1st, 2000):

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Secretariat EAHIL
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Pour le 1er octobre 2000, le secrétariat de l'AEIBS aura quitté Amsterdam pour Utrecht. Le bureau de l'Association néerlandaise des Bibliothèques (NVB) prestera tous les services de secrétariat pour nous.

La NVB a une grande expérience de la gestion de membres, l'organisation de réunions et de cours et dans la fourniture d'assistance en secrétariat aux associations de bibliothécaires. Les membres de l'équipe du Bureau de la NVB ont de bonnes connaissances linguistiques : ils pratiquent tous l'anglais, l'un d'eux connaît aussi le français et un autre l'allemand. Le déménagement effectif du matériel (dossiers, archives et stock) aura lieu le lundi 18 septembre. En septembre, le secrétariat ne fournira que les services minimaux et nous nous excusons des inconvénients que cela pourrait entraîner. Le compte bancaire de l'AEIBS ne sera pas modifié.

Ce déménagement a été annoncé lors de l'Assemblée générale à Londres. Suite à l'accord sur le changement, l'adresse d'Utrecht sera mentionnée comme siège social dans les nouveaux statuts.

Suzanne Bakker
EAHIL Executive Board
Assistant Secretary



Converge on London - Differences between ICML and MLA Conferences

1. At MLA there is no accompanying persons plan of tours for spouses or children.
My husband Jerry and daughter Catherine really enjoyed these tours.
2. MLA meetings usually start earlier.
Most mornings committee meetings start at 7 or 7:30, and often vendors offer breakfast meetings to teach the participants about their products. It seemed very nice NOT to have to be at the conference center until 9 because the location of the conference was not a conference hotel. I am accustomed to staying in the convention hotel and going back and forth to my room and then to the conference. In London, I had to plan to leave my hotel with enough travel time to arrive at the convention site on time.
3. Planning the 8ICML took much longer than planning at MLA. This is understandable since it involved the entire world of medical librarians.
4. The word "Venue" beside the location of an event in the conference program was a new word for me. We would say location, but when I looked it up in the dictionary, venue means location.
5. The number of simultaneous presentations at the 8ICML was much larger than MLA.
6. The security of the Queen Elizabeth II Conference Center was much greater than I have ever experienced at MLA. I am sure this is because the Centre is so near Parliament.
7. Getting to meet and see so many medical librarians from all over the globe was a wonderful experience and everywhere I had interesting conversations.

Donna Flake



EAHIL Executive Board and MLA representatives having renewed the agreement for cooperation between the associations. From left to right: Manuela Colombi, Suzanne Bakker, Carla Funk, Meile Kretaviciene, Alice Nørhede, Liisa Salmi, Tony McSeán, Ros Dudden, Susan Grefsheim, Ulrich Korwitz, Arne Jakobsson, Elisabeth Husem.

(Tony McSeán, UK)