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ER&L 2017: Tacos, Queso, and Electronic Resources

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ER&L 2017: Tacos, Queso, and Electronic Resources

... with thanks to *Jill Emery, Collection Development & Management Librarian, Portland State University, <jemery@pdx.edu>*

Electronic Resources & Libraries (ER&L) held their 12th anniversary conference in Austin, Texas, from April 2-5, 2017. This event was by far the largest in-person attended conference in the history of ER&L with **over 1,000** people participating. There were many more who joined into the live-streaming and online event that coincided with the conference. This conference was attended either online or in person by folks from almost every continent, the exception being Antarctica. There were many new faces and participants which always adds to the excitement and enthusiasm of the meeting.

One change which occurred this year was an **extended vendor showcase** on the opening day. Instead of just an afternoon of vendor tables and the reception, vendors/providers had the ability to exhibit for the entire day at a dedicated space in the conference center. From speaking with one publisher representative, this change was well received as it allowed the extension of time to meet with clients and interested parties but still allowed plenty of time to attend sessions during the rest of the conference.

ER&L launched their **consultation service arm** at the vendor showcase during the first day of the conference: Library Consulting Network. This group has been formed to develop white papers, provide advice and development assistance with products and business models, research inquiry, provide speakers, instruction and presenting on various topics, and

provide electronic resource management advice to institutions struggling with best practices.

The **opening keynote**, “Data Violence: Dignity, Discrimination, and Algorithmic Identity” presented by Anna Lauren Hoffman, really set the stage for this year’s conference. At about ten minutes into the presentation, the question was asked, “I can do this, but should I do this.” This single question in many ways affected many of the other presentations and discussions held during the conference.

In total, there were over **100 sessions and events** provided. There were short track programs offered that allowed speakers a bit longer than lightening talks but a quicker venue to discuss and present projects underway. The program was comprised of the following tracks:

- Managing e-Resources & Licensing
- Collection Development & Assessment
- Organizational Strategies, External Relationships, User Experience & Promotion
- Scholarly Communication & Library Publishing
- Emerging Technologies & Trends

Popular events included the “Librarians versus Publishers Family Feud,” organized by Steve Shadle from University of

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Washington and Carol Seilor from EBSCO, which featured a panel of three librarians “feuding” against three publishers regarding stereotypes of one another. This led to a very honest and open conversation on how these stereotypes get perpetuated and some audience suggestions for overcoming inherent biases in our behavior.

An overview of the final report of the **Charlotte Initiative** which has investigated the permanent acquisitions of ebooks was given. This has been a Mellon grant study developed over the past three years that indicates how academic libraries are acquiring and using ebooks. This report will be published soon and can be found here: <http://charlotteinitiative.uncc.edu/ci/about>. Management of ebooks in libraries is still a very time intensive workflow process in regards to record creation and delivery to the end-user.

Other programs indicated that libraries are spending more time incorporating **text and data mining** as part of license negotiations. Librarians from UCLA presented on the model language they use for incorporation of this language and some of the resistance they have faced when trying to negotiate these capabilities. This session indicated ways to simplify the process for negotiating for text and data mining capabilities.

Another first for ER&L this year was the “**beer**” session in which a conference sponsor chose to sponsor a late afternoon session on the second day by providing beers for those attending the events. This led to 300 attendees learning about how well discovery systems provide access to gold and hybrid open access

articles. The presentation was based on research performed by Michael Levine-Clark, John McDonald, and Jason Price on a crowd-sourced research project of utilizing data searching performed by 40+ librarians using various discovery systems to find sets of designated articles. Indexing for discovery of articles resulted in an almost 90% success rate for most libraries, however, the retrieval rate of these open access articles was only around 70%. These results compare to Google Scholar and Sci-Hub where the retrieval rate was 89% and 100% respectively.

The **closing keynote session** was led by Monica Bulger on “Fake News, Reliability & Questioning: A Researcher’s Struggle to Navigate the New information Landscape.” Her presentation set the stage for librarians to share different strategies they had developed to address these issues both with faculty and students at their institutions. This was a wonderful open session with many participants providing key ways they have responded to the shifting nature of information trust and reliability.

All in all, this year’s conference was a **resounding success**. The weather stayed glorious for most of the conference and those of us from the northern climes enjoyed our sojourn into warmer, sunnier weather. Next year, the conference will be held in early March in Austin again. The AT&T Conference Center is expanding and will offer a larger more state of the art facility for the conference. Everyone is excited to see what the venue will allow in regards to further advances for the event.

Finally, an important note. Thanks to the continued technological development of the ER&L organizers, it will be possible to purchase the 2017 Electronic Resources & Libraries Conference archive on the ER&L website here: <https://www.electroniclibrarian.org/2017-sessions/>.

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