



Feature

EBLIP7 Lightning Strikes: How I've Been Inspired by Evidence Based Library and Information Practice (EBLIP)

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EBLIP7 Lightning Strikes were 5 minute/20 slide talks on the topic "How I've been inspired by evidence based library and information practice (EBLIP)." The twist was that the slides automatically advanced every 15 seconds! The goal was to hear individuals' stories and perspectives, and conference organizers encouraged a broad interpretation of the topic. In the following talks, slides are described in italics.

Thank you to the Lightning Strikes participants who provided a version of their talks for this issue. Thank you as well to Lorie Kloda and Joanne Gard Marshall who also presented Lightning Strikes. Their talks are finding other venues as published research papers.

People of Influence

**Margaret Haines, University Librarian
Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada***

When Virginia asked me if I would talk about the impact that evidence based library and information practice (EBLIP) has had on my career, I realized that it was the actions of the people who promoted evidence based medicine (EBM) which had the most influence on me. So, this is a brief tribute to them and it begins when I became the first National Health Service (NHS) Library Adviser in the UK in 1994.

That year, the evidence based practice "bug" got me at a Canadian Medical Association conference when I heard about the work of the McMaster gurus - Gordon Guyatt, Brian Haynes and Andy Oxman. I was surprised that no other

librarians were there at the conference because it seemed relevant to the work that librarians did when searching the literature to find the best evidence to support medical decision making. This was confirmed by a General Practitioner in the audience who complained that he had no time to search the literature because he did not have his own personal librarian. I was later thrilled to discover that the McMaster gang did have their very own personal librarian, Ann McKibbin, who demonstrated just what librarians could do by playing a key role in sifting and appraising the research evidence and in conducting systematic reviews.

When I came back to the UK, I became very interested in the role of librarians in evidence based medicine (EBM) and wrote an editorial for *Health Libraries Journal* challenging the UK health library community to get involved in some way. As the NHS Library Adviser, I felt I ought to know more about what I was preaching and decided to research Archie Cochrane, who was said to be the “father” of EBM. That led me to Professor Iain Chalmers, the head of the UK Cochrane Centre who was zealous about the need to base medical practice on evidence, and who asked me to help interview librarians for a key role in the work of his centre.

Together we chose Carol Lefebvre who proved her weight in gold standards through her work on refining Medline search strategies. Carol has taught so many of us over the years how to do it right and with her quiet confidence was a perfect complement to Iain, the passionate promoter. But the real driver in getting all librarians into EBM was Dr. Muir Gray, Director of R&D in Oxford who supported me at the national R&D directors’ table to pitch how NHS librarians could be trained to do systematic reviews. Muir put money where his mouth was and funded his regional librarian to do something about it.

Enter Dr. Judy Palmer, NHS Regional Librarian for Oxford, and her deputies including David Stewart and Anne Brice, who started a training

program for librarians to improve their searching skills and to learn critical appraisal skills. It was the first in the UK and had a profound influence on all health librarians and on professional practice everywhere.

Muir did something else which was significant – he brought Dr. Dave Sackett to the UK to start the Centre for Evidence Based Medicine in Oxford. Dave of course is another father of EBM and helped to introduce this paradigm more widely in the NHS. Soon there were advocates everywhere: Anna Donald, Andrew Haines (no relation), Alison Hill, Vikki Entwistle, Trevor Sheldon, Jeremy Wyatt, Ruairidh Milne, to name but a few. But what sets these ones apart is that they actively sought collaboration with librarians whether in Getting Research Into Practice (GRIPP) programs or in evidence based purchasing or patient advocacy.

And of course there were the librarians in these collaborations and here are some familiar faces – Andrew Booth and Anne Brice, as well as some less familiar to you in North America such as Julie Glanville from the York Centre for Reviews and Dissemination, Bob Gann and Gill Needham who worked on Evidence Based Patient Care, Robert Kiley from the Wellcome Centre, David Stewart from the NHS, and my successor as NHS Library Adviser, Veronica Fraser.

At this point, I want to pay tribute to two mentors – Sir John Pattison, NHS R&D Director and Barbara Stocking, Chief Executive of the NHS Southeast for seeing research dissemination as a form of knowledge management and for taking a chance on putting a librarian, me, in charge of research and development for the NHS South East region. It was my biggest challenge.

So all of these people taught me about evidence based practice, getting research into practice and the key role of librarians in managing the knowledge base of health care, but at the same time, some librarians were applying this

approach to our own profession of librarianship. Enter Anne Brice and Andrew Booth who were among the first to promote evidence based library and information practice (EBLIP) and who wrote the seminal work on the subject and who have shaped the debate internationally for years. And Andrew is just as fond of the pun now as when I hired him at the King's Fund Centre nearly 25 years ago.

There were many others who shaped the EBLIP movement such as the three here from North America – Joanne Marshall, Jonathan Eldredge and Denise Koufogiannikis, all of whom are actually here at the conference and need no introduction. But I owe special thanks to Joanne who shaped my career by always being someone I wanted to be, and tried to emulate.

And of course, there were other research leaders. In the UK, for example, there were Chris Urquhart, Alison Brettell and Maria Grant. Without their continual efforts to provide the research evidence for our profession and to embed EBLIP in library education, the EBLIP movement would not have moved forward as fast as it did.

And EBLIP truly is an international phenomenon, thanks to many other librarians and researchers such as those listed here – Gilliam Hallam, Helen Partridge, Ann Ritchie, Rowena Cullen, Lotta Haglund, and many others around the world. I apologize for only mentioning a few of you and I would specially like to acknowledge the contribution of Niels Ole Pors who sadly died this year.

Then, there were librarians who saw EBLIP as part of being a professional. As President of the Chartered Institute for Library and Information Professionals (CILIP) in the UK, I worked with my presidential team (Margaret Watson, Debby Shorley) and staff at CILIP like Marion Huckle, to embed EBLIP into CILIP's qualifications framework so that every member had to

demonstrate how they used evidence to shape their learning and practice.

In North America, the Canadian Association of Research Libraries (CARL), the Association of Research Libraries (ARL), and the Medical Library Association (MLA) are also ensuring that librarians have the research skills and understanding to be evidence based practitioners. I particularly enjoyed working with Dr. Vicki Williamson, our host here at Saskatchewan, on CARL's competencies statement and also loved seeing how she put what we were preaching into practice in her own library.

And now I am learning from the younger generation, people such as you and people in my own team, like Laura Newton Miller, who really get what it is all about and who are adding to our knowledge base and influencing their peers through their research and professional practice.

So, what have I learned? I learned that behind every great "evidence based" practitioner, there is a librarian finding the evidence, and that behind every great librarian, there is another librarian generating the evidence. Thank you to all the evidence based practitioners, librarians and others, who have helped me along the way.

*Margaret Haines worked in the United Kingdom from 1989 to 2006, where she held five positions: Director of the King's Fund Centre Library (1989-1994), NHS Library Adviser (1994-6), Chief Executive of the Library and Information Commission (1996-2000), Director of Research and Knowledge Management for the NHS Southeast (2000-2003), Director of Information Systems and Services at King's College London (2003-2006). She returned to Canada in 2006 to become University Librarian at Carleton University in Ottawa, her hometown.

How I've Been Inspired by EBLIP
Virginia Wilson, Director
Centre for Evidence Based Library and
Information Practice (C-EBLIP)
University Library, University of
Saskatchewan, Canada

In library school, I wrote a paper exploring how physicians found the answers to clinical questions and was horrified to find out that often the research literature was not consulted. It was also in library school that I was hired by three librarians to assist on an evidence based librarianship project.

An image of the original Charlie's Angels labelled Denise Koufogiannakis, Linda Slater, and Ellen Crumley

Those three women inspired me to not only look for research to inform my practice, but also to do research. I'm intrigued by research, see the value in research, and figure if it's out there and it's useful, why don't we use it?

Research cartoon

I've never understood why some people seem threatened by the thought of using research evidence to inform decision making. And those people are out there. I've met them. But don't we need all the help we can get to get it as close to right as we possibly can?

A vintage advertisement for Hair Rental ("You Know it Makes Sense")

It just makes sense! Yes, we have our professional knowledge and skills. But if we can get more information, it's better, right? More is more. By looking to the research we might find a piece of the puzzle that we were missing or overlooking.

An image of Fabio

So I got the fever, the EBLIP fever, and I started going to EBLIP conferences and writing for the EBLIP journal. I was using research to inform

my practice. I was dreaming about Andrew Booth in my sleep.

Wait a minute – that wasn't Andrew.

"Everybody panic!" Cartoon

Then all of a sudden I was applying to host the international conference, and then planning the conference, and starting up a Centre for Evidence Based Library and Information Practice. And I thought, wow I'm on a bit of a roller coaster!

Image of a roller coaster

But no one is ever alone on a roller coaster, unless it's early in the morning at the amusement park. There are lots and lots of other library and information professionals out there also with the EBLIP fever. It's a little bit of a pandemic!

Image of Dr. Johnny Fever from 70s TV sitcom WKRP in Cincinnati

And you come to the conferences, and use evidence in practice, and conduct your own research, and disseminate your own research, and actively participate, and as Seth Godin says, we have a Tribe.

Image of Seth Godin

There's an EBLIP community. Yes, it's loose and there's no formal organization just yet, but when you look at the things that have come out of this community in only 15 years, it's very exciting. The journal, the conference series, the connections and partnerships.

Image of a big bag of evidence (yes, it's difficult to describe)

So, I'm in. I'm EBLIP all the way, baby! And now I'm the Director of the Centre for Evidence Based Library and Information Practice here at the University Library. The Centre idea surfaced almost 2 years ago and came to fruition in December 2012.

Image of the comfortable seating in the newly furnished Centre for Evidence Based Library and Information Practice

It was then that the University Council approved the creation of C-EBLIP and I began to shop for office furniture for the Centre space. I also began gathering interested colleagues to be Centre members and together we will explore research and evidence based practice.

Image in the style of "keep calm and carry on": Demand Evidence and Think Critically

The U of S encourages the establishment of centres to enhance the academic interests of the University and its faculty, and to meet the needs of the community at large. Centres are intended to strengthen, coordinate or facilitate scholarly activities, and to offer new areas of activity consistent with the University's strategic direction.

Image of C-EBLIP's goals, also found here

<http://library.usask.ca/ceblip/about/index.php>

The Centre consists of three components that are interrelated: supporting librarians as researchers, promoting evidence based practice, and overseeing established activities relating to the University Library's culture of research.

Personal nature photography, dandelions

And while the bare bones of the Centre are in place, the exciting part will be building the Centre into something that meets the needs of the librarians and archivists at the University Library both in terms of research and of evidence based practice. And it will be built with the active participation of Centre members.

Personal nature photography, geese (I was running out of slide ideas!)

And if I can reach into the future for a minute here, I also see the Centre as having the potential to grow into something that transcends the

bounds of the University Library. I see the Centre being a hub or a connector for EBLIP across Canada and possibly internationally.

Yet another photography of nature

But I don't want to get too far ahead of things. I've only been the Director for 2 weeks. Still, I see lots of potential for the Centre. And there's lots of exciting things ahead for EBLIP, too.

Image, Evidence to the rescue

There's EBLIP8 to think about! And more great EBLIP journals issues. More collaborations and connections to be made amongst librarian colleagues. More ways to use evidence, and more definitions of evidence, as we heard from Denise K. in her opening keynote.

Image of Christopher Walken from Saturday Night Live: "I got a fever. And the only prescription that can cure it is more cowbell!"

So the EBLIP fever continues for me. It's exciting to belong to a tribe who believes in a way of practicing librarianship that makes sense. It's exciting to belong to a movement that continues to make great strides and continues to inspire librarians to not only look to the research, but to conduct research.

Ryan Gosling "Hey Girl" meme image, "Hey girl, it's a good thing I have my library card... 'cause I'm checkin' you out!"

Having a network of EBLIP friends and colleagues around the world is inspiring as well. I just have to look to these people to see that the possibilities are endless when it comes to EBLIP and being a librarian practitioner-researcher.

Image of a diverse array of fruit

And finally, being here with all of you for the past three days has really filled up the inspiration reservoir. Seeing a conference come together and meeting such a great group of people will continue to inspire me for a long time to come.

Library Intelligence: Developing a Culture of Evidence-Based Decision Making

**Karim Tharani, IT Librarian
University Library, University of
Saskatchewan, Canada**

With the recent establishment of the Centre for Evidence Based Library and Information Practice (C-EBLIP) at the University of Saskatchewan Library, I think it is very timely for me, and perhaps also for other members of the centre, to start thinking about fresh, innovative and practical ideas to contribute to the research agenda and activities of the centre. I would like to talk about one such idea, which is the concept of library intelligence.

I define library intelligence as the art and science of bringing people, processes, and tools together to identify, obtain, and synthesize data in a systematic and sustainable manner, to assist decision makers in gaining insights into the current state of library operations. The concept as well as the term library intelligence is inspired by the well-established practices of business intelligence or BI in the commercial sector. BI is often defined as solutions that assist decision makers in understanding the current state of their organization. Of course there are many other terms associated with BI such as data warehousing, decision support systems, key performance indicators or KPIs, etc.

In essence, library intelligence or LI is nothing more than the application of business intelligence practices in libraries. And in this sense, the concept of library intelligence is already gaining some traction. "The academic library community faces some tough decisions with regard to business intelligence. First, this is not an assessment project, but a matter of technical and staff infrastructure, on the level of our commitments to ILS technology and similar IT supported functions."

In fact in 2011, I had the opportunity to present a paper at the Electronic Resources & Libraries (ER&L) conference with two of my colleagues,

Charlene Sorensen and Craig Harkema. In this paper we discussed a prototype that we built using some of the BI techniques to manage electronic resources. One of our motivations in building the prototype was to promote decision making, which was evidence based rather than vendor driven. Given the reality of distributed decision making in libraries, we also wanted to use BI to help enhance our culture of collaboration and accountability as custodians of electronic resources.

Why should libraries even bother about library intelligence? From an operational point of view, libraries generate and gather a fair amount of data. But how much of this data is analyzed or used to inform our decision making on a regular basis? If data is important enough to gather, why is not important enough for us to analyze and utilize? Library intelligence provides a way for us to gather, organize, and share information from our existing systems in ways that can help us gain insights for better decision making and planning. In my opinion, library intelligence is a worthwhile capability for libraries to build and strengthen to promote informed and insightful decisions based on evidence.

So how do we go about building library intelligence capability? Well, having a structure around any new endeavor is always helpful. One such structure is the Transformational Life Cycle (TLC) framework (Zucca, 2013), which helps organization develop new capabilities from a life cycle perspective. It takes into account the various progressive phases of a new capability such as envisioning, defining, designing, developing and deploying.

The TLC framework also defines critical high-level process areas such as capability development, ownership building, and program stewardship that collectively enable organizations to achieve maturity and expertise in any given capability. The final aspect of the TLC framework, and perhaps the most tangible and operational one, defines the key enablers of any organization endeavoring to build new

capabilities or expertise. These enablers include people, process, technology and infrastructure that an organization uses to fulfil its mission.

With the establishment of C-EBLIP at the University of Saskatchewan Library, the EBLIP community is fortunate to have the physical and intellectual space to entertain new ideas and ways to implement these ideas. It's a place for all of us to engage, enlighten and explore!

How I've Been Inspired by EBLIP
Ashley Ireland, Director of User and Instruction Services
Murray State University Libraries, Murray, Kentucky, United States of America

Hello, my name is Ashley Ireland. I am Director of User and Instruction Services at Murray State University Libraries in Murray, Kentucky.

This is my lightning strike presentation about how I have been inspired by evidence based methods in libraries, in which I have subtitled "How I learned to stop worrying and love the things I can quantify."

The truth is, I wouldn't really say I've been "inspired" by evidence based methods. Inspired sort of implies butterflies and rainbows, right? It implies that we're on the road to fix the problem, and that now we have the energy and enthusiasm to get there.

Evidence based practice, though, sheds light on the nooks and crannies of librarianship that aren't necessarily pretty and haven't always been up for discussion. It says, "yeah, but why?" and "prove it" to our long-standing assumptions about philosophy and practice.

The truth is, not everything in librarianship is an upward trend, and we have this innate fear that exposing any of that would mean the imminent end to our profession. Door counts dropping? Use of print collections slowing? Don't tell me we've seen fewer questions at our Ref Desk!

EBP allows us to say, "Ok. If we try this, then what happens?" It is the application of the scientific method on a profession that has occasionally, in the past, been driven by habits and ritual. Transitioning to an evidence based practice means that we don't rest our laurels regarding what has always been done and why.

I think that EBP allows us to move forward within the realm of uncertainty surrounding our profession. It allows us to experiment without fear because it gives us the tools to articulate our impact, from as small as a dollar spent to lasting impacts about how time spent with students results in increased retention in higher education institutions.

Some might say that EBP reduces our profession to some overly simplistic cycle, or even forces us to quantify what shouldn't be quantified. There might be some truth there, if you only think that EBP should be used to measure the things we already recognize as being true.

That perspective is a shame, because evidence based practice also gives us, hold on to your seats, people, a place to fail. Safely. This is the scientific method, right? We don't necessarily have to find correlation and causation. But if we find that there isn't a relationship between things we've examined, then we know more now than we did before. That is progress.

I have high expectations for this profession, and as I hope to be in it as few as 30 years from now, it better hold strong. I know that I'm preaching to the choir, but I say we start demanding the evidence and reducing the fear. (All different types of evidence, of course, in support of the opening keynote).

Let's add evidence based practice to our toolbox of other things that scare the crap out of librarians, use these things to show and test and experiment our way to a newly defined librarianship.

I guess you could say that I have been inspired to challenge the status quo. For instance, EBP has given me the foundation I need to build a giant dataset of library data simply to “see what we find.”

Evidence based librarianship, despite its label that is somewhat boring and to some, frightening, is about curiosity. And libraries are about curiosity. As far as I’m concerned, it’s a perfect fit.

How I’ve Been Inspired by EBLIP
Gillian Nowlan, Liaison Librarian
Dr. John Archer Library
University of Regina, Canada

I am incredibly excited to be here at EBLIP7 and just thrilled to be able to share my own research at the poster session and hear about the amazing research that everyone is engaged in. So, I wanted to take the next five minutes to tell you why evidence based library and information practice is inspiring to me.

I think evidence based library and information practice and research is a lot about muddling through, not knowing what to expect or find and working your way through it and I think that’s part of what makes it so exciting to work with.

I’m kind of a muddler. I do enjoy jumping into things and trying to find my way through and learning through trial and error and discovery. So evidence based library and information practice is really a nice fit for me and the way I conduct research projects I engage in.

Evidence based library and information practice is based on the very thorough selection and analysis of literature or original research and it’s really all about being engaged in what is going on around you and being aware of the different possibilities as you work through each step.

The opportunity to engage in what others are doing and reading about their perspectives on

different topics and ideas. Finding out what they are doing, why, and how really helps me guide my research and how I approach each project.

I love reading articles and getting those “ah-ha” moments, when I realize my thoughts are either right on track or that I’m way off and have to rethink my approach. Although it can be frustrating at times it’s certainly eye opening and it can spark new ideas and ways of thinking about how you conduct your research.

I think a huge part of evidence based library and information practice is about exploring the world around you. Find out how other people and places are doing things and how that fits into your environment.

Evidence based practice is all about thinking critically. Critical thinking and critical reflection are skills that need to be practiced and developed and this type of inquiry helps to solidify these important skills for life.

Evidence based library and information practice means asking questions. Questions really drive the EBLIP process. It’s what moves us through the process and challenges us to think about things differently and from different perspective.

It’s one of the best ways to find out more about a topic or research area. I think this kind of fits well with the muddling part, where you can just jump into the unknown and greatly increase your knowledge in an unknown area.

Asking questions can lead to different ideas or ways of looking at things and it can certainly sprout new projects and connections with either individuals or topic areas that you find interesting. There are lots of networking opportunities when you participate in this research practice.

As the name suggests, evidence based library and information practice is all about finding evidence to provide the best information for

your current practice. Evidence based practice has been incredibly helpful to me when pitching a new idea or changing the way we do things at the library.

One of my first experiences using evidence based library practice was during my first year as an academic librarian when I set out to collect data from the university community in order to build a mobile app for the library.

Using the evidence based approach I collected a large amount of data and assessed, evaluated, and compared it to current literature.

The results of the mobile applications project were incredibly helpful and the process led to an efficient mobile application design that provided the university community with what they needed.

Even if you are working alone you are still interacting with other individuals through their research and making important connections that you can draw on later as the project progresses or as you advance in your research.

It provides the opportunity to collaborate and network with others who are interested in the same materials as you and to find a network of people that have similar interests and are building in areas that you are working on.

Working in this type of environment can really be inspiring and you can develop new skills that can be used in your future projects, research, and work environment.

I really hope you have a wonderful conference and go sprout some new ideas and skills and get inspired by evidence based library and information practice. Thank you for your attention.

Eager and Enthusiastic Enroller
Tasha Maddison, Science Liaison Librarian
University Library, University of
Saskatchewan, Canada

I am quick to agree. I am known as someone who always volunteers; sometimes with few details about what I am volunteering for. I am happy to be that person, but recently I had cause to seek some further information before continuing with a task. This experience inspired my "lightning strike presentation" at the EBLIP7 International Conference this past summer in Saskatoon.

When initially asked to participate, I welcomed the challenge of a 5-minute presentation utilizing only 20 slides. Really the topic and the fact that I was presenting at an EBLIP conference is somewhat ironic, as I wholeheartedly jumped in and got right to work, thinking that I had all the details I needed. The topic seemed, I had assumed, open to multiple interpretations and I was keen to create something unique. Alas, when I handed in the first draft of my presentation I immediately discovered that I had not followed all of the instructions.

And what was the critical detail I had missed? All the slides had to be equally timed and be set up to automatically forward. Sadly, there was no way that I could make my initial presentation work as I had rewritten "The Twelve Days of Christmas" to reflect topics of discussion from the conference itself. As we all know, the song gets longer with each verse.

My next idea was to shape the lesson I had learned into a tale of the Princess Penelope who was known throughout the land for making disastrous assumptions. Along the way she meets a cast of characters, including the Viscountess Virginia (does that name sound familiar?) who help her to see the error in her

ways. The moral of this tale: examine the evidence, expand your knowledge and inform your opinions, yet remain thoroughly enthusiastic about all complex conundrums that come your way.

In retrospect, my initial mistake, led to a learning opportunity and ultimately a more interesting and entertaining presentation. If you are interested in reading a transcript from my presentation entitled *The Ill Conceived Supposition* or learning more about my experience preparing a lightning strike presentation, please visit my blog at <http://whatilearnedinlibraryschooltoday.blogspot.ca/search/label/EBLIP>.

References

- Zucca, J. (2013). Business Intelligence Infrastructure for Academic Libraries. *Evidence Based Library and Information Practice*, 8(2), 172-182.