



Feature

EBLIP8 Delegate Reflections

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**Ruby Warren, User Experience Librarian,
University of Manitoba Libraries**

I attended EBLIP8 in Brisbane, hosted by the Queensland University of Technology, and as a first EBLIP experience it couldn't have been more delightful. The University was a good venue, with rooms and sessions easy to identify and locate, and our host volunteers were both numerous and helpful. The University being located near the City Botanic Gardens was an unexpected bonus, as the Brisbane winter weather was perfect for a Canadian like me to enjoy some lunchtime sunshine under the Banyan trees. The session area being attached to The Cube, a unique arrangement of screens, visualizers, and projectors, was an excellent choice - it served as a unique method of poster display, and during session breaks it was refreshing to watch local children and parents play with the visualizers. I can only hope watching foreign adults like me dance in front of the cameras was just as amusing for the other attendees.

The sessions themselves were interesting, and I found the keynotes from Virginia Wilson and Kim Tairi invigorating, with a sense of playfulness that is often sorely missed during research-oriented enterprises. Virginia's

exploration of the strange position of the practitioner-researcher was an excellent conference opener, one that encouraged me to examine the supports we need and the supports we have in our unique role as someone with work to do and a need to study that work. Kim's encouragement of sketchnoting gave me an important new conference tool, and her exploration of different ways that evidence-based practitioners and researchers manage time and achieve work-life balance (or more accurately, work-other work-more work-life balance) was helpful to any librarian struggling with an administrative load in their move towards evidence-based practice. In addition to these excellent keynotes, I strongly appreciated the addition of practical, skills-acquisition oriented workshops to the conference program, and was incredibly impressed with my progress in the Visualizing the Evidence workshop hosted by Kim Davis. Her guidance gave me a stronger perspective on how to visualize data I've collected, and the practical resources to create those visualizations.

By far, the best thing about attending EBLIP8 was the warmth and engagement of the attendees. After arriving knowing hardly anyone, I became collegial and friendly with a large number of participants, and had a

wonderful time sharing opinions and research ideas with everyone there. The conference's strong twitter presence had a level of positivity and fun that is hard to achieve on conference hashtags, and it created a feeling of total engagement and interest in conference sessions and presentations. My thoughts about a presentation can sometimes escape by the time we get to coffee and tiny cakes, and being able to take notes and bounce ideas with others during the presentation itself made the ideas we explored even clearer and more exciting. This community is wonderful, and I'll definitely be planning attendance to EBLIP9 in 2017.

Megan Fitzgibbons, Librarian, University of Western Australia

It's perhaps an unprofessional way to phrase it, but EBLIP8 was, in my humble opinion, the best conference ever. It was my first time at an EBLIP conference, and I felt it was a unique gathering because attendees not just interested in 'topics', but rather we are all interested in ways of working and of understanding our profession. It really was a 'community of practice.' Like any good conference, the discussions transcended any single session and several themes threaded through many of the presentations, leading to a rich dialogue across the event and beyond, in person, on Twitter, and through the [LARK](#) (Library Applied Research Kollektive) group.

Virginia Wilson's opening keynote prompted me to think deeply about the importance of evidence-based library and information practice and effectively set the stage for my learning through the rest of the conference. For me, one of her most important messages was the accessibility of EBLIP. As she put it, EBLIP isn't a 'special occasion kind of thing'; it should be integrated as a part of daily practice. Further, research is a *way of knowing* that is relevant to all of us and should therefore be part of our jobs. EBLIP, she argued, is supported by management and organisational structures, but more

importantly, it is fueled by personal work ethic, dedication, and curiosity. Instead of completing a project and filing it away in a drawer, an EBLIP-inspired librarian in Virginia's characterisation wants to know more: Did it work? What did the clients think? How does this fit with what we know about information practice theory? I will certainly cultivate this ethic of constantly questioning going forward — because as Kim Tairi put it in her closing keynote, EBLIP empowers us to make a difference in our organisations and communities.

The conference also prompted reflection on the nature of research and its relationship to practice. There was a useful emphasis on projects that focused on workplace evaluation, but at the same time, when conducting research, I think that we should be careful to always consider the connections to theory of information practice. In other words, our workplace activities do not take place in isolation. The difference between research and simply 'evaluation' is that the former asks why and seeks to situate phenomenon within a larger body of knowledge. One key takeaway from the conference for me was the realisation that the key to evidence based practice is finding questions that matter and finding the best ways to answer them.

Any report back on EBLIP8 would be lacking without a mention of the fantastic facilities provided by Queensland University of Technology. The Cube of course was amazing, with its animated simulation of the Great Barrier Reef and later the conference posters, but I was equally impressed by the fact that there was a power point everywhere anyone could conceivably want one. I also had the opportunity to visit QUT's Kelvin Grove branch library and admire the book canopy as well as the clear consideration of students' needs in the details of how the space is designed. Inspiring!

**Kristie Jones, Library Manager – QLD,
Endeavour College of Natural Health,
Australia**



Gaspari, S., (2015). Viewed 24 Sept. 2015.
Retrieved from
<https://twitter.com/stefaniegaspari/status/618324652989886465>

The colouring-in breakout activity at EBLIP8 summed up the entire conference for me - "Today is going to be awesome". It was awesome indeed to be presenting a poster at my first international conference, held at the Queensland University of Technology Gardens Point campus in the heart of Brisbane.

186 delegates attended the conference from 12 countries and a range of library and information sectors. It was clear from the presentations that evidence based library and information practice could be incorporated into any type of library – university, public, school, health or special. The variety of the presentations gave all library professionals the opportunity to learn something of interest.

My own takeaways included Dr Carrington's enthralling keynote on team culture, Ruby

Warren's funny recount of designing an evidence based intranet, Charles Sturt University's models for effective research engagement, Seneca College's development and assessment of online information literacy learning objects and Kim Tairi's quirky keynote on research practitioners and role conflict. Over all, the sessions emphasised to me the power of EBLIP – that by applying a methodological approach to gathering and using evidence, it is possible to create change.

The conference was held in the Science and Engineering Centre which included The Cube, the perfect venue for holding poster presentations. It was exciting to see my own and other delegates' posters projected around The Cube's space, and to have the opportunity to discuss my project in such a fun, informal way. Tours of The Cube were offered every lunch hour and included a glimpse of the science research department with its innovative break out area and solar panelled terrace.

Helen Partridge and her team provided a welcoming atmosphere where we were encouraged to discuss new ideas with other delegates and put these into practice. At the end of the conference, Helen encouraged us to write down a plan for EBLIP ideas to follow up on or put in place in our own organisations, which would then be emailed to us in a few months' time. An innovative way of ensuring we wouldn't forget our learnings at such an inspiring conference!

Brenda Strachan, Campus Librarian (Fraser Coast), University of Southern Queensland

What's not to love about EBLIP8?

The conference of choice to contemplate
Evidence Based Practice from dawn til late.
Diverse librarians from all over the place
Came to Brisbane to meet their mates.
Enthused and confident they soon relate
Their stories and incorporate
the evidence. How did they rate?
Eight out of eight!