Libraries in the Digital Age (LIDA) Conference
Osijek, Croatia, 24 May – 26 May 2023

The LIBRARIES IN THE DIGITAL AGE (LIDA) conference, an annual academic gathering, has been organized by Croatian universities since the year 2000. The most recent iteration of this conference, titled "Information Everywhere", was hosted in Osijek through a collaborative effort between the University of Zadar and the University of Osijek.

Before delving into the central theme of the conference, it is noteworthy to acknowledge that the entire event was dedicated as a memorial to the recently departed Ross J. Todd. Ross J. Todd, an esteemed Associate Professor of Library and Information Science at Rutgers' School of Communication and Information, emerged as an indelible figure in the landscape of LIDA's history, having served as a co-director. In particular, his profound contributions to the realm of school libraries and his benevolent mentorship extended to fledgling researchers resonated throughout the conference. A dedicated session to commemorate his legacy was led by Professor Carol Gordon.

Professor Annemaree Lloyd delivered the opening speech of the conference, focusing on the question: "How should we approach information literacy practice?" Her talk skillfully clarified the changing ideas and difficulties related to information literacy, considering the widespread belief that information is everywhere. This pervasive stance was not only evident within the inaugural address, but also permeated the broader theme of the conference.These sessions went beyond assessing library operations, covering a wide range of aspects within information science.

The significance of enhancing education in Library and Information Science (LIS) was highlighted in the panel "Perspectives and Strategies for Excellence in LIS Pedagogy". During this session, findings was shared by researchers from various countries, including the USA, Slovenia, and Croatia. They concurred that the field of LIS has been experiencing substantial changes, necessitating adjustments in educational programs, a task often beset by challenges. A related discourse emerged in the "Research on Information Literacy and Competencies" panel. The presentations echoed the conference's guiding principle, the ubiquity of information – emphasizing the imperative to cultivate adept information usage skills as a fundamental component of higher education across disciplines.

The panel "Theoretical and Philosophical Approaches in LIS" also delved into LIS evolution and challenges of LIS. Particularly interesting was the contribution of researchers from the University of Buffalo – Amy VanScoy, Africa Hands – and

the University of Ljubljana – Tanja Merčun, Katarina Švab, Maja Kuhar. Their project aimed to gauge the integration of theoretical concepts and models into the professional practice of information experts in the United States and Slovenia. Confronting the abstract nature of theories, the researchers ingeniously employed a "card sorting" method, utilizing concise theory descriptions on cards to enhance participant engagement. This methodological fusion of theory and LIS practice deserves attention.

The subsequent panel, titled "Preservation, Legacy, Archival Pursuits", wove together diverse strands encompassing user behaviors concerning the preservation of digital legacies, the selection of films for digitization, and the creation of virtual research environments for glagolitic manuscript investigations. A common thread emerged, underlining the noticeable shift of research activities and information practices toward digital realms.

The panel "Human Information Behavior in Context" yielded a plethora of varied insights. The topics ranged from interactions with information during collaborative projects to seeking health-related information, the impact of the environment on individual and collective information behaviors, and even the information experiences of individuals with tattoos. Evidently, the vital importance of engaging with information resonates in a variety of domains. This principle was further emphasized in the "Privacy, Disinformation, and Trust" panels as well as in the "Critical Approaches to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion". Here, the emphasis was on the need for tailored information solutions that align with specific user contexts. Nonetheless, an intriguing study by Elke Greifeneder and Paulina Bressel among German scholars (presented within the "Exploring Virtuality & Information Services" panel) revealed that the seeking behaviors were very similar, and participants criticized when digital services were too different. This study indicates that it is really a universal necessity to check the actual needs of users rather than individualizing the solutions introduced.

Two panels focused on library studies themes within the context of public libraries: "Digital Services in Public Libraries" and "Information Literacy and Initiatives and Innovations in Public Library Services". Researchers explored how libraries address contemporary challenges. This spans from the realm of widespread digital presence (examined through discussions such as "How public libraries deliver value online: The perception of librarians") to assuming new roles during emergencies (as illustrated by the case of "Public library services for Ukrainian refugees in Hungary and Poland").

The conference provided a global platform, drawing together researchers from various corners of the world, including the USA, Spain, Slovenia, Croatia, Norway, Denmark, Sweden, the Netherlands, Lithuania, Hungary, Germany, Pakistan, Poland, and New Zealand. It is important to note that the mentioned speeches represent just a fraction of the comprehensive conference proceedings. A more

comprehensive view, including abstracts and presentation materials, can be accessed at https://lida.ffos.hr/program/.

The conference's overarching theme, "Information Everywhere," aptly encapsulates its essence. The diverse range of presentations underscores that the role of libraries in the digital age extends beyond the traditional scope of collecting and providing access to materials. In this dynamic landscape, libraries must flexibly adapt their services to cater to users' needs and be omnipresent in contexts where information interaction occurs. In essence, this signifies a pervasive presence across all spheres, everywhere.

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