AN LEABHARLANN : THE IRISH LIBRARY

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An Leabharlann: The Irish Library publishes articles on libraries, librarianship and related topics of interest to the library and information community on the island of Ireland. The Editorial Board invites original, unpublished articles for publication. Articles should be between **1,500** and **3,000** words. Occasionally, longer articles may be published.

Articles

- Manuscripts will be reviewed by the Editorial Board.
- Authors are asked to submit an informative abstract of not more than 200 words. Authors are responsible for the accuracy of statements and references in their articles.
- Images which visually support the article are welcomed. Authors should also submit a photograph of themselves. Original photographs and/or high-resolution scans (300 dpi) would be most helpful.

Format

- Manuscripts should be submitted by email attachment or on disc as Rich Text File (RTF). Text should be formatted in Times New Roman 12 pt., double-spaced, with margins of 2.54cm (i.e. standard A4 margins). Formatting of text (e.g. italics and bold) should be kept to a minimum.
- Authors should provide their name, organization, position and the title of the article at the top of the first page. If the article was presented at a conference, details of the sponsoring organization, the date and title of the conference should be given.

- Book reviews should include the full title, author or editor, publication details and price.
- Conference reports should be approx. 650 words and should include details such as the sponsoring organization, the date, place and title of the conference.

Style

- Microsoft Word and other word processing programs allow for a language to be selected. Please ensure that the language selected is either UK or Ireland English (i.e. NOT United States English).
- The Oxford Style Manual should be followed for acronyms, capitalization, captions, punctuation, quotations and tables.
- *An Leabharlann: The Irish Library* uses the Harvard system for references.

Editing

- *An Leabharlann: The Irish Library* reserves the right to make revisions and amendments.
- Substantive changes to articles will be discussed with the author. For consistency, all material submitted will be copy-edited.
- For additional information on style and referencing, please consult: Ritter, R.M. (Ed.). (2003) The Oxford Style Manual. Oxford: OUP

Copy Deadlines

- 31 July 2024 for Autumn edition
- 31 December 2024 for Spring 2025 edition

Editorial

Editorial, Vol 33 (1), Spring 2024

It is my pleasure to introduce the Spring 2024 edition of An Leabharlann. Unfortunately, the editor, Mary Delaney, was unavailable to work on An Leabharlann for the last number of months. I would like to apologise for being unable to publish an issue of An Leabharlann in autumn 2023.

In this edition of An Leabharlann, we delve into the critical realms of knowledge organisation, professional development, and community engagement within the Irish library landscape. Our featured articles offer insightful explorations into the evolving strategies employed by contributors to enhance accessibility, support, and inclusivity in library services.

Firstly, we turn our attention to the innovative initiatives undertaken by the Health Sciences Libraries Group (HSLG) of the Library Association of Ireland in crafting a comprehensive continuing professional development (CPD) framework. Through meticulous curation and organisation of online CPD resources, the HSLG endeavours to furnish evidence-based support systems for its members, empowering them in their professional journeys.

An article by Tamara Malone and Claire McGuinness confronts the critical issue of inclusivity and representation within Irish public libraries, particularly concerning the information needs of the marginalised Irish Traveller community. Through a qualitative exploration encompassing interviews, document analysis and literature review, the article unveils pervasive misperceptions, underrepresentation and engagement gaps.

Proposing actionable strategies such as targeted collaborations with Traveller organisations, outreach efforts and inclusive programming, the findings underscore the pivotal role of libraries in fostering cultural preservation, challenging stereotypes, and encouraging meaningful community connections.

Our next article illuminates the process of devising a specialised controlled vocabulary for the research publications produced by the Technology Education Research Group (TERG) at the Technological University of the Shannon (TUS). Highlighting the challenges posed by generic terminology in technological education research, the author underscores the imperative for tailored vocabularies to augment discoverability amidst the vast expanse of scholarly output.

Together, these articles offer a multifaceted glimpse into the dynamic landscape of contemporary library practices, underscored by a shared commitment to fostering accessibility, equity and engagement for all.

A preview of the 2024 CILIP Ireland/ Library Association of Ireland (LAI) Joint Conference in Newry is given by Rob Green. The first Joint Conference to be held in Northern Ireland since 2018, the conference with the theme "Building for the Future" will have a focus on technology's impact on library services. Keynote speakers such as Dr Andrew Cox and Janet Peden will explore AI's ethical implications and the transformative journey of library services at Ulster University, respectively. Sessions on humanity in library services, innovation in reader development, and decolonising library collections also contribute to the diverse programme.

The 2023 LAI/CILIP Ireland Conference held in Dundalk marked the 60th anniversary of this joint event. In a detailed conference review Cathal Coyle, Emma Goode, Sarah Timmins, Ciara Brodigan and Jessica Bates describe the diverse programme, a superb display of posters showcasing various projects and research, visits to local libraries, an array of vendor displays and even an impressive circus performance!

News from the Stacks lists a number of recent appointments and retirements. Since our last issue, we have seen the retirements of many esteemed colleagues who have contributed greatly to the profession of librarianship in Ireland. We wish all our colleagues well in their retirements and we send good wishes to all those taking up new positions.

I would like to sincerely thank all those who contributed to this edition of An Leabharlann, editor Mary Delaney and in particular members of the Editorial Board who helped to bring the edition to publication.

Eileen Morrissey
LAI President

Planning, engaging, reflection and impact: Supporting CPD for health library and information professionals in Ireland

Julianne O'Callaghan and Mary Dunne

On behalf of the Health Sciences Libraries Group of the Library Association of Ireland

Abstract

Over the last two years, the Health Sciences Libraries Group (HSLG) of the Library Association of Ireland has developed a continuing professional development (CPD) framework to provide an evidence-based support system for members. One element has been the addition of supports through our website. Here, we outline how we approached finding and organising useful online CPD resources.

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Planning, engaging, reflection and impact: Supporting CPD for health library and information professionals in Ireland

Background

In 2021 the HSLG committee conducted a study to explore the needs and expectations of our members and the wider library and information sector (LIS) in Ireland (Dunne, 2022a; 2022b). The importance of CPD support, including networking opportunities, was highlighted as a key priority. Therefore, the HSLG committee decided to enable a more structured approach to learning that would include aspects such as self-assessment, identification of competencies, reflection and dissemination of learning. Applying research evidence and with significant input from group members, we developed a CPD framework to guide our activities (Health Sciences Libraries Group, 2024). One action involved creating an openly accessible space on our website www.hslg.ie to provide tools and guidance.

HSLG website CPD resources

We added a calendar to our online events section to highlight upcoming events (webinars, courses, conferences, workshops etc) by the HSLG and other relevant providers. This is useful for one-off events, but we also wanted a dedicated area for CPD. Four webpages now provide access to useful resources for effective learning (Figure 1).

Figure 1: HSLG CPD website section

As well as a peer learning and support page, which includes information on our new literature-search buddy and mentoring schemes, the pages reflect elements of the HSLG CPD process that we are using to guide our framework (Figure 2). The aim is to facilitate a systematic approach to CPD that encourages LIS professionals to consider all aspects of effective learning, from planning and engaging in activities to implementing and sharing knowledge, all underpinned by active reflection.
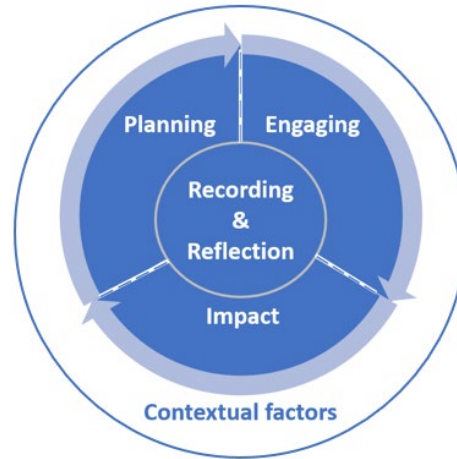
Figure 2: HSLG CPD process

The CPD process involves thought and action on**:**

Planning
- Audit and goal setting: including, skills gap analysis, prioritising competencies, target setting, goal development, creating systems for recording and assessment.

Engaging
- Taking part in activities: Choosing CPD activities or interventions that will meet identified goals and other criteria (quality, subject, time, format, location, opportunities to interact or collaborate etc.)

Impact
- Implementation: Specifying expected outcomes and how an activity will inform changes in attitudes, behaviour, practice etc.
- Discourse: Knowledge sharing, communication and collaboration to enhance our learning and help others to learn.

Recording and reflection
- These are at the heart of every stage and involve assessing and documenting progress, impact and direction. It also includes reflection on our values, beliefs and identity.

Contextual factors
- All professional development takes place in the context of members' professional situation - our experience, work role and status, access to resources (time, costs, material, colleagues or other supports etc), and organisational, national and library-sector strategies. There are also intrinsic (personal) factors such as participants' attributes, motivations, knowledge, attitudes and beliefs that influence willingness and ability to engage.

When designing our website CPD resource, we created webpages for the three key stages of the HSLG CPD process, planning, engaging and impact. Recording and reflection are core to all stages. Because documenting our actions begins at the earliest stage we incorporated recording into the *planning* webpage. And because reflection primarily involves learning from our experiences so we can effectively deliver our work, we added reflection to the *maximising impact* page. For the moment, rather than create a discrete webpage for *contextual factors*, the HSLG committee aim to understand and address these through regular engagement with members and the wider librarian community. For example, we aim to have inclusive formats, schedules and pricing for events.

The core HSLG CPD webpages are:

● **Planning and recording,** which provides tools for skills audits and planning.

● **Engaging in activities,** where we provide links to event/course providers including library-related websites and numerous other education providers. Some activities require payment, but many are free. Topics range from library and information-specific technical skills to more generic skills such as project management and leadership.

● **Maximising impact,** which includes links to sources that aid reflection and dissemination of learning outcomes.

We believe the sources we found will be useful to LIS workers across all sectors. The following section describes the process for identifying relevant content.

Sourcing Resources to Support the HSLG CPD Process

Our aim is to provide links to open access online resources that support members and other LIS staff to effectively work through the CPD process. As a starting point in the search for resources, we searched Google™ using the keywords 'continual professional development', 'CPD', 'librarian', 'information professional', 'health librarian/professional' and 'medical librarian/professional'. Other search engines such as Bing™ were explored, to ensure a thorough search for relevant resources. LIS journals were searched for relevant peer-reviewed articles. Information on the CPD process was also sought from some university sites who have Library and Information Science programmes. We also looked at the three main English-speaking professional librarian and information association websites i.e. Australia, UK and America.

Maximising impact

As a member of the framework working group had completed the L2L Joint Digital Badge PACT Commitment to Professional Development in 2021, where reflection featured prominently, we felt this stage was a good place to start.

Personal reflection is a key element in professional development. Using the keywords 'reflection' and 'continued professional development', we searched online for resources that described simply, what reflection actually involves and how it can aid in professional development. For example, Dundalk Institute of Technology library have some very helpful resources on this topic and access to guides and videos on reflective writing.

During this search, we came across many reflective resources from professional organisations. These generally focused on leadership and reflection. Many of these organisations had useful templates for professional development plans and CPD record sheets. Less visible were reflective resources aimed specifically at those involved in LIS work, particularly in health. We did however come across some insightful articles on reflective practice and librarians, which discussed barriers and benefits to the practice (see HSLG CPD 3 – impact webpage).

Planning

There was considerable information on *planning*, especially on skills gap analysis, goal setting and systems for recording. The Australian Library & Information Association (ALIA) and Medical Library Association (MLA) were two standout sites in this area. ALIA have an impressive page devoted to their CPD scheme with a focus on many areas, including health, where librarians can view their sector's competencies and then audit their skills. On the MLA site, there is a competencies self-assessment tool, which anyone can use freely. They also have a dedicated international librarian section and an impressive, free, self-paced course page available to non-members. Information on recording and documenting CPD is plentiful online. For example, we include links to resources on developing a professional development plan by IFLA, the American Library Association, indeed.com and LinkedIn. There are also good information resources on ePortfolios, with many Irish librarians having their own notable ePortfolio pages (see HSLG CPD 1 – planning webpage).

Activities

When searching for *activities*, we looked at the Library Association of Ireland website and its links to formal LIS courses. We also examined Web Junction, Library Juice and Fetch courses, which were some of the sites mentioned at the HSLG conference in March 2023, for their short informal courses aimed at our profession (see HSLG CPD 2 – activities webpage). It was most difficult to find resources in the areas of *discourse* (knowledge sharing) and *context,* which includes environmental issues including barriers and facilitators to CPD.

Conclusion

The HSLG committee continue to explore suitable tools and resources that will make it easier for those working in health library and information work to engage in effective professional development. We would be delighted to receive information on other useful sources and relevant events for our calendar (please send information to contacthslg@gmail.com).

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"The more they learn, the more they understand"[1]: Irish Travellers and public libraries in the Republic of Ireland

Tamara Malone and Claire McGuiness

Abstract

Many of the disadvantages Irish Travellers face may be countered by public library provision; we decided to examine the extent to which the information needs of this group are met by Irish public libraries in a qualitative and exploratory project, in which five Irish Travellers, two settled persons working with Traveller organisations, and a public library professional were interviewed. Interview findings along with an analysis of Irish public library documentation and a literature review were analysed by themes of (1) misperceptions of the library service, (2) the relationship between service provider and user, (3) outreach activities, (4) cultural preservation and representation, and (5) literacies. Among the most striking findings are that most Travellers are unaware of the services available; there is a lack of Traveller representation in collections and programming; and such representation is desired by the community on the basis that it may challenge negative perceptions of them among settled people. Irish Travellers are not, according to findings, engaging with library services, and misperceptions may be a partial reason for this. A number of suggestions are made, including involving marketing and outreach activities and the inclusion of Travellers in collections and programming.

1 Quote from study participant. See page 13 for full quote and details.

Introduction

The 2019 nationwide public library strategy has focused primarily on three initiatives: Right to Read, Healthy Ireland, and Work Matters; dealing with issues of literacy, health, and employment respectively (Department of Rural and Community Development [DRCD], 2019). These are issues which Irish Travellers, Ireland's indigenous ethnic minority, are particularly disadvantaged by. There are other disadvantages experienced by the community which may be addressed by public library provision, including the digital divide, as 2016 census data shows that 59.9% are without an Internet connection (Central Statistics Office, 2016), and fears around the loss of traditional culture (Department of Justice, 2017, p.24). The community would likely greatly benefit by the use of public libraries, but no research has examined the extent to which they engage with services, though Weller (2005) in the United Kingdom and Petr (2004) in Croatia argue that libraries are ideal spaces for the combatting of social exclusion for GRT (Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller) populations.

We decided to assess whether public libraries in Ireland meet the information needs of Irish Travellers, seeking answers to the following:

- Do Irish Travellers use public libraries?
- What have been their negative and positive experiences with services, collections, programming, and staff?
- Do Travellers feel welcome in public libraries?
- To what extent does the strategy and programming in Irish public libraries cater to the needs of the community?
- What kinds of services, if not currently in place, would be particularly welcome?

Methodology

Interview findings along with an analysis of Irish public library documentation and a literature review were analysed. Research was conducted from March to August of 2022.

Interviews were conducted with:

- Five Irish Travellers, two male and three female, with ages ranging from nineteen to interviewees in their sixties.
- Two settled persons working with Traveller support organisations, both female aged 18-65.
- A public library professional (female, aged 18-65). This person was initially contacted due to news coverage which depicted her facilitating programming with Irish Travellers in her library role.

Documents consulted include the nationwide development plan (DRCD, 2019) and those of the 31 local authorities of the Republic of Ireland, as well as any available documentation of public library policies including collection development policies or codes of conduct.

For the literature review, it was found that scholarly database searches using the term "Irish Traveller" reveal primarily studies in medicine, education, and anthropology and linguistics periodicals, with little appearing in library and information journals. The main themes of this project were generated on the basis of a thematic grouping of those findings that felt appropriate to the topic of information needs (these were: Social Inclusion; Culture; Literacy; Family; and Relationships with Service Providers). The questions asked of participants were designed to provide enlightenment both as to the themes generated, and research objectives.

Results and Discussion

Misperceptions

Of the Irish Travellers interviewed, only one is a current library user. A lack of engagement with library services may be due to misperceptions as to the range of services offered, and who is served by and welcome there. The idea of public libraries serving as an extension of formal education, wherein Travellers suffered discrimination (McGinley & Keane, 2021, para. 4; Yin-Har Lau and Ridge, 2011, p.131; McCaffery, 2009, para. 35; Devine *et al.*, 2008, Bhopal, 2004), was broached:

> **[Travellers] would've said to me that they never would have said that the library was for them…academic, tying very much with education, and…that wasn't a pleasant experience for them.** *(Library professional)*[2]

Tied to the association with education is the perception that libraries are only used for book lending, with a lack of awareness of the other services offered:

> **I wouldn't have a strong sense that a lot of Travellers use the library at present…maybe make the library more accessible as venues rather than to use the books.** *(Traveller organisation worker)*

> **[Libraries have] really expanded, they're not just for borrowing books…they do a lot of different things…I'd say for example if libraries did photocopying, you know people might go in [and] see what else is in there.** *(Traveller organisation worker)*

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2 There is a consensus that a major barrier to formal education is racist treatment and bullying, with a number of studies indicating that Traveller parents are reluctant to send their children to school due to the discrimination they themselves experienced, and more citing racist bullying as reasons for early school leaving (McGinley and Keane, 2021, para. 4; Yin-Har Lau and Ridge, 2011, p.131; McCaffery, 2009, para. 35; Devine et al., 2008).

Women and children preparing for Cahirmee Horse Fair, Buttevant, Co. Cork, photographed by Elinor Wiltshire in 1954. Reproduced courtesy of the National Library of Ireland.

"The more they learn, the more they understand": Irish Travellers and public libraries in the Republic of Ireland

No interview participants from the Irish Traveller community expressed an awareness, when asked, of public library programming. This is echoed by public library development plans, where under the category of "obstacles" or "challenges", a lack of awareness of the range of services on offer is frequently cited (Limerick City and County Council, 2021, p.26; Longford County Council, 2021, p.17; Cork City Council, 2019, p.13; Fingal County Council, 2018, p.57; South Dublin County Council, 2018, p.50).

Relationships with service providers

Inaccurate perceptions of the library may be challenged through the forging of relationships between Irish Traveller patrons and staff. This was recognised by the library professional spoken to:

> If [Travellers] walk into a space and [feel] very uncomfortable they won't ever go back, you won't get a second chance, they might not remember what your name was, but they'll remember [how] you made them feel. *(Library professional)*

For service providers to work effectively with Irish Travellers it is necessary to establish this relationship (Greenfields, 2017; McFadden *et al.*, 2016, Breen, 2012, p.121). This is likely due to the cultural trauma experienced by groups who have endured abuses at the hands of public and state bodies (Thompson *et al.*, 2022, p.150; Cavaliero, 2020, p.89; Yin-Har Lau and Ridge, 2011, p.135). Fortunately, the majority of positive feedback about libraries was in relation to staff:

> They're very good to me, genuinely, they're very nice to me…I can't put a fault on them, personality-wise. *(Irish Traveller, Female)*

> I have to say, I've never had a difficulty with the staff. *(Irish Traveller, Male)*

The potential of positive relationships to increase library engagement may be seen in an example provided by the employee of a Traveller support service:

> The staff were really amazing… [we now] feel so welcome, we use the library way more since, and sometimes just drop in for a chat. *(Traveller organisation worker)*

For such relationships to be formed, initial engagement must occur, and due to a distrust of outsiders, this initial engagement is most likely to be facilitated by a member of the community. Participants universally responded that if a Traveller were present in the library, this would increase uptake among the community:

> I can see where it would be really beneficial actually, because you'd have [the representative] who could work with like, em, like school liaison officers, they could say oh World Book Day's coming up let's have a group of Travellers come here, I think that would be so beneficial. *(Irish Traveller, Female)*

> If you had a Traveller embedded in the institutions…it begins to break down that kind of barrier or inbuilt mindset that those services are not for us as a people, some Travellers might find it easier to have a conversation off to the side with another Traveller [if in need of help]. *(Irish Traveller, Male)*

Alternatively, a Traveller/library liaison who, despite themselves not coming from the community, occupies a dedicated role in collaboration with local Travellers would also be helpful (Bhopal, 2004, p.56). Collaboration with Traveller organisations is also recommended in the promotion of services (Murray, 2012, p.577; Lane and Tribe, 2010).

Outreach

Mobile library services

No interview participants reported that mobile libraries stop near their homes. There is a mobile library service in many local authorities, but the frequency and availability of these services seems to vary. Reflecting on the nature of many Traveller communities in Ireland, including the frequency of nomadic and rural living patterns, the tendency to feel safer among one's own community, and material deprivation including lack of access to transport, these services may be of particular benefit. Site-work has also been cited as a particularly effective tactic in the engagement of Traveller families (Loftus and Fitzpatrick, 2012, p.25).

Targeted services vs. segregation

As Petr (2004) discussed a library facilitated by and for the Romany community in Croatia, participants were asked what they thought of a similar

institution for their own use. Many respondents reacted negatively to the implied segregation:

> **To me that would be going back into a silo, I do believe in having a section [where] there's always going to be a place for Traveller material…but not this idea of creating a specific segregated standalone section.** *(Irish Traveller, Male)*

> **The most important thing in the world is mainstream, keeping it mainstream, because we've come, in my own opinion, we've come through systems of segregation, Traveller-specific classrooms, Traveller-specific services…** *(Irish Traveller, Female)*

Aside from anxieties around segregation, a frequent preference expressed by participants was for settled people to access spaces facilitated by Travellers so that negative perceptions could be challenged:

> **I think it'd be good to have [a library for Travellers], but there should also be the option of letting settled people come in and see what the Travellers are doing, it's more about getting to understand Irish Travellers and seeing what they're like in the workplace and understanding them, that way they're understood better than what the media portrays.** *(Irish Traveller, Female)*

> **[A good idea would be] a space that you'd have in a library that you'd have your Traveller stuff that we could go in, and maybe students could go in for research, because we're trying to bridge gaps between the community, d'you know, the more they learn the more they understand.** *(Irish Traveller, Female)*

Many Travellers understandably feel safer, and therefore more likely to engage, when surrounded by members of their own community, so service providers must strike the appropriate balance between the delivery of targeted services and the reproduction of segregation.

Culture

Preservation

Study participants overwhelmingly expressed anxiety at the loss of their traditional culture, with every participant from the community agreeing that this was a concern:

> **Trying to preserve stories and d'you know, stories from our past and we want to archive them, cause we have young members of our community now and they really can't relate to our past because there's nothing we can bring them to and say, this is what we did in the past.** *(Irish Traveller, Female)*

> **I'm not just talking about the practicalities of skills, the ability to survive and all that, but all of the oral tradition, the song, the music, the poetry, the sean-nós material that a lot of Travellers did have.** *(Irish Traveller, Male)*

Public libraries may address these anxieties due to the role they have held as preservers of local and cultural memory, a role that Irish libraries embrace through paired Local Studies departments (Wexford County Council, 2020, p.27). The Cant language and traditional Traveller tinsmithing are counted among Ireland's National Inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage (Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport & Media, 2021). However, materials on Traveller history and culture are not easily located in public libraries:

> **There wasn't much there that you'd go and look at, no archives of stuff about our community, it wasn't really much of that.** *(Irish Traveller, Female)*

Traveller materials may be difficult to meaningfully include in Local Studies collections as these tend to be based primarily on State documents and news sources, which historically have excluded and misrepresented Travellers. There are, however, alternative forms such inclusion could take. Because storytelling and music have been so central to Traveller culture (Portner, 2017), audio collections would be beneficial. Many local authorities house music collections in their libraries or Local Studies departments, and the inclusion of Traveller materials in these would be a positive step.

Representation

Participants have not found materials about Travellers in their libraries, and aside from concerns around cultural preservation, the lack of representation can have a negative effect:

> **[When asked why she stopped using libraries:] I suppose it was never anything in it that would relate to my culture being a Traveller…none of our children see those, see stuff like that in libraries.** *(Irish Traveller, Female)*

For many participants, representation was important for the potential it offers for settled people to learn about Travellers:

> **What you're trying to do is normalise it societally, that Travellers…are part and parcel of society and of Irishness.** *(Irish Traveller, Male)*

> **We don't just want to be showing [Traveller materials] to our own community but the wider community too, to actually understand our culture and see it.** *(Irish Traveller, Female)*

Group of tin objects made by Mickey Doherty (1894-1970), Co. Donegal.
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Literacies

Literacy is oft cited as an area of disadvantage for Travellers, but the term has come to encompass a broader set of concepts than it had previously. Among the key areas identified as requiring attention are health literacy, workplace literacy, and media literacy (Carlow County Council Public Library Service, 2022b, pp.11-12), issues which the community is negatively affected by. Travellers are highly literate regarding orality and the transmission of traditional stories and histories (Ó Haodha, 2011, para. 22), but poor text-based literacy can contribute to generational cycles of disadvantage.

Not many research participants reported knowing of literacy instruction being offered in their local libraries:

> **No, not that I can remember, no, I really can't say because I don't think they have.** *(Irish Traveller, Female)*

While such instruction does take place (Cork County Council, 2021; Kildare Library Service, 2020, p.73), a lack of information has been cited as a major barrier to engagement (Carlow County Council Public Library Service, 2022a, pp.29-30).

Digital literacy

Irish public libraries maintain a role in the development of digital literacy and combatting the digital divide (DRCD, 2019, p.37; Cavan County Council, 2018, p.42; Fingal County Council, 2018, p.8), and it seems that when Travellers are aware of IT services offered, they make frequent use of them:

> **A lot of the women actually…were using the library to print off documentation that they needed for social welfare, housing, or the medical card and things like that, so that's where a lot of the women I see use the libraries.** *(Irish Traveller, Female)*

Comfort using, and access to, digital technology has increasingly become an essential part of daily life, as many services like banking, paying bills, social welfare, job applications, and grocery shopping have been made either partly or entirely available online. The majority of public libraries in Ireland provide access to PCs and an Internet connection, and so have become places people

may go to use these things particularly in rural areas without much other availability.

Active citizenship

McCaffery (2009) discusses the ways that Travellers in the United Kingdom have learned, despite educational disadvantage, to adopt the language of self-advocacy in local government activities. The language and modes of expression used for the purpose of self- advocacy and active citizenship is another kind of literacy, and libraries have shown a willingness to address this by partnering with Citizen's Advice (Kildare Library Service, 2020, p.32; Cavan County Council, 2018, p.22; Waterford City and County Council, 2017, p.12) and providing assistance with government e-services (Longford County Council, 2021, p.25; Wexford County Council, 2020, p.29).

Workplace and financial literacy

Irish Travellers have traditionally worked in non-mainstream occupations including self-employment, family businesses, and contract work (Cooney and Foley, 2017; Foley and Cooney, 2017; Cooney, 2009). With the current "gig economy" (Donovan, Bradley and Shimabukuro, 2016), this kind of work has become more prevalent, which has led to an increased awareness of the needs of such workers (Dublin City Council, 2019). Some difficulties here include a lack of experience with budgeting, ATMs, and financial documents (Carlow County Council Public Library Service, 2022b, p.53). The National Traveller MABS (Money Advice and Budgeting Service) aims to reduce financial exclusion and poverty for Travellers in culturally appropriate ways (National Traveller MABS, n.d.), and collaboration with local libraries and the national Work Matters programme may prove beneficial.

Conclusion and recommendations

Findings are not generalisable due to the small sample size, but tentative answers to the questions posed in the introduction are as follows:

● **Do Irish Travellers use public libraries?**

Engagement is low. One participant from the Irish Traveller community is a regular library user, and other participants report anecdotally that Travellers they know do not use libraries.

● **What have been their negative and positive experiences with services, collections, programming, and staff?**

There was unanimous positive feedback on library staff, who participants agreed were friendly and helpful. This positive feedback did not extend to programming or collections; most were not aware of programmes or collection materials relevant to their needs or which meaningfully included them.

● **Do Travellers feel welcome in public libraries?**

When participants have used libraries, they have felt welcome there. However, many do not make initial contact with services due to negative perceptions.

● **To what extent does the strategy and programming in Irish public libraries cater to the needs of the community?**

Programming and strategy does – or could – cater to the needs of the community, but Irish Travellers are not aware of the majority of services that are available.

● **What kinds of services, if not currently in place, would be particularly welcome?**

The following is suggested:

Marketing and outreach. Increasing awareness among Irish Travellers of the range of services available will likely be the most decisive factor in the improvement of service uptake. Outreach and site-work, for Irish

Travellers, would be a fruitful way of proceeding. This may include an increased provision of mobile libraries, or pop-up services at Traveller Pride Week (Pavee Point Traveller and Roma Centre, 2023) events.

Cultural preservation and representation. As Irish Travellers fear the decline of their traditional culture, it is likely that the housing of materials relating to this culture would be warmly received. These materials may include audio-visual and music collections. Events or exhibits highlighting traditional Traveller culture and history could also take place at such times as Traveller Pride Week or nationwide Culture Night (The Arts Council, 2024) or Heritage Week (The Heritage Council, 2024) events. This is important not just for Travellers to feel that they are represented and their culture is valued, but to challenge negative perceptions held by the settled community towards them. A positive example of programming which promotes the visibility of various groups is the Cavan "100 Books with a Difference" project, which features books representing many identities which may be found in contemporary Ireland, including Irish Travellers (Cavan County Council's Library Service, 2013, pp.49-52).

Collaboration with Traveller organisations, or a designated staff member occupying a liaison role. This would likely increase library usage when organisations may lead members to the library during a jointly organised event, for example, or informally recommend the library to members once they themselves are aware of what is available. These people should be consulted, or enabled to gather opinions on, such considerations as best practice with regard to the extent to which targeted services perpetuate segregation.

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Developing a specialist controlled vocabulary: What's involved?

Rachel Coleman

Abstract

This article details the development of a specialist controlled vocabulary for the research publications of the Technology Education Research Group (TERG) at the Technological University of the Shannon (TUS). An examination of the research topics and terms used in technological education identified potential issues in the discoverability of these research outputs. These terms, whilst used in the context of technological education may have specific meaning, from a search and discovery perspective many may be generic. Hence, this raises the possibility for TERG publications to be lost in the very vast searching and retrieval results when users are looking for these publications. This is the primary reason why the requirement for a controlled vocabulary was identified.
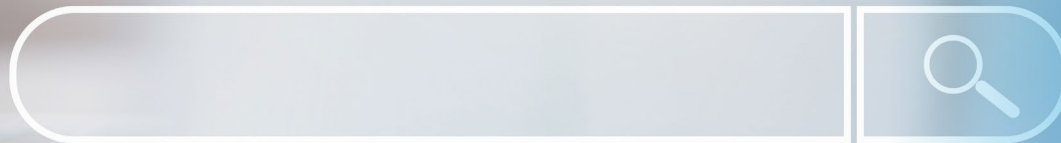
Technology Education Research Group (TERG)

The Technology Education Research Group (TERG) was established in 2010. TERG aspires to have an international impact on the advancement and provision of technology education at all levels of education.

The nature of research activities within TERG are varied. The group conducts basic research, use-inspired basic research, and applied research in the context of technology education in areas such as:

- Cognition and learning
- Heuristics, behaviours, and decision making in education
- Technology enhanced learning
- Technology mediated interactions
- Educational assessment and holistic judgement
- Pedagogical Content Knowledge.

Defining a Controlled Vocabulary

A controlled vocabulary is described as an organised arrangement of words and phrases used to index content and/or to retrieve content through browsing or searching (Harping, 2010). Examples of controlled vocabularies include subject headings, thesauri, ontologies, and taxonomies.

For this study research papers and conference papers from TERG members, across the years 2021 and 2022, were reviewed. From these papers a vocabulary list was devised, whose primary function was to standardise the context in which technical terms were chosen and implemented in research papers.

The purpose of controlled vocabularies is to organise information and to provide terminology to organise and retrieve information (Harping, 2010). Where terms have the potential to be ambiguous, the controlled vocabulary clarifies the meaning of the term in the context or subject area while capturing the richness of these variant terms. In essence the controlled vocabulary provides consistency and relevancy of terms to similar content and in similar context.

Controlled vocabularies can be powerful tools for specific collections or unique items, where existing generalised vocabularies do not capture the collection, or are too broad as descriptors. A purpose-built vocabulary devised within the subject area where it is required, supports the librarian in describing their collection accurately and in line with their organisation's standard or mission. The resultant controlled vocabulary can emphasise existing relationships between terms in a formal structure, which results in a more powerful and effective database (Harping, 2010). A strong controlled vocabulary removes user confusion and ambiguity and elevates its content intrinsically using its strong level of consistency (Silova, 2015). Voorbij's 1998 study found that a controlled vocabulary improves the bibliographic record of a publication by grouping synonyms under the same heading. In addition, a controlled vocabulary suggests other entries by presenting cross-references and by reducing irrelevant results (Voorbij, 1998). The use of consistent terms dramatically improves search and retrieval when the vocabulary is implemented across a database. The main draw in implementing controlled vocabularies is its positive effect on search and retrieval. Positive effects include:

- simpler database searching
- time-saving, as similar information is grouped together
- search results are focused and relevant (New Mexico State University Grants, 2018).

Users of the collections database will be supported in their information search by the aid of controlled vocabularies. Users are often not specialists (Harping, 2010) in the area they have searched and they may not know the correct term in order to find what they are looking for. An example of this is reflected in students researching for assignments in which they are expected to expertly report on a new topic. In the retrieval process, various end users may use different synonyms or more generic terms to refer to a given concept. A 1996 study found that Medical Education Subject Headings (MeSH), the medical

subject heading controlled vocabulary, plays an important role in retrieving relevant results (Srinivasan, 1996). Appropriately named subject headings allow users to perform additional searches using headings found in records they deem relevant, providing a simple means to limit retrieval to materials more likely to be relevant. Gross and Taylor's study in 2005, found that if subject headings were removed from or no longer included in catalogue records, users performing keyword searches would miss more than one third of the hits they currently retrieve.

Irrelevant results often come from homonyms. In the development of the controlled vocabulary of TERG, the term 'transparency' is an example of this. To a user who wishes to research transparent materials, a publication detailing the need to create transparent research practices is not a relevant result to recover. A well-constructed controlled vocabulary would reduce retrieval errors such as this, with the help of descriptive terms and scope notes. Several university controlled vocabulary articles provided a good starting ground supporting various methodologies in which a controlled vocabulary could be developed (New Mexico State University Grants, 2018; University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2024). However, the resource most heavily relied on for guidance was a report by Catherine Ryan, an Irish librarian, who described her journey and decision-making processes in creating a pilot thesaurus of Irish folklore (Ryan, 2014).

At the end of this project, a controlled vocabulary for TERG was based on the 2021 and 2022 publications, from this specialist research group. A vocabulary index notating what terms were included as keywords for every publication across 2021 and 2022, was also established.

Keyword Collection

A controlled vocabulary should be an accurate representation of the collection. Therefore, it is advisable to be familiar with the subject area when developing a controlled vocabulary. This helps to ensure that the resulting controlled vocabulary is an accurate representation of the topic and the meaning of words used in context.

This is especially important when building a controlled vocabulary within an area you are not familiar with. The methodology employed for this study was to read through each 2021 publication. For each publication, the author noted the keywords given for each paper as a term. It took several passes, until the author was confident in understanding the topic, after which point, only then were the suggested keywords expanded using terms discovered in the text. These terms are called Preferred Terms (PT) and have several attributes that can be used to describe the context of the term. The attributes that were used in the study were; Related Term (RT), Variant Term (VT) and Scope Note (SN). This kind of system can also include hierarchical attributes such as a Broader Term (BT) and a Narrower Term (NT), which have the purpose of describing and establishing relationships or links between terms. In this particular vocabulary these are not implemented explicitly; however, the classification headings mentioned later fulfil this hierarchical schema. An example of PT, VT and RT is included in Figure 1.

- PT - Preferred Terms tell the user the term that is preferred by the institution and/or author when referring to a particular concept or topic. PTs can be influenced by the intended user group's knowledge base and require consideration around synonyms and variant spellings.

- SN - Scope Notes provide a definition of the PT and allows the controlled vocabulary to be better understood by other librarians or, in this case, researchers in TERG. Notably, every PT requires a SN.

- RT - Related Terms show associative relationships and can be seen in Figure 1. There can be multiple RT for a PT.

- VT - Variant Terms supply the user with another popular term that the PT can commonly be referred to as. The VT is often a different spelling, acronyms or another version of the PT that is not suitable for this particular controlled vocabulary. An example from the Folklore Thesaurus is how 'cats' would be more appropriate for the general public while 'Felis catus' would be more appropriate for a veterinary or zoology thesaurus (Ryan, 2014). There can be multiple VT for a PT.

PT	VT	BT	RT	RT
Cats	Feline Catis	Pets	Kittens	Tabby Cats
Dogs	Canis familiaris	Pets	Puppies	Collies
Rabbits	Bunny Rabbit	Pets	Hares	Pygmy Rabbits

Figure 1: Example of classification structure for vocabulary terms for preferred terms, variant terms, and related terms.

Within the context of controlled vocabularies for TERG, after keyword collection, the current vocabulary list which contains established keywords and newly created terms for 2021, had 73 PTs, which is roughly 4 new terms per publication. At this stage, the context for particular keywords were compared, notably 'design' and 'spatial skills', in order to evaluate if their context across publications was consistent. The unstructured list of PTs was then ready for classification. This familiarisation process for keyword collection, was revisited for the 2022 publications, after the initial classification of 2021 publications which is discussed in the following section.

Classification

TERG 2021 Research Publications

A controlled vocabulary does not necessarily require a formal structure; however, there is the option to implement one. After collecting the list of PTs it was decided to implement a formal structure, which involved classifying each term into smaller groups. The aim was to create a classification system that would facilitate a user in searching and retrieving through the collection. A good classification structure is simple to understand, accessible for a variety of users and encapsulates the context surrounding each term (Harping, 2010). PTs are categorised into groups and can often contain subcategories. The category headings needed to be as stated, simple and accurately describe the terms' context.

The TERG 2021 research publication vocabulary list was categorised initially into six different groups: *Skills*, *Technology Education*, *STEM Education*, *Education Research*, *Assessment,* and *Research*. With category headings, the system was further refined using an online visualisation tool called Miro (Miro, 2022). Each term had a 'sticky note' that could be attached to the current category headings with each heading assigned a colour. Sticky notes with related terms were matched. The headings' relationship with each other were visualised using arrows to show which headings had terms that had connections with each other (Figure 2). Visualisation with Miro supported the author in reassessing each term's context, discovering its relationship with other terms, and determining if the current system is appropriate.
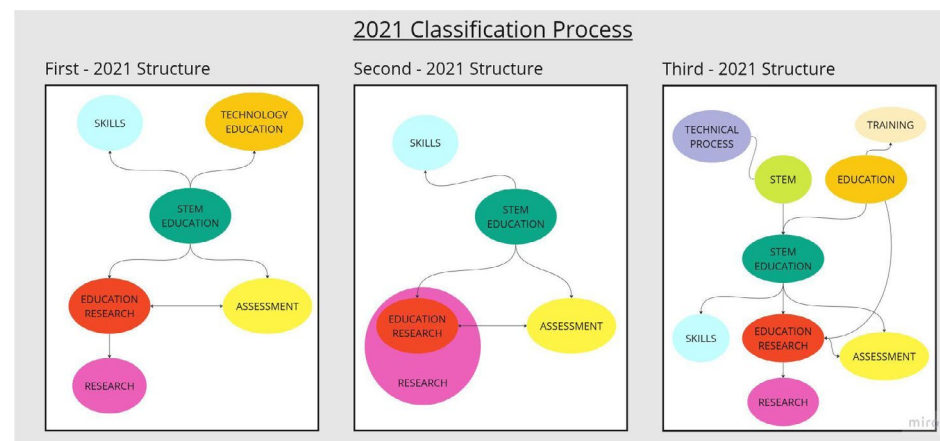

Figure 2: TERG 2021 classification structure for vocabulary.

The reassessment of each term's context was made by reviewing the publications the terms were found in and redefining the scope notes as well as including a link to the authoritative definition source. Issues that prompted classification alteration included a singular classification heading encompassing a majority of terms, and classification headings being too similar or too vague.

Visualising this data with Miro, it became apparent that:

● Terms within *Technology Education* fit into *STEM Education*,

Thesaurus

- *STEM Education* could be further split into *STEM,* and *Education*,

- *Education Research* terms could possibly be a subcategory within *Research*,

- *Technical Process* and *Training* headings should be established.

The headings were also searched on the Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSH) which was used to ensure validity to chosen classification headings. If an authority file existed for the heading on LCSH, then the heading could be verified as a suitable and descriptive heading. *Technology Education* was not found on LCSH and so had to be re-evaluated. A structure was created based on the contents of the collection of TERG research publications and not by using an established facet or classification technique, so authority files can provide rationale to the controlled vocabulary. The transformation of the classification structure for TERG research publications from 2021 can be seen finalised in Figure 2, with the new *Technical Process* and *STEM* and *Education* headings. This is because the *STEM Education* category had become laden with non-specific STEM terms including the STEM subjects of Science and STEM ecosystem, and non-specific education terms such as types of learners and types of academic institutions, leading to too many general STEM and educational terms that became lost within the very specific *STEM Education* classification. Table 2 outlines the final TERG 2021 research publications vocabulary including the number of PTs, VTs and RTs within each classification system.

Table 2: Controlled vocabulary for TERG 2021 research publications.			
2021 Controlled Vocabulary			
Classification Headings	**PT**	**VT**	**RT**
Assessment	9		
Education	5	1	
Education Research	16	4	1
Research	16	1	2
Skills	10	1	
STEM	3		
STEM Education	11	2	
Training	2		
Technical Process	1		

TERG 2022 **Research Publications**

Once the classification process was completed, for TERG 2021 research publications the series of steps stated in the Keyword Collection section were repeated for the 2022 TERG publications (Figure 3A). In particular, once PTs for TERG 2022 publications had been collected, the TERG 2021 publications were once more revised to see if any of the TERG 2022 PTs were present. The TERG

2022 PTs were compared with the classified TERG 2021 PTs and redundant terms or overlapped terms were removed or re-evaluated. Once all the PTs were gathered the classification system was revised to better encompass the complete vocabulary list.

In general, it is best practice to not have the vocabulary too weighted on one category. Therefore, term context and each classification heading were reviewed. Changes were made as headings contained terms that would be inaccurate if included in established headings. Figure 3B shows the final combined structure for the classification system for the controlled vocabulary. The TERG 2021 final classification system (Figure 2) was updated, introducing category headings of *Other* and *Industry*. *Industry* highlights the technical processes of industry, and *Training* had become absorbed into *Industry* as a subcategory, as the kind of term within training related to industry workers. *Stem Education* was no longer directly linked to *Assessment*, as it was deemed a facet of how education was delivered within *Education Research*. The *Skills* category was reviewed to acknowledge the link between *Stem Education* and *Education Research*.

The final categories were

- *STEM*,
- *STEM Education*,
- *Skills*,
- *Assessment,*
- *Research,*
- *Education Research*,
- *Education,*
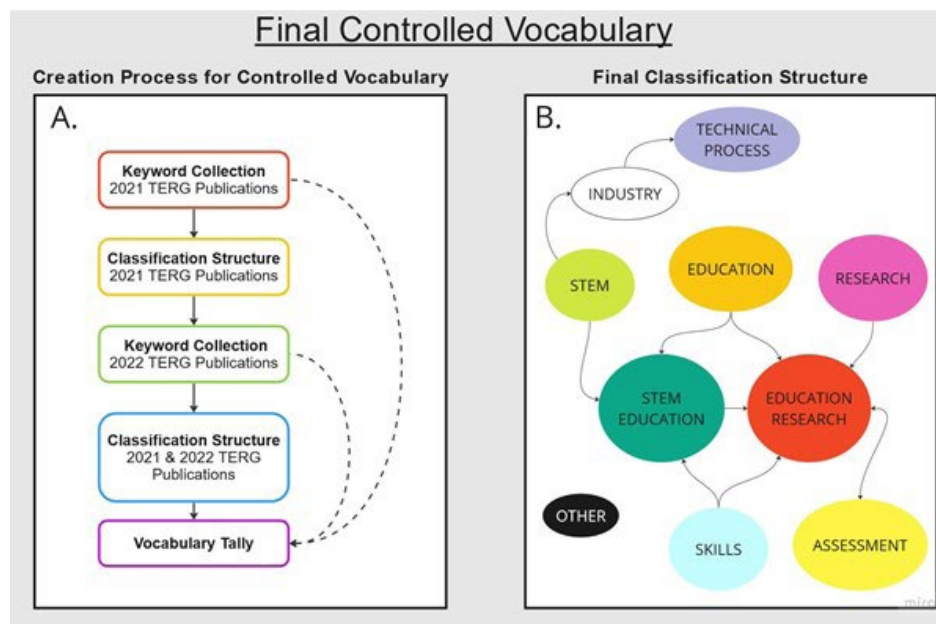- *Industry,*
- *Technical Process* and
- *Other.*

Figure 3: Controlled Vocabulary structures. A. Process for creating final controlled vocabulary and index for 2021 and 2022 TERG research publications. B. final structure of classification system for vocabulary used across 2021 and 2022 TERG research publications.

Final Vocabulary

Once PTs had been appropriately classified, subheadings within the headings developed naturally, increasing the structure of the classification system. Subheadings expand the classification system by providing another layer of structure within the main classification heading. Subcategories group similar terms and segment the possibly lengthy list of PTs into digestible chunks. Figure 4 details the classification structure of the controlled vocabulary and the subheadings that structure the terms within. The final vocabulary for the TERG research publications between 2021 and 2022 has 161 PTs, and the largest heading is *Education Research*, which has 43 PTs. In this case the extensive controlled vocabulary is detailed in a spreadsheet where terms are ordered alphabetically in each heading and subheading, to increase user operability and implementation into databases.
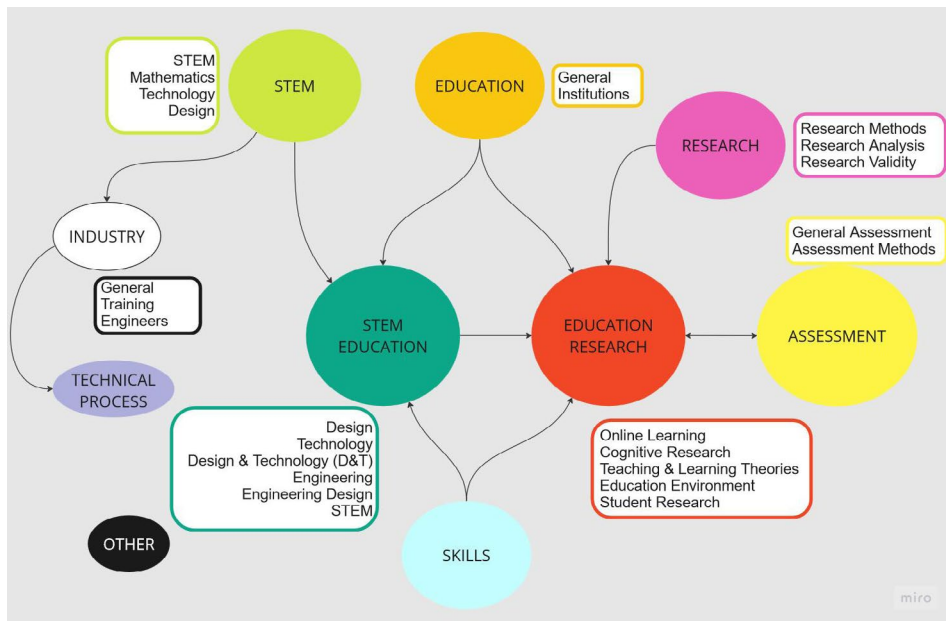
Figure 4: Finalised classification system for controlled vocabulary, developed for TERG 2021 and 2022 research publications. Headings noted here highlight subheadings in square boxes.

Vocabulary Index

The process of creating a controlled vocabulary allowed further analysis of term usage in the form of a vocabulary index. The vocabulary index, listed all terms in alphabetical order, and marked the number of appearances that term has made as a keyword throughout the publications produced by TERG research publications between 2021 and 2022, then further points to the particular publication(s) it found. This tally system offers a powerful insight into where research is implemented, and its impact on future research as the vocabulary is developed. For example, a recent publication could have a spike in readers and using the tally the librarian or researcher could see using the number of occurrences of a term in the TERG publication list. This could highlight if more research could be developed in this area, or if indeed other publications using this term have also recently increased in views. The controlled vocabulary can only be of service if it is updated and current,

where the tool can prove invaluable if properly employed. As it stands, the controlled vocabulary would benefit from expert opinion, where the system can be updated if its purpose is altered.

PT	VT	RT
activity systems theory	activity theory	
conceptual alignment		
enacted practice		enacted curriculum
evidence-based practice		
group-based learning		
linkography		
multi-cohort designs		multiple study
pedagogical content knowledge	PCK	
project based learning	PBL	
stimulated recall		
theory generation		
think aloud protocol study		

Figure 5: An example output of the controlled vocabulary, developed for TERG 2021 and 2022 research publications. Within the head classification of *Education* and the sub heading *Teaching and Learning Theories,* the PTs are given. Listed are preferred terms, variant terms, and related terms.

Conclusion

A controlled vocabulary for research publications from TERG between 2021 and 2022 has been designed, where terms have been linked using a developed classification system underlined by nine principal headings, which organise technical terms. The process of generating and establishing a controlled vocabulary in this study has been fascinating. The method of generating this classification system could be upscaled or reinterpreted for

larger datasets or other research fields. Furthermore, this proposed system could be further reviewed and altered to develop a controlled vocabulary and classification system with more efficiency in future.

A major benefit of a controlled vocabulary is creating consistent keywords that increase search and retrieval of the publications. Therefore, this locally held project improves the TERG publications' searchability and impact when this system is applied in an online space.

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CILIP Ireland kicks off conference season: Building for the future

Rob Green

THE first conference in the CILIP Calendar is set to take place this month, as the joint CILIP Ireland and Library Association of Ireland (LAI) Conference takes place on 24 and 25 April 2024. We look ahead to the conference and some of its highlights as delegates get ready to head to Newry.

The Joint CILIP Ireland/LAI Conference is a chance for library, knowledge and information professionals across the island of Ireland to come together and share ideas, expertise and develop new skills. This year's conference takes place in Newry in Northern Ireland and will feature a range of speakers, workshops and opportunities to network and build new connections.

Julie Reid, Chair of CILIP Ireland, said: "The programme of inspirational library and information professionals and cross-sectoral updates on best practice will engage and challenge us to be dynamic and innovative in delivering quality services in times of constrained finances. Learn, discuss and be empowered through keynote presentations, plenary lectures and participative learning sessions. There will also be a trade exhibition and plenty of opportunity for informal networking and knowledge sharing with professional colleagues."

The theme of this year's conference is "Building for the Future", and picks up on topics covering technology and impact on services. The opening keynote on day one will be delivered by Dr Andrew Cox, Senior Lecturer, University of Sheffield, and author of CILIP's Research report: *The impact of AI, machine learning, automation and robotics on the information profession* (www.cilip.org.uk/researchreport). His

keynote will explore the relationship between AI and library services, looking at how libraries can respond to build their AI capability in an ethical and strategic way.

Day one will also feature Dr Liam Campbell from the Mellon Centre for Migration Studies, with a session titled *Humanity and Emotion*. This will look at how "the head, the heart and the hands" must all be recognised in order to build for the future.

Sean Beattie, Libraries NI, will focus on *Innovation in Reader Development: A Libraries NI Approach*. Dr Claire McGuinness and Dr Stefanie Havelka from the School of Information and Communication Studies, UCD, will present a plenary session on research into *Students' Perceptions and Uses of ChatGPT: Implications for Educators*.

Day two's opening keynote will be Janet Peden, Director of Library Services, Ulster University. Her talk, *A New Chapter: University of Ulster Library Service Reimagined*, looks at the how the library service at Ulster has undergone a significant transformation over the last decade, including the design and delivery of the flagship library space at the new Belfast campus.

CILIP 125 recipient Louise Cooke-Escapil of Dublin Business School will look at the development of the concept of decolonising library collections, reflecting on work from England and North America and asking what Irish libraries can and should be doing in a session titled *Building a Decolonised Future Through Irish Libraries*.

Throughout both days there will be a series of Learning Sessions, where delegates can explore topics in more depth. There will also be lightning talks from our sponsors – AM Digital, Bibliotheca, Bolinda, Britannica, Lorensbergs and The Design Concept –taking place on each day.

Rob Green

Learning Sessions

Day One

Learning Session A

New professionals panel: Kirsteen Walters, Dr Aine Warren Kannan, Ashley Kong, Clare Hartwieg. Daniel McCurdy, Halie Kerns, Megan Lenahan - Presentations from new professionals in the library and information sector

Learning Session B

eBooks Panel: Anthony Hopkins, Libraries Connected, Sean Beattie, Libraries NI, Geraldine O'Beirn, Queen's University Belfast - A cross-sectoral update on eBooks

Day Two

Learning Sessions C&E

Futures Literacy Workshop 1: Ben Lee, Director, Shared Intelligence, gives a rapid introduction to the concept of futures literacy and the role of scenarios in futures studies.

Learnings Sessions D&F

How libraries can leverage AI? Daniel van Strien, Machine Learning Librarian, Hugging Face presents a focus on practical and approachable uses of machine learning.

To find out more and to book you place visit https://www.cilip.org.uk/event/CILIPIrelandLAIConf24

LAI/CILIP Ireland
Annual Joint Conference 2023:
Conference review

Cathal Coyle, *PhD Researcher, Ulster University*

Emma Goode, *Library & IT Service Manager, University of Galway and recently completed the MSc in Library & Information Management, Ulster University*

Sarah Timmins, *RCSI Library Assistant – Customer Services & Heritage Collections and student on the PG Diploma in Library & Information Management, Ulster University*

Ciara Brodigan, *Library Assistant, Louth Library Service and student on the PG Diploma in Library & Information Management, Ulster University*

Dr Jessica Bates, *Course Director, Library and Information Management, Ulster University. Email: j.bates@ulster.ac.uk*

The annual LAI/CILIP Ireland joint conference took place 26-27 April 2023 in Dundalk on the theme of 'Libraries making a difference'.
With over forty presentations and events, this was a great opportunity for networking, sharing and learning for all participants.

Plenary 1:

Welcome / Keynote: Trevor Vaugh

Following welcome addresses from Cathal McCauley (Outgoing President of the LAI) and Lorna Dodd (Conference Chair), the opening keynote speaker Trevor Vaugh (Assistant Professor of Strategic Design, Maynooth University) used the metaphor of libraries as an operating system for society, and introduced the notion of updating this system to reflect the changes in society. He posed the questions: 'What if libraries were designed from scratch with no regard for tradition or history?' and 'What if libraries focused less on 'preserving' the past and more on 'creating' the future?' Another 'radical' idea Trevor discussed was imagining the potential of a shared repository of knowledge and insights that could benefit all by shaping national decision making, and as Trevor remarked, with a collective catalogue of experts ready to share their wisdom for the common good, the impact could be immeasurable.

Breakout Sessions 1:

Louth Library Service as a Library of Sanctuary / Studio Saturdays at dlr Lexicon / End Period Poverty initiative at UCD Library

Leona Burgess's talk emphasised the 'library as sanctuary' theme, and how public libraries play an important role in welcoming refugees and people seeking sanctuary in our communities. She spoke of the need to 'learn, share and embed' – taking positive action to ensure the initiative continues to flourish. Louth Library Service was awarded Library of Sanctuary status in 2023 in recognition of the work it is doing to promote diversity.

The next speaker, Susan Lynch, outlined the dlr (Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County) Libraries services for those with additional needs, to make their library services and spaces more accessible, including sensory rooms, quiet evenings; and neurodivergent Studio Saturdays which offer a variety of

excellent workshops tailored for children such as Playful Yoga. During these sessions, dlr Libraries also have an area set up with a selection of sensory toys and equipment.

Vanessa Buckley and Catherine Bodey spoke about the valuable work taking place in UCD in promoting #EndPeriodPoverty and providing fine examples of how the campaign was born and platformed via posters shared on social media channels. The idea behind the campaign is that no one should go without period products: pads and tampons are provided for anyone who needs them on the UCD Campus.

Cork City Libraries as a play partner / Poetry as Commemoration / UK and Irish Legal Deposit

Eibhlín Cassidy posed the question 'why play?' and proceeded to make it rhetorical, as play was shown to be important for all ages and communities, highlighting its role around ADHD and dementia by way of examples. A trip to dedicated, stand-alone toy libraries in France was inspirational but it was clear that thoughtful adaptation was needed for Cork library services. A toy collection was acquired and catalogued for borrowing from the public library. A wonderful initiative was also devised whereby Community Play Bags can be borrowed by schools, community groups and used for street festivals and events.

Next, Evelyn Flanagan outlined some aspects of the wide-reaching and multi-faceted Decade of Centenaries project, in which UCD Library Special Collections partnered island-wide with Poetry Ireland, Arts Council NI, and Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media. Evelyn discussed breaking down perceived barriers and anxieties around non-scholars engaging with special collections and historical archives. Creative, public art was commissioned and is traveling the country in the form of 'poetry jukeboxes' and 'rain poems' on the pavements. Poets, including President Higgins, came in to record their poems for the collection and workshops are being held around Ireland using primary sources to inspire poetry.

Finally, Dr Linda Arnold-Stratford took us right back and explained the history and Irish nuance behind an area many librarians might struggle to understand or to explain - the legal deposit system. It is a 200-year running example of library collaboration, taking us from Sir Thomas Bodley and the Stationers' Office, to the Act of Union, the 1801 Copyright Act, the 1922 Free state and reciprocal arrangement with Trinity College Dublin, up to the Legal Deposit Act of 2003 and the 2013 non print legal deposit regulations, all of which Linda explained clearly for us. The particularities of current Irish legislation, being permission based, brings its own complex challenges around what is captured.

Breakout Sessions 2:

Weathering the storm / 'Partnering up' / Why do we collaborate?

Elizabeth Keane and Dr Lucy Elvis spoke about the 'Fierce Close: climate in crisis' project, which is a partnership between the School of Philosophy in University of Galway and Galway Public Libraries. It focuses on the voices of primary and secondary school pupils on the topic of climate change. The children are empowered to express their stories and interpretations of the world through a podcast. The project aims to develop the philosophical skills of children, challenging them to test their assumptions, enabling them to determine what makes a good inquiry question and exploring the central issues of climate change together.

Áine Carey set out the reasons for developing partnerships; a sustainable approach to hit key objectives, maximise resources, reach and output, shared conversations and the enhanced outcomes for users. She noted that collaboration can bring challenges; you may not have ownership of the project, though this can be countered by setting out clear and agreed working approaches at the start. Also, collaborative projects may be in addition to core responsibilities. It is crucial to ensure that any input is recognised and acknowledged. Áine mentioned the Inclusive Learning

Project in MU supporting non-traditional students with disabilities and the Access for Success project which established an Assessment and Feedback hub.

Martin O'Connor spoke about the radio show he hosts called *Shush! Sounds* from UCC Library. The show is broadcast each week and features news from UCC Library, interviews with library staff from UCC, and visiting librarians. Martin discusses the services and resources in UCC Library interspersed with an eclectic mix of his favourite tunes – it was evident to conference attendees that he has a passion for Indie music.

Who is a Librarian? / Inspiring the Librarians of tomorrow / Circulating a place for community, culture and conversation

Attending a talk by Jane Burns for the first time is a librarianship rite of passage. It was documentary-worthy to hear her recount her introduction to libraries growing up in New York City. The core values that impressed her then are what she believes raise our whole profession- kindness, fairness, acceptance. It was so refreshing, authentic and realistic to hear Jane discuss the various barriers and biases that early career colleagues encounter and how senior colleagues need to be mindful of them. Jane was in tune with the keynote address in promoting empathy and humility and it was inspiring to hear her say working in a library makes you a librarian.

Emma McKeag spoke on her work, with Graham Montgomery, on the transition year programme of work experience at Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown. It was treated as an opportunity for the library, as well as for the students. They devised a one-week itinerary and used focus groups and feedback to evaluate and tweak it. Emma shared some practical learnings and insights. She noted that induction presentations were reduced in favour of more on-the-job training, informality was preferable, and the participants grew in confidence. Students gained an understanding of library professions through their exposure to library professionals and were largely positive about a future library career.

Angela Hannon and Cork City Libraries were ahead of the curve when it came to Design Thinking (as championed by Trevor Vaugh). They have already been taking human-centered, collaborative problem-solving and cognitive approaches to create meaningful solutions. We learned about the 'Design Thinkers Academy' collaboration. It was valuable to get insight into the methods and processes undertaken to target personas, identify problems and brainstorm ideas.

Plenary 2:

In their own words: Librarians Aloud! A podcast record of librarians making a difference / An Leabharlann: The Irish Library

Laura Rooney Ferris's podcast *Librarians Aloud!* has been in existence for over seven years and boasts 36 episodes with 45 guests and an incredible 28,000 listeners. The style is easy, free flowing and conversational, and is released on an ad-hoc basis. Laura took the audience through the different paths and experiences of her guests and what drew them into librarianship and the ethical and cultural roots of their professional careers. She had noticed that librarians are spoken about and not spoken to, that we keep the stories of others as opposed to telling our own stories and the podcast provides the vehicle for this expression.

The first issue of *An Leabharlann* was published in 1905, and for the next couple of decades it ran on and off until 1930 when the LAI took it over, and it has been consistently published ever since. It is now a fully online publication issued biannually. At its heart it is a publication by librarians, for librarians, capturing what fuels our profession and professional development. Under Dr Mary Delaney's editorship the publication aims to broaden its content to include student and international voices, to strengthen links with professional library bodies and to provide themed issues.

Plenary 3:

Keynote: Martina Chapman / Prison Library Research in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland

Martina Chapman is a consultant in the area of Media Literacy and Digital Engagement, and she began by outlining the difference between Misinformation and Disinformation: the latter being deliberately created with the intention misleading or manipulating for political, financial or personal gain. She posed the question: "How did we end up here?" and offered a number of reasons such as political polarisation and of course Digital Media Literacy, but the reason that resonated the most with this reviewer was 'being human', especially in this era of Fake News. The use of Toffler's quote about the illiterate of the 21st century being those who 'cannot learn, unlearn and relearn' led to Martina outlining her diagram of evaluating information, which included 'NEVER follow anonymous sources': sound advice for everyone.

Dr Jessica Bates gave a presentation on prison library research in Ireland and NI (other team members were Dr Jayne Finlay and Dr Susannah Hanlon). She provided an overview of their Review of Irish Prison Library services carried out in 2021 for the Local Government Management Agency (with some follow-up activity and dissemination in 2022). She explained the data collection methods which included interviews with global experts and focus groups with persons in custody and other relevant individuals such as education staff in prisons; before outlining the Principles for Prison Library Provision in Ireland which they developed. The NI research was directed towards a case study of Hydebank Wood library.

Breakout Sessions 3:

Bereavement Friendly Libraries / Pride in Louth Library Service / Cork City Library and the Development of LGBT+ Policy for the Local Authority

This moving and essential presentation highlighted the best of what public libraries offer. Suzanne Brosnan and Dearbhla Ní Mhaolagáin presented their work, alongside Dr Amanda Roberts in Kildare Libraries, which offers their patrons bereavement services following a death. Supported by the Irish Hospice Foundation, Kildare Libraries offer compassionate help, particularly during and after Covid where many people required a helping hand dealing with the loss of a loved one by providing relevant reading material and pointing people in the right direction to find counselling services.

Ray Gainford and Ciara Brodigan spoke about how librarians in Louth County Library Service noticed there was a dearth of authors in the 7–12 age group writing on LGBTQIA issues, though this is increasing. In selecting new books for this cohort, Children's Books Ireland and Healthy Ireland were consulted and new titles such as *My Shadow is Pink*, *The Pirate Mums* and *Uncle Bobby's Wedding* have been added to the collection to cater to this group. The Library also holds Rainbow Reads events where LGBTQIA books are read and promoted, and coffee and chats are encouraged.

Thomas Talbot of Cork City Library presented their important and essential work around developing a LGBT+ policy for the local authority. He highlighted the need to link up with local LGBT+ support groups and services to work in conjunction with developing this policy and the importance of seeking knowledge from trusted sources working directly with the LGBT+ community. After a spate of attacks in recent months on libraries promoting LGBT+ services, this talk was emotional and came from a place of love and respect, something noticed wholeheartedly by the crowd which responded with resounding applause in the middle of Thomas' talk.

The global reach of the HLI Lenus Institutional repository in delivering COVID-19 Evidence Summaries / Establishing an Institutional Repository / Exploring your Digital Identity Module

Niamh Walker-Headon discussed the Irish Health Repository and the LENUS Institutional Repository, and one librarian's role in combatting an 'Infodemic'. In the midst of the global pandemic, Niamh at HSE Library seized on the demand for summaries of evidence (SOEs) and developed a dual-strand deposit model to publish open access PDFs and to make COVID-19 summaries available in Libguides. The global reach of the summaries was illuminating.

Ann Byrne and Emberley Davey took us through an authentic warts-and-all journey of their project that offered up many learning opportunities and insights. The fruits of their labour is an institutional repository for Hibernia College - the delightfully acronymic IASC, as inspired by the salmon of knowledge college crest, with SQUID reports adding to the memorable sub-aquatic glossary! Next for them is embedding a self-archiving policy for the institution.

Finally, Dr Marta Bustillo took us through a digital literacy initiative, set up to run as a perpetual module outside the curriculum, in three units of tutorials and e-tivities via the UCD virtual learning environment (VLE). Having it GPA neutral and sending out friendly, timely reminders boosts student participation. Students often have anxieties around online identities and personal branding. The course is designed not just for the students, but also has the wider communities they engage with in mind.

Breakout Sessions 4:

Tik Tik Boom / Towards a Literacy-Friendly County Carlow / Being creative in making your (special) collections

With the disclaimer that it was not a talk on the controversial aspects of Tiktok, the focus was on the fun, engaging and creative applications being pioneered by Lori Moriarty in Laois public libraries. Lori was asked if those seeing the Tiktok content were in turn using the services and she explained that people seem comfortable coming to Tiktok with queries, but that the next phase to be looked at is measuring and evaluating the impact in relation to library services.

Trish Nolan provided insight into barriers to literacy and the aims of the Right to Read initiative. We viewed a wonderful video of man whose life was hugely impacted by literacy outreach, that left a huge impression on the room. We learned of practical tools, free training and advice available on raising awareness and 'literacy-proofing' workplaces. Trish's talk certainly enabled a greater understanding of how those with literacy issues navigate the world.

The presentation from Stephanie Chen focused on how UCC Library staff from Special Collections and Archives and the Digital Learning Services and students collaborated to create a virtual tour of Cork city based on historical newspaper advertisements, various 3D models of objects including parchment fragments, a colouring book published online, and a digital exhibit on historical recipes with different visualisations. These projects presented challenges relating to skills development and time, however the collaborators also benefited through upskilling and raising the profile of the Library both on and off campus.

Knowledge and Skills for Life / School Libraries in Ireland / A Digital Library for the Irish Further Education and Training Sector

Cathal Coyle, PhD Researcher at Ulster University, delivered his fascinating findings in relation to his thesis work on school libraries in disadvantaged areas of Northern Ireland. His research highlights the resounding need for good library provisions in disadvantaged schools and the effect that they have on students' well-being, both academically and personally. Having a safe space for kids to learn or simply hang out is essential to post-primary pupils, which in turn helps schools, parents and communities as a result.

Kathleen Moran is the Senior Librarian of the JCSP Demonstration Library Project, which includes 223 schools and over 23,000 students. The rights of the student are promoted within the project, advocating for every student to have access to a library, to develop their information and research skills and to be inspired by good books. The JCSP Project offers a number of important reading promotion and learning initiatives, such as the National Drop Everything and Read Challenge (DEAR), and performance poetry/rap. Kathleen mentioned the Digital Library Service within schools which can offer 11,700+ titles and 53,000+ copies, and concluded with the thought that always remember that the child that challenges you the most might be the child that needs you the most.

David Hughes spoke of his work with Robert Alfis and outlined the mission and aims of the digital library, in providing a user-focused service to assist in the fulfilment of the Education and Training Boards Ireland (ETBI's) support of learning and teaching in the ETB Further Education and Training (FET) sector. He mentioned the FET Digital Library website that is an important resource for FET learners and which includes academic library content and resources such as subject guides, tutorials, and reference material. Another interesting feature of this work are the FET resources for Ukrainian refugees in Ireland, which helps them better understand the FET system in Ireland.

Final keynote:

Kieran Moylan is the Principal Officer, Libraries Development and Community Policy with responsibility for, among other community innovations and supports, Libraries Development and Policy. Kieran emphasised the importance of public libraries to communities, highlighting their position within society as a haven for all. He commended librarians for their professionalism, compassion and ability and drive to support library users in ways that fall far beyond the loaning of books. His appreciation for the work of librarians was appreciated and acknowledged by those present.

Posters:

There was a superb display of posters highlighting a wide range of projects and research, with poster creators available to answer questions and engage with the conference delegates. Congratulations to Alice Morrissey, IADT for her winning poster on Online Information Literacy @ IADT Library.

Final thoughts:

"I thoroughly enjoyed the networking after the barren years of Covid, also the variety of libraries represented and the high standard of posters on display. Overall, I was very impressed with the organisation and breadth of library themes covered at the LAI/CILIP conference."
(Cathal Coyle)

"This was the first time that I had ever done any sort of public speaking, never mind in front of a huge conference, so being able to conquer that fear and step out onto the podium was a real bucket list moment personally. The reaction afterwards has been so heartwarming, with many people reaching out after attending the conference for advice on how to set up their own Pride events in their library. To also be able to present in my own hometown was also very special, and to highlight the incredible work undertaken in Louth Library Service by my amazing colleagues."
(Ciara Brodigan)

"Some personal highlights of the conference were meeting people from the course at Ulster University in person, being inspired by Design Thinking and engaging with colleagues and vendors over innovative technologies for dementia and ASL."
(Sarah Timmins)

Conference attendees were treated to the option of two different visits to local libraries, either in Dundalk Institute of Technology or in Dundalk Library. In Dundalk Library, visitors got a tour of the museum and library and a short history of the former distillery buildings that house them. Highlights included a visit to the newly installed 'Room for All', which is a room within a room built using custom made blackout curtains that houses the Tovertafel (Magic Table) and can be turned into a multi-purpose space when required. The conference was well supported by sponsors and vendors, and the conference meal included an amazing circus performance – so all in all this was an incredibly successful conference showcasing how libraries are making and can make a real difference – well done to all involved!

NEWS from the STACKS

People

Recent Appointments:
Ciara McCaffrey, University Librarian, University of Limerick
Monica Crump, University Librarian, University of Galway
Martina Needham, Longford County Librarian
Margaret Birchall, Wicklow County Librarian
Deirdriú McQuaid, Monaghan County Librarian
Paula Leavy McCarthy, Westmeath County Librarian
Marian Higgins former Kildare County Librarian and past President of the Library Association of Ireland was appointed to a position of Director of Services with Kildare County Council.

Retirements:
John Cox, University Librarian, University of Galway
Jane Cantwell, Waterford County Librarian
Brendan Martin, Wicklow County Librarian
Mary Stuart, Westmeath County Librarian
Catherine Elliott, Monaghan County Librarian
Ciarán Mangan, Meath County Librarian
Bernie Kelly, Acting Galway County Librarian
Jarlath Glynn, Wexford Public Library Service
Coleesa Humphreys, South Dublin Public Libraries

Forthcoming Conferences

ALA: https://2024.alaannual.org/

BIALL: https://biall.org.uk/annual-conference/

EAHIL: https://eahil2024.rsu.lv/

IAML: https://www.iaml.info/congresses/2024-stellenbosch

IFLA: https://2024.ifla.org/

LAI/CILIP: https://www.cilip.org.uk/event/CILIPIrelandLAIConf24

LIBER: https://liberconference.eu/

CPD

CILIP Ireland: https://www.cilip.org.uk/events/event_list.asp?show=&group=201287

DBS: https://www.dbs.ie/course/postgraduate/msc-information-library-management

UCD: https://www.ucd.ie/ics/

Ulster University: https://www.ulster.ac.uk/courses/202324/library-and-information-management-30339e