

Over the past few years, my journey towards chartership has been on hold due to the COVID-19 pandemic and a change in jobs and sectors. I have been searching for a way to reignite my enthusiasm for the chartership process and to find networking opportunities. I hoped for a bit of serendipity to inspire me again.

Attending the CILIPS-24 Conference provided exactly what I needed. It was a fantastic opportunity to connect with other professionals in the library and information sector and to hear about their experiences in various fields. Learning about the current challenges and opportunities within public libraries was enlightening. Additionally, I enjoyed speaking to information professionals working in special collections and archives, which broadened my understanding of these fields. Reconnecting with fellow Strathclyde alumni and discovering where they are in their careers, four years post-graduation from our Master's program, was a highlight for me.

The first keynote speaker, James LaRue, was particularly impactful. Having previously worked as a school librarian in an international school where soft censorship and the threat of material challenges were significant issues, I found his discussion on how different states and public libraries are combating these challenges truly inspiring. The courage and resilience demonstrated by the librarians in his examples, coupled with James's unwavering stance against censorship from any direction, left a lasting impression on me.

Over the course of Monday and Tuesday, I attended a variety of workshops led by library and information professionals from different sectors. One session that stood out was the National Library of Scotland (NLS) workshop. The concept that a catalogue can be considered a dataset was a revelation to me. Ines Byrne's talk made me realise that our organisation's collection, which is already in the process of being digitised, could potentially be utilised for digital scholarship. The creative ways in which the NLS's collections have been used—such as accessing the Encyclopaedia Britannica through a rollercoaster in Minecraft or using a mountaineering book collection to research climate change—were surprising and inspiring. This made me think about the untapped potential of our collections, if we can make them machine readable and accessible.

In the exhibitor hall, I had the chance to speak with various exhibitors and learn about the latest technologies available to public libraries. Engaging with Better World Books, which our service uses, gave me insights into the destinations of our used books—information I can share with our library users. Additionally, I was intrigued by the updates to Canmore.

The panel discussions and inspirational stories, especially Nel Coleman's workshop on participatory research, were incredibly motivating. They provided me with new perspectives and ideas to apply to my own practice, as well as some new books that I can't wait to read!

I want to extend my gratitude to CILIPS for granting me a delegate place at the 2024 conference. This experience has given my professional practice a much-needed boost and has reignited my drive to progress with my chartership. Connecting with fellow information professionals and being energised by the innovative work happening in diverse libraries across Scotland has been truly inspirational. This conference has not only re-energised my career aspirations but has also provided me with valuable insights and connections that I will carry forward.

