

INSPIRED, ENTHUSED, AND EQUIPPED AT NLS6



Kimberley William's sketchnote from Romany Manuell's 'I liked librarianship before it went mainstream: the rise of the hipster librarian'. Find more sketchnotes from NLS6 at: newlibrariansssymposium.com/2013/02/25/sketchnotes-for-fun-profit

"Be Bold (with Bananas)" will forever be one of the stand out memories from the Sixth New Librarian's Symposium, held at QUT's Gardens Point campus, Brisbane, 10–12 February 2013. The image of a ten-foot high banana dessert remained emblazoned on the wall immediately behind the panel of speakers on Sunday afternoon, causing more than a few to turn to Twitter as an outlet for their amusement – and discomfort! It was an immensely funny moment, in a weekend that was jam-packed full of highlights.

Every speaker commented on the 'positive buzz' of the Symposium, the energy that almost 250 delegates, many of whom were newly minted information professionals, brought with them to the sessions. As a LIS student who is keener than ever to graduate, it was a weekend that left me, and all those around me, inspired, enthused, and feeling very equipped to face the challenges that lie ahead of the library and information professions, both now and in the not-too-distant future.

Inspirational speakers were interspersed with enthusiastic workshop leaders, and the comment was often made, "How do I choose which of the

concurrent sessions to go to – I want to be at all of them!" Fortunately, Twitter again became the go-to tool, and seeing people on twitter on their mobile devices everywhere was the norm, as delegates, speakers, and committee members all tweeted what they were hearing and learning. It was possible to sit in one session, and follow the other two concurrent sessions via Twitter. Perhaps that was what gave the conference its 'buzz' – as the majority of the participants were living at an intense speed, there was no choice but to be energised by the experience!

The use of Twitter became so popular, in fact, that the hashtag #nls6 started trending (becoming popular in external circles) and started attracting spam. Foolish spammers, to try and hit a conference of information professionals! By Saturday midday, even non-conference goers were spending their lunchtime sifting through the #NLS6 tweetstream and reporting spammers! Nevertheless, the conference organising committee made the decision to change the hashtag, so #nls6sun and #nls6mon were the vehicles through which conference participants, and many hundreds of information

professionals both across Australia and around the world, could follow the action, join in the conversations, and be inspired, enthused, and equipped by the teaching.

The organising committee had planned for a very user-friendly symposium, so from freely available power boards and spare phone chargers of all shapes and sizes, through to facilitated tours and organised networking opportunities, everything ran very smoothly. As at every conference, the New Librarian's Symposium was a networking nirvana. The opportunities that a face-to-face conference offered were many and varied – from the 'Old School networking wall' to the tweet-ups at the Ship Inn, the Pancake Manor, over karaoke, and, of course, at the concluding barbeque.

As a LIS student, I had been encouraged to use Twitter to follow library and information professionals, and had done so. Since late 2010, I had been interacting with dozens of LIS practitioners, and other LIS students, and – as an external student – had formed solid online friendships with many. NLS6 offered me the chance to meet many of these people in real life, and it was with surrealism that I met so many of my PLN (Professional Learning Network) face-to-face. We laughed, we hugged, we tweeted to (and about) each other. NLS6 gave us the opportunity to connect on a far deeper level – and the impact of such connectivity should never be underestimated.

But we were challenged. The speakers took us out of our comfort zones (and not just with bananas) and challenged us to take a real look at the world around us, and what we were doing in it. We were challenged to face our fears, to become #superlibrarians, and to be practical visionaries. The final keynote, Jenica Rogers, summarised the symposium theme perfectly: "In a world with self-driving cars and mind-controlled limbs, we should expect more than crappy OPACs from libraries." She challenged us to stop fearing failure, to stop waiting for a hero, to define success ourselves, to build the libraries that we deserve, not just the ones that we get used to, to push our bosses, our library, and ourselves. We need to realise that we have 'mad' skills, and we need to go and use them – be different, be better.

Over 250 Symposium participants left late Monday evening, feeling excited and energised for the future. We left inspired, enthused – and equipped. Watch out world – here we come!

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