

Bibliothekartag 2011, Berlin

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I would first like to thank Bibliothek & Information International (BI-International), a standing committee of the Bibliothek & Information Deutschland. Both BI-International and Penn State University Libraries provided financial assistance allowing me to attend the Bibliothekartag 2011 conference in Berlin, June 7-10. I would also like to thank the Berufsverband Information Bibliothek, the Verein Deutscher Bibliothekare, and the Deutscher Bibliotheksverband for organizing the conference and providing me the opportunity to engage with colleagues from Germany and other European states and to gain new perspectives on services, research methods, and issues in librarianship and allowing me to share my ideas and research through two presentations at the conference.

Background

My work as Librarian for Germanic, French and Slavic languages and literatures, philosophy, and comparative literature is chiefly related to developing collections in the humanities, developing and delivering course-related and other instructional sessions, and providing advanced reference and research consultation services to faculty and students. Since faculty and students in my areas are most often researching European literature, culture and thought, an understanding of European academic institutions, research methodologies and technologies, and fundamental resources allows me to better serve my assigned academic departments, faculty, and students. The 2011 Bibliothekartag provided a great opportunity for me to learn more about German and European libraries and librarianship.

About the Conference

The 100th Bibliothekartag was held in the Estrel Convention Center, Berlin, Germany from June 7 through June 10, with the theme “Libraries for the Future -- the Future for Libraries.” The topics covered were broad in scope, ranging from the theoretical concepts of libraries in a societal and political framework, professional ethics, and preservation of cultural heritage to more practical and methodological concerns of library management, changing methods and strategies, and new information technologies.

Outcomes

Attending the 2011 Bibliothekartag provided me with numerous opportunities to better understand the issues and hot topics in German academic libraries, present and discuss ideas and issues relevant to my own research and professional interests, and to form relationships with colleagues working on similar projects and problems. There were many interesting presentations to choose from, but the sessions I attended focused on digitization, professional development, learning spaces in libraries, collection development, and citation management:

Sessions attended:

- Deutsche Digitale Bibliothek: ein großes Vorhaben nimmt Gestalt an (German digital library: a large project takes shape)
- Berufliches Lernen im Ausland: Ein Blick über den Tellerrand (Professional learning abroad: a look outside the box)
- Digitalisierung historischer Zeitungsbestände in Deutschland (Digitization of historical newspaper collections in Germany)
- Sichern Lernraumkonzepte die Zukunft der Bibliothek? Ergebnisse der Umfrage zur Entwicklung von Lernräumen an Hochschulen (Securing the future of the learning space concept? Results of the survey on the development of learning spaces at [community] colleges.

- Firmenvortrag Massmann Internationale Buchhandlung: Massmann Approval Plan (Vendor presentation: Massmann)
- RFID kann mehr: Anwendungen jenseits von Selbstverbuchung und Sicherung (RFID can do more: applications beyond self-checkout and security)
- Literaturverwaltung & Bibliotheken: das zentrale Portal für Informationen und kollegialen Austausch (Citation management and libraries: the central portal for information and collegial exchange)

In addition to attending the above sessions, I gave two presentations of my own on “Information Literacy for Graduate Students and Advanced Researcher”s and on “Citation management and the Role of Libraries.” Before arriving in Berlin, I was unsure how relevant my topics might be to German libraries and librarians. As it turns out, many librarians are discussing similar issues when it comes to using technology in the research process. I was pleasantly surprised when I was contacted both before and after my presentations by librarians expressing their interest in my talks and in following up after the conference. As a result of these conversations, I was invited to attend the annual *Freitag* library un-conference sponsored by Humboldt University in Berlin. There I met many more librarians interested in these issues and participated in open discussions on technology in the research process.

As an international participant and recipient of a BI-International grant, I was invited to attend a reception at the Berliner Rathaus sponsored by the Mayor of Berlin. There I met other international librarians attending the conference, including a group of librarians from ARCL. The reception was a venue for international librarians to come together and discuss possibilities for international projects, librarian exchanges, and other profession development opportunities. As a result, I am now talking with a few libraries in Germany about a future visit to a German library.