THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTHAMPTON

Conference or Workshop Item

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Sharing research and practice:

the University of Northampton experience

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LIR HEAnet User Group for Libraries Annual Seminar

Publishing, Partnership and Innovation:
the imperatives for the 21st Century Library

Liberty Hall, Dublin

22nd March 2013

Outline

- Context – LIS research at the University of Northampton

- Why do research?

- Research in LLS

- Sharing the findings

- The LLS conference

- Making an impact

The University of Northampton

- About The University of Northampton:

  – Achieved university status 2005

  – Committed to delivering "*outstanding life changing opportunities in education, underpinned by a culture of entrepreneurship, purposeful research and social enterprise recognised around the world for its originality and impact*" [1]

- Some facts and figures:

  – University: approx 14,000 students; 2,000 staff

  – 6 Schools: Arts; Business; Education; Health; Science and Technology; Social Sciences

  – Library and Learning Services: 75 staff (55 FTE) in six teams

[1] Raising the Bar Strategic Plan 2010-2015

Why do research?

- Research is positively encouraged in LLS because:

  - it informs service development

  - it demonstrates our engagement with the research ambitions of the university (and we do what they do)

- But we also do it because:

  - it provides interest, challenge and variety, increases job satisfaction, and supports professional development

  - it provides evidence of service value, facilitates engagement with users, supports decision-making, solves problems, and wins us recognition (internally and externally)

Research in LLS

Reading lists as pedagogical tools

Repositories and digital preservation

Reading lists as pedagogical tools

Transitions in Higher Education

Supporting international students

Boutique teaching and training

Students' use of learning spaces

Users' experience of e-books

Developing the VLE

Reading groups for community engagement

Visual literacies

Use of video to enhance learning and teaching

Researchers' data management practice

Mobile learning
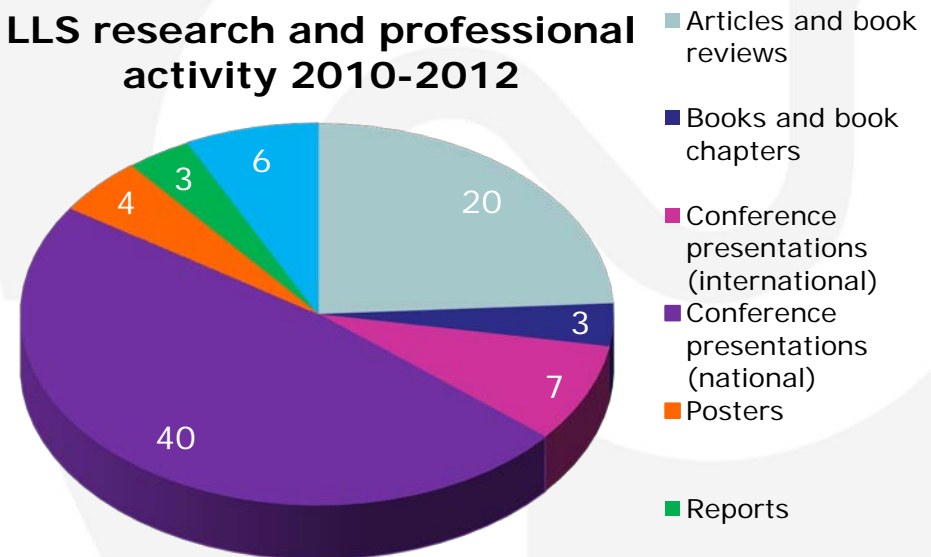
Sharing the findings – which audience?

- Need (or want) to reach several audiences:

  - Internally – departmental colleagues; service users (students, academic staff, professional services); senior managers (budget holders!)

  - Externally – professional colleagues; funders; policy makers; local community

- The intended audience(s) and the purpose in targeting them should underpin any dissemination decisions

- Who, why, what, where, when, how?

Sharing our research externally

- LLS staff encouraged to write articles and submit conference proposals

- Start simply:

  - Present at local events or with a colleague at bigger conferences

  - Gain experience of writing through book reviews, short articles in practitioner press, conference posters etc.

- Build confidence and reputation gradually

LLS research and professional activity 2010-2012

- Articles and book reviews
- Books and book chapters
- Conference presentations (international)
- Conference presentations (national)
- Posters
- Reports

Sharing our research internally

- Opportunities for internal dissemination:
    - Departmental, School and University meetings
    - LLS events and seminars
    - Internal newsletters, emails, social media
    - Academic liaison
- But not reaching all our internal audiences as well as we wished
- So we decided to organise our own LLS conference…

LLS Conference – June 2012

- Purpose:

  – To share research findings with LLS colleagues

  – To promote 'librarian as researcher' to academic colleagues

    – To showcase the work of the department to professional colleagues

    – To celebrate our research successes

  - Supported by professionally designed publicity materials and a conference blog

LLS Conference – on the day

- Introductions from the Vice Chancellor (on video), Head of Library and Learning Services (LLS) and external speaker

- Four types of presentation: research papers (6), work in progress (2), posters (12) and 'minute madness' (12)

- Banners and posters emphasised range of LLS research outputs and professional contributions

- Presenters (26 in total) represented all parts of LLS

- Event supported by a large team of LLS volunteers
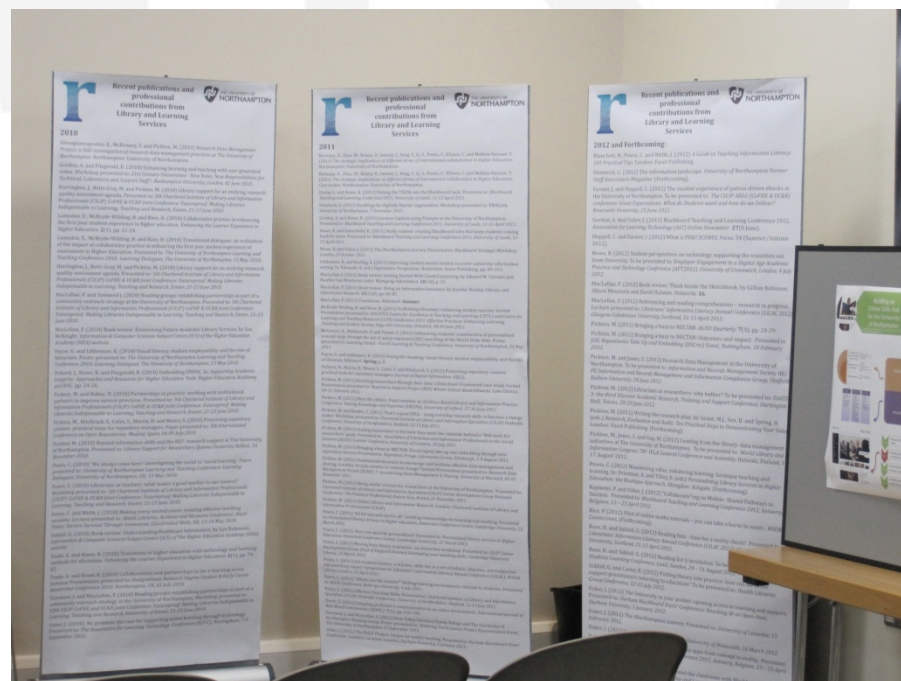
LLS Conference - impact

- Attended by 36 LLS staff, 27 academic and support staff from UoN and 23 librarians from across the UK (Yorkshire, Kent, Dublin …) – many more than the 30 originally hoped for!

- Hugely successful:

  - Feedback overwhelmingly positive from all audiences

  - Tremendous 'buzz' on the day translated into huge amount of pride among LLS staff and enthusiasm for new research activity

  - Large number of hits on conference blog

  - Invitation for conference blog to archived in UKWA

  - Received a CILIP PPRG Silver award for marketing

LLS research - impact

- 'Scaffolded' approach to teaching information skills – widespread interest from other universities; approach adopted elsewhere at UoN

- Reading lists – huge interest at LLS conference; VC became involved; subsequently informed implementation and use of new reading lists software (Aspire)

- Learning spaces – informed refurbishment of library; library staff now recognised as knowledgeable in this area; prompted further research activity in collaboration with academic colleagues

- Transition out – raised awareness of the risks and benefits of using social media as students complete their studies and look for employment

LLS research - impact

- Research data – results underpinned institutional research data policy and subsequent RDM activity; Northampton selected to be one of the DCC's 'institutional engagements'

- Mobile apps – Learning Technology Team developing strong reputation in field; colleague left soon after the conference for an exciting new job with Blackboard ☹

- User experience of E-books – findings fed back to supplier for subsequent enhancement of product

- Delivery of maths tutorials online – this funded project demonstrated to funder and university that this method of delivery was not popular with students so not worth pursuing

Questions?

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