

REPORT ON THE FIL INTERLENDING CONFERENCE AT  
PEEBLES, 30<sup>th</sup> JUNE TO 2<sup>nd</sup> JULY, 2008.

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This was the first FIL conference I have attended and it proved to be an interesting experience. Looking back, a greater awareness of current trends in interlending is the most valuable thing I have taken away with me. Being comparatively new to inter-library loans, the conference certainly got me thinking about ways in which services are changing and possible future directions.

Professor Derek Law began the keynote address by describing inter-library loans as a major achievement. Documents pass from library to library, sometimes crossing borders and oceans, and then they are safely returned! But, he added, this traditional service increasingly belongs to the past. That introduced a key theme of the conference, the need to address change. Later, Professor Law moved to a second major theme, the challenge of new technology.

These two themes ran through much of the conference. There are a number of new sources of information available and libraries need to start exploiting them. The two seminars I attended on day 2, both with Stephanie Taylor, looked in detail at some potential information sources.

In some ways these themes came together, from a public libraries point of view, when David Potts outlined the MLA's vision for interlending. As a delegate from public libraries, that was a particularly interesting session. Mr. Potts emphasised the need to operate more smoothly across library authorities and in a way more in line with current expectations of service provision. The ideas outlined were broadly welcomed in a following seminar - although major practical issues were identified.

The majority of conference delegates were from academic libraries. It was, therefore, inevitable that not all of the conference was directly relevant to myself. Some of the content was aimed at academic or specialist institutions and the service provided by public libraries differs in many ways. But there was enough that was relevant for me to recommend the conference to other public library staff. The range of topics covered was impressive. As well as core interlending subjects, there were sessions on web 2.0 and copyright. These had an emphasis on interlending, but were useful beyond that narrow application.

As well as the conference content, it was an enjoyable social occasion and a good opportunity for networking. I discussed interlending services with a number of colleagues and went home with various ideas. The fact that many delegates were from academic and specialist libraries made for an opportunity to network and discuss ideas across sectors.

So, a good three days, and in very pleasant surroundings.