Sessions that ran at Bradford Radical Library Camp

Feel free to pitch whatever you like, preferably in-keeping with the overall theme of the event. If you would like some ideas of what to pitch, check out our [Twitter account](#) or our list of interesting links [curated here](#).

When you have pitched a session, [click here](#) and tell the world you've pitched a session at Radical Library Camp!

Effective Radical Study Groups

A practical workshop to establish an effective study group with the theme, "radical interpretations of peace and conflict".

The aim of the study group would be to allow students to make better use of the radical libraries they have access to in the Bradford area, with the main venue being the 1in12 Club's library.

Various pedagogical and discursive methods could be used to vary the study group experience.

Beyond Fifty Shades: BDSM & libraries (proposed by @lgbtlibrarian)

Libraries - particularly public libraries - have historically performed quite poorly in providing any materials on sex or sexuality, so perhaps it is not surprising that there has been little discussion of provision of resources on BDSM (bondage & discipline; dominance & submission; sadism & masochism). A search on LISA and Library Literature & Information Science Full Text brought up no relevant articles.

However, there are arguments in favour of providing this material, which need to be considered by librarians:

- The popularity of Fifty Shades of Grey shows that there is an interest in this area; however, Fifty Shades has been criticised by many within the BDSM community for its misleading and potentially even dangerous portrayal of BDSM (see for example this Guardian article).
- Consensual BDSM is just as valid a form of sexual expression as any other, and its adherents have often been (and still are) stigmatised, mocked and misunderstood. Libraries have a duty to provide positive and accurate information, as for any other consensual form of human sexuality. The Public Libraries and Museums Act requires libraries to meet "the general requirements and any special requirements" of library users.
- There are potentially safety concerns when practising BDSM, so information on how to do it safely is all the more important.
- Books on BDSM can be difficult to access (cost; availability in mainstream bookstores; knowing what books or resources are useful and where to find them) so there is a role for libraries here.
- A (rather brief and unscientific) literature search suggests that interest in BDSM as a subject of academic study is growing (see for example this call for papers), so academic libraries should also be providing materials on this subject.

It must be acknowledged that there are areas of potential difficulty, such as the possibility of complaint; internet filtering; and the possible ramifications of the Extreme Pornography Act. However, librarians routinely face issues such as this in numerous areas of their work, and I would argue that they should not stand in the way of provision of accurate information.

LGBTQ libraries (proposed by @lgbtlibrarian)

In the UK, there is very little discussion or awareness of the needs of LGBTQ* library users (or indeed library staff members). This is true of both research and practice. I'd like to talk about how we can raise

awareness and improve matters, particularly in an environment where materials or services that are perceived as 'niche' are particularly likely to fall victim to funding cuts. My own area of interest focuses on LGBTQ* young people and families, but I'm happy for the discussion to be guided by participants' own interests, whatever the sector or focal area.

Here is a non-exhaustive list of suggestions, in no particular order:
- Overlooked sections of the acronym (e.g. bisexual, trans, queer, intersex and asexual library users)
- LGBTQ*-specific libraries and archives
- Internet filtering
- School libraries (primary and/or secondary) (e.g. safe space, provision of fiction, working towards whole-school LGBTQ* inclusion, dealing with the 'ethos of the school'...)
- Public libraries (e.g. events, displays, young people's services, LGBTQ* book knowledge among library staff members, non-book materials, online services such as recommended links, community consultation)
- Academic libraries (e.g. the fact that LGBTQ* doesn't fall neatly into a subject area, going beyond the curriculum, special collections)
- LGBTQ* library staff, e.g. being out at work, being seen as the 'token expert' on LGBTQ things, your own library and information needs
- LGBTQ* reference services
- LGBT History Month in libraries
- Inclusion of LGBTQ* issues in LIS education
etc.

Facilitating dissent – the role of librarians/information professionals in challenging the state
(Proposed by @ijclark)

In *A Chorus Against War*, Howard Zinn wrote:

"There is a basic weakness in governments - however massive their armies, however wealthy their treasuries, however they control the information given to the public - because their power depends on the obedience of citizens, of soldiers, of civil servants, of journalists and writers and teachers and artists. When these people begin to suspect they have been deceived, and when they withdraw their support, the government loses its legitimacy, and its power."

Two aspects of this quote in particular interest me:

1) the control of information and how it is used by power, and that

2) this control relies on the compliance and obedience of professionals and influencers of various sorts.

This discussion will explore what role we have in challenging the control of information, how we can challenge this control to create a more open, engaged and democratic system of government and the role of disobedience (of the state and corporate interests) within the profession.

Some Bradford Radical libraries - 1in12 Club, Commonweal Collection and the library at the

Resource centre (proposed by @turquoiseellie but I'm hoping backed up by some of my chums in Commonweal and the 1in12 library collective)

Bradford has a nice number of small radical libraries or infoshops... (we've listed 3 above but there are probably more) all set up for different purposes and at different times but all still largely dominated by print collections... and we've seen popup infoshops in a variety of protests (there was a library at occupylondon
and also the Weapon of Mass Instruction to name but two)
This session will be about the role of the radical library/infoshop today (as well as a little bit of history - and examples from elsewhere - bring yours...) I might get personal and talk why working outside traditional libraries has always been something I've done to augment my day job...
I'd also be really interested in chatting with anyone who has started digitally curating the information we used to collect in print - and top tips on how to make it painless and worthwhile without institutional structures...

Libraries as monocultures - what happened to being inclusive of disabilities? (proposed by @pennyb)

I know people talk about it, but they don't actively try to do anything about it. Library staff are predominantly white, middle class and non-disabled. There are quite a lot of visible lesbian and gay staff, nothing much is said about bi, queer and trans (much like in other organisations) staff. There are some initiatives across the globe for non-white library staff. But everything to do with disability (and to a lesser extent, social class), beyond some work on mental health, is always about users and not staff. There are no staff networks. There are no special interest groups. There are no events. There is no specialist guidance for employers. I want to do something about that... Diverse staff means diverse viewpoints and also a greater understanding of users.

Scholarly communications: challenging practical pedagogies that espouse regression and oppression (A waffly proposal by @moananddrone)

The process of scholarly communications began as an exchange of information and ideas. This fundamentally pedagogical practice, has over the course of time been commodified and politicised with a range of external agents engaged in the process of publishing and disseminating this information at premium cost to increasingly exclusive audiences that are defined by their ability to fund access.

Concurrently, there is also a culture of governmental academic auditing through Research Excellence Frameworks. These seek to audit institutions based on their academics' outputs. This potentially reinforces negative praxes for scholars that are under increasing pressure to follow existing frameworks which are seen to somehow (artificially) enhance the work that they have produced.

Whilst Open Access (OA) has been increasingly in the spotlight post-Finch, OA is not something that inherently improves the democratic praxis of scholarly communications, but instead supports the knowledge economy. Indeed, the formal products of the results and dissemination through OA:

can be efficiently monitored and measured and can be better made accountable as measurable outputs as part of the audit culture: […] according to this neoliberal rhetoric, society, or better said, the individual taxpayer, gets improved value for money or return on investment with Open Access" (Adema, 2012.)

With such pressures to retain demonstrably high standards of academic practice, I would like to discuss if or how can we advocate unorthodox, experimental and alternative methods of disseminating to practicing researchers that are obliged to conduct activities on behalf of their departments, faculties and institutions.

Adema, J. (2012). Why Experiment? A Critical Analysis of the Values Behind Digital Scholarly Publishing, retrieved from
http://openreflections.wordpress.com/2012/08/04/why-experiment-a-critical-analysis-of-the-values-behind-digital-scholarly-publishing/

Open by default and FCUK the REF (Proposed by @mrnick as both corollary and vague challenge to @moananddroan)

Envisioned as a point of discussion with @moananddroan who has previously challenged my perhaps uncritical enthusiasm for Open Access along the lines of his pitch above.

Open Access may well have been hijacked by the neo-liberal agenda and I'm neither clever or politically literate enough to think through the implications but we should nevertheless strive for the lowest barrier licencing possible which certainly doesn't mean CC-BY-NC...or even CC-BY.

CC0 FTW!

OA also perhaps has lessons to learn from Open Source software...webservers at multi-nationals, not-for-profits and charities will all run on the Apache web-server, OS software that now underpins the www [citation needed]. I've no idea who wrote it. Yes it too feeds the maw of the capitalist machine but it's free, it's brilliant and I can even run it on my own laptop.

DIY OA - the University Press of the future? (proposed by @mrnick / @moananddrone)

The simple fact is we no longer need commercial publishers - it's just academic inertia chasing an impact factor, which, like capitalism itself, is an artificial construct. The technology to publish online is readily available through Open Source software like WordPress, Open Journal System, EPrints. 2 blind peer reviewers is an anachronism and there is NOTHING to prevent rigorous scholarship being posted online and being reviewed by 10, 100, 1000 expert peers before the email from Elsevier to An Important Professor has even been opened.

https://twitter.com/moananddrone/status/374114952367190016

http://journals.ed.ac.uk

Crisitunity! (proposed by @danpgrace, inspired by Homer Simpson Crisitunity!)

Public libraries are in crisis. Is this an opportunity to radically rethink the position of the public library in relation to its community? Is campaigning for the status quo, that is for the State to continue in its role as the provider of public library services, both unrealistic and fundamentally conservative? Are there more radical approaches that might be explored that attempt to go beyond the traditional dichotomy of State or Market? If so, what might this new library service look like and how might we get from here to there?

Some suggested reading/listening (it's nice and short...): ["It's not how big your society is, it's what you do with it" by Dougald Hine](#)

Library space design: privileged spaces (proposed by [@librarygirlknit](#))

Library (re)design and architecture has had increased publicity in local press in spite of diminishing funds, be they public or academic. They are supposed to be inclusive, supportive, community spaces, for collaboration or quiet contemplation. However, as a doctoral researcher in the design and use of library spaces, I suggest that in many cases design is used as a promotional statement, and that the people who use the spaces aren't consulted sufficiently to ensure design is suitable for use. Additionally, rules are developed without examining first what kind of use is applied, be it intuitively or habitually, potentially excluding or marginalising certain user groups. Power relations exist between service provider and visitor as well as within the hierarchy of staff of the service which may lead to limitation of quality and accessibility of service.

This session proposes discussion of library design trends, the perceptions of appropriate use of staff compared to users and whether the two match, and whether we are inadvertently sometimes creating spaces that are prioritised for image instead of practical use.

Professional ethics: copyright is broken, so why am I enforcing it? (proposed by [@lawsonstu](#))

Copyright law is broken. By criminalising citizens and creators in order to protect the profits of corporations, it harms the people that it should be empowering. Therefore I see it as an ethical imperative to break and/or subvert it; civil disobedience is a necessary part of a functioning democracy.

It is part of my job in a library to uphold and enforce copyright law.

Professional ethics are in conflict here: on the one hand, I have a duty to my employer and society to act in accordance with the law; on the other hand, when that law is wrong, it is unethical to force people to comply with it.

How can this be resolved? I'm not sure that the [professional ethics](#) espoused by our current professional organisation, CILIP, are enough to negotiate dilemmas like this. What does this mean? Do we need a new, more agile ethical approach that can deal with contemporary information ethics? And if so, can we find this within existing professional frameworks or do we need a new professional body?

(*I may not be able to attend myself, but if not others are more than welcome to take up this idea.*)

What's So Radical about Public Libraries Anyway? (proposed by @librarian & @sarawingategray

This discussion aims to take an historical~philosophical~sociological approach to the question of public libraries: exploring their 19th century origins, we'll take a look at statements of library (and librarian) purpose "through the ages" to end up with an exploration of how such visions of originating functions play out now (or now possibly impede function) in today's world.

The talk will also include some contemporary examples of "radical" libraries and library services operating out in the wilds of the 21st century, with the aim of us reaching and consolidating some key concepts of "modern" public library role~purpose~function.

We'd like this session to be both informative (i.e. you'll learn new things, and we'll learn new things from discussing together things) *and* inspiring, so it will include some "blue-sky"/what-if elements, hopefully meaning that we come out of the session with some aims & outcomes around how to act/facilitate aspects of what we've talked about & agreed upon as relevant to #makingithappen.

"So and so can find that out..." (proposed by @jenatthelibrary)

our friends will know we have an interest in libraries, we might volunteer or work in them, or organise our information well at home or in activist groups. We might be the person that everyone asks for help when they need to know something. We might be the person who always ends up doing the research or bringing the information to meetings.
Are we doing a good job? Is it our job to do anyway? Can't we just let them "Google it"? (other search engines are available).

I'd like to argue that as radical minded folks with interest and skill in finding, analysising and using information we should also be spreading these skills to others. If we can help people learn how to search, read, understand and use information then we are liberating information and improving our chances of getting to whatever future it is we are aiming at, instead of just talking about it.

I'd like to use the time to talk about practical tactics for doing this. How do we teach folks to use the internet well, find books, read research without being really blimmin' boring??

Working culture, neoliberalism, and a library without librarians: a vision of the future? (proposed by @SimonXIX)

In this session, we will look at the changes in working culture in libraries using a major public sector organisation as a case study. As working practices have changed in organisations and corporate business practices have been increasingly adopted, the attitudes of workers and the ethos of libraries has changed accordingly. By looking at the British Library as an example of a library that is staffed predominantly by

non-librarians, we see a neoliberal vision of a library of the future.

This session will facilitate a discussion around these issues and think about the philosophy behind it. Prepare to discuss: changes in working culture, corporate working practices in libraries, the use of 'management jargon', and the much-repeated claims of 'public sector inefficiency'.

Hate speech on the internet - communicating online (proposed by @walkyouhome)

Management and leadership (proposed by @preater)

International perspectives on radical librarianship (proposed by @mariacotera)

After some discussion we thought it would be worthwhile suggesting a plenary at the end of the day to draw together thoughts on the sessions and think of how we want to take any ideas forward.