**Intro**

Last year I was lucky enough to win one of the A&SL's bursaries for attending a conference. I had applied to go along to Open Repositories which was due to be held in Indianapolis. Despite working in a library which supports CPD I didn't expect my employer to send me so far and to be honest I thought that applying for the bursary was chancing my arm a little. So you can imagine that I was delighted to be successful.

Open Repositories is an annual conference which focuses on repositories built with open source software. The conference is formatted around workshops, different session 'tracks' for different software user communities such as Fedora, Dspace and Eprints as well as more general sessions addressing issues common to all communities. It is an international conference which crosses the Atlantic between North America and Europe each year.

OR brings together an international gathering of those involved in creating and using repositories on all levels; from software developers, front end designers, and academics to librarians of all sorts including repository managers, metadata creators, cataloguers, and research data custodians. The attendees are mainly drawn from universities and third level institutions but also from a range of other research and information institutions across the public, private and third sectors.

The conference has been running for ten years now so it's not a surprise that the theme was 'Looking Back, Moving Forward: Open Repositories At The Crossroads'.

The first day of the conference is devoted to workshops and tutorials. These were great to attend - while general sessions are recorded and available online these workshops aren't and they provide real hands on skill-sharing.

The workshops were followed by two days of talks – some on community tracks and some more general. Myself and Caleb Derven from UL had a paper on “Needs, practices and frameworks for library based repository staff” accepted for the first day. I was my usual nervous self speaking but it was great to get it over and done with early on. The final day had a closing plenary and more community sessions which gave a real sense of how the different software is developing and how it is being used in different institutions.

Keynotes talks were delivered by Kaitlain Thaney [<https://twitter.com/kaythaney>] from Mozilla Science Lab and Anurag Acharya, the creator and lead of Google Scholar. Thaney spoke about open science and open access, the way they compliment each other and also about the work that Mozilla Science Lab does in this area. Acharya detailed how Google Scholar indexes repositories and laid out methods for making it easier and more likely for Scholar to index their contents.

**Takeaway points:**

Libraries have moved away from holding their own servers in recent years. Much of the work around Discovery services and OPACs can now be outsourced to vendors. In the repository space I think that libraries are going to have to get back to dealing with software themselves. The most cutting edge and most interesting solutions involve customisation by libraries – local developers and technically able staff are required to implement the type of changes that produce the most interesting results.

The future for repositories seems to be community driven. Communities of libraries decide on what functions they need from their software and collectively work towards delivering it. This can involve providing developers time but it can also involve librarians and other users writing documentation, or forming working groups to come up with best practice or suggested ways of working.

It was clear from different presentations and from talking to other attendees that there has been a lot of change in the sector. Different software communities seem to wax and wane as interest, resources and feature development moves through different cycles. What is encouraging however is that the structure of these communities means that libraries can make interventions in how these communities prosper. So for example Fedora has made a decision to take much more input from the wider community – and this has resulted in the project being revitalised and delivering a better product at the end of it.

**Next Year**

Open Repositories 2016 will be hosted by Trinity College Dublin and will take place in June 2016. I think it will be well worth anyone who works in repositories heading along. It is an expensive conference, though there have been scholarships and bursaries available in the past and hopefully this will continue. The call for papers has just ben released, for more details see <https://twitter.com/OR2016Dub> and <http://or2016.net/>

**Thanks again**

Attending OR2015 certainly enhanced my cpd and was a highlight of my year. It was of real benefit and gave me the chance to deepen my understanding of technologies I already work with and to learn about new and developing repository solutions.

**Links:**

Full conference programme and all recorded sessions: [bit.ly/21p7Xyu](http://bit.ly/21p7Xyu)

Storified tweets: [bit.ly/1QPWggD](http://bit.ly/1QPWggD)

Readers working with Eprints might find this blog post interesting: <http://www.adamfield.net/wp/2015/06/or2015-in-broad-strokes/>