

Matching CPD activities to professional needs – an Irish case study

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Abstract

This presentation details the evolution of continuing professional development within the Irish health science libraries profession. Despite humble beginnings in 2002 consisting of one person offering 4 courses a working group was formed a year later to fuel the growth of CPD activity. The group has gone on to deliver a minimum of 5 courses per year since then. This poster shows how courses and events organised by the CPD working group are mapped to professional needs in an ever evolving information environment.

The design of courses for Irish health library professionals was based on 2 criteria: the needs of the profession as a whole and the needs of individual professionals. The latter was informed by a literature search on emerging trends in the LIS field in relation to the health sciences and an analysis of the HSLG discussion list; the former was informed by a series of questionnaires in 2002; 2004 and 2006 respectively. Some of the key findings of the 2004 & 2006 surveys are displayed here.

Introduction

The CPD working group was founded to provide a forum for the acquisition and development of skills amongst Irish health library professionals. This has been achieved using different learning mechanisms including courses, seminars, and conferences. CPD has led to the successful implementation of standards, tools and emerging technologies in the profession as well as supporting individual learning and growth.

In Ireland the economic prosperity brought by the Celtic tiger (1990-2001) along with a key report [MacDougall report, Information for Health, 1996] saw the creation of hospital libraries and jobs for librarians in the health sector. However it wasn't until the early 2000's that a working group for CPD within the Irish library sector was founded. Recently the health sciences libraries sector in Ireland has been through some challenging times with ongoing budget cuts and diminishing resources. The parent organisation of the Health Science Libraries Group is the Library Association of Ireland which operates largely with a volunteer base from within the LIS profession. It is predominantly for this reason the LAI has been slow to develop CPD.

Figure 1 shows a timeline of the CPD activities undertaken from 2002 to present with the main outcomes. Only a summary of the main activities are shown.

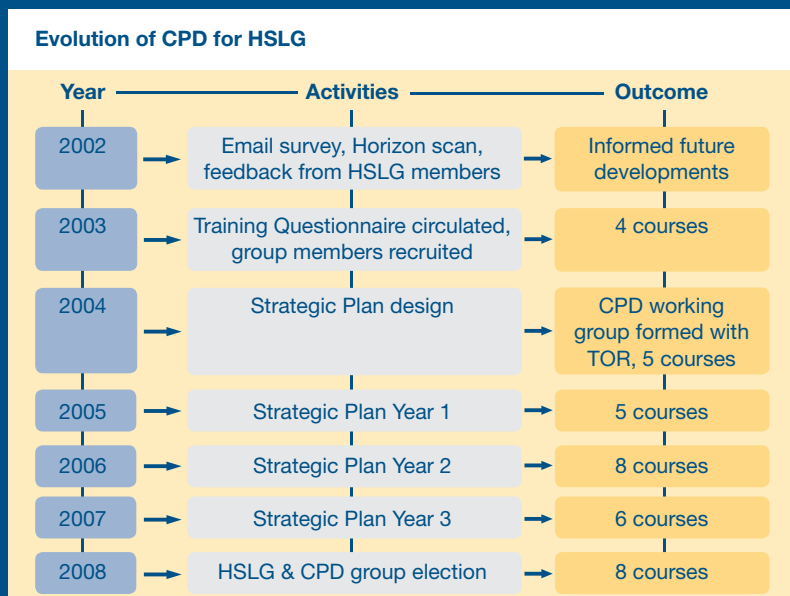


Figure 1: Evolution of CPD for HSLG in Ireland 2002-2008

Hot topics on HSLG discussion list by year:

- 2005:** Standards for Irish Healthcare Libraries & Information Services, public loan service, health portals, intranet design, acquisitions policy for books, out of hours service, healthcare management resources, Cochrane Library, outsourcing original cataloguing.
- 2006:** Moving stock, HSE library website launch, Cochrane Library, library management systems, MESH searching, Cinahl, UK PubMed central, repositories, Google.
- 2007:** Open access to publicly funded research, security systems, webdewey, Cochrane conference in Dublin, ICT policies, blogs, wikis, web images, tagging – the new dewey?, paediatric resources, patient information, copyright, health management databases, RCN, binding, survey design, Google scholar integration with ejournals, LAI Literacy working group, Cochrane podcasts, journal clubs, expert searching.
- 2008:** Web 2.0, institutional repositories, digitisation, EB Library & Information Practice

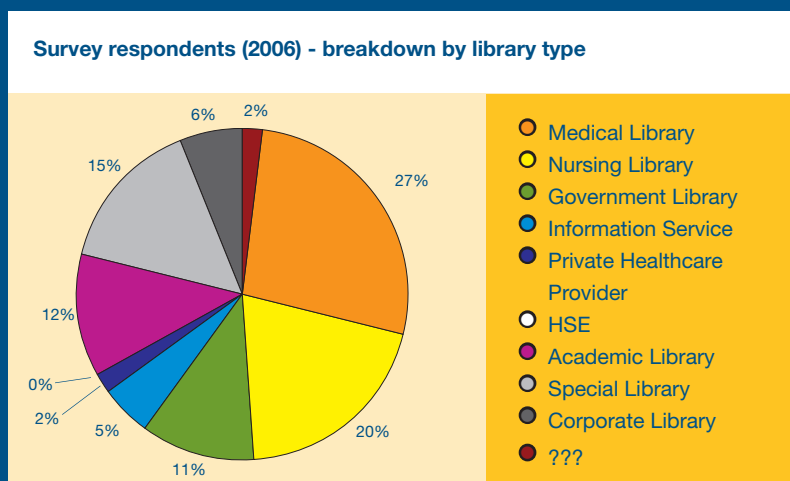


Figure 2: 2004 Survey: Breakdown of Respondents by Library Type



Methods – Extract from HSLG Strategic Plan objective no.7: to develop a continuing professional programme

- To monitor the health service environment for future skills requirements.
- Draw up a business plan to support the training programme.
- Examine methods to market and promote courses.
- Establish a minimum number of training courses to be held each year.
- To develop & review a comprehensive panel of internal and external trainers.
- Establish training centres nationwide
- Explore different methods and delivery styles of learning. (e.g. E-learning)
- Undertake a skills/training analysis of IHSLG members.
- Seek accreditation for all courses from the LAI in the first instance.
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- To form partnerships/links with relevant sister organisations. (e.g. HLG UK, CILIP, ANLTC etc.)

Results

Figure 2 shows a breakdown of responses to the survey by type of library. The majority of libraries are medical and nursing. This influenced the choice of courses offered in the following year. Figure 3 shows the courses most and least requested in 2004. This informed course selection for the following year. Figure 4 displays a set of skills survey respondents in 2006 marked as being important for either their current job or future career or both. This feedback was used for course selection from 2007-2009.

There is no professional LIS organisation that offers courses in Ireland which makes recruiting trainers from the UK or further abroad expensive. A panel of internal trainers and training venues was drawn up based on results from surveys conducted in 2004 and 2006. This helped keep costs to a minimum and enabled value for money events to be held. Many of our own colleagues have become experts in specialised fields such as the Cochrane Library or searching for health information on the Web. This is down to experience, practice and attending external courses offered by employers.

Most Requested Courses	Least Requested Courses
Electronic Resource Management	British nursing Index and PsycINFO
Evidence Based Practice	Reference Skills
Financial Management	Training the trainer
Knowledge Management	Communication skills
Project Management	Customer Service Skills
Copyright	Classification and Cataloguing
Website Administration/Design	FOI and Data Protection
Cochrane Library	Subject knowledge

Figure 3. Result from 2004 User Needs Analysis Survey

Skills for current job or future career	Current Job	Career Advancement	Respondent Total
Communication skills	100% (43)	35% (15)	43
Copyright	100% (38)	18% (7)	38
Collection Development	100% (41)	32% (13)	41
Supporting Systematic Reviews	60% (18)	63% (19)	30
Internet Searching	98% (43)	34% (15)	44
Intranet Design	41% (14)	76% (26)	34
Writing for the Web	42% (15)	72% (26)	36
Electronic resources management	93% (39)	38% (16)	42
Cochrane	95% (36)	26% (10)	38
Clinical Librarian	40% (10)	76% (19)	25

Figure 4. Top 10 responses from 2006 survey on current & future skills.

Conclusions

- Successful CPD is dependant on a number of factors: individual awareness of personal development, organisational support for CPD and availability of appropriately selected courses by a professional library association.
- The process of mapping CPD activity to professional needs through close communication with health science library workers has proven successful in Ireland as evidenced by the positive feedback from HSLG members.
- The CPD working group is run entirely by volunteers utilising the skills, vision and commitment of Irish library professionals. It is crucial that future CPD programmes receive financial & professional support by our parent organisation the Library Association of Ireland.

Next steps for the CPD working group:

- Maintenance & enhancement of annual CPD projects & training with strong attendance and encouraging feedback.
- National LAI accreditation is a priority followed by European accreditation in particular CERTIDOC (the European system of certification of competencies for librarians and information professionals).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This poster was funded by the Health Science Libraries Group Ireland.