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# Library buildings projects and partnerships: making them work for all of the stakeholders

Organised by the SCONUL Working Group on Space

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The day was introduced by Sheila Cannell, Director of Library Services at Edinburgh University and Chair of the SCONUL Working Group on Space Planning. Sheila announced the winner of this year's SCONUL Building Award (first announced at the SCONUL Autumn Conference the day before) as Bournemouth University for the large building project, with Girton College Cambridge winning in the smaller project category.

The keynote speaker was Dr Stuart Kings from Docte Consulting who gave a very thought-provoking talk on obtaining value for money from construction projects. He emphasised the importance of partnering, team working and risk management and outlined the critical success factors for a building project. This session provided the basis for discussion in the afternoon workshops.

John Fitzgerald, Librarian at University College Cork, followed this with a very interesting presentation on the Library extension project there. No doubt what most impressed the assembled audience was the fact that the majority of the money for this project had been raised from private donations.

The Learning Gateway at Cumbria University was the subject of the final session before coffee. Margaret Weaver emphasised the important role that user input had played in the design process, even down to the fact that they allowed the students to choose the furniture for the building!

After coffee, the final morning session was a presentation by Kathleen O'Donovan, University of Sheffield, entitled 'The Information Commons at the University of Sheffield: politics and people'. By this stage in the day it was interesting (and somewhat comforting) to note that there were similar strands coming through in all of the sessions. Kathleen, once again, mentioned the importance of co-operation and consultation with all stakeholder groups and underlined the importance of having a good project team structure in place where meetings are timetabled in advance and everyone knows what their role is in the team and what is expected of them.

After lunch the final presentation of the day was delivered by Jacquie Kelly, Senior Advisor, JISC infonet, who talked about 'Planning and Designing Technology-Rich Learning Spaces: project organisation and management information'. Jacquie talked about the background to JISC infonet and encouraged us to look at the many examples of good design collected on the JISC infonet page on Flickr: <http://flickr.com/photos/jiscinfonet>. An interesting quote from this session that sticks in my mind is 'any new idea that doesn't elicit a howl of protest isn't really new!'

Following this session there were several breakout discussion groups followed by a feedback session. I attended the session on successful project management which turned into quite a lively and stimulating discussion. What struck me during the following feedback session was that although all the groups had different discussion topics we had all ended up talking about more or less the same things and that was, in the main, how to ensure that your project was a success and that you ended up with a building you could be proud of that the students enjoyed working in. Speaking as someone who is Library Project Manager on a large extension/refurbishment project which is over half way to completion, I found the whole day interesting and came away with plenty of food for thought.