CILIP Diversity Group Conference, 8 February 2006

"Pride or Prejudice?" – How well are Libraries serving Lesbian, Gay, Bi- and Trans- Communities?

Summing-up

This is an edited version of the summing-up by John Vincent.

What an inspiring and emotional day! The big theme of the day has been journeys, often brave journeys:

- To find ourselves – and who we really are
- To take invisible issues and make them visible
- Towards a greater understanding of the sheer complexity of life!

We have also recognised the fundamental and vital role that libraries should play as:

- Sources of information – in some cases, eg in relation to transgender issues, we may be the <u>only</u> source of information
- Somewhere where people can start to be themselves
- The provider of information about LGBT issues for the rest of the community.
- Providers of information and sources of support for the friends and family of LGBT people.

Let's revisit our demands. To start with, we had those from this morning:

- A full recognition of our needs at work
- Proper equality at work, eg training and support for other staff to prevent our having to deal with hostile colleagues; and proper ways of dealing with homophobic/discriminatory members of the public
- Proper consultation and involvement of staff and the community
- Provision of a full range of stock (and to get beyond the barrier of how it's going to be arranged, by consulting and experimenting)
- Support for young people
- Provision of information, especially web-based
- Displays and promotions.

Many of these have been amplified during the sessions since, and we have also added:

- Ensuring that, just because we're LGB or T, we're not seen as token experts
- None of us should make assumptions about our library users – or other staff
- We need to review and revise the terms we use.

This is about using our own expertise, skills and knowledge to make changes: as Kal Dale said, "to do nothing is not an option" – so let's go back to our libraries and see what we can all do!