



Not Online Information - yet more promising than anything else in Germany and Europe

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6-7 December 2016, London Info International, at the ExCeL Centre, London – www.londoninfointernational.com

The successor event to London Online Information 2014 is taking place for a second time this year. Unlike then, my review of the upcoming event is a lot more positive. The new London Info not only seems viable and promising – what is more, it might even become important for the German information sector. The following points spring to mind:

1. In 2014, my main criticism was that London Info International was basically an exhibition. Now, we are seeing a better balance in the form of a cross between an exhibition and a conference, which has worked well at other information sector events. Cf. below, “How the organisers are advertising their event”.
2. The event’s central topics, or “Conference Themes”, were chosen by Paul Blake and Vincent Cassidy. They are up-to-date based on their relevance, potential generation of added value for information professionals, continuance of ongoing debates, inclusion of new trends and in part even take into account the overall needs and interests of today’s information professionals. Before starting to nit-pick and becoming too critical, we should realise that no events of a similar calibre are currently taking place in Germany or even the whole of Europe.

According to the organisers of London Info International, the Conference Themes are as follows:

- The Rise of the user - how traditional scientific discourse is being transformed by the social world
 - Information everywhere – strategies for reaching the mobile worker
 - Open access, open science and the rights struggle – whose content is it anyway?
 - Managing change in a fast moving world – optimising information delivery through shifts in technology, user behaviour and funding
 - Big data goes real time – deriving value from large, fast changing data sets
 - Universities as publishers – a library inspired ‘counter revolution’
 - Big platform publishing – making sense of the tech industry’s move into the publishing business
 - Demonstrating value – how analytics can give information services a measurable and indisputable value
 - Advanced internet searching for today’s information professional – tools and techniques
3. How have these Conference Themes been transformed into a concrete event plan? It is difficult to predict this with any great certainty because the website only includes the session headlines as well as the names of the speakers, but not the headlines of the individual presentations. Presumably, however, all of the Conference Themes will be touched upon at some point. The following can be gleaned from the information available: A remarkable remobilisation of the British information scene, or rather, the information scene which, in Europe, is best accessed via London, has been accomplished here. This means that a significant degree of internationalisation has been achieved, and talks are mainly given by company founders and top-level managers. Yes, there is a heavy focus on scientific information, but the topics discussed are also of interest to information professionals, who mainly work in the private sector. The pharmaceutical and publishing sectors are both heavily represented. Although it seems that we are still a long way from three simultaneous tracks of online information, this is the current international *crème de la crème*.
4. These advantages seem to have convinced the major players in the British and international information scenes, which has resulted in 38 exhibitors so far. They include commercial heavyweights such as EBSCO, Springer Nature, CAS, Elsevier and Wiley, as well as high-profile institutions such as the British Library, the Copyright Clearance Center and the American Association for the Advancement of Science. Again: it is not quite the same as Online Information, but a decent effort for its reincarnation, and certainly a big improvement on London Info International 2014.

5. The concept of London Info International, but also the acquisition skills of the London organisers, are highlighted and supported by the fact that a number of institutions from the German-speaking countries can be found among its participants: Springer Nature, Frankfurt Book Fair, ETH Zurich, TIB Hanover, Novartis Pharma AG, Hoffmann-La Roche AG and Stuttgart University Library. Other participants include the Copyright Clearance Center, Outsell, the Royal Society of Chemistry, Research Information, CrossRef, the American Chemical Society, Rights Direct, Eduserv, UCL Press, Universitaire de Nancy, Taylor & Francis, BMJ, Clifford Chance, the Office for National Statistics, Pearson, GlaxoSmithKline, the Royal Society of Medicine, Altmetric, the European Youth Forum, the Department of Health, the Saudi Fund for Development, JSTOR, ProQuest, Cochrane, BioMed Central, the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, BP, British American Tobacco and Nielsen. One of the speakers, Oliver Renn from ETH Zurich, is also from the German-speaking countries. We didn't do much better than that at Online Information.
6. The Advisory Board is comprised of 14 members, among them six Brits. There are also three members from the Netherlands as well as members from Ireland, Denmark, Turkey, the US and Egypt. One of the members is Prof. Dr. Shawky Salem from the Library of Alexandria, the most famous library in the world. Professor Salem has been a Password interview partner since Online Information times. However, it is striking in this regard, as well as when looking at the speakers, that the Brits' "American cousins" are less well represented than in the past. It remains to be seen to what extent London Info International can fulfil a former function of Online Information, which was to update us on the latest trends from the USA. The prize awards have now been replaced by a better format: In a so-called "Disruptor Zone", start-ups and established institutions present their innovative products, platforms and content. The best among them receive an award.
7. Director Philip Ditchfield and the other management team members have shown a remarkable ability to learn and act by transforming a little successful concept dating back to 2014 into a 2016 event that, even though it cannot quite compete with the old Online Information, is the most promising event of its type that we have today.

Let's hope for the best in the coming years.