

LIRG NEWS

THAMES VALLEY UNIVERSITY WINS LIRG UNDERGRADUATE PRIZE AGAIN

Meral Seyfried of Thames Valley University has won this year's undergraduate prize awarded by the Library and Information Research Group (LIRG). Meral won the prize for her dissertation on the information environment at the London architectural practice of Dawes and Geddes.

This is the third time in the five year history of the LIRG student prizes that a student from Thames Valley University has won the undergraduate prize. Previous winners have been Robin Pearson (1996) and Krista Roberts (1994).

The aims of Meral's study were to establish the information needs of the staff, the value of the library to the architectural practice, and attitudes towards information within the practice. She used a variety of techniques including a questionnaire, interviews and observation to investigate these areas. Meral's work was described by one of the judges as a "fairly deep evaluation of the information environment of a particular organisation..(and)...as such has a realistic focus". Another described it as "descriptive and imaginative" and went on to say that "the aims and methodology were well set out and the conclusions indicated in her original perceptions had been thoroughly tested".

The Library and Information Research Group (LIRG) established its student prizes in 1993 to recognise the contribution of student projects to library and information research and to encourage wider dissemination of the findings of exceptional theses and dissertations. One prize of £250 is awarded each year for an undergraduate student project and one for a first professional postgraduate student project. Schools/Departments of Library and Information Studies nominate their best projects in each category and a judging panel made up of representatives of the Library and Information Research Group evaluate the entries and choose the winners.

DAHPNE CLARK PRIZE

A study of the value of Internet resources to researchers at Sussex University has won the Daphne Clark Prize for 1997. Neil Jacobs of the University of Sussex Library is the first winner of the prize, which was launched by the Library and Information Research Group (LIRG) last year.

The research involved in-depth interviews with arts and social science researchers on their use of internet based research resources. The qualitative data obtained was analysed using the NUD*IST software package. The research revealed that researchers welcomed the up-to-dateness of internet resources, the convenience of being able to search for information from one's own desk, the potential for new ways of publication, and serendipity. However, there were concerns about local access, information quality, and lack of time to explore Internet resources. Academics want tuition and support to be close at hand and delivered at point of need. Training opportunities, however, need to emphasise that new skills are required to make use of Internet based resources. Researchers have the perception that they should already have the search skills and this inhibits them from participating in training sessions. A report of the study will appear in a forthcoming issue of *Library & Information Research News* which is published by the Library & Information Research Group.

Philip Payne, Chair of the Library and Information Research Group, commented that:

“Practitioners are increasingly carrying out small scale studies of their clientele. The results inform decisions on service development and delivery at a time of considerable change for library and information services. The Library and Information Research Group (LIRG) seeks to encourage the use of sound methodologies in practitioner research and to encourage wider dissemination of the results. This is why we launched the Daphne Clark Prize and we are delighted to award the prize this year to Neil Jacobs for a timely study, soundly conducted, and of practical application and relevance.”

The prize is named after Daphne Clark, a founder a member of the Group and Chair of the Group at the time of her death in 1983, who actively promoted excellence in library and information research through her work.

The prize is worth £250 and entries are acceptable from any individual or staff teams who have conducted practitioner based research over the previous two years. Any sort of research project can be nominated but externally funded projects are not eligible. The closing date for applications for the 1997 Prize is 31 January 1998.

COMMITTEE CHANGES

Roz Cooper of the University of Northumbria has decided to step down from the LIRG Committee. We are very grateful to Roz for all her hard work on behalf of the Group especially in her previous capacity as Membership Secretary. Steve Morgan of the University of the West of England joins the LIRG Committee after kindly agreeing to take on the role of LIRN Reviews Editor from Eric Davies of Loughborough University.

**STUDY OF USING MULTIMEDIA SYSTEMS IN THE HOME
WINS ELSEVIER/LIRG RESEARCH AWARD**

The Library and Information Research Group (LIRG) is pleased to announce that the winners of the 1997 Elsevier/LIRG Award were Dr. Mark Gillham and Ms. Kathy Buckner of the Communication and Information Studies Department of Queen Margaret College. They will be using the Research Award, worth £1000, to undertake a study of access strategies of home users of interactive multimedia CD-ROM information systems. Increasing use is being made of multimedia CD-ROMs as a source of information in the home. But how effective are users' skills in finding information? The study will use controlled observation techniques to investigate the information seeking techniques used by two groups of users of a multimedia encyclopaedia: people who have no experience of computing or information work compared with those who do have such experience.

The Elsevier/LIRG Research Award was launched in 1990 and is sponsored by Elsevier Science. The objective of the Award is to encourage research and innovation in library and information science. It is made annually on the basis of proposals submitted by practitioners and others in the field. It is intended that encouragement will be given to research directed at improving the accessibility, retrievability and usefulness of information. The closing date for applications for the Award is 31 October each year.

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TOURIST INFORMATION STUDY WINS LIRG PRIZE

An evaluation of the role and effectiveness of 'Gateway Yorkshire', a tourist information service based in Leeds, won the 1995/6 LIRG Postgraduate Prize. Jane Sheehan of Leeds Metropolitan University won the prize for her dissertation submitted as part of the MSc Information Studies. The judging panel commended the study for being well-written and for its sound use of research methodologies.

The runner-up for the LIRG Postgraduate Prize was Andrew Seaman of the University of Sheffield for his study, 'Factors affecting the organisation, management, and use of a science fiction library'.

The Library and Information Research Group (LIRG) every year awards prizes of £250 for the best undergraduate and postgraduate student projects. The projects are nominated by Schools/ Departments of Library and Information Studies and the entries are judged by a panel drawn from the membership of the Library and Information Research Group.

The prize was awarded to Jane Sheehan at the Annual General Meeting of the Library and Information Research Group on 19 March 1997, at the British Library.

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