

WIT Libraries – Where Research Really Matters

The role of the library as a gatekeeper and facilitator in the housing, accessing, and disseminating of research is long recognised. At WIT Libraries, this role has been expanded to include research by library staff, resulting in a burgeoning research profile and culture.

The library has hosted lecture series, such as the annual Luke Wadding Lunchtime Lecture Series and National Heritage Week, as well as a national conference – the IoT Innovative Systems Librarians Conference (2005). Many library staff have been involved in a wide range of cross-disciplinary, collaborative projects and initiatives including NAIRTL, Newfoundland Creative Approaches to Intercultural Competence (CAIC), Library Association of Ireland and the NDLR. The Institutional Repository, one of the first in Ireland, launched in 2007 and maintained by the library, is now established as one of the main mechanism for measuring the academic output of the Institute.

Since 2004, the library has established a strong record of publications in international, practitioner, and peer reviewed journals in the Library & Information Sciences (LIS) and wider educational fields. These include papers published in established peer review journals from the Emerald stable such as Library Review, New Library World, Library Management, Library Hi-Tech, Reference Reviews as well as papers in the Journal of Information Literacy and SCONUL Focus, a UK-based international library journal for practitioners. Library staff have written and presented on a diverse range of subjects from marketing, special collections, surveys work-life balance to data protection, pedagogy, and technology. WIT Libraries has a particularly strong reputation in the research area of library learning support and “information literacy”, with extensive publications from the development of one of Ireland’s first online information literacy tutorials OLAS (2003), to more recent work on pedagogy, problem based learning (PBL), international students, and the library nursing programme (2010).

Library staff have also presented posters and papers at national and international seminars and conferences including LILAC (2010), the international library conference on information literacy, Internet Librarian (2010), Innovative Users European and Irish Joint Conference (2009), Academic & Special Librarians annual conference (2008), and at the Academic & Special Librarians annual seminar (keynote speaker 2007). The

cultivation of this research ethos has been recognised not only through presentations and publications, but also through a number of awards including a SIF/WIT co-funded award for Innovation in Teaching Practices to the Learning Support Team (2009), and an Emerald Literati Network reviewer of the year award (2009). In 2010 a library article “Practical low-cost marketing measures. The experience of Waterford Institute of Technology Libraries”, was selected as one of the Emerald articles of the year for case study treatment in Strategic Direction.

WIT Libraries has established a profile that places us firmly within the research community of the Institute, and beyond.