

ACLCP Continuing Education Grant
Fall 2024 Award

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UXLibs9 Conference Summary

I attended User Experience in Libraries 2025 (UXLibs9), held June 17–19 in Liverpool, UK, with support from an ACLCP Continuing Education grant. The UXLibs conference brings together library staff from around the world to share their work in User Experience (UX) research and design, with the goal of understanding user needs and improving library services.

The conference featured a mix of keynotes, plenaries, delegate presentations, workshops, and a team challenge. One keynote that stood out to me was Building Trust to Drive the Full UX Process by Vanessa Bennett, who emphasized the importance of stakeholder trust and support. She discussed the importance of understanding our stakeholders' needs and ambitions, and how we might influence and gain their support by learning about both. She also noted that while we must trust the UX process enough to follow it through, stakeholders must trust us enough to let us lead it. As I prepare to conduct usability testing and semi-structured interviews this spring—part of the final phase of my first UX project—her reminder to stay committed to the full process feels especially timely. At the same time, I'm starting to think about how successful completion of this project might build the trust needed to gain stakeholder support for future UX work.

I attended sessions that explored UX in the context of accessibility, study space design, information literacy instruction, and a graduate course that gave students the opportunity to conduct UX research in collaboration with the library—an approach that offers meaningful research experience for students while supporting library initiatives. My selected workshops focused on tools for participatory design and accessibility in journey mapping.

A key takeaway for me is the importance of balancing data collection with action. UX is a four-step process, and collecting just enough data to support prototyping is critical—many skip this stage and miss valuable insights. I also learned about a variety of UX methods—such as guerrilla interviews, walk & talk interviews, card sorts, affinity and behavioral mapping, journey maps, and love/breakup letters—during sessions and the team challenge. These tools can help gather both attitudinal and behavioral data, and I came away with a deeper understanding of why capturing both is essential to getting a complete picture of the user's experience.

In February, my proposal—Designing Inclusive Library Spaces for Student Parents—was selected for presentation at the conference. I was honored to have my talk voted second place by attendees for best delegate paper.

I'm grateful for the opportunity to attend and look forward to applying these approaches in my work.