

Conference Report: LIBER Book Fair, Madrid, Spain

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The Embassy of Spain's Ministry of the Economy, Commerce and Business (ICEX) annually invites U.S. based librarians to attend the LIBER Book Fair in Madrid or Barcelona in October. They cover travel expenses and arrange for meetings with publishers of books in Spanish. This year, I was honored to be invited (along with 24 other librarians) to attend the Book Fair in Madrid, and it was an intense and fruitful event. It began with an initial session for the librarians and the Spanish publishers to meet, where we had to introduce ourselves, our library, and what materials we were interested in seeing at the fair. During the week, I met with twelve publishers of books in Spanish who presented their newest products as well as explaining their areas of focus and expertise. This included adult, teen, and children fiction and nonfiction books which ranged from popular works to history to travel to cooking and so much more. I brought back lists of titles to recommend to Ignayra and Suzy for the Children and Teen Departments; and of course, I have adult lists to order.

Learning about all the materials is certainly beneficial, but you need a U.S. based distributor to be able to acquire the books for your library. I have since set up an account with Miami-based Spanish Publishers, and Bob Majernik and their Sales Manager took care of the necessary paperwork. I'm excited to order more books in Spanish that reflect the wide range of needs and interests of our patrons. I am confident that Spanish Publishers will be responsive to our requests and find the books we are interested in purchasing.

Another vendor invited all of us to an incredible meal at Lhardy, Madrid's oldest restaurant. It was a wonderful way to spend time with librarians; I already knew some of them from the New York Metro area; and made new friends and compared notes with others from a variety of states. (The food and services were spectacular too!)

Additionally, I toured Spain's National Library/Biblioteca Nacional! The building and their work is impressive, as they have (in various locations) a copy of every book printed in Spanish. We saw exhibits, statues and commemorative plaques, the impressive Board Room, and the Maria Moliner Reading Room, which is named after an important 20th Century Spanish librarian!

I am grateful to Karen and OPL for giving me this professional development time so that I and the Adult Services Dept. can best serve our patrons who read in Spanish, continue to build the diversity of our collections, and meet our community's literacy needs.