

# Charting the Future of Forced Migration Research in Information Science

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**Abstract:** The proposed workshop will address pressing issues in forced migration research from an information perspective. It will bring together researchers in information science and related disciplines to illuminate two trends in forced migration research: information spaces and environments of refugees, and refugees' experience in digital environments and how it impacts their resettlement process. The workshop will approach the topics from a variety of perspectives addressing researchers from different countries with a specific focus on early stage researchers. The workshop will be a day long starting with a moderated panel. There will be dedicated sessions for each theme followed by discussion rounds that allow for bringing together the main points. A call for contribution will be issued to interested researchers to present their projects or work-in-progress, as well as to submit pressing ideas for the brainstorming portion of the workshop.

## **Description:**

Information as a research object in the area of forced migration<sup>1</sup> and vice versa, forced migration in the information science domain, is only slowly gaining attention and has not yet been addressed in an interdisciplinary research environment. Information science provides a perfect lens through which to examine a range of forced migration-related issues, practices, and methodologies.

In the proposed workshop, contributors and attendees will be able to tackle some of the following research questions:

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<sup>1</sup> Lloyd, A., Pilerot, O., & Hultgren, F. (2017). The remaking of fractured landscapes: Supporting refugees in transition (SpiRiT). *Information Research*, 22(3), paper 764. Retrieved from <http://www.informationr.net/ir/22-3/paper764.html>

- How can the information practices, spaces and environments of refugees be better defined and understood?
- How can information practices of refugees, and of the service providers that work with them, be steered to support the inclusion process?
- How do refugees deal with the disruption of knowledge<sup>2</sup> during transitions?
- How can refugees' information needs be better supported? And by whom?
- What role do information institutions and information professionals play in the forced migration context? What can they do more of, or better? Is a new framework necessary<sup>3</sup>?

Throughout the workshop, attendees will be able to examine these research questions, focusing on one of the two following themes:

- Information spaces of refugees
  - navigating the information environments in new and/or transitional countries
  - operational knowledge about information practices in different contexts
  - making space for refugees
  - evolving services provided by (public) libraries and other information professionals in the context of forced migration
- Digitally-mediated environments of refugees
  - information-related skills and strategies that facilitate access to information
  - the role of social media and online spaces as sources of information and in creating and regaining a sense of place
  - role and/or importance of access to ICT for refugees
  - credibility and assessment issues; multilingual interactions; user-generated content.

A call for contributions will be issued. Contributors will be asked to submit an extended abstract of their work in progress, or research findings. Selected contributions will be presented in the Lightning Talks section of the workshop (10-15 minutes presentations). Each lightning talk session invited will be followed by a group discussion.

A shared document with all invited abstracts will be published open access on Zenodo ahead of the Workshop. Later on, and with consent of the contributors, slides and notes

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<sup>2</sup> Lloyd, A. (2017). Researching fractured (information) landscapes Implications for library and information science researchers undertaking research with refugees and forced migration studies. In: *Journal of Documentation* 37(1), 1-15.

<sup>3</sup> Caidi N., & Dali, K. (2017). Diversity by Design. *Library Quarterly*, 87(2), 88-98.

of the meeting will also be added to the shared document. We will also create a workshop website hosted at the Berlin School of Library and Information Science<sup>4</sup>.

***Purpose and Intended Audience:***

In the proposed workshop, we would like to bring together researchers from the information fields broadly construed, along with researchers in related disciplines to showcase the range of areas, practices and methodologies available to research forced migration. The aim is to introduce our IS colleagues to other research in related disciplines, as well as acculturate our colleagues from other disciplines into the rich research context and frameworks in information science.

***Proposed format and tentative schedule:***

<b><i>Time</i></b>	<b><i>Agenda</i></b>
09:00-09:15	Introduction
09:15-10:15	Moderated panel: The state of the research in forced migration and information
10:15-10:45	Lightning talks: Information spaces
10:45-11:15	Discussion with speakers
11:15-11:30	Break and networking
11:30-12:15	Lightning talks: Digital environments
12:15-12:45	Discussion with speakers
12:45-14:00	Lunch
14:00-15:00	Brainstorming session: Forced migration/Information nexus – Future Trends
15:00-16:00	Discussion and ideas for a research agenda
16:00-16:30	Break and networking
16:30-17:00	Wrap up; Knowledge dissemination; Schedule a follow up event

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.ibi.hu-berlin.de/de>

**Goals or Outcomes:**

By bringing together researchers and practitioners, we aim to:

- highlight, share and position the information research and perspective around forced migration
- foster scientific exchange about a diverse strand of research in the area, and
- encourage the translation of existing research into practical implementation, and vice versa (the knowledge gained from initiatives on the ground into research opportunities)
- engage with refugees themselves as active partners in research and its outcomes.

**Relevance to the iConference:**

The workshop addresses a current topic where it is particularly important to demonstrate solutions that can come from information sciences to solve some of the issues associated with forced migration. The iConference 2019 theme is also reflected in the topic of the workshop as information science can offer solutions that help *inform* displaced people promoting *inclusion* in the host countries. We also hope to *inspire* young researchers in information science to dedicate parts of their research to finding solutions to societal issues.

**Duration:** full-day event

**Attendance:** We expect approximately 50 attendees

**Special Requirements:** We are planning on inviting 3-5 special guests to this workshop: some will be refugees and other service providers and/or policy-makers. We would like to make arrangements so that cost is not a barrier to participation, and will request that at the very least the registration fee for the refugee(s) - and possibly the community partner(s), if they are non-profit and not able to defray the registration costs - be waived for the purpose of attending this workshop.