

(lib)TeachMeet

librarians learning from each other

What is TeachMeet?

TeachMeets are 'unconferences', **informal gatherings** run by teachers for teachers since 2005. By dispensing with the organisation and hierarchy of traditional conferences they allow more time for the 'good bits': meeting new people, **learning from others' experiences** and sharing new ideas.

Typically they have **very short presentations** (7 or 2 minutes), volunteered in advance by attendees, about IT tools that they've used in the classroom. The order of presentations is chosen at random: there are no keynote speakers, and no hierarchy. They are free to attend, **informal and welcoming** and have no sponsors' pitches.

Poster presented by Katie Birkwood, Cambridge University Library
Acknowledgements, links and useful information online at:

<http://camlibtm.info>

Twitter hashtag: [#LibTeachM](https://twitter.com/hashtag/LibTeachM)

Why hold TeachMeets for Librarians?

Well, what's not to like about a free CPD and networking event? More seriously, **librarians increasingly have to teach** as part of their daily work, and may have had little or no formal training in education. Often, like teachers in schools, they work in isolated environments where they have little chance to learn about how their colleagues are facing familiar challenges. TeachMeets give librarians a chance to learn from what other people are doing, both within their own sector and from other sectors of the profession.

By presenting at a TeachMeet you get an opportunity to **hone your presenting skills** in front of an informal and friendly audience--an audience of a few librarians is much less intimidating than a lecture hall full of students!

And if you don't speak up, you still get to participate by asking questions, discussing ideas and sharing your thoughts with other attendees. The ethos of TeachMeets is that **no-one is merely a passive bystander**.

LibTeachMeets

The very first librarians' TeachMeet was held in September 2010 in Cambridge, with the theme 'techie tools and teaching tips'. It was such a success that a second was held in March 2011, and people are already asking when the third will be!

LibTeachMeets have happened in:

Cambridge (27.09.10, 29.03.11)

Huddersfield (09.02.11)

Newcastle (04.05.11)

Brighton (25.05.11)

Liverpool (26.05.11)

Leicester (14.06.11)

London (20.06.11)

Oxford (12.07.11)

LibTeachMeets are coming up in:

Stirling & Inverness (20.07.11)

Bedfordshire (21.07.11)

Sheffield (10.11.11)

See the panel on the right for tips on how to make your own TeachMeet!

What do TeachMeets look like?



Newcastle: image by toonlibtm

Cambridge: image by Nermin Minter



Brighton: image © Sarah J Ison

London: image by @NunuThunder

Huddersfield: images by Andrew Walsh

What do people talk about?

You can talk about anything you like at a TeachMeet, so long as it might be useful to the other people there. These are a few titles from LibTeachMeets around the country:

Effective assessment: a tough nut to crack (Kaye, Huddersfield)

Keeping the attention of your audience (Anne-Mary, Huddersfield)

Resource Discovery: two worlds colliding (Chris Keene, Brighton)

Using Skype with media students (Sarah Ison, Brighton)

Livening up library induction sessions the low tech way (Lucy Keating, Newcastle)

Lunching with Renoir: demonstrating why wikis should be more than just content (Linda Crane, Liverpool)

Library posters: engaging your students (Liz Osman, Cambridge)

Debunking the myth of the Google generation (Nicky Adkins, Cambridge)



How to make your own...

- ✓ Essentials: some **people** willing to help organise and a **venue** that can hold some librarians and info pros (probably between 20 and 60 of them).
- ✓ **Publicise a date and time** and you'll probably find that people are keen to sign up.
- ✓ A **web presence** - a blog or wiki and a twitter hashtag - is good to let people know what's going on and to bring information all together in one place.
- ✓ If you can find a little **funding** or sponsorship then that can help pay for **drinks and nibbles** - TeachMeet-ers always appreciate the presence of cake!
- ✓ **Speak to people** who have organised other TeachMeets. They'll be more than happy to share what they've learnt.
- ✓ **Use technology to make your life easier**. Online tools like Google Docs and Eventbrite make collaborative working much easier.