

# Welcome by Sarah Porter and David Baker

## Blog by Sam Jordison

The Plenary will be starting at 11.00am in the auditorium.

It will be given by Sarah Porter and Professor David Baker.

And it's a lovely sunny morning here in Egham.

The title is on the screen: **Innovation - 'New Stuff Made Useful'**

It's just about 11.00am as I write this, the auditorium is filling up nicely and we'll be underway any minute.

Sarah Porter, Head of Innovation at JISC, has taken the stand and an expectant hush falls.

After a few housekeeping notes, Sarah discusses the importance of continuing to innovate in the current climate. "This isn't the time to be conservative. We need to be using new ideas in different ways. We want to share ideas and innovations," she says, "and this is very much a creative working vent for us all. We from JISC are here to listen as well, so please do speak to us at any time."

David Baker takes the chair... is briefly interrupted by the phone in his pocket... and begins by discussing the wide range of expertise gathered in the room today and the matrices of relationships and sets of goals.

"Now, when times are tough we really do have to mean what we say in terms of aims and objectives," says David and quotes the "lovely line" that: "one should never waste a crisis." There are opportunities and now is the time to innovate ever more, he says. But there are issues about persuading people to innovate when there is such a mood of retrenchment.

The environment in which we are working is an increasingly differentiated environment. There are segmented missions and priorities and visions of the future.

There are creative tensions - institutions may compete, but also collaborate: "In my view there will be ever more collaboration." And collaboration in order to be more competitive.

David is now talking about the blockages to the effective application in projects. Top of the list is lack of effective leadership in institutions. JISC is very much involved in developing effective leadership and technology training.

We also talk a great deal about sustainability - and especially financial sustainability. JISC is not immune from the changes the coalition is bringing in, says David.

Sarah has now taken the stand to explain how JISC is helping organisations "help themselves" and face the challenges of lack of money and similar.

She talks about how to prioritise the things that will really make a difference. She says "we have to find the business models" to support the work that projects do - and that's why one of today's strands is all about that.

Sarah also wants feedback on how JISC continues to be indispensable and "make sure that we do things that are vital to the sector" and keep moving on and keep innovating.

Sarah has brought up a URL for the JISC Elevator Pitch Prototype:

<http://elevator.triplegeek.com>

She's asking for people to visit it and give feedback.

Sarah closes by wishing us all a profitable conference and asking again for feedback.

There's warm applause and now delegates are streaming to the first sessions.

## **Blog by Michelle Pauli**

Sarah Porter has promised a double act with David Baker on Innovation ('new stuff made useful'), following the usual event housekeeping concerning fire exits, refreshments and accommodation.

She begins by highlighting that this is the third JIF and in the current climate, highlighting for the sector the importance of innovating in tricky times is crucial and why we're all here - thinking about how to be creative. The setup of the event should reflect this - delegates should expect the unexpected and enter into the spirit of it! JISC is also here to listen - "speak to us!" urges Sarah.

David Porter takes over: "times are tough and now we really need to mean what we say and do what we say," is his opening salvo. "One should never waste a crisis," he suggests, quoting Greg Jackson, and points to the opportunities that may be offered.

The cruciality of innovation is what he wants to emphasise - now is the time to innovate ever more. But there are issues about persuading people of the value. We need to demonstrate the vitality and applicability of what we're doing.

Should there be different solutions for different parts of the sector? It also needs to be segmented, particularly in higher education, and also tiered. We're globalised, not simply internationalised, but also personalised and we want things as individuals. There is also a creative tensions - institutions compete at every level but they also collaborate and we will see ever more of that. It's not about competition versus collaboration - it's about both. Leadership will be crucial - lack of effective leadership is a real blockage. JISC is working with the Leadership Foundation to help leaders become more effective. Under the heading of leadership, active management, anticipation and sustainability are also important. Sustainability requires selectivity - JISC is not immune to the Coalition cuts.

David hands over to Sarah at this point.

What is JISC's response? JISC needs to prioritise, says Sarah. It must also be prepared for different business models. Open is an important part of what we do, but we need to find the business models to make those work, to sustain them.

We want your feedback on how we can make JISC indispensable, asks Sarah. How can we continue to do what no one else does? How do we make sure we are doing the things that are essential to the sector, and continue to be innovative and not also take the easy route.

Sarah then announces a new launch, a trial! It's called [JISC ELEVATOR](#) and it's a trial site asking for elevator pitches, ideas that JISC can build into its processes. Might be a short cut around the usual lengthy document proposal writing scenario. "Have a look, tell us that you think, and do keep talking to us," is Sarah's parting shot.

Delegates now disperse to the breakout sessions.